From:	ckoning0
To:	Grp. City Council and City Web Site
Subject:	Proposed fiscal year budget for 2021
Date:	Friday, July 24, 2020 1:49:35 PM

Dear City Council,

My name is Celeste Koning. I am a mother and a student of the University of Montana. I'm writing to you today to address some concerns I have with the proposed 2021 fiscal year budget. I, as well as many other community members, feel that this budget does not reflect our community values.

To begin, why increase the police budget so immensely for items like riot gear (i.e. helmets with face shields) when Missoula has never even come close to having a riot? Or purchasing of new motorcycles, a "special teams transport vehicle", and replacement vehicles for the police chief, the assistant chief, and the captain's vehicles? Do they truly need brand new vehicles? What will happen to the old ones? The three expenses I just listed alone, based on the proposed budget so far, total $299,800. That's more than the proposed amount for additional training of the police force.

Instead of almost $300,000 spent on vehicles and riot gear that may or, more than likely, may not be used wouldn't it be more prudent to allocate more (and permanent) funding for the Behavioral health mobile crisis unit? I also feel that the Behavioral health mobile crisis unit should be allowed more than 10 months of funding from the city to adequately display that it is a beneficial program. More of the proposed amount of the police budget should also be used toward more funding for affordable housing, funding local substance use support, and establishing funding to promote racial equity within the public school system.

The mayor himself stated that the changes to all of the things I have previously listed would not "happen overnight", but if adequate funds and thought aren't put into them now, the changes will never happen. These are needs that our community has RIGHT NOW. Real needs, not potential needs. Just because these problems may not affect you or your life directly does not mean that they aren't happening to countless people within our community. How could anyone call themselves a community leader if they don't concider the needs of EVERY community member? I'm a proud Missoulian, but I know our community can do better.

I appriciate your time in reading this e-mail and I truly hope you concider the things stated within it.

Regards,

Celeste Koning

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone