

From: [REDACTED]
To: [!City Council](#)
Subject: Public Comment
Date: Sunday, June 21, 2020 10:26:40 PM

I am writing to urge city council members to reduce the police department's budget for the upcoming year and to put more funds into community social services.

I commute to Paxton, IL, where I work as a therapist. Due to a limited amount of local community mental health services, my agency provides services to many CU folks who have to commute all the way up to Paxton (approx 20 miles from North Champaign area) for community mental health services. For people who are already struggling to make ends meet, this is an unnecessary additional expense for mental health services. If more money was put towards social services in the CU area, perhaps this additional burden would not be placed upon families who are already experiencing financial and mental health difficulties.

Please reprioritize Urbana's budget for the upcoming year. Additional funds are needed in areas that will directly benefit the community - not the police department.

Sincerely,

Anna Asplund

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: Public input 6/22/20 city council meeting
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 11:58:38 AM

Hello City Council,

Please read the following for public input at 6/22/20 city council meeting. Please consider this public input regarding the city's proposed budget as well.

You have heard from me before, my name is River Andres, Physician Assistant, and Urbana homeowner. I appreciate all you are doing and plan to do for our community. I ask that you strongly reconsider this proposed budget.

Police are not doing their jobs (which is to protect us). They are terrorizing and killing our Black and Brown neighbors. Folks have tried to implement changes within this policing system. It is clearly not working, and it is not working because this police system was set up to do exactly what it's doing. Put Black and Brown bodies behind bars.

I ask that you cut funding to the police department and instead reinvest in your community. This looks like taking officers out of our schools. This looks like taking officers off of our streets. This looks like increasing our school budgets, investing in our teachers (not in more hired guns). This looks like flipping the percentage you offer for community development and police budget. The police get roughly a third of our annual budget. Our community development gets 5%.

I have to be honest, knowing these numbers makes me even more furious for my Black and Brown neighbors and family.

You are actively choosing to pay predators to attack us. Stop. Now. Reinvest in the community and get the violence off the streets.

--

River Andres

(pronouns: they/them/theirs)

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: PUBLIC INPUT: Public Hearing June 22
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 4:06:06 PM

This public input is from:
David Cisneros
Urbana Resident, Ward 4

Dear Mayor and City Councilmembers:

I write to provide input on the proposed annual budget.

As all of you know, this has been an extraordinary few weeks. Huge and sustained protests across the nation are drawing our attention to the systematic nature of police violence and racism and to the need for systemic changes. This is a crucial time to have these discussions in our own city, as the Urbana community has been loudly demanding justice for Aleyah Lewis and accountability for the violent actions of the UPD **for months**.

I am glad that the city has heeded to some of these calls by planning an independent investigation of the abuse of Ms. Lewis and beginning to strengthen and transform the Citizens Police Review Board. We also call on the city to demand that the charges against Ms. Lewis be dropped and that the officers involved be suspended pending the investigation.

But you cannot stop here. If you recognize these are systemic issues we need systemic and sustained solutions. The conversations around the budget provides an opportunity. As you have no doubt heard, [policymakers in major cities around the country including Los Angeles, San Francisco, Baltimore, Washington DC, and Minneapolis are reducing funding for policing](#), redirecting those funds toward efforts to strengthen community institutions and to provide more accessible housing, health care, food, education and community participation in city governance. [Experts](#) have long been arguing that reducing funding for police is the only way to stop the overreliance on policing, to solve widespread and recurring police abuses and racial injustice, and to deal with the root causes of community problems.

These calls are all the more urgent in the world of the COVID pandemic, with decreasing revenues and increased community needs. Right now the City spends over 30% of its budget on policing the community and the city only spends a combined 8 % on general services and community development. As the City plans to cut the budget to deal with the COVID 19 pandemic, the community development budget AND the fire department EACH face a drop of nearly 12% while the UPD's budget stays the same. What better time to begin to draw back from excessive policing and instead commit to strengthening the community and its institutions?

The Mayor's budget message says that " Our top priority is public safety, on our streets, in our neighborhoods, and in public schools." But, it's important to recognize that putting a third of the city's budget toward policing does not and never has ensured public safety. More police in the streets and schools will never solve the root causes of gun violence or conflict but only replace one kind of violence with the threat of another. It's also important to ask whose safety is being secured here...certainly not that of Ms. Lewis, who has been traumatized by police violence, and certainly not the thousands of African American Urbana residents who are even more disproportionately stopped by UPD in traffic stops than

they were years ago.

More importantly, the City's goal should **not just** be providing for a bare minimum of "public safety" in the form of police on the streets and in the schools. This is a low bar to set. The TOP PRIORITY of the city should be to create a community that supports the freedom and flourishing of all its residents. That means more than the illusion of public safety but rather real investment in transformative solutions to violence; aggressive efforts to tackle poverty, homelessness, and addiction; and a greater commitment to those programs that can help build community.

Over the last few weeks the City Council and mayor made powerful statements in support of community calls for greater racial justice and police accountability. This week three Councilmembers--Bill Brown, Dennis Roberts, and Jared Miller--publicly committed to efforts to defund law enforcement agencies and divert those funds to other community solutions. In that interview, Mayor Marlin herself lamented that "[we have chosen to expand the role of policing rather than providing equitable access to healthcare, education, housing, income, and opportunity.](#)" Sometimes these statements can sound good until we remember that the Council and the Mayor **actually have the power** to follow up on these statements with real action. If you truly believe our policing priorities and funding are out of whack, then how fortuitous that you actually have the authority to change those priorities! Otherwise, these statements ring hollow. If you really want to honor those statements and deal with systemic problems, then you need systemic changes, including listening to the community's demands and having serious discussions about the future of policing in our community, including in the next year's budget.

Thank you.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: public comment on the city budget
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 5:27:39 PM

As a resident of Urbana, I am concerned to see the great disparity between the city budget allocated to social services compared to, well, really everything else, but especially compared to the largest expenditure in the budget, the police department. Does this really reflect the priorities of our community? Unfortunately, too many black and brown people have a much different experience when interacting with the police than when I, as a white person, do, because of the color of their skin. This needs to change. Perhaps it can start with re-prioritizing the city budget.

Given that such a large proportion of calls to the police are not for criminal law enforcement, I would like to see Urbana re-allocate funding into investments in neighborhoods, affordable food and housing, social services, education, mental health services, and public works, to more fully reflect the needs of the residents of this community. I'd like to echo Urbana City Council Member Bill Brown's statement in response to the question from Smile Politely of defunding the police, in which he said that he would support "re-imagining the role of police and increasing support to alternative first responders in addressing public safety issues." I think this is a good start.

