



“Accountability”
Glendale’s Watchdog

Question of the week:

What percentage of Full Time City Employees is paid more than the median household income of Glendale residents? Email your answer to info@vanguardians.org

Vanguard
News Service Vol IV
Week of August 16, 2009
City of Glendale, CA Edition
www.vanguardians.org
818 243 1502

‘BARRY, GO AWAY’ -- CONTEST CONTINUES

The four stages of Vanguardians “**First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win.**”
Mahatma Gandhi describing the stages of establishment resistance to a winning strategy of nonviolent advocacy



Please tell us Mr. Starbird...How much did you pay, to whom and for what type of performance? The public wants to know what we received for \$1,500,000. Did the performance bonuses go for ‘hush’ money, for political paybacks for favors? We, the people demand to know.

Congressman Adam Schiff held a Town Hall meeting to present the Health Care Reform legislation last Tuesday in Alhambra. Over four thousand people showed up. Only about 15% were undecided as to their stand on a sweeping change in healthcare. There were others that demanded a debate but the program was for a discussion on the plan. Staff members were passing out cards to allow audience questions to be responded to by the speakers. There were some ‘partisans’ that tried to shout down the speakers and who made it difficult for others to listen to the proceedings. The discussion was moderated by Dr. Bruce Hensel of KNBC and the presenters were:

- Benjamin Chu MD President of Kaiser Permanente Southern California Region,
- Jerry Flanagan, Consumer Watchdog,
- Francine Kaufman, MD Chief Medical Officer of Medtronic Diabetes and
- Leeba Lessin, President of CareMore Health Plan

The City of Pasadena saved themselves another First Amendment lawsuit by saying, ‘No,’ to a handbill ordinance. There was a short institutional memory as the City had lost an earlier lawsuit ion 1998 for the same handbill restriction. PW 8-13-09

NEW STATE LEGISLATION: These are issues we can support –

- 1- Public employees and elected officials that eat out of the public trough who are convicted of a job related felony lose the publicly paid portion of their pension.
- 2- State will mandate public record act training for cities

City of Glendale investment portfolio is \$483M down from \$600M just a few years ago and the revenue on investments dropped to \$12.4M a drop of \$7M from last year.

Local restaurants have a new obligation to prevent Fats, oil and Grease from going into the sewer system as the Council votes in a new Ordinance on Tuesday.

There will be a discussion on campaign finance reform to fix some bothersome issues for CCM Friedman and Weaver.

Vartan at Benik’s Auto Body Repair on San Fernando just one block east of Glendale did a fast, replacement including paint matching for the side view mirror. It was a great value. If you need to replace that side view mirror drop by. ba

Sacred cows make the best hamburgers. Abbie Hoffman, political activist

August 21 FRIDAY BUSINESS BREAKFAST
See you at Foxy’s at 7AM

Your COO4Rent

Interim Solutions to Speed Up Your Company's Success

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Vanguard is published independently by **Vanguardians, Inc.** Advocating for Accountability— Our vision is to live in a community where all people, regardless of geography, background or economic status, can enjoy accountability, integrity, effectiveness and responsiveness from our elected officials and each of the city's departments, through grass roots involvement, engagement and advocacy.



Ms Miller is on assignment

Council Reporter Laurel Miller

All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good women & men to do nothing

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You may agree or disagree with the views below. Feel free to comment on them.

From the Publisher.... FIRST AMENDMENT



Ara Najarian and John Drayman walked out of a City Council meeting rather than acknowledge their support of an activists' First Amendment rights.

At least the City Council is consistent with their disregard of the First Amendment.

The issue came up when Vanguardians provided the Vanguard News at City Hall and the Council had a discussion on 'clutter' in the peoples' house. Council in their timidity and not wanting to hurt the City Managers feelings decided to leave the issue up to him. He wrote an Administrative Procedure that said, basically, "check your First Amendment Rights at the door."

To this date, no Council member has brought this issue to the Chamber and reversed the decision of the City Manager. To this date, clutter abounds in the Peoples' House.

Remember to get your vote in...time is running out...Do you want Barry to stay on target or get out of Glendale?

