From:	E A
To:	Grp. City Council and City Web Site
Subject:	We can do better.
Date:	Friday, July 24, 2020 12:26:44 PM

Dear Mayor Engen and Missoula City Council,

I have to say I'm disappointed. Not only that, I'm a little mad.

I love Missoula. I have respected our local government and leadership. To me, our local government has felt responsive to and involved in community issues to date. But not right now.

Budgets are moral documents. Mayor Engen said so himself: "...Our budget is a reflection of community values." Well, the budget you just proposed certainly makes clear your priorities.

Allocating $19 million for police and a mere $2.2 million for housing and community development does **not**, in any way, support your claim that "we can and should and will continue to steer resources to appropriate responses to folks struggling with mental illness, homelessness, hunger, poverty, addiction..."

Your budget proposes an **increase** in the police budget, despite clear, consistent calls from the BIPOC and ally communities to **decrease** funding for police and reallocate that money to other upstream, supportive community resources. You want to listen? Then listen - and act accordingly. We've been very clear.

Increasing funding by $633,356 for the police department (including the purchase of riot gear - really? Riot gear?) and a mere $88,966 for housing and community development is laughable.

Instead of investing in the police, Missoula should (and YOU CAN) redirect funds to:

* Additional permanent funding to the Mobile Crisis Response Team so trained professionals can respond to emergencies instead of cops,
* Additional funding for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund,
* Mental health services,
* Emergency and transitional housing,
* Local substance use support,
* Local schools!! - including promoting racial equity in public schools,
* Food security efforts.

In sum,

This budget does not reflect our community values.
I do not support the increase in funding to the police.
I DO support investment in services that promote health and wellbeing in our community.

I sincerely hope you reconsider this budget and offer a dramatically revised version.

Thank you for your time -- but ultimately, for your action.

Erin

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