From:	DeAnna Bublitz
To:	Grp. City Council and City Web Site
Subject:	Response to proposed budget
Date:	Saturday, July 25, 2020 12:54:16 PM

Dear Mayor Engen, City Council, and all other relevant committee members,

I am a resident and homeowner in Missoula and am writing to voice my dissent of the proposed Missoula city budget, specifically, the disproportionate increase to police funding over programs that are in greater need and may do greater good for the community. I am so disappointed that instead of taking this opportunity to lead by example, to be a leader that responds to the community and the true needs of the community, instead, Mayor Engen has chosen to keep the status quo. We do not need enhanced riot gear. This sends the message that the police anticipate escalating tension with the citizens rather than build the trust they have worked decades to abuse. For example, I served on a jury trial where there was a single piece of evidence that the jury wanted to see and could have changed our entire verdict but the cops didn't bother to even look for it. Even though that item was mentioned repeatedly by the victim, the cops on the scene did not look for it and the detective that followed up later, on the stand said that she, "didn't think it was important." The entire experience made our police force come off as tremendously lazy at best and jaded or disinterested in their day-to-day at worst.

I support a defunding of police and moving that money to organizations and programs that serve the broader needs of Missoula. With proper retraining and scaling back, the police may be able to serve in some safety capacity, but it seems here and nationwide they have continually demonstrated that they are woefully unable to provide the services most needed by their communities. Instead of prevention, they are reactive. The metrics for success for police means that they must find (or create) lawbreakers instead of fostering trust and stepping in to break the cycles that create crime. That can be changed – and it has been changed in other cities. Generally speaking, the root of most crime is instability; mental, financial, medical, childcare, and housing. It is programs that address these needs and the downstream results (e.g. substance abuse, domestic abuse, homelessness) where our community funds should be placed. It should not be controversial to provide for the most vulnerable. As a taxpayer in Missoula, I am all in for my money being used to develop new community support systems. I am disgusted at the thought of them going to beef up gear that is wholly unnecessary in any police unit but especially in Missoula. The police have a bloated budget as it is, let them figure out how to manage the same way teachers and nonprofits have for ages.

Sincerely,

DeAnna