From: Mary Bolch
To: Public Comments
Subject: County budget and COVID
Date: Monday, July 20, 2020 4:57:28 PM

Hello,

My name is Mary and I'm a resident of Asheville. I am demanding the commissioners amend their budget and defund the county sheriff's office and detention center by at least 50% immediately. COVID-19 is killing our community members, or leaving them with lifetime organ damage.

As the county health board acknowledges that racism is a public health crisis, commissioners need to effectively address the local pandemic, and to fund reparations for our Black, Brown, and Indigenous neighbors.

To start, please redirect the funds from the sheriff and jail toward local pandemic response and prevention. This includes postponing reopening; only essential businesses should be open, with a requirement that all businesses provide all workers with PPE and enforce a mask policy.

Free testing and free masks must be available, as well as increased pay for medical and emergency workers. All city and county schools should refuse to return to in-person learning.

Also, the TDA must be abolished, and tourism de-emphasized, to keep residents of Buncombe safe from travelers who may be carrying COVID. Evictions must also be halted during the pandemic. Finally, pandemic response must direct funds toward communities hardest hit and most at risk, especially immigrant communities.

Sincerely,
Mary Bolch