

You are being presented, for approval, a negotiated budget proposal with our local law enforcement, specifically our County Sheriff's office. I would like to point out some very specific concerns regarding the negotiating process:

- 1 While all such proceedings conducted by Council are intended to always have the best interests of our community in mind, this process was predominately negotiated by two Council members. The Council's attorney was never consulted nor brought into the process until bringing the contract to the sheriff's office for a signature. I have spoken with our mayor and he has expressed his dissatisfaction with this process and negotiated terms as well. As a previous City Council member, I was originally assigned to the City Council committee that would have overseen this negotiation but was unilaterally removed from this position and replaced. At the time, my only thought was that my colleague wished to have another City Council member on this committee that was more compatible to their way of thinking. I did not take offense, nor did I voice any objection. This process did not go before Council proceedings for review, however. In light of my concerns this evening, I regret not having spoken out then.
- 2 I have spoken specifically with Sheriff Scheyer and have spent a considerable amount of time parsing out the department's budget and correlating it with call volume around the County. Yearly Department call volume averages about 5,856. Of that amount a little over 60% (60.58%) come from the 5 municipalities of Stevenson, Carson, Washougal, North Bonneville, and Underwood, or roughly 3,548 calls a year. Of that 3,548, the City of Stevenson averages 1,205.4 calls a year or roughly 33.5% of them. The department's annual budget is \$3,547,111.00 (given to me by our Under-Sheriff Tracy Wyckoff). If 60% of that amount (or \$2,128,266.67) is allocated to the 5 municipalities and 33.5% of that amount is our City's obligation, we should be paying our Sheriff's office \$712,969.31 a year.
- 3 White Salmon spends \$1.4 million on its Police budget. Washougal spends \$5.3 million. It is not hard to see that we are in no position to hire a Police Chief and form our own police department. We are, in fact, extremely fortunate to have our County seat and our Sheriff's department here in Stevenson. Our Sheriff's department submitted an initial proposal that specified the City budget \$360,000.00 for its services. This currently negotiated contract comes in at around \$328,000.00 with concessions on services to our community. It should be noted that the negotiations were contentious. Specifically, there would no longer be any animal control services provided and most notably there would no longer be any code enforcement provided. Both these services were represented as non-essential. While the necessity for these services is minimal, they are nonetheless essential to a growing community. Not providing these services means there are no solutions for stray or even dangerous animals; no solutions for noise abatement, no solutions for vagrancy or City camping or health violations, no solutions for CCR violations, no solutions for traffic control or ticketing should the City decide to institute parking regulations. The list goes on. Unless there are state RCW's, law enforcement will not be available. In the future, law enforcement would only be required to respond to actionable criminal complaints. Posting just 1 (one) deputy 24/7 to our community would require 4.2 FTE's. With this proposed budget, we will fund 1.92 FTE's.
- 4 Before this contract was negotiated, the City administrator took the Sheriff department's budget proposal of \$360,000.00 and added it into the City's annual budget proposal to the state. It was a balanced budget. The City is not in a financial hardship, and this amount does not represent a fundamental budget problem.
- 5 I believe City Council needs to reshape its paradigm in dealing with public constituents that provide services to our community. These constituents include law enforcement, fire protection, our County commission and City port. These entities provide vital services to our community and we should be fostering good will and understanding instead of creating adversarial

relationships. Well intentioned Council members feel they are saving our City money, but what is the real cost when we compromise these services. When we force these entities into contrition, we are not really saving our citizens anything. Taxes are prescribed. They do not change by short-falling a contracted need. Council's responsibility is to act as a good steward for the tax dollars given to us, but that money is there to benefit our community and should be spent appropriately to make it a safe and vibrant place to live. Council decides which pot holes to fill, not which elements to ignore.

- 6 I am urging Council to vote no on this contract. Further, I would suggest that Council make a motion to provide a continuing resolution to fund our Sheriff's office during a period of continued negotiation. Going forward, negotiations should be done in concert with the Mayor and City Administration and possibly even an advocate for the Sheriff's Office. It would be my hope that a future contract be negotiated with kind and thoughtful consideration, and that no services be eliminated for our growing community. We should be thinking about the health of our Sheriff's office and how it can best serve our needs, not strapping them with trying to figure out how to cut expenses and services to meet an untenable budget constraint.

Respectfully submitted,
Chuck Oldfield