



Overview of the City Attorney's Office City of Chula Vista

SEPTEMBER 12, 2011

Role and Function of City Attorney

- ✓ Primary role is to deliver quality legal services to the City in order for the City to operate in a lawful and effective manner to improve the quality of life of its citizens.





Responsibilities

- ✓ Attend meetings and provide advice to City Council, Redevelopment Agency, CVRC and all City Boards and Commissions
- ✓ Prepare or approve as to form all City resolutions, ordinances and contracts
- ✓ Provide legal advice to all City Departments
- ✓ Defend the City in litigation and commence litigation, as appropriate, to protect City interests
- ✓ Prosecute Municipal Code Violations



Wide Range of Legal Matters matches Wide Range of City Services

- ✓ City is essentially public corporation that produces and maintains infrastructure and delivers wide range of services to the community
- ✓ Police, Fire, Planning and Building, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Libraries, Human Resources, Community Development, Affordable Housing, City Clerk, Finance

Wide Range of Applicable Laws



- ✓ Federal, State, and Local Laws Apply
- ✓ Special Rules for Government Agencies
 - Constitution (State and Federal)
 - Labor, telecommunications, utilities, ADA, Environmental (State and Federal)
 - State: Government Code, Streets & Highways Code, Health & Safety Code, Civil Code, Penal Code
 - Local: City Charter, Municipal Code and Policies



What's Different About an Elected City Attorney?

- ✓ Proposition Q, which made the City Attorney an elected position, Amended Charter Section 503 to add:

“Is the intent of the voters that the City Attorney shall be sufficiently independent of the City Council and other city officials to advise the City while acting in the best interests of the public.”



Primary Role and Function Remains the Same

- ✓ Client is still the City
- ✓ But now directly accountable to the people

Enhanced Responsibilities

- ✓ Improve flow of information to the Public
- ✓ Guardian of Individual Rights
- ✓ Require City officials and employees to follow the law

Strategic Goals

2011/2012

1. Improve the flow of information to the Public:

- ✓ Add information and legal resources of community interest to the City Attorney Website
- ✓ Implement a policy for publishing City Attorney Opinions that clarify rules that apply to important/frequently raised issues
- ✓ Expand and expedite community access to public records
- ✓ Conduct City Attorney Public Forums throughout the City regarding legal areas/issues of interest
- ✓ Lobbyist Registration Ordinance

Strategic Goals 2011/2012



2. Enhance Efficiency and Accountability:

- ✓ Purchase and implement law office/project management software
- ✓ Expand legal intern program
- ✓ Standardize legal analysis, process and forms
- ✓ Create legal opinion bank
- ✓ Undergo peer review process
- ✓ Develop and implement performance measures

Strategic Goals

2011/2012

3. Improve Risk Management Practices:

- ✓ Add a litigation Deputy to handle more cases in-house
- ✓ Develop and implement training program in high-risk areas, including police advisory matters and conflicts of interest
- ✓ Review and advise regarding appropriate funding levels and protocols for managing public liability trust accounts and reserves

Strategic Goals

2011/2012

4. Assist various City Departments with implementation of their strategic objectives

Resources

- ✓ 8 Attorneys
- ✓ 3 Support Staff
- ✓ Interns (as many as possible)

**Staffing down from peak of 14 in 2006/2007
(9 attorneys and 5 support staff)**

Annual Budget

Approximately \$2 million per year

- ✓ Primarily labor costs
- ✓ Includes funding for outside counsel
- ✓ Addition of litigator will yield net savings
- ✓ Important to Expand Intern Program and Grant Funding