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Orange County Unveils FY 2016-17 Recommended Budget

Orange County's Fiscal Year 2016-17 Recommended Budget has been released for review by the Board of Supervisors and the public.

Public budget hearings will begin at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, June 14, and Wednesday, June 15, at the Hall of Administration Board Hearing Room, 333 W. Santa Ana Blvd., Santa Ana. The budget is divided into seven sections or programs: I Public Protection; II Community Services; III Infrastructure and Environmental Resources; IV General Government Services; V Capital Improvements; VI Debt Service; and VII Insurance, Reserves and Miscellaneous.

The final budget vote is scheduled for June 28, 2016.

"Looking forward, the County is well-positioned to focus on providing the needed resources to strengthen our infrastructure and continue delivering high quality public services," said County Executive Officer Frank Kim. The \$6.1 billion budget is structurally balanced without the use of reserves for ongoing expenses.

During the public hearings, budget staff will provide highlights of the County's spending plan and discuss specific budget requests, as well as answer questions from Board members and the public. County spending for FY 2015-16 was increased by 1% for departments that rely on General Fund support to create the base budget for FY 2016-17; departments have identified additional funds needed to restore current levels of service above that allowed within the base budget, as well as submitted augmentation requests for new programs and spending.

The FY 2016-17 Recommended Budget includes the following key initiatives:

- ✚ **Homeless assistance:** The County has acquired property for a multi-service center in Anaheim to assist connecting the homeless with long-term housing and other programs, including mental and physical health services and increased service coordination across County departments. The new multi-service center is set to open in FY 2016-17.
- ✚ **OC Animal Shelter:** The County is moving forward with construction of a new state-of-the-art animal shelter on 10 acres of property at the former Tustin Marine base. The new facility will include a large reception area, outdoor exercise areas, kennels and a training center. Construction is set to begin this summer.
- ✚ **Countywide Public Safety Communications System:** The Countywide Coordinated Communications System is an interoperable two-way radio communications system serving public safety and public works agencies across the county. Efforts are underway for a system-wide upgrade, new infrastructure and updated radios.

- ✚ **Civic Center Master Plan:** The Civic Center Master Plan will address the County's long-term occupancy in the Orange County Civic Center for enhanced and more efficient delivery of public services, improved use of space, grouping County offices by affiliated services, updating aging buildings and better managing occupancy and maintenance costs.
- ✚ **Central Utility Facility:** The CUF is undergoing a significant upgrade to replace antiquated equipment and underground piping to ensure reliable, uninterrupted utility service to the Orange County Civic Center, including the jails and Superior Court, as well as continue to provide reduced costs for utilities.
- ✚ **Services for Older Adults and Veterans:** The County is dedicating resources to improve outreach, assessments and services for the County's aging population and veterans, engaging and connecting caregivers who those who would most benefit from the services.

FY 2016-17 Recommended Budget Highlights:

- Total budget is \$6.1 billion, of which \$3.2 billion is the General Fund Budget—about \$6 million more than was budgeted for the General Fund last year.
- Of the \$3.2 billion General Fund, \$744.2 million is the General Purpose Revenue portion, which are unrestricted and may be used for any purpose. Last year's General Purpose Revenues were \$723.1 million.
- The \$744.2 million includes a \$25 million payment to the State. This is the third of five escalating payments totaling \$150 million ordered as the result of a lawsuit over the distribution of vehicle license fees. This payment was included within the base budget and will not come from reserves.
- The budget incorporates revenue assumptions of 4% growth in secured property taxes and a 3.5% increase in Public Safety Sales Tax (Prop. 172) revenues.
- The recommended base budget reflects an increase of \$264.3 million (4.6%) and a net decrease of 136 positions, all of which are recommended by the CEO to be restored to retain current levels of service.
- The District Attorney and Sheriff's Department are recommended for slight increases in overall funding for FY 2016-17 from the current fiscal year, as well as adding 29 positions and six positions respectively.

The FY 2016-17 Recommended Budget documents can be found online at:

<http://ocgov.com/gov/ceo/deputy/finance/budget/fy2017>

The County also invites members of the public to explore additional budgetary and financial information online through the OpenOC data tool, the Strategic Financial Plan and quarterly budget reports. These helpful resources can be found at: <http://ocgov.com/about/openoc/>