

CITY OF VENTURA
NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release
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Ventura City Council approves portion of Measure O revenue to keep all existing fire stations in Ventura open

On June 12, 2017, the Ventura City Council voted unanimously to approve \$1.64M of Measure O revenue annually to keep all fire stations in Ventura open. Consistent with the Measure O ordinance, the ongoing funding will maintain nine rotating full-time firefighters who staff Fire Station 4 (three firefighters daily), located at Telephone Road and Montgomery Avenue, and ensure the fire station remains open for the next 25 years. The Measure O funding was approved with the adoption of the City's fiscal year 2017-2018 Operating Budget of \$278M; Ventura's General Fund budget is \$110.6M.

"The City Council is upholding the promise we made to Ventura voters," said Mayor Nasarenko. "All revenue from Measure O stays right here in Ventura and this initial allocation will help to maintain fire and paramedic response times for the 15,000 calls for service received each year from citizens who need emergency care."

The FY 2017-2018 balanced budget reflects the City Council goals to steward Measure O dollars responsibly, create and maintain economic development and vitality, and enhance the response to homelessness. General Fund budget highlights include: increasing the City's operating reserves by \$1.5M to prepare for the future, funding for public safety to improve emergency communications center response, and one-time funding for the parks ambassador program. The City held four public workshops and two public hearings regarding the proposed operating budget for FY 2017-2018.

In November 2016, Ventura voters approved Measure O, a half-cent transaction and use tax for 25 years that will generate \$10.8M annually to maintain vital services. In accordance with the San Buenaventura Municipal Code Section 4.129.160, the Measure O Citizens Oversight Committee reviewed and unanimously recommended that the City Council approve ongoing funding to staff Fire Station 4.

The City established a separate Measure O Fund to review expenditures and ensure that they are appropriate under the Measure O ordinance. An annual, independent financial audit of the funding is required.

Background:

Fire Station 4 was closed in 2010 as a result of budget cuts. To maintain area coverage and keep the fire engine in service the City applied for and received two, 2-year Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response (SAFER) Grants consecutively from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in 2010 and 2013 totaling nearly \$5M, to provide previous staffing levels for four years during the economic recovery. The total cost to maintain a fire station is approximately \$2.23M annually; Measure O dollars will fund the staffing for Fire Station 4 and the City's General Fund will cover the operating expenses.

This release can be found on the City of Ventura's website at www.cityofventura.ca.gov. ###