



SAN BRUNO CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
June 23, 2026

Public Comment(s)

From: [Dennis Revell](#)
To: [Rico Medina](#); [Michael Salazar](#); [Sandy Alvarez](#); [Tom Hamilton](#); [Marty Medina](#)
Cc: [City Manager](#); [Ryan Johansen](#); [Ari Delay](#); [Nick Pegueros](#); [Trisha Ortiz](#); [Lupita Huerta](#); [CityAttorney](#); [John Castilone](#); [Milton Broussard](#); [Amy Freeman](#)
Subject: June 23, 2026, Study Session – Proposed Safe and Sane Fireworks Ballot Measure
Date: Sunday, June 21, 2026 1:33:14 PM
Attachments: [2025 Firework Billing Summary \(00062654xB1573\).PDF](#)
[00062653.DOCX](#)
Importance: High



Public Relations & Public Affairs

June 21, 2026

The Honorable Mayor Rico E. Medina and
Members of the San Bruno City Council
City of San Bruno
567 El Camino Real
San Bruno, CA 94066

Re: City Council Special Meeting
Date: Tuesday, June 23, 2026
Time: 5:30 pm
Agenda Item: STUDY SESSION
ITEM NO: 4a.
2026 Ballot Measures: Revenue Measures Options, Height Ordinance (ord. No. 1284) and Safe and Sane Fireworks Ban

Our Client: American Promotional Events, Inc. (dba TNT Fireworks)

Dear Mayor Medina and Members of the City Council:

Since 1989, Revell Communications has served as the public affairs representative for American Promotional Events, Inc. (TNT Fireworks), California's largest distributor of State Fire Marshal-Approved Safe and Sane Fireworks. During that time, we have worked with hundreds of California cities and counties, state agencies, nonprofit organizations, fire departments, law enforcement agencies, and elected officials on issues relating to fireworks safety, enforcement, public education, and illegal fireworks interdiction.

As the Council considers whether to direct staff to place a Safe and Sane Fireworks Ban measure on the November 2026 ballot, we respectfully request that you first consider the history of this issue in San Bruno and several significant factual and policy questions that remain unanswered.

In 2024, the City, the nonprofit permittees, and TNT Fireworks engaged in extensive discussions

concerning the City's fireworks cost recovery program. At that time, questions were raised regarding whether certain costs being charged to the nonprofit organizations were reasonably related to the sale and use of State Fire Marshal-Approved Fireworks and whether those costs satisfied the legal standards imposed by Proposition 26, Sinclair Paint Company v. State Board of Equalization, Sheetz v. County of El Dorado, and California Health and Safety Code Section 12635.5 (AB 1403 which became law on 1/1/2024).

These discussions were constructive and ultimately resulted in the City Council's adoption of Resolution No. 2024-37 establishing a cap on permittee cost recovery fees equal to seven percent (7%) of gross sales for the 2023 and 2024 Independence Day holidays. The nonprofits appreciated the Council's willingness to address concerns regarding transparency, proportionality, and fairness.

For that reason, we were surprised to read portions of the June 23, 2026, staff report which appear to suggest that the fireworks program now represents a significant net fiscal burden on the City and therefore justifies consideration of a ballot measure banning the sale of Safe and Sane fireworks.

Respectfully, we do not believe the record before the Council currently supports that conclusion.

First, there appears to be a significant discrepancy between the revenues described in the staff report and the City's own billing records.

The staff report states that following adoption of the cap, the City collected an average of approximately \$1,045 in fees for FY 2025-26. However, the attached billing reconciliation spreadsheet provided by the City to participating nonprofit organizations appears to reflect total permittee payments and obligations of **\$44,568**, consisting of prepaid Fireworks Stand Safety Clearance fees of \$13,864, prepaid nonrefundable applications fees of \$1,140 and post-Fourth of July billings/payments to/by the twelve San Bruno nonprofits of \$29,564.

We respectfully request clarification of these figures before any policy conclusions are drawn concerning the program's fiscal impact.

Second, the City has not demonstrated what portion of its reported fireworks-related expenditures are actually attributable to State Fire Marshal-Approved, Safe and Sane Fireworks and what portion are attributable to illegal aerial fireworks and explosives activity.

This distinction is critical.

For several years, San Bruno has experienced the same growing illegal aerial fireworks and explosives challenges faced by communities throughout California. Indeed, the City's own reports and enforcement activities recognize that dangerous illegal fireworks remain a substantial public safety concern independent of the legal, State Fire Marshal-Approved, Safe and Sane Fireworks program.

The fundamental question raised during the 2024 discussions remains unanswered:

If the sale and use of Safe and Sane Fireworks were prohibited tomorrow, which of the City's identified enforcement, fire prevention, public education, cleanup, and administrative costs would actually disappear and which would remain due to ongoing illegal aerial fireworks and explosives activity?

Without that analysis, it is impossible to determine whether the fireworks program is truly imposing a net fiscal burden on the City.

Third, the staff report does not appear to contain an analysis demonstrating how the costs allocated to permittees satisfy the standards of nexus, proportionality, and reasonableness reflected in Proposition 26, Sinclair Paint, Sheetz v. County of El Dorado, and California Health and Safety Code Section 12635.5.

We are not suggesting the City has violated any of these authorities.

Rather, we are respectfully observing that the report before the Council does not appear to contain the analysis necessary to demonstrate compliance with those standards or to support the conclusion that permittees are responsible for the entirety of the reported expenditures.

Before asking voters to eliminate a longstanding fundraising program relied upon by San Bruno youth organizations, veterans groups, athletic programs, service clubs, and other nonprofits, we respectfully submit that these questions deserve a more complete public examination.

Equally important, the Council should carefully consider whether a ban on State Fire Marshal-Approved, Safe and Sane Fireworks would meaningfully address the underlying public safety problem.

The principal fireworks challenge facing California today is not the regulated sale of State Fire Marshal-Approved, Safe and Sane Fireworks through licensed nonprofit organizations. Rather, it is the continuing importation, storage, distribution, and use of illegal aerial fireworks and explosives on a massive scale.

Recent criminal investigations involving a large-scale illegal aerial fireworks and explosives trafficking operation, including enforcement actions involving over 600,000 pounds of illegal aerial fireworks and explosives materials imported into California by one criminal enterprise alone, demonstrate that local jurisdictions are confronting a statewide supply-chain problem that no individual city can solve on its own.

(For reference: See the attached summary of the 38-page criminal indictment issued by a Yolo County Criminal Grand jury and the recording of the Yolo County District Attorney's press conference at:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/r6sq4lm4ckcypdwwxk9df/Yolo-DA-Announces-Indictment-April-26-00061512xB1573.MP4?rlkey=sn27lydo1s4xpwinky11m6ogy&st=7u7ziruy&dl=0>)

Accordingly, we respectfully suggest that the Council consider a more constructive alternative.

Rather than placing a ban measure on the ballot at this time, the Council could:

- Direct staff to reconcile and publicly explain the City's fireworks revenue and expenditure figures.
- Identify which costs are attributable to legal, State Fire Marshal-Approved, Safe and Sane Fireworks and which are attributable to illegal aerial fireworks and explosives activity.
- Evaluate additional enforcement tools targeted at illegal fireworks violators, including improvements to the City's Fireworks Social Host Ordinance, citing on a "per device" basis and enhanced cost recovery from violators.
- Consider adopting a resolution or legislative platform supporting stronger state and federal enforcement efforts, including the State conducting enhanced port monitoring, coordinated intelligence sharing with local government, and interstate cooperation being amended into SB 828 (Cabaldon-D), the post Esparto Tragedy legislation intended to strengthen California's

response to illegal aerial fireworks and explosives trafficking. This bill is set to be heard on July 1, 2026, in the Assembly Local Government Committee.

