From: Mitchell Schwartz
To: Public Comments
Subject: Re: Rebudgeting
Date: Monday, July 20, 2020 6:46:57 PM

Hello County Officials,

My name is Mitchell Schwartz, my sister has been a resident of Asheville for just about 5 years now. She currently lives in the 28704 zip in Buncombe County.

I am writing to you today to demand that County Commissioners amend their budget and defund the County Sheriff's Office and Detention Center by at least 50% immediately.

As a start, please reinvest funds taken from the Sheriff and jail in ways that effectively address the local pandemic. COVID19 is causing exponential harm by killing our neighbors, family and friends or leaving them with organ damage to last a lifetime. This plan should include an end to the reopening of schools and further opening of the city's businesses at large. Only essential businesses should be open, with a requirement that businesses provide all workers with protective gear and that the mask policy is upheld.

All city and county schools must choose Plan C and refuse to return to in person learning.

The County must provide accessible, free testing for all who need it, free masks available for everyone who doesn't have one and funds for increased pay and support for frontline medical and emergency workers.

We must address overtourism and that means the county must shut down all leisure travel and abolish the TDA and its advertising.

The County must open hotels for the unhoused community to prioritize their health and wellbeing.

The Buncombe County Sheriff must also halt enforcing evictions during the COVID pandemic. Durham County's Sheriff has made this commitment. Buncombe County's must too.

Finally, the pandemic response must direct funds towards communities hardest hit and most at risk, especially immigrant communities. The pandemic management must center the needs of communities of color. Going forward, the Count must invest in the economic wellbeing of Black, Brown and Indigenous residents. Commit resources to eliminate the racial opportunity gap and provide deeply affordable housing, land provisions, mental health services, rent subsidies, eviction diversion,free public transportation and restorative justice services for all.

Please help us create a better Asheville for my sisters future, and the people Asheville’s future.

-Mitchell