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Subject: 7/20 Public Comment: Data Collection for Homeless Outreach Coordinator
Date: Friday, July 16, 2021 10:07:21 AM

Dear Council Members,

As the citizens of Sebastopol will be supporting a \$72,000 per year homeless outreach coordinator, I hope the Council will be able to provide annual data on the positive impact this position has yielded for the small businesses and residents who are paying sales and property tax.

As many programs that benefit the general public and crucial baseline services go unfunded and underfunded, it seems that a position which addresses a niche and transient population should have a direct benefit to the community at large.

As the State and County are putting significant amounts into homeless services, it will be important for both entities to have the data from this program to see its effectiveness. Data concerning its effectiveness in reducing costs to police and public works should be shared with County and State agencies.

The data which would be useful to the general public and possibly to other agencies are the following:

1. In the past 2 years, what percentage of calls to the police, fire and other emergency services within the City Limits of Sebastopol could have been handled by a homeless outreach coordinator, working 40 hours per week?;
2. In the next year, there should be a record of how many calls the homeless outreach coordinator handles and resolves within the City of Sebastopol without any assistance from local police, fire and/or other emergency services. How much money does this save?;
3. What are the specific goals and data targets for this program? What public document is on file that gives specific goals and numbers regarding this position?;
4. How many people are currently homeless in Sebastopol?: What is the target reduction in homelessness for this position? Does the Council know how many homeless people are in Sebastopol? Does the Council have a target of reduction?;
5. How much will this position reduce the impact of homelessness on our public spaces

and thereby lessen the burden on public works in terms of restroom cleaning?;

6.

What is the net economic benefit to the citizens of Sebastopol?; It has been implied that this position will reduce costs to the public, how will that be determined?

As the Council is well aware, the City has lost Transient Occupancy Tax due to the conversion of the Sebastopol Inn to Permanent Supportive Housing for homeless individuals by the County of Sonoma. As the City budget reflects, TOT has dropped significantly in the last year.

Due to this conversion, the Citizens of Sebastopol lost \$200,000 or more per year in TOT, sales tax and tourist foot traffic. Now, the Council is hiring a homeless outreach coordinator for \$72,000 per year. In addition, the Citizens of Sebastopol are paying \$11,000 for hand washing stations on Morris Street. For fiscal year 2021/2022, the Citizens of Sebastopol will be impacted by homeless expenses, tax losses by \$283,000.

The State of California has budgeted \$12 Billion or \$75,000 per homeless person this year. The County runs a homeless facility, the Sebastopol Inn, in downtown Sebastopol.

It is unclear why the City cannot coordinate with the County to host a homeless outreach coordinator - paid for by the County as part of the mitigation of loss of revenue to the Citizens of Sebastopol - at the Sebastopol Inn as it is a facility that is already fully staffed and also has 24/7 security, which costs \$55,000 per month.

It would be much more economically prudent to have the County pay for and direct a homeless outreach coordinator through the Sebastopol Inn rather than having the Citizens of Sebastopol pay for this position and then have staff be responsible for tracking data and outcomes. A County employee would have access to data systems and a network of professionals and County programs.

Given the fact the City is facing a budget deficit, many departments are understaffed and underfunded, there are outstanding maintenance issues regarding road repaving, sidewalk repair and infrastructure, what is the plan to make up these funds related to homelessness?

While \$72,000 is not necessarily a high salary, it could go toward many needed civic projects such as maintenance of public space, filling current staff vacancies, purchasing a fire truck, sidewalk repair, road repair, and upgrading our public parks. All of these items directly benefit all residents of the City and represent investments into the community at large and infrastructure for small businesses and residents.

I hope the Council will be providing more specifics regarding the intent and purpose of this position with goals and outcomes. I hope the Council will be providing a report on how this position has served and benefited the Citizens of Sebastopol as it comes at the expense of

other investments into our community.

Best regards,
Kate Haug
Sebastopol