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Reallocation of Police Funding

1 message

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To: "citycouncil@ci.stevenson.wa.us" <citycouncil@ci.stevenson.wa.us>, "leana@ci.stevenson.wa.us" <leana@ci.stevenson.wa.us>, "scott.anderson@ci.stevenson.wa.us" <scott.anderson@ci.stevenson.wa.us>

Dear Council Members,

Please include the following in the packet and public record. You may also read this at the city Council meeting.

I have lived in Skamania County for over a decade now, and have seen many changes take place here over the years. While not all of those changes have been bad, this past year has really brought awareness to injustices in our community such as racial inequality, and a lack of mental health resources and funding. The latter being of major concern here in our county.

It saddens me to see what was once (in my opinion) an institution of honor and integrity, turn into merely a building for political showboating. It further saddens me that "protect and serve" seems to be a thing of the past here, as Sheriff Brown and the rest of the staff have made perfectly clear by their refusal to participate in acts that would mitigate a global, deadly pandemic, such as wearing masks.

I find it ridiculous, at best, to continue to feed such an insane amount of money into an organization that refuses to abide by mandates laid out by our state's Governor, regardless of our leader's political affiliation. I would ask who wins in that situation? Sheriff Brown, who gets an ego boost by those in agreement with his views? The thousands of people who have died of this virus? The countless families now missing a loved one? It's honestly heartbreaking.

The words "defund the police" have never, and will never, come out of my mouth. In no way do I think we should completely abolish our Police Department. However, I do believe there needs to be a reallocation of some of the funds that go to that department, for a multitude of reasons.

As someone who personally struggles with mental health issues, I can honestly say that resources for help in that area are lacking in our county. Expecting an officer with no training in dealing with someone experiencing a mental health crisis to respond to a call and appropriately handle the situation is preposterous. Which only brings attention to the fact that more funds need to be going to mental health services.

I would take that a step further and suggest the police shouldn't even be responding to domestic violence calls. At least not alone. I feel that we would have much better outcomes and resolutions if domestic violence advocates were also on such calls. Again, what special training to police go through to prepare them for these types of situations?

We need to stop expecting our officers to handle every single situation, even when they are ill equipped to do so.

Until we realize, and start acting as though, we really are all "in this together," nobody wins. Forming ridiculous posses, refusing to wear masks, not appropriately handling the situation at Granny's, etc. helps no one. There are very real and very large problems within our community that need to be dealt with, but that will never happen if all we're focused on is the fact that masks are uncomfortable.

Respectfully,

Char

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Charla Schuman
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