Nancy Dietrich
Urbana, IL

From: [REDACTED]
To: [!City Council](#)
Cc: [! Wu, Maryalice](#); [! Jakobsson, Eric](#); [! Hursey, Shirese](#); [! Brown, Bill](#); [! Roberts, Dennis](#); [! Colbrook, William](#); [! Miller, Jared](#)
Subject: June 22nd, 2020 Public Input
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 2:00:37 PM

Dear City Council,

I write to you as a concerned citizen of the Urbana-Champaign community for the last 17 years.

I believe in our community. I believe in its citizens, I believe in its leaders, and I believe we are capable of many extraordinary things. I believe in being more conscious and critical of where we are allocating the finite funds of our budget. I believe in reducing the responsibility and presence of police, and expanding our support for social services. I believe assisting people facing homelessness through programs like Cunningham Township, which could be much more robust. I believe in caring for our children, with wrap-around initiatives like the Youth and Family Initiative that Unit 4 is working on.

I believe in what my community is saying and in what I've been hearing. I believe that police are a major source of trauma. I believe children are missing their mothers and fathers who are locked in jail. I believe the youth at these protests who say they are proud to be Black, but they are afraid because they are Black. They know that at some point they could be harmed just for being Black. I believe we fund this harm, and we should stop.

I believe how we spend reflects what we value. I believe spending a third of the budget on policing reflects investment in the continued trauma of our community. I believe there are ways to achieve public safety without this investment in violence.

How many bullets do we need to buy for cops to use against our neighbors? How many people do we need on the street willing to punch a woman in the head as she is already pinned down? We do not need police reform. We do not need better police surveillance, or records of their heinous acts for the mayor to later justify. We need to believe in our community. We need to fund our community.

Thank you,
Brian Dunn

From: [REDACTED]
To: [!City Council](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 3:11:38 PM

As long-time residents of C-U, we strongly support proposals to “defund the police and invest in the community,”

Funding social workers and mental health professionals, feeding the hungry and housing the homeless, could deal much better with many problems the police are now called upon to handle.

Sincerely,

(Dr.) C. G. Estabrook

(Dr.) L. S. Estabrook

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: Public Input 6/22 City Council Meeting
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 6:42:46 PM

Dear members of the Urbana City Council,

Over the course of the past month, there has been an intense call both nationally and locally to reallocate funds designated to the police and instead use that money to invest in social services that serve to improve the community and reduce crime rates over the long term. You have already received hundreds of calls for this change here in Urbana and nothing has been done.

The recent case of Ms. Aleyah Lewis's unnecessary and brutal attack and arrest illustrates exactly why depending on the police to deal with every societal issue is misguided and tends to exacerbate violence, fear, poverty, and division in the community, especially for African Americans and other people of color. No one in this country and especially no one in this community should have to live in a world where they are more likely to be arrested and incarcerated unjustly, if not killed, than to receive a good education, mental health services, and access to affordable housing. These are the things that truly make communities stronger and lead to better quality of life for all. Currently, these are not accessible for many who call Urbana home.

Please heed the urgent call from the community you serve to reallocate funds designated for the police and instead invest them in social services. Further, please do everything in your power to drop all charges against Aleyah Lewis. She was the victim of a senseless overreaction on the part of the UPD and was painfully hit and restrained all while an officer carelessly laid his assault rifle over her, which could have resulted in a fatal injury. Tomorrow morning, dozens of your constituents will gather to support her at the courthouse as she goes through a legal process that is known to be highly discriminatory toward African Americans. This young woman's life and future are on the line all because of the mistakes of the police department, a police department which you have so far refused to question or criticize.

As a community, we can do better than this. You can do better than this. Instead of silencing calls for justice, invest in the future of this community. We cannot accept any more of the same violence and fear that is caused by the police department. Allocate that money toward social services that will truly make our community safer and more equal for all.

Sincerely,
-Kacie Gastanaga

Kacie L. Gastanaga, M.A.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [!City Council](#)
Subject: PUBLIC INPUT
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 1:43:46 AM

Dear Council members, etc - -

Mayor Marlin stated that "our top priority is public safety", yet the city budget is not allocating funds to community services that can help create a safer city. I would like to add my voice to those who are advocating for reducing the police budget and reallocating those funds to more relevant social and community services.

Thank you,
Marcey Goldstein

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [!City Council](#)
Subject: PUBLIC INPUT June 22, 2020
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 4:14:04 PM

The following is public input I am providing for the Urbana City Council Public Hearing of June 22, 2020:

Given the incredible global movement led by youth and people of color demanding #JusticeforGeorgeFloyd, fighting for racial justice, and standing up against police violence, it is shameful that this is the budget you, the City Council, have proposed and that we, the Community, have to speak out against.

In the midst of this struggle, why are we spending the largest portion of our city budget on the police department? Why is it “unfortunate” and all too easy to defund education and community services? We need to invest our money in community services, NOT police. You should decrease the police budget by 25%. That \$2.8 million needs to go towards education, affordable housing, youth and jobs programs, and mental health and substance abuse facilities.

Re-allocating 25% of the police budget towards community services would be a major step forward for our community. But that is the first step. We need to additionally tax the 1%, who’ve gotten away with paying little to no taxes for far too long, to help pay for these necessary services.

Across the country cities are moving to address deep systemic issues. In Seattle, for example, city councilmember, Kshama Sawant, is proposing and fighting for a 50% decrease in their police budget and is also leading the movement to Tax Amazon to permanently fund affordable housing, social services and jobs. We should follow their lead and set a positive example for other communities across the midwest.

Any less in this historical moment, would be a complete betrayal of the very community you claim to represent.

- Michael D. Johnson

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: PUBLIC INPUT: June 22nd Council budget meeting
Date: Sunday, June 21, 2020 11:26:12 PM

Dear council members,

I urge you to reallocate funding for police into community needs instead.

In the budget proposal Mayor Marlin states that "Our top priority is public safety, on our streets, in our neighborhoods, and in public schools". While this is a laudable sentiment, I face some confusion and consternation at the idea. I certainly don't feel unsafe nor do I think allocating as much as 32.7% of the city budget towards the police department is the way to achieve this.

First, consider that the majority of work done by the police force is non crime-related. It is patently false that any given police officer is actively preventing crime and thus contributing to public safety.

