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BASTA Leadership Says Without Full Transparency, All Changes in City Governance Should Wait Until A New Council is Elected

A lack of a legitimate and functioning city council and an LA Times article and quick retraction from Interim City Manager only add to public confusion and incoherent transparency process at City Hall.

BASTA is calling on interim City Manager Pedro Carrillo and current city council members not move forward with plans to balance the City of Bell's budget. The tough decisions should be left up to the new council, but the current administration should instead work with the community to thoroughly understand the city's finances. In particular, Mr. Carrillo should explain how he arrived at the current budget numbers and allow the community be part of the action team that creates a plan to balance the budget.

"Right now the community is more than a little confused with all the information, real or imagined, about Carrillo's plans to balance the budget. One day the paper says one thing the next day he says it's not true. Full transparency means full communications with Bell residents. Mr. Carrillo needs to understand that if it's not clear and transparent whatever he has planned is tainted by backroom secrecy," said BASTA representative Susana Lopez.

Lopez is referring to an article published in the LA Times on Thursday that appeared online on Wednesday, asserting that Carrillo was about to make sweeping cuts in services provided to Bell residents including cuts to the Bell police department and Parks and Recreation services. Mr. Carrillo distributed a letter calling for a retraction from the Times, they did not modify their article.

"Taking into account basic practices of good governance, not to mention the extraordinary circumstances of Bell, we believe Mr. Carrillo needs to allow the next city council and next city administration decide and should instead focus on providing a full accounting of the budget in a manner that is easy for the community to understand so that they can be better prepared to make decisions about a balancing plan. We can't even get him and the city attorney to respond to a simple inquiry on legal fees and now he wants to balance the budget without full transparency —that's unacceptable!" concluded BASTA representative Alicia Romero.

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Romero is referring to a letter sent from BASTA to city attorney Jaime Casso on November 3, 2010 asking him to detail how much his firm Meyers Nave has charged the City of Bell since they became the interim City Attorneys. To date BASTA has not received a response.

BASTA is calling on Mr. Carrillo to convene a meeting with community representatives of BASTA, The Bell Resident Club, the Bell Business Association, the Bell Police Officers' Association and city department heads. The meeting should be scheduled immediately and convened early next week.

All **BASTA** representatives are unpaid volunteers. **BASTA** remains committed to financial transparency and believes is it crucial to leave the ugly, divisive politics of the Rizzo regime behind. That only worked to divide us, not make us a strong, vibrant city capable of local control. We invite anyone who has a difference of opinion with us to sit down with us and discuss it. We remain committed to doing all in our power to **Take Back Bell.**

BASTA welcomes our community and others interested in reviewing our demands for transparency to visit our website at **basta4bell.com**

BASTA is a coalition of Bell residents, the Bell Police Officer's Association and AFSCME Council 36 who are committed to restoring ethical and honest governance to the City of Bell.

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