Here are the rules: Send your check for \$100 to Vanguardians, POB 11202, Glendale 91226 note on your check, on the memo line, either **STAY** or **GO**. Checks must be received by August 20, 2009. The August 23 edition of Vanguard will carry the talley. No check means no vote. **BARRY ALLEN**



"If you can't drink a lobbyist's whiskey, take his money, sleep with his women and still vote against him in the morning, you don't belong in politics." And, "Money is the mothers' milk of politics." Jesse Unruh

"The American Republic will endure until the day Congress discovers that it can bribe the public with the public's money" - [Alexis de Tocqueville](#)

Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. [Albert Einstein](#)

Commentary: THE DEATH OF MERITOCRACY



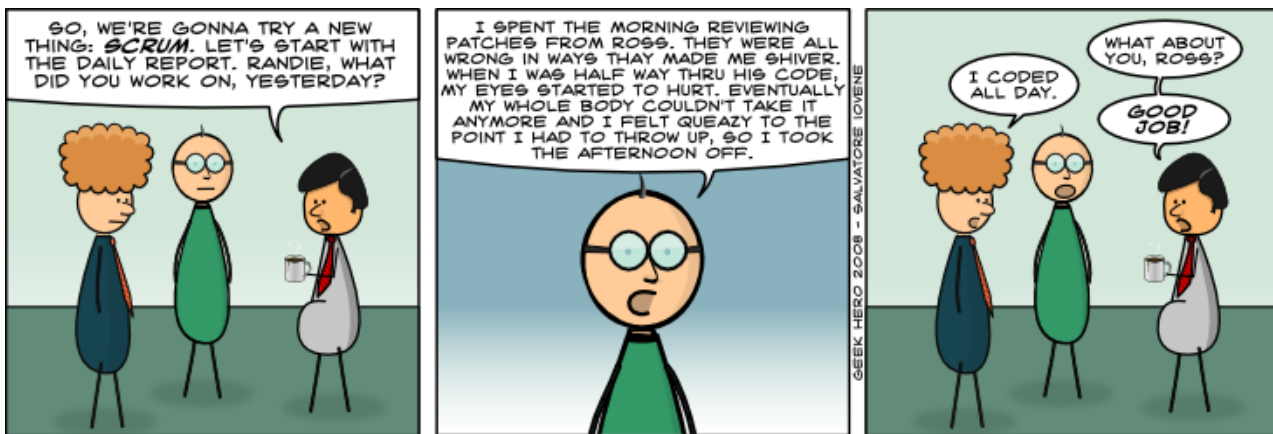
Somewhere among the 2450 city employees who got a check last year, there are probably scores who arrive to work early, are highly committed to their profession, carry the heavy load of their department, and believe in their bones on the concept of public service – That their efforts will lead to a better quality of life for the city's residents.

But side by side with these professionals, are those who work hard at working the system. Those are the ones who are always talking about their last vacation, their next vacation, and what they'll do with their next three-day weekend. These are the same ones who go from meeting to meeting wondering if someone else in another city with the same job title is getting more money than they are, and wondering how to position themselves to take the bulk of the credit on the next high-visibility project.

When I walk through the civic center grounds a couple of times per week, I often run into the same faces crossing Parcher Plaza. Often, when I sit waiting for a commission meeting I listen to the banter of city staff talking about the next cruise line they'll be taking, or the destination of their next trip to paradise, or the details of the last movie release. It doesn't matter if there is an item on the agenda discussing another rate hike to the taxpayer, or the dismal financial state of some charitable organization, or another urgent ordinance geared towards a pay "adjustment."

What strikes me is that the work behind the reports is very likely being generated by those who are not necessarily present front-and-center before a public meeting. I've seen some truly remarkable work that provided well-researched background and policy recommendations for the consideration of the city council. I've also seen reports so devoid of due-diligence that they seem only a facade to rationalize a big expenditure for the approval of

the
city



council or to make believe that the city will be diligent in controlling costs.

If meritocracy were alive and flourishing in Glendale Governance, we would see performance objectives clearly defined for each business unit, with full recognition of those employees who helped achieve them. Instead we applaud a parade of city employees who participated in a charitable function spending a few hours of their time in the limelight, got their picture in the paper, and helped management with their public relations image before the cameras.

When a project is completed on time and on budget, as were the upgrade of the soccer fields at the sports complex, we do not hear a resounding applause for those who worked behind-the-scenes to make that accomplishment such a success.

