From:	J. Kevin Hunt
To:	Grp. City Council and City Web Site
Subject:	Please watch each other"s backs
Date:	Saturday, October 24, 2020 7:48:32 PM

Dear Mayor and Council:

I urgently write with two items of exigent concern:

(1) I'm sure you're quite cognizant of the increasingly vocal ignoramuses here in our own community and environs, who share the anti-science, ultra-paranoid delusional belief that universally accepted anti-epidemic measures willingly undertaken by generations of Americans during periodic outbreaks of dangerous contagions, are, they maintain, in the case of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, a conspiracy by the "deep state" to "brainwash" and enslave us by conditioning us to unquestioningly obey COVID-19 anti-infection directives as a prelude to full-on dictatorship.

In the off-chance that you have the time – between your endless hours of studying, discussing, debating, pondering and taking positions and voting on the myriad issues and problems facing a rapidly growing city – to take note of social media posts by many Montanans including too many Missoulians, then you apprehend the level of irrational anger being focused and magnified upon public officials deemed by the self-proclaimed "freedom lovers" to be complicit in this imagined conspiracy.

Over the past 48 hours, I've become alarmed by social media posts warning that "in Montana, where we are armed, they don't dare" set up citizen complaint channels by which people may alert public health officials to significant deviations by public accomodations from social distancing and mask directives. References to guns and armed resistance are increasingly uttered by this cult, and Facebook, as one example, makes no effort to remove them.

I long considered the bellicose blatherings to be attention-seeking behavior by uninformed, partisan crackpots, worthy of sarcasm and occasional refutation with scientific truths but nothing more. As you're aware, I've been critical in the past of what I characterized as excessive official reaction to citizen comments critical of council public policy.

I am, however, genuinely alarmed. This, also because of the eruption of numerous episodes of alt-Right firearm violence in various cities in the waning days of the election campaigns, and because of the vitriol with which many of the deluded, selfish anti-maskers foment loathing for the officials trying to slow down the pandemic while awaiting a vaccine (by the same measures as today, with which our parents, grandparents or great-grandparents for the most part willingly complied, facilitating, for example, the end of the long polio epidemic that produced 58,000 reported cases and 3,000 deaths by the time it peaked in 1952), as we now are in the throes of a conflagration in which we see the novel coronavirus spreading like wildfire, having produced a quarter million U.S. deaths in 8 months.

I fear that at any moment, we will, in some community similar to ours, experience shootings of public health officers. The risk is sufficient to justify provision of rotating one-person details of plainclothed or uniformed peace officers assigned to 24-hour protection of them.

This is not – or should not be – a partisan matter. I urge the provision of such protection

straight away.

(2) Notwithstanding the dangerous decompensation among the deluded, their disdain for the devastating economic disasters befalling the working class and small businesses secondary to the state- and locally-imposed anti-COVID-19 measures permitted by the Tenth Amendment, are valid even though the blame for this economic catastrophe and coming deep depression is clearly misplaced.

It is your job, the Governor's, and that of state and local officials, to diligently take steps necessary to protect the public they serve from threats such as COVID-19, and this you and they are doing.

The fly in the ointment is that state and local governments have finite resources and cannot protect the people and businesses from the economic effects of those measures.

The drafters of the Constitution, faced with a significant war debt and understanding that the new nation would periodically face grave dangers requiring immense resources to fight, wisely provided in Article I, section 8 for the unlimited authority of the national government to produce money and make necessary expenditures, with the guarantee that the credit of the United States shall not be questioned.

It is the deeply partisan political posturing by very wealthy Congressional politicians owned by big banks and mega-corporations regardless of which duopolist party to which they claim allegiance, that is responsible for the terrible hardships befalling our people.

If ever there were a crisis since the Great Depression and World War II calling for the "promotion of the general welfare" by exercise of the unfettered power of spending bestowed by the Constitution upon the Federal government, it is this one.

Accordingly, I urge you to unanimously adopt a Resolution imploring all members of Montana's Congressional delegation to unite behind, and tenaciously pursue, the massive national program of cash payments to individuals/families, extended and enhanced unemployment compensation, expanded SNAP, subsidies to small businesses and landlords, required in order to halt a tsunami of evictions, bankruptcies, foreclosures, suicides, and the greatest upward transfer of wealth in American history – with associated, misplaced anger directed at the state and local officials struggling to slow down the pandemic.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

/s/ J. Kevin Hunt
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