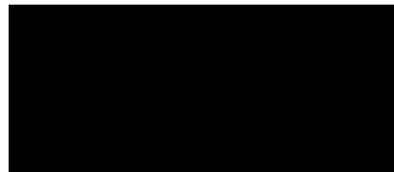
The nonprofits participating in San Bruno's Safe and Sane Fireworks program have never shied away from their responsibility to support public safety. For decades they have helped fund education, prevention, and enforcement efforts while simultaneously raising critical funds for organizations that serve San Bruno residents every day.

Before asking voters to eliminate that community partnership, we respectfully urge the Council to ensure that the financial, legal, and public policy foundations for such a decision are complete, transparent, and fully supported by the evidence.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

REVELL COMMUNICATIONS



Dennis C. Revell
President/CEO

Office - [Redacted]
Cell - [Redacted]

Cc: San Bruno Nonprofits
Alex McIntyre
Lupita Huerta
Nick Pegueros
Trisha Ortiz
TNT Fireworks
Phantom Fireworks

City of San Bruno
 2025 Fireworks Permit Cost Recovery Calculations
 Approved by City Council on 6/10/25

Organization	Non-refundable Application Fee*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
		2025 Cost Recovery Calculation				2025 Billing Reconciliation			
		A	$B = (A / \$710,956)$	$C = (B * \$99,153)$	$D = (A * 0.07)$	E	F	$G = (E + F)$	$H = (G - D)$
2025 Gross Sales	% of 2025 Gross Sales	Full Cost Recovery Allocated Costs	Cost Recovery Capped at 7% of Gross Sales	2025 Prepaid Fireworks stand safety clearance fee	Additional Payments for 2025 Holiday	Total amount paid	Due To/ (From) City for 2025 Holiday		
American Legion Post 409	\$ 95.00	\$ 48,115	7.76%	\$ -	\$ 3,368	\$ 1,733	\$ 1,733	\$ 1,635	
Booster's 71	95.00	30,448	4.91%	-	2,131	1,733	1,733	398	
Camp Saint Andrews	95.00	74,559	12.02%	-	5,219	1,733	1,733	3,486	
Capuchino High School Sports Boosters	95.00	38,827	6.26%	-	2,718	-	-	2,718	
Parents of Boosters #72	95.00	43,243	6.97%	-	3,027	1,733	1,733	1,294	
Parents of Pack 290	95.00	24,198	3.90%	-	1,694	1,733	1,733	(39)	
San Bruno Girls Softball	95.00	87,620	14.12%	-	6,133	1,733	1,733	4,400	
San Bruno Lions	95.00	43,802	7.06%	-	3,066	-	-	3,066	
San Bruno Police Association	95.00	81,095	13.07%	-	5,677	1,733	1,733	3,944	
San Bruno Rotary	95.00	62,442	10.06%	-	4,371	-	-	4,371	
San Bruno Soccer	95.00	32,700	5.27%	\$ -	2,289	-	-	2,289	
San Bruno Youth Baseball	95.00	53,361	8.60%	\$ -	3,735	1,733	1,733	2,002	
Total 12 Organizations	\$ 1,140.00	\$ 620,410	100.00%	\$ -	\$ 43,428	\$ 13,864	\$ -	\$ 13,864	\$ 29,564

2025 City Expenses:

	2025
Police Department	36,349
Fire Department	13,725.00
Community Services Department	5,154.00
Public Works	6,796.00
Additional Costs	3,714.00
Grand total	65,738.00

Summary of Yolo County Criminal Grand Jury Indictment Esparto Fireworks Explosion – July 1, 2025

1. Defendants

The indictment charges **seven primary individuals**:

- Kenneth Kin Chee
- Gary Y. Chan Jr.
- Jack Y. Lee
- Douglas Michael Tollefsen
- Craig Allen Cutright
- Ronald John Botelho III
- Samuel Elmo Machado

2. Core Allegation

The Grand Jury alleges a **long-running, coordinated criminal enterprise** involving:

- Illegal importation, storage, manufacture, and sale of explosives
- Misrepresentation of operations as lawful fireworks activities
- Use of rural properties in **Esparto (Yolo County)** as a hub for illegal activity

This enterprise culminated in the **July 1, 2025 explosion and fire (Oakdale Fire)** that resulted in **multiple deaths**.