Last year, we had a 33% decline in the number of pedestrian vehicular collisions, yet that huge accomplishment has yet to be publicly recognized by the city council. But let a few employees spend the morning making pancakes, or gather kids for a photo op and the applause is effusive. Polish the trumpets take out the banners, press the uniforms, its publicity time.

Someone behind a desk right now is diligently creating the justification for critical capital improvements that the city needs while wondering if those projects will ever get off the ground. It must be disheartening to find a major project relegated to the back burner as a new concoction takes precedence arising from the latest trip to Las Vegas by one or two of the councilmen or by an opportunity to spend federal dollars.

Someone at another desk is now working to polish a presentation to make that councilman's concoction thrilling for public display, and maybe wondering if they'll get one of those secret bonuses if the project gets approved without much public scrutiny.

Somewhere along the line, a true public servant may be wondering why it is that the city now has 45% more middle managers than it did ten years ago and how it is that top managers get every other Friday off with pay. Then, as she works the long hours, she realizes that those two facts are intrinsically related.

In the give and take of public employment there are those who give and there are those who take. For the last ten years we've had too much of the latter and not enough of the former. A 50% increase in the city's payroll expense since 2000 is just one of those silent indicators, yet even that increase has not been proportionately distributed among departments.

You can't have a meritocracy without establishing measurable goals and objectives that align to a clear strategic plan. You can't recognize true merit when the goals and the evaluations are subjective and the performance bonuses secret.

My hat goes off to those city workers whose diligence and dedication keep the wheels of Glendale city government working and the city's communities safe. It is my hope that their wish for a meritocracy will reign some day in city employment.

HERBERT MOLANO

Commentary II: DON'T LET THEM BE LIKE BERNIE

How do you know what you know? How do you know that you can rely on the professional assurances that someone gives you? What lessons can we learn from thousands of people and non-profit organizations who trusted Bernie Madoff?

For the last twenty-five years, America has been going through an ominous transition of losing trust in every major institution, and we must now look warily on every professional that wants our business or our money.

Banks now offer you new and "better" accounts, until we read the charges on the statements. Dentists often see every tooth ache as a root canal. The auto club promised you the "best" rate exclusive to members. You just discovered the phone company's undeclared charges on your phone bill. And let's not go into the hidden practices of your real estate agent or your loan broker.

It seems that children need to start formal classes on "caveat emptor" every year. The mantra of "Let the buyer beware" must now be mandatory education to keep us ever aware of the con-artists surrounding us.

Can you trust your children alone with your parish priest? Can you trust your kidneys to a New York Rabbi? Even a trusting wife must now think twice when her politician-husband says he is going out for a muffin or claims he's never been abroad.

Do you have an annuity perhaps? Have you ever checked that investment advisor against the FINRA Broker-Check website? Checked your attorney against the California Bar website lately?

There have always been con-men whose charm and friendly disposition hid fine-tuned skills aimed at separating you from your money. But today, they seem to gravitate in larger numbers towards politics. Why pursue money subject to the personal scrutiny of the giver when you can pursue money that nobody is watching – Taxpayer money?

So how well do you know that the friendly local politician who claims to be your friend and supported so passionately the traffic calming bumps on your street? Do you really, really know him? Your vote has now given him 1/5 share of an 800 million city budget and he can now help call the shots on tens of millions of city contracts, or massage those participation agreements with the Redevelopment Agency money.

The recent arrest of the mayor of Hoboken on bribery charges just two weeks after his election along with dozens of other politicians is indicative of the state of local politics across the nation.

Ever wonder why major capital improvement needs of the city that have been documented and on the project queue for years suddenly get pushed to the back burner? The city cooks up a survey; find a justification, then pursues a project from a vendor known to a councilman. Find a project so complex and costly that no one outside government can determine its true cost and you found the right money vehicle for the insider.

Who knows the real cost of a seismic retrofit, a freeway overpass, or a smart electric grid? Who knows if ten change-orders or three-hundred change-orders are normal? The raw truth is that we don't really know how to gage these costs well and the insiders know that we have little idea, or won't spend the time to find out.

How can we tell there is something wrong? Look for projects that took precedence since the councilman was last elected to office. Look for the big ticket item presented in the tens of millions instead of practical easy-to-understand costs. (For example, a 33 million dollar project for an electric grid is much more difficult to grasp than a cost depicted as \$600 per household.) Look for status reports kept away from public scrutiny. Look for managers assigned to the project who can retire quickly if the project fails or has huge cost overruns. Look for an absence of measurable outcomes. Look for the recipients of hidden city bonuses.

