

## Switzer, Donna

---

**From:** MyHB <reply@mycivicapps.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 01, 2019 7:43 AM  
**To:** Estanislau, Robin; Switzer, Donna; Esparza, Patty  
**Subject:**  MyHB-#170182 City Council [05814]

### MyHB

#### Issue Type/Subtype Changed - #170182

Workorder #170182 Issue type changed from City Council to Agenda & Public Hearing Comments and subtype City Council Meeting.

Status

Change issue type

Work Order

#170182

Issue Type

City Council

Subtype

All Council Members

Staff Member(s)

Robin Estanislau, Donna Switzer, Patty Esparza

Notes

June 30, 2019 Honorable Huntington Beach City Council Members, I am a 12-year Huntington Beach resident and 4 year Huntington Beach Police Department Parking Control Officer (PCO) and it is my honor and pleasure to write to you regarding a subject, which was presented to the Parking Control Unit on June 26, 2019 by Police Chief Handy and his staff. Chief Handy informed the PCO Unit the subject would be presented during the City Council Study Session on Monday July 1, 2019. Chief Handy and the Teamster Union representatives encouraged employees to attend the Study Session. Unfortunately, I have a prior commitment in south Orange County, which I could not re-schedule and may prevent me from returning to the city in time for the Study Session. Thus, I am writing this email prior to the Study Session to express my thoughts on the subject Chief Handy will present. As background, the Parking Control Unit has been working at less than full staff for well over two years. Since approximately late 2016, the Parking Control Unit has lost 5 officers out of the 16 total officers if the unit was fully staffed. Additionally, a 6th PCO has been in an Injured On Duty (IOD) status for approximately 1 year. The losses were due to retirements and other attrition. As a result of being down so many PCOs, the street sweeping routes have not been fully covered for much of this time and sometimes to the point of entire routes not being covered at all. Also, due to the loss of so many PCOs the response times to parking complaint calls from residents and businesses has been significantly diminished, and parking meter patrols have been extremely low compared to past years when the unit was fully staffed to cover all the daily/nightly duties and patrol the meters. Furthermore, these losses have hindered the PCO's ability to proactively patrol the city identifying abandoned vehicles and other parking violations. On June 26, 2019 Chief Handy informed the Parking Control Unit he and his staff have spent a year exploring the idea of outsourcing the street sweeping function of PCO duties. As I understood Chief Handy's proposal the current 6 empty positions are to remain on the PD organizational chart in an unfunded status so a contractor can bring in 6 people to cover street sweeping in hopes of saving \$50,000 - \$250,000 annually. Aside from the obvious reason I am opposed to this idea, which is the potential impact on my personal employment, I also feel the cost savings is minimal and this idea will prove to be a disservice to the City, the residents and the businesses overall. I feel there is a misconception throughout the city that PCOs simply drive a pickup truck at 5 MPH following a street sweeper and writing citations when the sweeper goes around vehicles which failed to move on street sweeping day. I am still a fairly new employee and even I thought, "How hard can street sweeping be?" I am here to say there is SO much more to the street sweeping duties than following the sweeper and writing citation. Here are a few examples broken down into two categories: 1. PCO Observations and Actions 2. PCO Community Encounters and Relations

