

# Dear Editor – Just the Facts

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Dear Editor,

The Culver City Police Officers' Association (CCPOA) Board of Directors issued an open letter, entitled "CCPOA sends an open letter to City Council in response to change in meeting agenda." CCPOA wants to know why "Approval of a Purchase Order ... for one ... BearCAT rescue vehicle ... \$450,000" was "removed" from the City Council's August 26, 2019 Agenda. In this concerned-resident's opinion, the City Council declined to authorize the purchase of a pig-in-a-poke.

Culver City residents recognize and appreciate services provided by CCPD. However, that does not mean that residents unthinkingly support the purchases of every toy CCPD wants in its arsenal. Taxpayers' money is tight, and there are alternatives competing for it.

First: CCPOA does not explain how "Approval of a Purchase Order ... for one ... BearCAT rescue vehicle ... \$450,000" appeared on the City Council's "Consent Calendar," i.e., "items are considered to be routine in nature." After the recent spy-in-the sky controversy, who would consider this request for further militarization as "routine"?

Why does CCPOA repeatedly describes the beast as a "rescue vehicle," when it is a "Ballistic Engineered Armored Response Counter Attack Truck (BearCAT)... an armored personnel carrier"? Why did CCPD not provide a copy of the "Purchase Order" with the agenda item? Does the BearCAT "Purchase Order" involve a souped-up model equipped with twin-50-caliber-machine guns, a flame thrower and/or a grenade launcher? Where is the transparency?

Second: CCPOA's case of an alleged need for the beast is problematic. Evidently, in January 2019, CCPD asked Los Angeles County Sheriff's SWAT for assistance, and LASD showed up with a BearCAT. CCPOA fails to state whether the BearCAT was needed or employed. We can assume it was neither needed nor employed.

Third: CCPOA ignores whether there are alternatives. Would more training or other equipment serve the same purpose? In May 2019, Los Angeles Police Department (Pacific Division) aided CCPD. LAPD showed up with a BearCAT, but while it was parked on the roadside, LAPD decided to use old-fashion tear gas.

Fourth: If the request is denied, what would befall Culver City? CCPOA members will still wear bullet-proof vests and will rely upon LASD or LAPD SWAT for backup. The relationship has worked well in the past.

To get answers to the aforesaid basic questions, I have issued a formal Public Records Act request to Culver City. The response(s) should be interesting.

CCPOA says it is insulted by the City Council. So be it. As a longstanding resident and taxpayer, I am insulted that CCPOA relies on fear-mongering rhetoric. Remember what Sargent Joe Friday of Dragnet said, "Just the facts, ma'am." CCPOA, only tell us the facts.

Les Greenberg, Esquire

*Editor's Note – Culver City Crossroads declined to publish the letter referenced here from the POA. It was a journalistic decision in regards to the ethics of using a 'leak' as well as an editorial decision not to use tabloid tactics to foster sensationalism.*