Tax money is your money. If you let them be like Bernie, you'll find that they "madeoff" with your money and are laughing all the way to the next election. **HERBERT MOLANO**



CHRISTIAN ARBID is a Real Estate Broker and Loss Mitigator. If you have questions about Foreclosures, Short Sales, Saving Your Home, Loan Modifications, email him at christianarbid@gmail.com and your question may be answered in the next issue of Vanguard.

Total Number of Current and Active Glendale Foreclosures as of Aug. 14, 2009

are: **875**

The only way to make sure people you agree with can speak is to support the rights of people you don't agree with. [ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON](#)

TAKE ACTION – GET INVOLVED – BE INFORMED – SHARE VANGUARD – VOLUNTEER

Moral cowardice that keeps us from speaking our minds is as dangerous to this country as irresponsible talk. The right way is not always the popular and easy way. Standing for right when it is unpopular is a true test of moral character. [Margaret Chase Smith](#)

2 Shout Box ED – Letters published do not necessarily express the opinion of Vanguardians, this publication, the organization or Barry Allen. Names are used only when requested. Initials are used as there are people, believe it or not, who are concerned with retaliation or have issues before a legislative body. Letters will be published that are signed and are not hate oriented.



Barry, don't give up fighting city hall. They cannot think they won. Do you take mc or visa?" GD

About 2 months ago some person put in for a permit to operate 75 taxi cabs here in Glendale, I haven't heard anything more, and so I thought you might have heard about it? Now there is one thing about the hospitals here in Glendale. There are too many of those medical transportation vans. They have no consideration for other patients at the hospitals. They are continually parking and blocking the handicapped spaces and make the handicapped go around when they need emergency care. Dave Bryce

Carole Weling had a dialogue with GWP Director Glenn Steiger. Read the documents in their entirety by clicking here [Water Conservation](#) Thanks to Hal Weber

A letter from Nick Friesen to the City Council:
Honorable Glendale Council Members:

Tonight, 11 August 2009, at your regular Council meeting, Mr. Herbert Molano, presented data indicating that from the year 2000 to the present, payroll costs for the City Staff have increased some 50%, along with an increase in pension costs of 300%. This compares to an increase in inflation and population for the City of some 25%. This is a significant disparity deserving of comment and an explanation by someone on the Dais.

Later, during "Public Comment" Mr. Molano further suggested that the City and the public would be better served if the City Management were to utilize, and publicly report on a variety of "Metrics" detailing some simple "Quality of Life Measures", and how well the City is achieving its goals in key areas. Mr. Molano has suggested any number of relevant "Metrics". Ones in use in other like organizations. We have been told, as long as two years ago, that such "Metrics" were being developed for Glendale. Yet to my knowledge none have been disclosed in public.

As is your practice, there was "No Comment" from anyone on the Dais.

These are the sort of data, presented by concerned constituents, that begs for comment and response lest you be considered poor custodians of the City and its resources, and/or uncaring of the "Quality of Life" and your governance of Glendale. As it is, Mr. Molano and others have been ferreting out this data from official documents, and requesting explanations from you over several years now, with little or no response. Mr. Molano and other like minded persons are doing this to assure that Glendale is well governed. What are we to make of your lack of action and comment?

It is time that you address these issues, provide your data and metrics, and prove your value to Glendale and its citizens. Please comment. N. (Nick) Friesen

Did you notice how the city council conducted themselves this week? It was like a love-in of the 60's. Only thing missing were the flower children. . They patted the Fire Chief on the back for the 'great job' his department did by putting out the fire. Even the Police Chief had some nice words to say. Everything went smooth; they had nobody to protest the giveaway of city money on more paid medical premiums by the city. Nobody stepped forward on the water bonds or artificial turf issue. So as Weaver would say, since the public did not speak out last week the council members must be doing a great job. Mike Mohill was nowhere around to protest the abuse of power of Najarian and Drayman. Guess, the smoke screen put out by Najarian and Drayman scared all the serious gadflies away...Did you notice how polite they were to Molano? Council members listened with a yawn. MM

