From:	Lewis Black
To:	Grp. City Council and City Web Site
Subject:	Mayor Engen"s budget
Date:	Thursday, July 23, 2020 10:36:12 AM

Good morning Missoula City Council,

My name is Lewis Black. I am a Missoula city resident, and a Sociology graduate student at the University of Montana. I am writing today to say that I do not support the Mayor's proposed budget to increase police presence or investment in riot gear. My main reason for not supporting this increase is that riot gear is another step towards militarizing the police force. This step, as we have seen in other cities, leads to more police brutality, and higher levels of conflicts between Law Enforcement and civilians. Recently, Missoula residents have shown up in large numbers at peaceful rallies in support of more community resources and less funding for police equipment.
Respectfully, I do not see how Mayor Engen can state, "...our budget is a reflection of community values..." At this time, a $2.2 million budget for housing and community development is disgraceful compared to the proposed $19 million for Law Enforcement. I do not see how Mayor Engen can honestly say, "We can...and will continue to steer resources to the appropriate responses to folks struggling with mental illness, homelessness, hunger, poverty, and addiction..." if the proposed budget is giving priority funds to Law Enforcement at a rate of almost 8 times that given to housing and community development.
I am writing to ask the Mayor and City Council to readjust, and balance the funds to truly reflect the community values of permanent funding for the mobile crisis response team, increased funding for the housing trust fund, increased mental health and addiction services, increased emergency and transitional housing to mitigate homelessness, and to promote racial equity in public education.

Thank you for your time,
--
Lewis Black
Pronouns: He/Him//They/Them
University of Montana Sociology Graduate Student