From: Jessica Schultz
To: Public Comments
Subject: Amend the budget and save lives
Date: Monday, July 20, 2020 12:53:55 PM

County commissioners,

The 2020 budget which defunds the health department and increases funds to the sheriff and jail is absurd, disrespectful to your community, and downright dangerous. In the midst of a global pandemic we have seen time and again that countries which invested in their communities and focused on healthcare and isolation have successfully flattened the curve, saved lives, and been able to reopen safely. Stealing money from the health department to appease law enforcement unions will kill citizens. Your job includes ensuring the county is safe and, and this budget shows that you have no interest in doing so.
Allowing non-essential businesses to reopen was irresponsible. Furthering the reopening, including schools, will show a complete lack of disregard for the safety of the county's residents, specifically its most vulnerable, such as those in low-income areas, the unhoused, and BIPOC, who are already discriminated against by healthcare systems and the police. The board needs to respect scientists and doctors who have given clear guidelines on how to save lives. The board needs to immediately close hotels to non-essential visitors and repurpose the rooms to provide safe shelter for the unhoused, close all non-essential businesses, suspend all leisure travel into the county and shut down the TDA, refuse to reopen schools and invest in supporting distance learning by providing technology and financial stipends to those who require them, require and enforce the requirement of masks in all public spaces, and invest more money into the health department, including providing sufficient PPE to healthcare workers, free testing to all citizens, and free masks to community members who cannot access them. In addition, going forward, the budget should accurately reflect the needs of the county, including truly affordable housing, living wages, rehabilitation services for mental health and addiction, equitable education services for BIPOC, legalizing marijuana and releasing with an expunged record all inmates with marijuana-related charges, and stronger financial investment in healthcare and education workers.
The federal government has completely failed its citizens, but you have the opportunity to support us within this county. Your residents, myself included, are counting on you to help keep us alive. Do not bend to lobbying; instead, consider the ramifications of unnecessary death on your hands. This budget as it stands is nothing short of murder.

Jessica A. Schultz
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