Also consider the economic impact of policing. [The Illinois State Commission of Criminal Justice](#) and Sentencing Reform stated that of all Illinois prisoners released, 17% will return to jail within a year, and another 43% will return to jail within three years. Incarcerating someone has a [price tag](#), and not just on the state; personal relations of those incarcerated often spend hundreds, or even thousands of dollars over years in the form of commissary accounts, legal fees, or even simple communications including emails to prisoners. This is surely an economic burden on many in the community.

I am emphasizing the economic burden, because [it has been demonstrated time and time again](#) that poverty and low income contribute greatly to incarceration. Lack of resources is a contribution to incarceration. High incarceration rates definitively contribute to lack of resources in communities, particularly Black communities. About 60% of the Illinois prison population is comprised of Black people, even though the entire population of Illinois is only about 15%. Do many Black people live in the same neighborhood communities? Yes. Do these same Black communities have the same access to resources that wealthy communities have? No.

Ultimately, it utterly confounds me that the police represent the largest part of the city budget, when a simple reallocation of police funds into community needs (such as affordable housing, generous funding of public schools, and other general infrastructure) would do more to alleviate crime rates than the police ever have. Especially with the burden of the pandemic that we are all facing, we need to find ways to support all of Urbana.

To serve and protect is a wonderful idea, but I refute that that is what the police do. The city council has a much greater opportunity to serve the community by divesting from the police and reinvesting into the general Urbana community. I urge you to reduce the police budget, and reallocate the funds to community projects.

Thanks for your time reading my letter.

Sincerely,

Jon Hays



Virus-free. www.avast.com

From: [REDACTED]
To: [!City Council: ! Roberts, Dennis](#)
Subject: PUBLIC INPUT JUNE 22
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 2:28:46 PM

Dennis,

As a community member in district 5 I urge you to continue asking needed questions, engage in critical thinking, keep a pulse on those in your community protesting every night for justice and as you sit in your elected seat, push for needed change.

Like many cities around the country it has become ever more apparent that police budgets have ballooned out of control leaving many needed social services behind or nonexistent. I urge you to deep dive into the possibilities, we would not be the first and certainly should not be last.

For example Dallas has implemented a pilot program called [RIGHT Care](#). Or in Milwaukee, the city created an Office of Violence Prevention in 2008 and expanded it in 2016. The office helped residents develop a ["Blueprint for Peace"](#) that outlines "community-driven solutions" to violence, including methods to interrupt conflicts and retaliatory gun attacks, increase investment in youth programs and improve health care, family resources and employment opportunities in vulnerable neighborhoods.

Our community will do the work to make more just solutions not only viable but ones that thrive. So continue to stand with the words you have already shared publicly in the June 18th article from Smilie Poliety to defund the police. Our current budget does not reflect our city and what is important to those that have been left out of the conversation for too long.

Lara Orr
District 5

From: [REDACTED]
To: [!City Council](#)
Subject: [*** SPAM ***] PUBLIC COMMENT
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 3:55:37 PM
Importance: Low

Hello,

I am a resident of Urbana and have been so, off and on, for the last two years. Now having made my permanent residency here, my commitments to the community are strong. In reviewing the city's proposed budget for the fiscal year of 2021, I am struck by several things: The proposed budget would allocate 32.7% of operating funds to Urbana police, while leaving as little as 5.2% for community development. There are plans to fund a new police records management system, but no information in the budget proposal about how much more this would cost. The proposed police budget (\$11,197,190) is approximately 3 million dollars more than the proposed public works budget (\$8,023,497) and more than 150 times greater than the total budget allocation for social services (\$73,150). While funding for police takes up by far the largest portion of the proposed budget, funding is being reduced for public education in order to cover additional expenses for the Fire Department. Mayor Marlin describes this decision as "unfortunate." It is more than that.

If the city's "top priority is public safety, in our streets, in our neighborhoods, and in public schools," it makes no sense to uphold the institution of policing. Why, tomorrow there is a court hearing for Ms. Aleyah Lewis, physically attacked by police in this very county, in which Ms. Lewis is the *defendant*. Any member of city council who refuses to take seriously demands to defund and abolish the police is shameful.

Caitlin Kingsley

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: Urbana City Council meeting, June 22, 2020 -- public input
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 3:52:27 PM

Dear Mayor Marlin and the Urbana City Council,

What does it mean to defund the police? In Urbana, it starts by recognizing that the police, the criminal courts, and the jailing function are all institutions dedicated to a punitive model of justice predicated on crisis response. As with every institution, the first priority of the policing institution is to grow – bigger budgets, more personnel, more authority.

Defunding the police begins with the premise that crisis-based authority should not grow like other institutions, and if possible, should shrink – smaller budgets, fewer personnel, and reduced authority. Instead, the original mission of the police has been so overgrown that we now count on them to handle everything – noisy neighbors, domestic disputes, substance abuse, mental illness, and crimes of poverty, just to name a few.

Listen to the police tell the story and you'll arrive at a similar conclusion – the police do not like these emergency calls, nor do they possess the expertise to deal with them. In this context, homelessness, substance abuse, and domestic disputes seem like intractable problems – we wait for them to reach a state of crisis, then call the police, and once the police are involved, the focus of attention is on punishment, not treatment.

Defunding the police means reducing our reliance on crisis, force, and punishment in order to improve the health and well-being of our community.

Defunding the police means using public resources to employ professionals who can identify and respond to situations before they reach a crisis point.

Defunding the police means promoting virtues like communication, collaboration, and caring to address multigenerational problems like racism and the erosion of public trust.

We should all support the creation and adequate funding of a municipal institution dedicated to the health and well-being of our neighbors and without the need for crisis. The first step is for you, our elected representatives, to stand up and say that you support defunding the police.

Mayor Marlin, is it better for someone who is homeless to be offered residential housing or the confinement of a jail cell? Right now, the city budget sends them to jail.

Councilmembers Wu and Jakobsson, should we resolve domestic disputes through professional facilitation or by domestic violence 911 calls? Right now, the city budget waits for the violence.

Councilmembers Hursey and Brown, should those suffering from drug addiction and alcoholism be regarded as victims or perpetrators? Right now, the city budget regards them as perpetrators.

Councilmember Roberts and Colbrook, should multigenerational problems like racism and the erosion of public trust be addressed by criminal justice institutions or community justice advocates? Right now, the city budget kicks the can down the road.

And finally, Councilmember Miller, thank you for stepping forward to identify the crisis of police accountability in Urbana – your dedication to improving the community is inspiring.

