**City of Stockton Press Conference**

**February 4, 2015, 2p**

**Statement: City Attorney John Luebberke**

It is very common, when a claim or lawsuit is filed, for a claimant's attorney to come forward with his own opinion and interpretations of the facts.

In the course of processing this claim or defending a lawsuit, the City's attorneys will certainly differ with many of the interpretations and characterizations made today by the claimant's attorney.

We cannot, however, engage in a public debate with a claimant's attorney on the validity of the claim or the accuracy of its allegations.

The Police Chief has requested a thorough, independent investigation of every aspect of our response to this robbery and to any related crimes. We will wait for the results of this investigation before reaching any conclusion.

The City is self-insured for amounts up to $1 million. When a claim or lawsuit seeks an amount in excess of this, the City's provider of risk coverage becomes a key player in any discussions or settlement negotiations.

We have participated in a mediation session with the claimant's attorney, and we will continue to follow the claims and litigation procedure in hopes of resolving this claim in a way that is acceptable to all parties involved.

We understand that after a critical event, our actions and response are viewed critically. Aided by hindsight, opinions are offered regarding what we should have done differently, and conclusions are drawn about what would have happened if different actions were taken. Police departments accept this as part of their job.

Nevertheless, we must dispute some of the suggestions made today.  It’s clear that the suspects had at least one hostage when they first appeared outside the bank. To suggest that officers should have hidden, and allowed the suspects to leave with their hostage is not reasonable, in our view. Similarly, we do not agree with the characterizations made regarding the investigation of a previous robbery at the bank. We believe the facts regarding this investigation will differ in important ways from the descriptions offered today.

What is clear in this case is that officers faced suspects who were intent on violence, firing hundreds of rounds from an automatic weapon and showing every potential for taking their rampage to any number of locations, including schools or private homes.

The officers acted to stop this threat, and did so with bravery. That the pursuit ended with the tragic death of an innocent hostage is profoundly sad.