



CITY OF HALF MOON BAY

PUBLIC SAFETY SUBCOMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING

MEETING DATE & TIME

Wednesday, September 23, 2020 – 12:00 PM

Meeting Location:

In accordance with Governor Newsom’s Executive Order No-29-20, this will be a teleconference meeting without a physical location to help stop the spread of COVID-19. This meeting will be conducted entirely by remote participation, in compliance with the Governor’s Executive Order N-29-20 allowing for deviation of teleconference rules required by the Ralph M. Brown Act.

This meeting will be conducted via Zoom Webinar. Members of the public are welcome to login into the webinar as Attendees. During any public comment portions, attendees may use the “raise your hand” feature and will be called upon and unmuted when it is their turn to speak. The meeting will also be streamed on Channel 27. Please click to join the webinar: <https://zoom.us/j/91629097451> or join by phone at 669-900-9128, using Webinar ID 916-2909-7451.

A. CALL TO ORDER

B. REVIEW OF LETTER TO ATTORNEY GENERAL REGARDING SHOOTING OF SANDRA HARMON

C. ADJOURN

Meeting facilities are accessible to people with disabilities. If you require special assistance to participate in the meeting, or agendas prepared in an appropriate alternative format, please notify the City Clerk’s office at (650) 726-8271 at least 6 hours prior to the meeting.



September 23, 2020

Via E-mail Delivery

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
Attorney General of California
Office of the Attorney General
1300 I Street
Sacramento, California 95814-2912
c/o Supervising Deputy Attorney General Joyce Blair (Joyce.Blair@doj.ca.gov)

Re: Request to Conduct Review/Independent Investigation of Officer-involved Shooting of Sandra Harmon

Dear Mr. Becerra:

The City of Half Moon Bay is requesting that your office review and as appropriate conduct an independent criminal investigation into the shooting death of 56-year-old Sandra Harmon. Ms. Harmon was shot and killed on May 5, 2020, by deputies of the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office in downtown Half Moon Bay. The San Mateo County District Attorney's Office investigated the incident and issued a corresponding report, which concluded that the deputies' actions were lawful.

District Attorney Wagstaffe kindly presented the results of his investigation at the September 15, 2020 City Council meeting. At that meeting, members of the community expressed concerns about the testimony given by the deputies and the report's conclusion that the deputies' use of deadly force was warranted. Accordingly, the City Council voted unanimously on September 15, 2020 to seek review and as appropriate a full investigation of the incident by your office. This letter is being transmitted along with public comment received at the September 15, 2020 City Council meeting and September 23, 2020 Public Safety Subcommittee meeting.

On the evening of the shooting, the two deputies involved responded to a 911 call regarding a woman, later identified as Ms. Harmon, walking through downtown Half Moon Bay carrying a shotgun and a bottle of alcohol. After interviewing the witness who made the 911 call, one deputy tracked Ms. Harmon to a parked RV in a nearby parking lot. According to the District Attorney's report, Ms. Harmon initially exited the RV unarmed, but moments later



reentered and reemerged with the shotgun. The deputy took cover behind his vehicle, at which point Ms. Harmon allegedly fired her shotgun in his direction. Over the course of the next minute, the deputy fired 11 rounds at Ms. Harmon, in two separate “volleys.” In the meantime, the second deputy arrived on the scene, responding to the first deputy’s call for assistance. The second deputy fired 3 additional rounds at Ms. Harmon, concurrent with the first deputy’s second “volley.” Although the second deputy on the scene and the paramedics attempted to resuscitate her, Ms. Harmon was pronounced dead on the way to the hospital.

Body camera data of the entire incident, including the initial confrontation of Ms. Harmon, is not available. Without footage from his camera, community members have noted challenges with corroborating the deputy’s version of the incident. Public comments to Council also asked why the two deputies could not subdue Ms. Harmon without resorting to deadly force. See Enclosures.

These open questions make it difficult for the Half Moon Bay community to heal from this tragic event. And as you might imagine, these concerns are especially relevant and pressing in light of the current nation-wide public demand for police accountability and scrutiny of the use of excessive force. The City thus seeks review by your office to ensure that all facts are considered.

This letter was reviewed and approved on September 23, 2020 by the City Council Public Safety Subcommittee. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Bob Nisbet, City Manager (bnisbet@hmbcity.com) or Catherine Engberg, City Attorney (cengberg@hmbcity.com) for additional information.

Sincerely,

Bob Nisbet, City Manager

Catherine C. Engberg, City Attorney

Enclosures:

Public comment

- September 15, 2020 Special Meeting of the Half Moon Bay City Council
- September 23, 2020 Public Safety City Council Subcommittee Meeting