Sincerely,
Rohn Koester



From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT 6/22/2020
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 5:42:34 PM

To the Urbana City Council,

I'm writing today concerning the proposed budget for the Urbana police department. As an Urbana resident, it's extremely troubling to me that the proposed budget for the police department makes up by far the largest percentage of the proposed General Operating Fund Expenditures for 2020 with 32.7% of the budget, whereas community development would receive only 5.2% of the budget. Despite such a large budget for the police, I have read that funding is being redirected from public education to cover expenses for the fire department. The Urbana police department, like police departments across the nation, has a history of racism, particularly targeting BIPOC. As such, it is the Urbana City Council's responsibility to redirect funding in the proposed General Operating Fund Expenditures for 2020 from the police department into community development and public education programs that would build the community up, not keep it down.

Thank you for your time,

Jamie Keener

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: Public comment for meeting 6.22.2020
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 6:17:05 PM

Hello Mayor and Council Members-

I'm writing today along with many other citizens asking that you rethink the budget before approval in light of the movement to end police brutality and dismantle the racism the police force was founded in. I'll keep it short: Reduce funding of the police department-- or at the very least for today, do not increase funding while you plan the path forward- and invest that amount in community programs and social services.

Kelsey Langley

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: PUBLIC INPUT 6/22/2020
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 1:17:00 PM

Hello,

Thank you for taking the time to read my comment. I am contacting you to urge you to divest funding from the Urbana Police Department and redistribute these resources to areas that support the community such as public education, public works, and community development.

I agree with Mayor Marlin that public safety ought to be our top priority, but I know that this priority isn't being reflected in the proposed city budget that allocates 32.7% of operating funds to the UPD. There has long time been evidence that police do not keep neighborhoods safe, but rather they terrorize the most vulnerable and protect the property of the most powerful. Our community cannot tolerate this. As city council you serve the members of this community and we demand to be prioritized, not controlled nor brutalized as is the function of the police. Help us envision and enact a rich future for everyone in Urbana by defunding the police and investing in the community.

Thank you,

Elise Lanker, Urbana resident

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 4:15:01 PM

Dear City Council Members,

In light of a great age of reckoning, I am appalled that Mayor Marlin believes that public safety, also known as the police department, is the top priority of the community.

The fact that 32.7% of general operating funds will leave only 5.2% for community development just does not make sense at all.

I ask that you vote on a considered budget taking community input into account. I ask that you hold yourself accountable to this nation's deeds in perpetuating structural racism and police brutality. I ask that you release **Aleyah Lewis and free her from all charges.**

I demand that you defund the police department and even abolish the police department. I demand a reallocation of funds from policing and incarceration to long-term safety strategies such as education, local restorative justice services, and employment programs.

Please take responsibility. Please do the right thing and hold yourselves accountable. Innocent people are dying all over the country.

Sincerely,

Arum Lee

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: PUBLIC INPUT 6/22/20
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 6:32:30 PM

Dear Urbana City Council Members,

My name is Erin, and I am a graduate student in the psychology department at UIUC. I am writing to urge you to consider community input on the proposed budget, and to vote on a considered budget that incorporates community feedback. The Urbana community and local organizations, along with the NAACP and ACLU, have called for substantial changes to be made to policing in Urbana. Additionally, numerous members of City Council have reported that they would support defunding the police and redistributing those funds to community initiatives, but the proposed budget does not reflect this. On the contrary, the proposed budget would increase the proposed police budget to over 150 times the proposed budget for all social services. Further, your proposed budget actually decreases funding for public education. As a psychology trainee who works with youth in this community, I am disturbed by this short-sighted decision. A wealth of evidence demonstrates that when communities invest in their public school systems and in their children, learning and achievement outcomes, graduation rates, and social outcomes all improve, and these positive consequences endure long-term. When communities spend more on education, all of society benefits. Defunding public education in favor of funding the police and fire department is truly a mistake. Additionally, you have budgeted funding for full-time school resource officers while defunding the actual, crucial educational and social services you are providing to children through public schools. Armed police have no place in schools, and that money would be better invested in our community's children. I urge you to reconsider.

--

Erin E. Long, M.S.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: Public Input - 6/22/20
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 3:47:26 PM

To the Urbana City Council:

I am writing today with concerns about the proposed budget, to be discussed at tonight's city council meeting.

My first concern is that funds from public education are being reallocated to fund the fire department's additional expenses. The money cover those expenses *should* be coming out of the Urbana Police budget, which accounts for 32.7% of the general operating funds in the proposed budget for this meeting.

My second concern is with the size and amount of the Urbana police budget—over *eleven million dollars*, and 150% larger than the proposed social services budget. This discrepancy needs to be corrected immediately.

Police are not social workers (and were never designed to be), they do not have any of the necessary training to properly help someone in crisis, and their presence in situations where a social worker or representative of social services would have been more appropriate frequently causes *more* suffering rather than alleviating it or de-escalating the situation. Continuing to pump up their budget to spend as they see fit robs our community of the vital resources that it needs, and asks police to do work and enter situations that their positions were never designed for or trained to do.

Social services and public education should be any self-respecting community's first two priorities, and their status as such should be reflected in how the community spends its money. I therefore propose that the Urbana Police dept should be de-funded, and that the funds it was originally set to receive be reallocated to social services and public education. Such a redistribution of the city's wealth will allow community services to do what they do best—serve the community without violence.

I am, very sincerely,

Your constituent,
Kathleen McGowan

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: PUBLIC INPUT - 6/22/20 Meeting
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 3:48:58 PM

Dear Members of the Urbana City Council,

A budget is a statement of a community's priorities. The disproportionate level of funding earmarked for UPD in the proposed budget, and the paltry funding for community development in comparison, makes it clear that we're choosing to invest in criminalizing people for problems we are creating. As the ongoing pandemic affects revenues and confidence in UPD's integrity plummets, these discrepancies become even more glaring. I urge the Council to pass amendments to defund the police and instead fund proactive, compassionate solutions to the needs of Urbana's citizens.

Thank you,
Katherine Majewski

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: PUBLIC INPUT 06-22-20
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 2:55:03 PM

Dear Members of Urbana City Council,

I am writing to express my support for a move to defund the police and reallocate resources to community initiatives. This is a historic moment: the national conversation has decisively shifted in favor of defunding the police; this is in light of a better nation-wide understanding of policing's systemic racism, anti-Blackness, and police brutality. It has also revealed the extent to which the police are OVER-funded, sucking up the vast amount of city budgets for unnecessary expenses that don't keep its citizens any safer; meanwhile truly vital social services like education, health care, mental health services, and housing face cuts or remain critically under-funded.

The obvious answer then is to cut police budgets and reallocate that money to these social services. In our own community, we have the opportunity to do so. This is especially urgent in the wake of the Urbana Police Department's beating and arrest of Aleyah Lewis, a Black woman and Urbana resident, and its gross mishandling of her case.

