

Dear Council Members and City Staff,

I urge you to invest \$40,000 in community policing.

Agenda Item 10 gives Council the opportunity to invest in our Sebastopol Police Department and to give them the training which Council has wanted for years.

It seems that WCCS will not have the funding to keep the homeless outreach coordinator, especially given the State and County budget deficits and with more funding uncertainty due to the Trump administration's policies.

As this position is part-time, it has a limited capacity. This position was originally funded from money that the County gave to Sebastopol when it removed the revenue from the Sebastopol Inn. I believe the original amount was around \$380,000. Obviously, that money has been spent on homelessness issues. The SAVS RV Village was expensive in terms of police and staff time.

The City has employed a homeless outreach coordinator for at least 5 years. During the 5-year period, there have been at least 3 different people employed in that position; it would appear that it is hard to attract and retain people in the position, which creates inconsistency in outreach and destabilizes relationships the coordinator might build with homeless people.

If the City has the opportunity to invest in the City's Police Force so Sebastopol's Police Officers are better equipped to serve the homeless population and to de-escalate people experiencing mental illness, it would be a great improvement over a homeless outreach coordinator with limited hours.

The general public call the police when they have an issue with a homeless individual, not the homeless outreach coordinator. Thus if the police are called and if they have more training, they can use the training more often than the homeless outreach coordinator.

The police are available 24 hours per day, seven days per week, including holidays. Training the police to have more productive engagement with homeless individuals produces much better coverage than a position that is less than 20 hours per week.

Police officers keep track of data and therefore the City can get more information on the needs and outcomes of homeless individuals.

The Agenda Item, written by Chief McDonagh, had more data in it than any report ever submitted by WCCS. If citizens, City Staff and Council can get more reliable and more consistent data on the homeless population, it will help the City to guide its homeless policies.

I fully support money going into our Police Department to teach them how to become better trained and better educated on community policing and interfacing with the City's homeless individuals. I think it is a good use of tax money and will have a positive impact in our community.

Please support our Public Safety Departments and our homeless individuals by directing money to Officer education.

Kate Haug