3. Homicide Charges (Most Serious)

- **7 separate murder counts** (Counts 1–7)
- Each tied to individual victims killed in the explosion
- Allegation: deaths occurred during the commission of a felony (felony murder doctrine)

👉 Key point:

The prosecution is **not alleging accidental deaths**, but **criminal liability tied to illegal explosive activity**.

4. Conspiracy & Organized Criminal Activity

Multiple counts allege a **structured conspiracy dating back to ~2009**:

Key elements:

- Creation of businesses such as:
 - *Devastating Pyrotechnics*
 - *Devastating Pyro Displays*
- Use of **federal explosives licenses (FELs)**—sometimes in others' names
- Systematic effort to:
 - Evade regulations
 - Conceal true operations
 - Expand storage and distribution capacity

👉 This is framed as a **deliberate, coordinated enterprise—not isolated misconduct**.

5. Illegal Explosives Operation

The indictment repeatedly emphasizes:

{00062653.DOCX; 1}

Massive Scale

- Over **11 million pounds** of materials imported into California (2015–2025)
- Over **1 million pounds present on-site** at time of explosion
- This was not a small or informal operation. The indictment describes a large-scale, commercial enterprise that developed and distributed multiple branded product lines of illegal explosive fireworks.

These included:

- **“Bean Day Ho” fireworks** — associated with **Kenneth Kin Chee**
- **“For the Streets” / “FTS”** — associated with **Douglas Michael Tollefsen**
- **“Big Bully” fireworks** — associated with **Ronald John Botelho III**
- **“Double OG” fireworks** — associated with **Craig Allen Cutright**

Types of Materials

- Explosives disguised as fireworks
- Components used to manufacture explosives (e.g., potassium perchlorate)

Storage Methods

- Shipping containers (“storage containers”)
- Structures like the “Yellow Shop”
- Rural properties not compliant with safety regulations

👉 Key point:

This was **industrial-scale illegal explosives handling**, far beyond consumer or regulated fireworks.

6. Fraud, Deception, and Regulatory Evasion

The defendants are accused of systematically misleading authorities:

- **False statements to:**
 - Local officials
 - State regulators
 - Federal agencies (ATF)
- **Fictitious business filings**
- **Backdated or fabricated lease agreements**
- Misrepresentation of facilities as:
 - “Agricultural buildings”
 - Legal fireworks storage sites

👉 This shows intentional circumvention of regulatory systems.

7. Licensing Abuse

- Use of legitimate federal explosives licenses (**FELs**) in improper ways
- Licenses transferred or used under other individuals’ names
- ATF denial of Chee’s license (2009) did not stop operations

👉 Important distinction:

The indictment suggests **abuse of licensing**, not compliance with it.

8. Additional Criminal Counts

Beyond murder and conspiracy, the indictment includes:

Explosives & Weapons

{00062653.DOCX; 1}

- Possession of explosives
- Possession of materials to make explosives
- Transportation of explosives
- Possession of destructive devices
- Possession of assault weapons

Fire & Public Safety

- **Unlawfully causing a fire** (Oakdale Fire)

Child Endangerment

- Exposure of a minor to dangerous explosive materials

Animal Cruelty

- Injury/killing of animals in connection with incident

Financial Crimes

- Tax fraud (2023 & 2024)
- Insurance fraud
- Workers' compensation fraud

Workplace Violations

- Failure to disclose dangerous conditions to employees

9. Physical Site & Operations

The primary operational hub:

- Properties in **Esparto, CA (Yolo County)**
- Key features:
 - Storage containers
 - Warehouses
 - “Yellow Shop”
- Used for:
 - Storage
 - Assembly
 - Distribution of explosive materials

10. Narrative the Prosecution is Building

The indictment presents a very clear theory:

A **multi-year illegal explosives enterprise**, disguised as a fireworks operation, knowingly violated laws, misled regulators, and created dangerous conditions that ultimately **caused a deadly explosion and fire**.

