From: Rachel Nussbaum
To: Public Comments
Subject: Public Comment re: Budget 7_20_2020
Date: Monday, July 20, 2020 4:15:50 PM

Hi, my name is Rachel Nussbaum and I am an Asheville resident. I am writing today to demand commissioners amend their budget and defund the county sheriff's office and detention center by at least 50% immediately.

To start, reinvest funds from the sheriff/ jail in ways that effectively address the local pandemic, including an end to reopening. Only essential businesses should be open requiring that businesses provide all workers protective gear and uphold mask policy.

All city and county schools must choose plan C. The county must provide accessible, free testing for all who need it, free masks available, and funds for increased pay for frontline workers.

Address over-tourism, meaning the county must shut down all leisure travel and abolish the TDA and its advertising. The county must open hotels for the unhoused 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 already. Buncombe's must too.

Finally, the pandemic response must direct funds towards communities hardest hit and most at risk. The county must invest in the economic wellbeing of black, brown, and indigenous residents, commit resources to eliminate racial opportunity gap and provide deeply affordable housing, land provisions, mental healthy services, rent subsidies, eviction diversion, free public transportation, and restorative justice services for all.

I urge you to listen to your citizens. Do what is right. Be bold and courageous enough to break the mold. Reallocate half of the police and jail budget into the community and watch as it thrives. We cannot afford to lose anymore valuable, talented, vibrant, black brown and indigenous lives in our community, be it to police brutality or being priced out/ having to relocate due to lack of affordable housing and economic opportunity.

Thank you — I believe you can and will do what is necessary for our public safety.