From: Abbie Young
To: Public Comments
Date: Monday, July 20, 2020 4:59:35 PM

Hi there,

My name is Abbie Young and I am a resident of Asheville, NC. I am a Program Manager and Registered Dietitian at a local non-profit that shares free fresh produce & education with the community.

I am writing today to demand commissioners amend their budget and to defund the County Sheriff's Office and Detention Center by at least 50% immediately. Defunding organizations happens all of the time and this is a very realistic, necessary, and tangible goal. COVID-19 is causing extreme harm killing our community, our loved ones, our co-workers, our family and beyond. Oftentimes, if they survive the virus, their bodies are forever damaged.

Since the County Health Board acknowledges that racism is a public health crisis... it should be treated as that--a crisis. Crises demand urgent change. Change that y'all have the power to make. Therefore, I am asking that you please address the local pandemic effectively and to fund reparations for Black, Brown and Indigenous neighbors. An important place to start is to reinvest funds taken from the sheriff and jail in ways that effectively address this and the pandemic.

This plan needs to include an end to the reopening. Tourists are seen swarming downtown not wearing masks... putting the most at risk folks at risk for contracting this deadly virus with little to no protection. Only essential businesses should be open, with a requirement that businesses provide all workers with protective gear and that wearing a mask is mandatory for entry. 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 for those who do not have access to one, and funds for increased pay and hazard support for frontline medical and emergency workers. Anything less than can be a death sentence for people.

We have to address over tourism! This means that the County must shut down all leisure travel and abolish the TDA and its advertising. Why hasn't this happened already? Whose lives are you prioritizing? When over 19 million dollars are prioritized in the TDA budget for tourism and people are houseless, filling up hospitals due to COVID, when we are in a housing crisis, when people are having to work multiple jobs to make ends-meet... what community are you for? I hope one for the people of Buncombe.

We are asking for the County to open hotels for unhoused community members to prioritize their health and wellbeing. There also has to be a halt to evictions during this time. The Durham County's sheriff has made this commitment and now its Buncombe's time to do the just, moral thing.

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 fo olor. Going forward, ,the County MUST invest in the economic wellbeing of Black, Brown & Indigenous residents, commit resources to eliminate the racial opportunity gap, and provide affordable housing, land provisions, mental health services, rent subsidies,

and eviction diversion, free public transportation, and restorative justice services for all.

This is what we are here for. This is what we are worth. And so much more.

Thanks,

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ABBIE YOUNG (she/her/hers) | **Program Manager**
Registered Dietitian Nutritionist LDN, Registered Yoga Instructor, Certified Meditation Instructor

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