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Public Information



"Just the facts"

- 260 Contribution/month for healthcare insurance for 2+ dependents under PPO plan (GCEA)
- 1112 Cost/month City of Glendale contribution to PPO plan above (GCEA)
- 309 Contribution/month Employee Kaiser Med Insurance for 2+ Dependents (GCEA)
- 709 Cost/month City of Glendale monthly contribution to Kaiser plan above (GCEA)
- 10 Thousands of dollars in college expenses per employee the city will pay every 5 years (GCEA)
- 200 Annual Health club membership cost reimbursement to police department employees
- 20 Number of vacation days (160 hrs) after 15 years of employment (GCEA)
- 24 Number of Fridays off per year for employees working 9/80 work schedule (GCEA)
- 24 Number of Fridays off per year for managers working 9/80 work schedule (9hrs/9days)
- 24 Number of Fridays off per year for executives working 9/80 work schedule
- 12 Number of sick days that can be accumulated each year by an employee (GCEA)
- 6 Millions of dollars in compensation deferred (without tax) until retirement by city employees annually.
- 50 Percentage of city safety employees who retired on disability in the last 10 years
- 0 Amount of income tax paid by city employees who retire on disability
- 24 Number of days state employees must take without pay each year starting in August 2009

In response to a request for reports, arrests and convictions by the Vice Unit the official records provided show 4509 reports since 1985 through 2008. Of that number, 2631 were for DRUNK, 1 for gambling, According to the report there were no arrests or convictions

[Home Page of Open Government \(???\) in Glendale California](#)



Click to view the agenda [City Council](#) [Housing Authority](#) [Redevelopment Agency](#)
Meetings at City Hall (CH) are in the Council Chambers, 2nd Floor at 613 E Broadway.
Meetings at the Municipal Services Bldg. (MSB) are in room 105 at 633 E Broadway.
Meetings at the Perkins Bldg (PB) are in the Conference Room at 141 N Glendale Ave.
 Phone numbers are in area code 818 unless noted otherwise

Monday, August 17

North Glendale Community Plan Advisory Committee
 RE: Designing the Community – 5:30 pm, Montrose-Crescenta Branch Library, 2465 Honolulu Blvd. (818) 548-2140

Wednesday, August 19

Glendale Zoning Administrator's Hearing – 9:30 am, MSB (818) 548-2140
 Planning Commission – 5:00 pm, MSB (818) 548-2140

Tuesday, August 18

2:30 CH Housing Authority –(818) 548-2060;
 Redevelopment Agency -- (818) 548-2005
 6:00 pm CH City Council -- (818) 548-4844

Thursday, August 20

Arts & Cultural Commission – 2:00 pm, CH (818) 548-2000
 Design Review Board #1 – 5:00 pm, MSB (818) 548-2140

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Vanguardians

- Vanguard Friday Breakfast at Foxy's spoke to issues about Healthcare Reform and the Town Hall in Alhambra; we reviewed the GPD Vice Squad reports; Homeland Security payments to Glendale for jail services. Each week we add a few new faces and have returning warriors. Become one. This is an excellent opportunity to share opinions about quality of life issues.
- All issues of Vanguard are archived at www.vanguardians.org
- A reminder: If you see blue underlined words that is a link to more information on that article.
- Get breaking Glendale News by signing up for an RSS feed at www.vanguardians.org.
- Great opportunity for you to place your ad or link on www.vanguardians.org
- Vanguardians needs a donated car or van in running condition. Blue Book donation value
- The Vanguard editorial advisory panel reviews and often comments on each edition. Let us know by email if you would like to be considered for the advisory panel.

VANGUARDIANS needs your Continuing Financial Support

Please make checks payable to "VANGUARDIANS" Mail to: POB 11202 Glendale, CA 91226
 Your contributions are tax deductible. You will receive a receipt for income tax purposes