As a trained historian and soon-to-be PhD from the University of Illinois, I could recount the long history that has led us to this moment, the racist history of US policing, the systemic disenfranchisement of Black and POC Americans, the necessity for fundamental change and for local governments to work towards that change. Here suffice it to say that a simple move like cutting the Urbana police budget, which is bloated and unnecessary, and putting that money toward education and community development would be a huge step forward. The community is behind it, the country is behind it, and history is behind it.

Please change the proposed budget, cut police funding, and increase funding to social services and community initiatives.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Matsushita

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [!City Council](#)
Subject: Public Input 6/22/20
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 2:01:05 PM

Dear Urbana representatives,

I am writing to you today to ask that you stand for the rights and justice of all citizens, no matter their sex, gender, or color of their skin. I ask that you allocate resources towards community programs instead of the police force. Investing in our community and it's people should be top priority in this country, and it is our job to ensure that there is NO TOLERANCE for discrimination within our police forces, or any institution for that matter, by defunding their increasing militarization, lessening interactions with police whenever possible, and strengthening other community services and relationships.

I do hope you put OUR money to good use.

Sincerely,
Drake Maxson

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: Public Input: Policing and the Budget
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 3:54:38 PM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Danielle McFarland** [REDACTED]
Date: Sun, Jun 21, 2020, 7:46 PM
Subject: Policing and the Budget
To: <dymarlin@urbanaininois.us>
Cc: <mwu@urbanaininois.us>, <egjakobsson@urbanaininois.us>, <jtmiller@urbanaininois.us>, <sehursesey@urbanaininois.us>, <dproberts@urbanaininois.us>, <wpcolbrook@urbanaininois.us>, <bbrown@urbanaininois.us>

Dear Urbana City Council Members,

I've been a resident of Urbana for over thirty years. I've been living on the same rental property in SE Urbana's Ward 7 for over a decade. In that time I have also been a local Elementary educator, activist and parent. My roots are here and I value Urbana as a community worth raising my family in.

I'm writing the council today to express my continued concern over the lack of oversight for the UPD, the reappointment of Chief Seraphin while under review, the racial profiling still endemic to the UPD, the over-policing of our Black and Brown neighborhoods, the lack of social services available, the excessive force used against Ms. Lewis in April and the Mayor's poor leadership during this national movement for change in policing.

The citizen's review board should be overhauled today. Complaints should be anonymous and the PD should not get to choose whether their conduct is worthy of review. As an educator, I did not get to choose whether or not to listen to parent or administrative complaints. All public servants should be open and willing to be reviewed at any time but especially those with the ability to use lethal force. It is up to you to put pressure on the Chief and the FOP to make this happen.

The reappointment of Chief Seraphin based on personal relationships is a conflict of interest to the city. No one on the council provided evidence based data supporting his reappointment. The information Jacobsson provided was false and indicative of his lack of knowledge of our city's actual policing data. This shows a serious lack of leadership on the part of Mayor Marlin and further cements the national claims of politicians supporting corrupt and ineffectual policing.

Again, I implore all council members to file an FOIA request for data on racial profiling in our community so that you can be acquainted with the process, the obstacles and the actual data. Please do not count on Chief Seraphin to accurately assess his own department as he has no incentive to provide reliable data that would call his department and leadership in to question. They are public servants and public servants have no business assessing themselves where public money and safety is concerned.

As a long time resident of one of the Black and Brown neighborhoods with a high volume of police calls, I see daily interactions between the UPD and the public. I've had SWAT in front of my house, detectives looking for bullet casings and following blood trails, as well as frequent shootings and gunshots. I know what it means to fear a stray bullet.

However, the police are largely ineffectual and often serve to further provoke the residents in my neighborhood. Their increased presence over the last decade does not make me feel safer. It is in fact the opposite. Every interaction I witness leaves me fearful that it may end up with a similar brutalization as that which Ms. Lewis received or worse.

What our community needs is better mental health resources, unarmed first responders, drug treatment programs, more equitable educational opportunities, better access to public health, an end to minimum fines and penalties, an end to cash bail, the ban on chemical agents for crowd dispersal, and the demilitarization of our PD. All of these things are being done in municipalities across the country, not because it is a passing trend, but rather the data shows it is well overdue.

The slow response and lack of transparency in reviewing the excessive force used on Ms. Lewis is one example in a line of many that demonstrates why the community has lost faith in our PD and city governance. You have the power to put pressure on the district attorney to drop charges and hold the PD accountable. By publicly standing up for the Chief and his department you have effectively stated you are no longer concerned with your constituents' safety or the trust and the integrity of the department. A public relations liaison that acts as a PR firm for the police is not a good use of tax payer's money. We're not interested in more platitudes. We want measurable change yesterday!

In this time of economic upheaval, cuts will undoubtedly have to be made. Your community is telling you where they'd like to see them. We do not want to see a further reduction in community development or public works, which we so desperately need, but from the very bloated budget of those who further racist policies.

The police Chief will likely fight hard, as any department head should, for more of a piece of the pie. I challenge you to ask him why they can't use money allocated for gas masks and other militarized equipment for bikes. Bike cops, ideally without guns, have a greater opportunity of interacting one-on-one with the public while reducing emissions from their highly inefficient SUVs. Instead of patrolling my neighborhood behind a glass window furthering the "us vs them" culture, encourage them to actually walk the beat. This gives them an even better opportunity of seeing the Black and Brown people they patrol as families, while still furthering Green initiatives.

Remove SROs from our schools! Their presence only sends the message that those children with disciplinary problems are criminals and are doomed to be forsaken in our racially unjust penal system. There is absolutely no evidence that they make schools safer. We are lucky to have a plethora of social work resources in this University town better suited to help children and their families. Demand the schools actually invest in restorative justice training and implementation instead of paying it lipservice and expecting police to do the work. These are data driven solutions.

Hold the entire department to a higher standard with better financial and disciplinary oversight. Banning the use of chokeholds is the very minimum you should be requiring during

upcoming negotiations. Do the research to replace wellness checks, mental health calls, domestic violence issues and substance abuse problems with individuals in our community already trained to handle those situations without a gun.

Your fears of lawlessness speak to your privilege and lack of contact with the actual communities being heavily policed. Theft is the most reported crime which directly stems from lack of economic development and opportunities. Your efforts to bring in business should focus on the Philo Business District first and not after downtown. We don't need more temporary slot machine businesses but large employers that are willing to pay a livable wage.