**PCO OBSERVATIONS and ACTIONS** • While street sweeping, a PCO who is citing a vehicle for street sweeping discovers the vehicle has 5 or more delinquent citations. Occasionally, that PCO has the ability to boot the vehicle right then. If the PCO is unable to boot the vehicle at the time of issuing the street sweeping citation the PCO can return to the vehicle at the end of the route to boot the vehicle or notify a colleague to respond to the vehicle and apply a boot. A contractor will not be able to do this and the HYPD PCOs will have no knowledge of the location of the bootable vehicle. • Occasionally while on a street sweeping route, PCOs have witnessed suspicious circumstance or even the commission of a crime, which the PCO is able to call out over the radio to advise dispatch and police officers in the area. I am even aware of situations where a PCO was street sweeping in an area where officers were actively looking for a subject or subject vehicle and the PCO observed the subject/vehicle and alerted officers to the location. A contractor will not even know about these situations in order to provide assistance to the officers. • On occasion while issuing a street sweeping citation PCOs have observed something suspicious about the vehicle being cited – perhaps the vehicle already has multiple citations on the windshield, or a window or door is open and when the PCO runs the license plate the vehicle returns as a reported stolen vehicle. A contractor will not have the ability to help recover reported stolen vehicles. • Similar to the previous point, PCOs have observed something suspicious such as multiple citations, cobwebs and leaves all over the vehicle so the PCO makes a note to either come back to the vehicle or have a colleague find the vehicle and mark it for the 72-hour violation. Many abandoned vehicles are identified and removed as a result of street sweeping. A contractor will not have the ability nor care or take the time to identify potentially abandoned vehicles. • On occasion while street sweeping PCOs encounter situations requiring City Public Works and/or Code Enforcement response. Such situations include, vehicles leaking toxic fluids on city streets, faded or missing street signs which need to be replaced in order to be enforced, malfunctioning traffic signals, faded red curbs, which need to be repainted in order to be enforced, overgrown city trees either blocking signs or encroaching on the curb, which need to be trimmed so the signs are visible and/or the sweeper can properly sweep. A contractor is not going to take the time to care about these situations. • Occasionally, the vehicle being cited for street sweeping is completely blocking a fire hydrant or wheelchair access ramp and the PCO issuing the street sweeping citation has the ability and discretion to issue an additional citation for the other parking violations. **PCO COMMUNITY ENCOUNTERS and RELATIONS** • While street sweeping, PCOs frequent encounter angry citizens receiving street sweeping citations. Some citizens are more civilized than others and handle it well. Others become borderline violent. In my four years of employment, I have had eyeglasses and keys thrown at me while issuing a street sweeping citation. In fact, keys have been thrown at me on more than one occasion. PCOs are experienced in talking with these angry citizens and de-escalating the situation as best as possible. On rare occasions, police officer back up has been required to address the situation. What is the expectation of how the contractor employee will handle these situations and what is the City's responsibility and liability? • While street sweeping, PCOs encounter countless "flag downs" from residents, tourists, businesses and other citizens alerting the PCO to abandoned vehicles and other parking violations. People frequently ask about RV and oversized parking, residential permit parking, meter parking, 4th of July parking and event information, US Open parking and event information, how to obtain beach parking permits, Code Enforcement, Public Works and other City telephone numbers. Other questions posed to PCOs during street sweeping which are unrelated to street sweeping or parking include asking for good places to dine, directions to their destination or other locations, location of banks or ATMs and so much more. A contractor is not going to be able to answer these questions or even take the time to try to help people. This will reflect negatively on the City even though it is a contractor. • While street sweeping, PCOs encounter children who wait for the street sweeper to drive past their house waving to the sweeper driver and the PCO. Many of the children ask the PCO for Junior Police Officer stickers. Seeing these children is a definite highlight of my route. I even have a couple "regulars" I look for any time I get their route. One is a young boy in the Continentals on Cornwall and another is family on Lochlea. I love pulling out my supply of stickers and handing them out to the kids. A contractor is not going to care about the children who stand waiting for the street sweeper. This will reflect negatively on the City despite it being a contractor. My other concerns regarding this issue pertain to the anticipated cost savings to the City and the quality of the contractor employees performing the duties. My career prior to my employment with the City of Huntington Beach was over 20 years as a federal agent investigating procurement fraud against the Department of Defense (DoD). I investigated and helped prosecute numerous DoD contractors who defrauded the United States on multi-million dollar contracts awarded to them. One of the easiest and most common schemes contractors engaged in was to knowingly low-ball their bid to be awarded the contract and then hit the DoD with numerous change orders and modifications throughout the duration of the contract all with added costs not in the initial bid. I predict any bids or proposals submitted for the street sweeping job will omit certain subtle aspects of the job and then change orders with additional cost will be submitted and whatever savings Chief Handy anticipated will not be seen. This is just one of many examples of how contractors add costs and/or otherwise defraud the government whether federal government or city government on contracts. As a consequence the government agency spends more than they should have or expected. Not to mention, the performance is usually substandard as well. Several street sweeping routes are extremely busy year round due to high-density parking issues. Some of these busy areas are exponentially busy during the summer months due to the addition of students being out of school for the summer and the influx of thousands of tourists on vacation. Specifically, the street sweeping route covering the downtown numbered streets has a very short window of time to complete the morning route. These streets include metered areas as well as non-metered areas considered prime free beach parking areas. Locals going to the beach and tourists fail to see or read the street sweeping signs posted. The increased volume of vehicles to be cited for street sweeping can be so great the route does not get completed in time. The sweeper would continue to sweep, but the PCOs would cease issuing citations since it was outside the window of time posted. When the HYPD PCO unit was fully staffed three PCOs were assigned to this route to ensure it was completed in the allotted time period. If a contractor has to assign an additional employee to this route to ensure it is completed in the posted time period this will result in increased costs to the City. Another concern in this regard is the data being used to make this decision. I am not aware of specific the data Chief Handy is using to make this proposal, but if the cost recovery numbers he is submitting are from 2016-2019, they are NOT an accurate representation of what a fully staffed PCO Unit could provide and therefore should not be considered when deciding to outsource the street sweeping aspect of the PCO Unit. If the city simply filled the vacant positions so the PCO unit was fully staffed allowing the PCOs to cover street sweeping and all the other aspects of the position the unit could

