From:	Susan Stubblefield
To:	Grp. City Council and City Web Site
Subject:	City Budget Proposal
Date:	Sunday, August 2, 2020 5:56:20 PM

Dear City Council members,

I am writing to address the current City Budget proposal. The health and well-being of Missoula residents has always been a core value in our community. But, the proposed annual budget does not adequately reflect or support those values.

I am a retired senior renting an apartment in Missoula. I first moved here in 1971 and have rented for many years. Currently I pay almost 40% of my monthly income to rent even though my landlord gives me a good deal in terms of today's market. I am one of 50% of Missoula renters who are rent burdened. Last year, there were over 1700 people waiting for Section 8 housing in Missoula. But, no new units have been built in the last 2 years. Many Missoula residents can no longer afford the city we have supported and loved.

While I understand that the police department needs money for training and some upgrades, I am opposed to funding that supports the militarization of our police force. And, why is there such a huge disparity between proposed funding for the police department ($19 million) and funding for affordable housing and community development ($2.2 million)?

I've heard that the real test of democracy is how its most vulnerable members are supported. And, democracy begins locally. Missoula residents desperately need more funding support for housing (affordable, emergency and transitional) as well as care services for mental health and substance abuse treatment centers. The surge in mental health and substance abuse is only made worse by the racial and economic inequities in our stratified society (nationally and locally) plus the current pandemic.

I ask the City Council to take a good, hard look at the proposed budget allocations and bring the budget back into balance. Please consider ALL Missoula residents in the final annual budget. All Missoulians need and deserve your support.

Thank you,

Susan Stubblefield
August 2, 2020