We know you have tough choices to make but that's not an excuse to delay measurable change. Those of us who are passionate about this and about our community are working hard every day to secure a better future that upholds the values Urbana residents hold so dear; we're expecting the same from you.

Sincerely,
Danielle McFarland

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: [*** QUARANTINE ***] PUBLIC INPUT: June 22 Meeting on Urbana City Budget
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 6:04:22 PM
Importance: Low

Dear City Council members,

I urge you to reduce the funding allocated to the police department in the Urbana City budget, and instead reallocate those funds in order to invest in the community through social services, community development, and infrastructure.

As [Alex Vitale writes](#), a nation-wide pattern of the defunding of social services along with an increase in policing has forced police departments to deal with social issues they were never trained to handle, which has led to the criminalization of homelessness, addiction, and mental illness. While Mayor Marlin states in the budget proposal that "our top priority is public safety, on our streets, in our neighborhoods, and in public schools," interactions between city residents and the police are not defined by safety, but by violence that is disproportionately applied to those who are Black, Indigenous, and/or people of color. In 2019, [Edwards, Hedwig, and Esposito](#) found that 1 in 1,000 Black men are killed by police, and that Black men are 2.5 times more likely to be killed by police than white men. In a study of fatal police shootings in 2015, [Nix and colleagues](#) found that Black people killed by police were twice as likely as white people to be unarmed, and people of color killed by police were less likely to have been attacking police when they were killed. Further, this pattern of police violence can be seen in our own community in the [case](#) of Aleyah Lewis, who was assaulted by Urbana police. In neighboring Champaign, the police's use of excessive force toward protestors this past May 31, [the murder of Richard Turner by police in 2016](#), and [the murder of Kiwane Carrington in 2009](#) illustrate that police violence is an ongoing and county-wide issue. I call on Urbana to lead the way in seeking an end to this violence in order to *truly* foster public safety. Allocating 21% of all city funds, and 32.7% of general operating funds, to the police department, while only allocating 5.2% of general operating funds to "community development" shows that Urbana sadly follows in a nation-wide pattern of misplaced priorities. Further, the city of Urbana is proposing increasing the police budget, which works to dismiss and invalidate the concerns of BIPOC in our community who work again and again to show how their lives are endangered by police presence.

In addition, [the UPD website claims](#) that the police force "is on the cutting edge of law enforcement related mental health response," yet their mental health response is based on the concept of "excited delirium," a "syndrome" that [is not recognized as a mental health condition](#) by the American Psychological Association (APA), the American Medical Association (AMA), or the World Health Organization (WHO), and is also not listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). Suspiciously, excited delirium is also most often "diagnosed" post-hoc in cases where people die in custody after instances of excessive force, and [has been promoted by the corporation Taser International](#), arguably in order to decrease the statistics on the number of people that die as a result of taser use. Further, as Joel Sanders of the UPD reports, police officers receive only 8 hours of training in the Mental Health First Aid program, and fewer members of the department receive the 40-hour Crisis Intervention Training. Despite having a budget of over 10 million dollars, [Sanders stated in 2017](#) that making the CIT program mandatory for all officers would be "difficult for the department cost-wise and because officers need to dedicate a week of on-duty time for it." This statement says less about UPD resource needs and more about where the priorities of the

UPD lie, which is not with adequately preparing officers to work safely with people with mental disorders in our community. Even so, 48 hours - two days - is not enough to prepare any officer to responsibly and safely respond to mental health issues in the field or in their daily lives. By contrast, counselors are required to complete 2,000 to 4,000 hours of supervised clinical practicums in addition to an undergraduate and graduate degree before qualifying for a license. Regardless of your position on the police, encounters with the police are incontrovertibly stressful and traumatic. We should not be sending people who have violent tools at their disposal - guns, tasers, spit hoods, restraints - to "solve" mental health issues in our community, while taking funds away from essential mental health services at the same time. It is telling that in a 264-page budget document, mental health is not mentioned once, nor is a plan for the placement of resources into measures to improve community mental health explicitly outlined.

As a whole, policing is an inherently racist institution, [with roots in slave patrols, the enforcement of Jim Crow legislation, and union-busting](#). Urbana has the opportunity to begin to move away from the misguided idea that police departments contribute to safety, following in the footsteps of Minneapolis. As an example, [the CAHOOTS program](#) has run for 30 years in Eugene, Oregon, where trained social workers respond to over [20% of 911 calls in the area](#), using crisis intervention and de-escalation training to respond to mental health and non-violent encounters that address the problems facing the people involved, rather than treating the people involved as problems and "suspects." Over the course of a year, crisis intervention experts only had to call for police backup 150 times out of 24,000 cases, or 0.006% of the time. In addition, Ben Brubaker, the clinic coordinator, estimates that CAHOOTS saves Eugene approximately \$15 million a year by diverting calls that would otherwise have been handled more expensively through the police or EMS. [Other cities](#) have and are consulting with CAHOOTS to develop their own programs or to imagine alternatives to policing, including Portland, Denver, and Dallas. I urge you to consider placing Urbana on this map as well.

In sum, the police services you're seeking to fund work to further marginalize and harm those who are most hurting in our community. While [the movement to defund the police](#) certainly cannot happen overnight, and does not seek to ignore the problems that police currently address, we also know that policing as a system only exacerbates these problems, and [reform measures do not work](#). While I did not delve into all of the consequences of policing or the possibilities for change here, I would be happy to speak more about this if you have further questions, as I am seeking to listen and learn myself. Please join me in considering what a new vision of safety would look like for our community.

Thank you for your time,
Megan Mericle

From: 
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Tonight's City Council Meeting (6/22)
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 6:04:42 PM

Dear Urbana City Council,

I'm writing with a very straightforward ask—Defund the Urbana Police Department. It is preposterous that the proposed \$11 million police budget for FY 20-21 is more than 150 times that of the total budget allocation for social services. But beyond numbers, it is just as outrageous that these vast sums of money be directed to support such a racist institution as the police at the very same time as the global uprisings we've seen in response to the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, Andrés Guardado, and countless other Black people.

For council members Brown, Roberts, and Miller—In a *Smile Politely* article published on June 18th, you indicated that you believed funding for law enforcement agencies should be reduced and diverted elsewhere. Please use your power and influence here to listen to the residents of Champaign-Urbana, work with us to defund the police, and convince your fellow council members that this is the only way forward on this issue—not *8 Can't Wait*, not Civilian Review Boards, and not the NAACP's 10 steps for police reform. Thank you.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: [*** SPAM ***] Public Input - 6/22/20
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 1:34:32 PM
Importance: Low

Dear City Council,

Nearly 1/3 of the city budget is going to the police. Only 5.2% for community development and a mere pittance for social services is bad enough, but reducing public education funding is even worse. I know the cuts for the latter are going to the fire department, but what if there was another way.