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the Insider

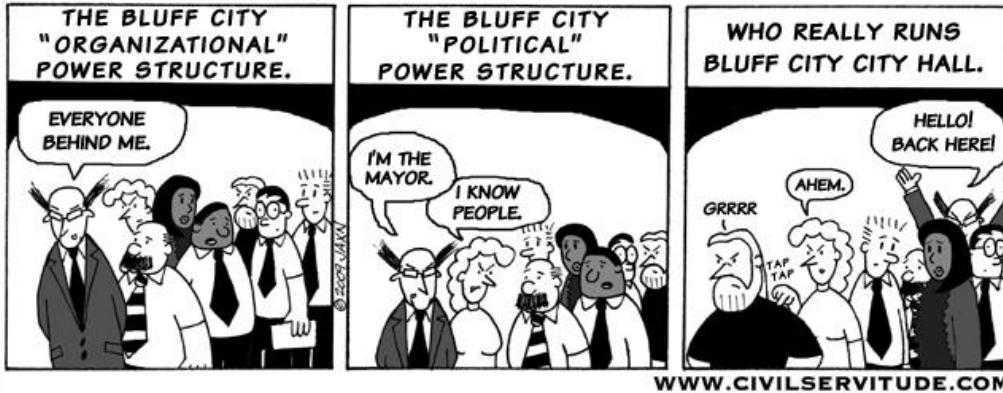
is a digest of information from city employees that care about the way the City is run. As they are concerned about retaliation, their identities are secret. Vanguard provides them the opportunity to have this forum. The comments are their own.



The City has had an Acting Deputy Building Official, even though building and safety doesn't have an authorized Deputy Building Official position, for the past 4 years. The position is held by one of the few female managers in Public Works, yet they refuse to make it permanent because she is a woman. All of the executives know of the issue, including Doyle, but refuse to do the right thing because she is not one of the "Good Old Boys".

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Humor or Not



7

News Briefs from the neighborhood

In May 2008 Vallejo, CA went bankrupt [May 7, 2008: Vallejo, California Votes for Bankruptcy] After some digging we found out in a decent sized town of 100,000 people - some 300 city workers made over \$100K; many of those over \$150K and more than 30 over \$200K. And that is just salary - we did not even scratch the surface of the gold plated benefits and pensions that many are receiving. While their private worker peers are seeing pensions go the way of the dodo bird, and left with 401k plans. Job security between the two sectors is a whole different conversation but until the taxpayer wakes up, I continue to urge you to raise your child to be a government worker. Or switch careers yourself.

We will have a massive bailout down the road in public pensions [Mar 4, 2009: Bloomberg - Hidden Pension Fiasco May Foment Another \$1 Trillion Bailout] States and cities are now literally selling off assets to pay the salaries and benefits of a very few citizens.

http://www.forexhound.com/article/Stocks/Stocks/LA_Times_Amid_Cost_Cutting_Los_Angeles_City_Pensions_Continue_to_Soar/151409

[From CalPensions: CalPERS actuary says pension costs are not sustainable](#)

The CalPERS chief actuary says pension costs are “unsustainable” and the giant public employee pension system plans to meet with stakeholders to discuss the issue. So, are the critics right? Do overly generous pensions threaten to eat up too much of state and local government budgets? A historic stock market crash wiped out a quarter of the CalPERS investment fund last fiscal year. Some experts are forecasting limited investment earnings in the years ahead, making it difficult to replace the losses.

Now “sustainability,” a term used in environmental discussions, has become a common label for a big question about public employee pensions: Will the current level of benefits be affordable in the future? The question of pension sustainability emerged as a hot topic during a seminar in Sacramento last week sponsored by the Public Retirement Journal. Ron Seeling, the CalPERS chief actuary, described the process used to “smooth” the rate increases that will be imposed on the 1,500 local government agencies in CalPERS in 2011 in the wake of the stock market crash. Instead of a rate increase of 4 to 20 percent of pay, the smoothing will reduce the rate hike to a more manageable 0.5 to 2 percent of pay. “I don’t want to sugarcoat anything,” Seeling said as he neared the end of his comments. “We are facing decades without significant turnarounds in assets, decades of — what I, my personal words, nobody else’s — unsustainable pension costs of between 25 percent of pay for a miscellaneous plan and 40 to 50 percent of pay for a safety plan (police and firefighters) ... unsustainable pension costs. We’ve got to find some other solutions.”

You can’t make this stuff up. A summer lemonade stand to help eight-year-old Daniela Earnest earn a trip to Disneyland was shut down by a code enforcement officer who claimed there is no wiggle room in a city ordinance. Citing that the lemonade stand requires proper license, the code enforcement officer told the Visalia Times-Delta, “Everybody needs to be in compliance.” [Read more.](#)

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