more than recover the cost of the unit. We have not had this opportunity for over two years. Chief Handy stated there would be 6 contract positions. Most if not all the street sweeping routes require 2 PCOs per route to sufficiently and effectively cover the routes. Additionally three street sweeping days have 4 routes, which requires 8 PCOs. How is a contractor going to handle these routes if there are only 6 employees? This is a perfect example of where a change order would be submitted to add two additional contractor personnel and the City would have to pay because the contractor would not have sufficient personnel to cover the necessary routes otherwise. My hiring process for this position took over 8 months and involved an extensive background investigation including a polygraph examination. It was very clear to me that PCOs are held to a higher standard of ethics than certain other jobs. What sort of background investigation will be conducted before bringing on contractor employees? Will they be held to the same level of ethics? Another fiscal concern pertains to rainy days. Occasionally, the rain is so heavy PCOs do not enforce street sweeping compliance. What will be the City's obligation to pay on the contract for days when street sweeping enforcement is cancelled? When Chief Handy discussed this with the PCO Unit last week he stated the contractor would NOT be taking a percentage of the fines for the citations issued during the specified time period. What contractor would not want a percentage of the fines for the citations they issued on behalf of the City? How will the contractor's profit be determined? Along the lines I expressed earlier of potential contract fraud, I fear if a prospective contractor does not actually have a percentage of the fines itemized in their proposal, then a savvy contractor will use an algorithm or mathematical formula to inconspicuously build that amount into some other line item in the bid or proposal. In conclusion, I respectfully request you consider all of the concerns outlined herein before making a decision. Furthermore, I invite and encourage all of you to do a ride along with any of the PCOs to experience street sweeping and ALL other aspects of a PCO's duties. I sincerely hope I can make it to the Study Session on Monday, but if not I am reaching out to each of you for your support and input on this topic. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of my concerns. I look forward to hearing from you. Respectfully Submitted, Shelly Amsden 7132 Little Harbor Drive Huntington Beach, CA 92648 657-250-4884

[View the Report](#)

Reporter Name  
Shelly Amsden

Email  
nedsmasl@gmail.com

Phone  
657-250-4884

Report Submitted  
JUN 30, 2019 - 11:11 PM

---

Please do not change subject line when responding.

**SUPPLEMENTAL  
COMMUNICATION**

Meeting Date: 7/1/19

Agenda Item No.: Study Session #1