In the middle of nationwide calls to defund the police and reallocate resources (with other cities actually moving forward), maybe Urbana could consider a similar plan. The police do not need that funding more than social services, or community development. And they certainly don't need it more than the schools.

Sincerely,
Richard Miske, Urbana resident

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: Public Input - 6/22/20
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 2:06:00 PM

Please defund the police and reallocate those funds for other community services. The amount of funds earmarked for the police is **obscene** and does nothing to reduce crime. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Sincerely,
Marion Morris
Urbana Resident, Homeowner, and Taxpayer

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 6:02:57 PM

Hello,

As you are doubtlessly aware, the current state of policing has become a front-and-center issue. I am adding my voice to those of numerous others wanting change. I believe in something simple; if we put funding toward other social programs, we'll naturally reduce the need for policing in our community.

Police are overwhelmed with a disconnected cluster of petty duties, and reallocating funds would allow them time to focus on more pressing problems. Over 30% of Urbana's budget goes to the police department. This is simply absurdity, especially when comparing how much other departments of Urbana are receiving. A more balanced budget between libraries, schools, and social programs would be admirable. This way, Urbana would be able to delegate some of the officers' duties to more suitable resources. Basically, by redirecting calls that would be going toward the police stations to more appropriate institutions suited for handling the particular problem at hand, the police department will be saving time, money, and resources.

There are still ongoing problems of violence and crime all over the country, even with police presence. Poverty, homelessness, and mental illness are just a few examples of things that can lead to crime that can be solved with social programs. We need to turn our attention to tackling the root causes. Sometimes, the best solution isn't someone with a firearm showing up. In fact, police presence can escalate a tense situation. We need to consider alternative methods.

The current model is outdated and it is not showing the efficient results it could be. "No society can make a perpetual constitution, or even a perpetual law. The earth belongs always to the living generation. They may manage it then, and what proceeds from it, as they please, during their usufruct." Generations from now, we will see this era as a paradigm shift in the public consciousness. The City of Urbana's future can be that of a leader and model in change.

So, yes, I agree that we should be "defunding the police." I'm sorry if it sounds like a scary next step to take. The phrase has already grown a negative connotation, and I hope that will be seen through. To me, it means the people simply want to redistribute funds to other forms of social work, housing, and education to increase the community's safety net naturally.

Thank you for taking the time to hear the people out.

Sincerely,

Brian Mottashed

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: PUBLIC INPUT 6/22/2020
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 6:44:16 PM

Police violence makes the community unsafe for Black people and other vulnerable groups. Urbana's City Council should reallocate funds currently proposed for the Urbana police to instead support social services and community programs. Police are not social workers--they are not the appropriate respondents to crises related to mental health or homelessness. Invest in social workers, in mental healthcare facilities, in affordable housing, in education, and in community programs that will support Urbana residents, not abuse and incarcerate them.

- Valerie O'Brien, Urbana resident

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: Public Input 6/22/20
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 11:38:33 AM

Hello Urbana City Council Members & Mayor Marlin,

I recently looked over the proposed budget for the City of Urbana in FY21. I was very disappointed to see that 21% of the budget is dedicated to the police while only 12% is dedicated to community development.

The budget's introduction notes that COVID-19 has drastically increased unemployment in our area. For this reason, we need a far larger budget for community development to support Urbana residents living in poverty. Increasing the amount of funding for public works would also create jobs while also fixing our city's infrastructure. I urge the Council to allocate as much money as possible to projects that will actually keep our residents safe, fed, and housed.

Any cuts to the City budget due to COVID-19 and the economic downturn should be taken from the police budget. As someone who believes very strongly that black lives matter, I am in favor of completely abolishing the police. But I understand that this is a substantial project that would need to be enacted carefully and gradually, and with attention to supporting City employees as well as the immediate needs of our community.

But I strongly encourage you and the City Council to start thinking about defunding the Urbana police as a way to create a safer City for ALL of our residents.

Sincerely,

Lesley Owens
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: Public Comment
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 1:16:27 PM

Dear City Council,

I will be brief and to the point. Please do not approve the current proposed budget! It needs amendments. Yes, time is short, but the amendment work will be important. During this time of crisis, we need an increase in funding for community development and public works, not an increase in the police department! Our communities need caring assistance to help make it through these trying times, Not more policing! History has shown, more policing only brings more community trauma and pain, not healing. Police are not the answer to helping this community, most importantly, it is not the solution our community wants. Listen to the people's cries, have empathy. Consider a different path forward, please. Many in the community have a brighter vision and are willing to help pave a better path. Hear, listen, reach out, collaborate, and work with us in the community willing to make Urbana the home we care so deeply for. We are tired of the pain inflicted upon its residents by those in law enforcement. Enough is enough! For the love of all that is good and right, reallocate funds from the police department to community efforts to make Urbana a better home for all!

Thank you for your time,
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: PUBLIC INPUT 6/22
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 6:52:06 PM

I do not believe the budget, as it is currently drafted, reflects the best interests of the community. I would like to see funds currently allocated to the police redirected to community development and/or education.

-Patricia Paulausky

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From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: PUBLIC INPUT June 22 2020
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 4:49:22 PM

To the City Council:

The 2020-2021 proposed budget for our town is disproportionate; an unnecessary amount is allocated to the police department, while community development is massively underfunded. Mayor Marlin says that she is committed to public safety and to maintaining safe and vibrant neighborhoods; the most effective way to do this is to invest in those neighborhoods rather than to increase police presence.

The proposed budget notes that Urbana's unemployment claims are at historic highs, rising to 10.9% in April. In this economic environment Urbana residents need housing assistance and social services; we need the Economic Development division to attract developers and create jobs. The Community Development Services Department needs proper funding to fulfill its mission to improve quality of life for Urbana's residents. The city budget must allocate more funding to community development.

Additionally, Urbana's students are experiencing severe disadvantages from the interrupted school year and the transition to remote learning. To reduce expenditures on public education in this budget is an appalling disservice to our young people. The city budget must allocate more funding to public education.

In contrast, the proposed budget increases its allocation to the police department. Investing in the police department does not enhance Urbanan's economic opportunities, increase neighborhoods' vibrancy, nor does it improve public education. The police are a threatening presence in our most vulnerable neighborhoods, neighborhoods in which residents need assistance, not surveillance. The allocation of the cannabis excise tax to the police department is especially heinous, given the disproportionate impact of cannabis-related arrests in our poorest neighborhoods. This excise tax should instead be invested in developing the communities previously targeted for illegal cannabis use. The city budget must reallocate police funding to more necessary services.

