

**From:** [Norm DeGare](#)  
**To:** [ClerkoftheBoard](#)  
**Subject:** BOS Agenda for June 6, 2023, Item 39  
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Board Members and Chair;

I had some questions about Agenda Item 39, requesting a large "contribution" (\$150,000) for a "Swap Meet Justice" program in Oxnard:

1. Is this part of the normal County process for deciding how and where to spend taxpayer money, by "contributing" large sums of money with little fanfare and outside the normal budget timeline? Wouldn't it be more above-board to consider funding big expenses like this in the County's annual budget process, and let NGOs or other private parties donate to support the programs that aren't included in the County's budget? If the Board does contribute this money, are Board members going to pay \$150,000 out of their own pockets? If not, then please make it very clear that it is the taxpayers of Ventura County that actually made the donation, including folks who have no idea this is happening.

2. I noticed under Agenda Item 31 (consent agenda) that the County Public Works Department apparently is underfunded for maintenance of its infrastructure, which is now failing. Wouldn't it make more sense to make sure the County's direct responsibilities are fully met and funded before you "contribute" large sums to volunteer social causes?

3. The "Swap Meet Justice" budget document includes \$2,200 per month for table and chair rental, with no backup documentation. That's \$79,200 total over the three year period. Doesn't that seem high? To make sure taxpayer dollars are appropriately spent and counted for, I would recommend that this organization provide a more detailed budget, with supporting cost documentation, in their proposal.

4. Their budget document adds up to a total of \$7,100 per month. Over three years, that's \$255,600 (\$7,100 x 36). They are asking for \$150,000 from the County, or about 60% of the total cost budget. How is the 40% shortfall going to be made up? Are there donations from additional sources? Again, it would be helpful (should be mandatory) to see an accounting of income and expenses for this project that explains how the County's contribution fits into the project budget.

5. The logo at the top of the budget document says that this event is a "monthly citizenship and social justice fair." The Board letter requesting this donation doesn't mention either "citizenship" or "social justice" as goals of the monthly events. Could Supervisor Lopez provide more information regarding how much of the County's \$150,000 would be used to support the activities mentioned in her request letter (e.g., healthcare), and how much would be spent on citizenship or social-justice related activities? I'm all for citizenship and all forms of justice, but I think the taxpayers should know where their "contribution" is going, specifically, before the Board writes a big check on our behalf.

Thank you,

Norm DeGare  
Ventura County