Key Takeaways

1. This is NOT a “fireworks case”

The conduct described involves:

- Illegal explosives
- Industrial-scale materials
- Criminal conspiracy

👉 This is fundamentally different from **state-approved consumer fireworks operations**.

2. Strong Evidence of Illegal Supply Chain

The indictment highlights:

{00062653.DOCX; 1}

- Cross-border importation
- Mislabeling of explosives as fireworks
- Use of shell entities and licensing loopholes

👉 Reinforces the argument:

Illegal fireworks/explosives networks are sophisticated and organized.

3. Regulatory Evasion is Central

Repeated emphasis on:

- False filings
- Misuse of licenses
- Concealment of activities

👉 Supports TNT's position that:

The problem is enforcement and illegal actors—not legal fireworks.

4. Scale and Severity Matter

- Millions of pounds of material
- Multiple fatalities
- Extensive criminal conduct

👉 This is **orders of magnitude beyond legal retail fireworks activity.**

5. Policy Implication

The indictment strongly supports:

- Need for **targeted enforcement against illegal explosives networks**
- Differentiation between:
 - Licensed, regulated fireworks
 - Criminal explosive operations

From: [Claudia Quinn](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: Please include in City Council meeting public comments 6/23/26
Date: Monday, June 22, 2026 3:32:00 PM

I urge the Council to vote **to bring the issue of Sale of Safe and Sane Fireworks to the public and place on the November ballot.**

One council member recently stated that San Bruno is "rare" in still allowing the sale of Safe and Sane fireworks. I would argue that perhaps we are simply one of the last communities to fully recognize the impact these sales—and the subsequent use of fireworks—have on our residents. Many neighboring cities have found ways to operate without the revenue generated from fireworks sales.

I also question the rationale that these sales benefit youth organizations. The children themselves cannot participate in the sales, yet their organizations receive the proceeds. There are many traditional fundraising activities that actively engage young people and teach responsibility, teamwork, and community involvement: car washes, bake sales, candy sales, calendars, community events, and other volunteer-driven efforts. These activities allow youth to contribute directly toward their goals rather than relying solely on adults to raise funds on their behalf.

While Safe and Sane fireworks may be legal, the reality is that their widespread use creates a virtual smokescreen for illegal fireworks. Once the permitted fireworks begin, enforcement of illegal fireworks becomes extremely difficult, and our neighborhoods are subjected to hours of noise, explosions, and disruption.

My family experiences this firsthand every year. We have a rescue dog that survived the dog meat trade in Korea and remains severely traumatized by loud explosions. When the fireworks begin, he literally tries to climb the walls in panic. We have worked with veterinarians and tried medications over the years, but nothing has helped. Every Fourth of July, we are forced to isolate ourselves in a single room, close the windows, and attempt to drown out the noise. It feels unfair that one person's entertainment can have such a profound impact on the peace and well-being of their neighbors.

Beyond pets, we should also consider veterans, individuals living with PTSD, young children, and others who experience significant distress during these celebrations. We cannot ignore the very real risks of fires, injuries, and property damage that accompany fireworks use, especially during increasingly dry and dangerous fire seasons.

I do not oppose celebration. In fact, I would support exploring alternatives such as designated public displays or community events where fireworks could be enjoyed in a safer, more controlled environment with reasonable rules and oversight.

At the very least, I believe this issue deserves to be brought before the voters once again. The community should have the opportunity to weigh the benefits against the costs and decide whether the continued sale of fireworks truly reflects San Bruno's values and priorities. Thank you.

Claudia Quinn
San Bruno

From: [Tim OBrien](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: Fireworks in San Bruno
Date: Tuesday, June 23, 2026 7:12:48 PM

Hello City Clerk

Please pass on this message that I oppose the sale of fireworks in San Bruno and that it should be put on the ballot in November 2026 for the people to decide .

Thank you
Tim O'Brien
324 Hazel Ave
Sent from my iPhone