

Mayor's Notes
September 2012

The home invasion, and a spike in other types of violations in this town, are factors which are driving the difference in the budget this year. I had written earlier this year that I did not believe there would be a need for a tax increase this coming fiscal year----this thought was before the latter events which took place in May.

There are a number of reasons for my proposed increase in security. Considering the current situation in our region I believe that the possibility of being impacted by criminal activity cannot be ignored. The dynamics in this kind of activity is brisk and all law enforcement agencies must be well-prepared. The interrogations of the suspects involved in the home invasion left no doubt that they were willing to shoot anyone who got in their way of accomplishing their goal. This group of six, armed with AK-47's, would not hesitate to use their weapons. The police personnel prior to the home invasion, etc. allowed for a one-man patrol during the night, which was the case when this event occurred. One-man patrols are no longer safe for our officers or our residents. My proposal for the coming year is to increase police patrols which will enable two-officer patrols at all times, except on Friday and Saturday nights, which would be manned by three-officer patrols during the night when activity is higher. My proposal would be in effect on one-year periods at which time the program would be re-visited for re-evaluation. In order to pay for the added security services we need to increase the work hours for our police reserve officers. This year we funded the reserve position to essentially enable one-man patrols, except in overlap shifts. During most of the current year we had not used the reserve hours too much. This allowed for us to increase patrols at the proposed rate after the home invasion occurred. The results have been very positive concerning our security; I will recommend to the Board of Aldermen to continue the increased security into the coming fiscal year.

So how much will this cost? If the town adopts the maximum tax rate (.418717¢ / \$100 valuation) without triggering a rollback election, an average valued house in

Rancho Viejo of \$179,389 would pay \$56.00 more in taxes the coming year; this means \$4.66 per month. You can figure your own tax by multiplying your house valuation by the tax rate above. Please note that the budget is not complete yet and it appears that the general fund surplus is over the standard amount usually imposed and it will be reduced thus reducing the tax rate as well. If things were to hold as they are currently concerning the budget the tax rate would decrease to .414185; this means that a household would pay \$43 more the coming year, or \$3.58 per month---a savings of \$1.08 per month when compared to the calculations above.

There is talk on the Board of Aldermen of eliminating a reserve officer. If this was to happen a house as described above would pay \$37.03 per year, thereby saving such a household \$18.97 per year, or \$1.58 per month. When I consider the value of having the added security service to saving \$1.58 per month under the scenario above, I believe that it is not worth cutting the reserve officer during this time of relative unrest. Additionally, cutting a reserve officer would impact the police administrative activities if we were to have an event of the magnitude as the one that occurred in May. We would also need to utilize our regular police hours to cover for absent officers which would entail overtime---this can also get expensive.

This is all for now. May God Bless Everyone.