From: John Bohyer
To: John Engen
Cc: Grp. City Council and City Web Site
Subject: Missoula Police Department Support
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 6:51:29 AM

Dear Mayor Engen:

I have appreciated your positive public responses to date regarding the civil rights protests in Missoula as well as your support for the Missoula Police Department. Much has been said and written in the past month or so regarding policing generally and particularly to what extent public funds should be directed toward police departments as opposed to other endeavors.

I write to offer my complete support to the Missoula Police Department, its administration, detectives and the officers who drive, bike and walk the streets of Missoula each day. I appreciate and ask for your continued and unwavering support too. I ask the same from the Missoula City Council. Every day the men and women in our police department are devoting their professional lives to public service for all of us, often in the face of extreme danger. They need and deserve strong public support, training and education to better do their jobs. Removing their funding, however, would be disastrous all round.

To the extent that the current "defund police" movement is publicly geared toward a discussion of how to better permit police officers to be police officers—as opposed to social workers, EMTs, marriage counselors, and more—I am all about it! When non-police functions can be shifted to other professionals who can deal with social and medical issues, and police officers can instead focus on their law enforcement duties, that is a win-win situation. To the extent police officers can obtain better education, training, including increased understanding of how racism can and does affect minority and marginalized members of our community, that too is a win-win situation.

However, some seem to believe that "defunding police" should mean elimination or financial crippling of the police department. Such an effort is misguided and it should be discussed openly. Unfortunately, some people out of desperation, malice or mental illness will resort to their basest instincts and commit crime. The policemen and policewomen of Missoula and elsewhere are present to protect us all from such situations and people. They deserve our unwavering support, including financial support, continued education, and training that will make them better at their jobs.

Please continue your public support for the department, its officers and administration. They need you. Kind regards as always.

John E. Bohyer