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To: supplementalcomm@surfcity-hb.org; [CITY COUNCIL \(INCL. CMO STAFF\)](#)
Subject: Agenda Item 25-903 and Mr. Gates
Date: Friday, November 14, 2025 12:36:45 PM

Meeting Date: 11/18/25

Agenda Item No. 11 (25-903)

City Council –

I have questions and comments about one of your recent actions, as well as an item on today's agenda. I will start with the item on today's agenda: the partnership with Archer Aviation for electric VTOL aircraft.

While Mr. Twining did ask some relevant questions, what struck me was the lack of questions on topics relevant to the issue. Here are some of the questions I think you should have asked, and did not – questions that I believe deserve answers before any decision is made:

Questions:

1. The proposed aircraft is not yet FAA certified. What is the time frame for certification?
2. The noise level mentioned for the aircraft is at cruise, which would be at 1500-1600'. What is the noise level during take-off and landing?
3. Archer asserts much less maintenance than helicopters. That makes sense for the electric motors vs. gas turbines. But what about all the rotational components and the tilting mechanisms? We have recently seen how inadequate maintenance has led to a significant accident here in HB. (Military aircraft require 3-4 hours of maintenance for every hour of flight time.) What is the expected ratio for these aircraft?
4. Exactly what does "host of operations" entail, since that is what HB is being requested to support? What costs are expected of HB? What is the benefit to HB?
5. HB is in the take-off and landing paths for two airports – both Long Beach and Orange County. What is the de-conflicting protocol to ensure that these VTOL aircraft are not interfering with both commercial and general aviation for both of those airports?
6. Archer mentioned that the aircraft can glide, but made no mention of the glide ratio. What is the glide ratio for the aircraft?
7. According to the documentation, the City would be the lead applicant? What does that entail in terms of staff effort and cost? Who gets the grant – the city or Archer? Archer says they have done a lot of the leg work - what exactly have they done and what remains to be done? What is the risk to the city as the applicant lead?
8. Who is on the hook for damages and liability should there be an accident?

In my opinion, all those questions deserve answers before any decision is made regarding this proposed agreement and application.

Changing gears, I think it's appropriate to discuss the council's apparent decision to rehire Michael Gates. Mr. Gates portrays that he left his employment at the DoJ voluntarily, but recent reporting is that he was actually fired "for cause", with that cause being the creation of a hostile work environment – specifically demeaning and derogatory comments about female staffers. Given the history at HB, wherein the city had to pay out significant sums of money over ageism complaints, it would appear that Mr. Gates has no learning curve. Your decision to rehire someone with an extremely troubling past from an HR perspective is exposing the city to additional potential legal actions and consequent penalties. Mr. Gate's history will make it nearly impossible to defend the city in the event such issues recur.

I urge you to reconsider his hiring. Should you not do so, I believe that you also expose yourselves to a contributory negligence finding in the event of legal action.

Sincerely,

David Rynerson

Huntington Beach

From: [Paula Schaefer](#)
To: [CITY COUNCIL \(INCL. CMO STAFF\)](#); supplementalcomm@surfcity-hb.org; city.manager@surfcity-hb.org
Subject: 11/18 Agenda Item 25-903
Date: Monday, November 17, 2025 2:17:09 PM

Based upon the presentation made by Archer at the prior City Council meeting, it was apparent that the City Council had already met with Archer to discuss this Letter of Intent.

If Archer is one of the 5 entities selected for this program, I would hope that the City Council would work closely with adjoining cities and the County of Orange to ensure the safety of the proposed services offered by Archer.

Paula A. Schaefer