I urge the city council to redistribute the proposed budget's disproportionate allocation from the police department to necessary services of community development and public education.

Thank You,

Elisabeth Potsch

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: [*** SPAM ***] PUBLIC COMMENT
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 5:23:54 PM
Importance: Low

I am writing this as a member of the community who is worried for the future of our town. Over 30 percent of the cities budget going to the police department is too much. Please reduce funding to the police department and invest them into social programs that would benefit the entire community. Things like education and mental health. Domestic violence support. Community centers. This is where the funds should be going. Too much is expected of the police department right now. They are not helping mental health situations. They are not helping people with addictions. In my job, I frequently come across people who are in need of some support, and my only option right now is to call the police for a wellness check. Police presence is intimidating, unhelpful, and frankly, scary. Please reallocate the funds going to Urbana Police Department.

Sincerely,
A concerned citizen



Virus-free. www.avast.com

From: [REDACTED]
To: [!City Council](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT: City of Urbana Proposed Budget
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 12:10:24 PM

Hello Mayor Marlin and city council members,

In the proposed budget for FY2021, it is clearly stated that the city of Urbana's "top priority is public safety, on our streets, in our neighborhoods, and in public schools." While your version of public safety clearly favors ensuring the police have the tools they need to uphold racism and white supremacy, public safety begins from the ground-up in community services such as mental health, early childhood development, and schools. I urge you to reject this budget and instead invest some of that 25% disparity between police funding and community funding back into this community.

This cut in public school funding is unacceptable. How can the mayor and council members of a town that boasts one of the country's top *public* institutions just... cut *public* school funding? Think about how wrong that is, and how complicit you are being in the cycle that fosters oppression and police brutality. I am abhorred that this was a solution introduced and accepted by the city when money was needed for a service that does not benefit all residents.

Additionally, this past year I received an arts grant from the Urbana Public Arts and Culture Commission with the task of reaching out to underserved populations. I have come to ask myself, why are these populations underserved? The answer lies in the 25% difference between funding for the police and funding for community development in this town. Don't make your citizens do the work for you. Invest in your community - practice and cultivate the vibrant, inclusive environment that you preach. Like you're supposed to.

Thank you,

Veronica Severini



From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: [*** QUARANTINE ***] PUBLIC INPUT 6/22/20
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 2:56:01 PM
Importance: Low

Dear Council Members,

With power comes responsibility. Thank you for your continued attention to our community concerns.

This is a historic moment we will look back on, and the question will be: which side were you on? For over two months you have heard consistent testimony that Urbana citizens want to see change in policing, and in specific, to see you take an action, ANY action, towards dropping the charges against Aleyah Lewis who you clearly saw on video being assaulted by the police under your jurisdiction. Yet, as a Council you have taken no action on this, and tomorrow morning Ms. Lewis will have her court date at 8:30am. On a personal note: I invite you to come to the courthouse in support of her. But as a council: I say that inaction is a form of taking sides, and on this matter, you have chosen the status quo over our community safety.

Next, you will decide about budgets, and again we are asking: which side are you on? Continuing to overfund inappropriate responses to community needs? Or investing in our well being? We do not need a person with gun to respond to the majority of what the police are currently called for. If you want community safety, put money into appropriate services.

Merriam Webster recently changed the dictionary definition of racism to include systemic racism. You, councilmembers, are part of that system. If you are not changing it from the inside, you are perpetuating it. Fifty-four percent of Americans [support](#) protests against police violence. This approval rating is higher than for either [Trump](#) and [Biden](#). Mayors and councils all over the country are taking right action in line with community needs. I look forward to your swift and decisive shift toward being on the right side of history.

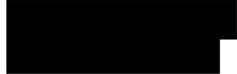
Here is a short list of what your peers, many of whom have much higher crime rates, have already done:

- In San Francisco, unarmed professionals rather than militarized police will now be [responding](#) to non-criminal police calls.
- The mayor of Los Angeles cut the police budget by [100-150 million](#) to reinvest in programs.
- Boston is [cutting](#) \$12 million from its police department in favor of community services.
- The mayor of New York City [announced](#) he would shift an “unspecified” amount of money from the police budget to youth programs.
- The State of Minnesota [filed](#) a civil rights lawsuit against the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD).
- Denver public schools voted unanimously to [remove](#) police from Denver schools.
- The Minneapolis School Board [ended](#) their contract with the police.
- Minneapolis city council [voted](#) unanimously to eliminate its police department and replace it with a community alternative.
- New York [repealed](#) a law which kept police disciplinary records secret, opening them up to the public for the first time in decades.
- Both Urbana and Indianapolis Pride [announced](#) they will not have police at Pride events.

- Louisville temporarily [suspended](#) the use of “no-knock” warrants.
- Minneapolis Parks and Recreation [ended](#) its contract with the police.
- Portland, OR public schools [decided](#) to end the use of police in schools.
- A Denver judge [issued](#) a restraining order limiting the use of tear gas and rubber bullets by police at protests.
- The University of Minnesota [ended its contract](#) with the police.
- Los Angeles put a [moratorium](#) on adding individuals to the police gang database.
- New York City [ended](#) the police enforcement of street vendor violations.
- Transit unions in at least [Minneapolis](#), [Pittsburgh](#), [New York City](#), [Chicago](#), [San Francisco](#), [Washington DC](#), and [Boston](#) refused to transport protesters arrested by the police. In Minneapolis, Boston, and Pittsburgh they also refused to transport police.
- Seattle’s central Labor Council (MLK Labor) [threatened](#) to expel the Seattle Police Officers Guild from the body.
- Officials from both parties in Congress were forced to [announce](#) putting limits on sending military equipment to local police departments.
- Fuji Bikes [suspended](#) the sale of bicycles to police departments.

We will get there, too, with or without you. But, I look forward to saying that you led us in joining the right side of history.

Be well,
Elizabeth Simpson



--

I don't have a pronoun preference, but I respect yours.

[Why I put pronoun information in my email](#)

“We are not to simply bandage the wounds of victims beneath the wheels of injustice, we are to drive a spoke into the wheel itself.”

– Dietrich Bonhoeffer

From: [REDACTED]
To: [!City Council](#); [! Roberts, Dennis](#)
Subject: Public Input - 6.22.20
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 6:35:04 PM

First off, I would like to express my disappointment in all of City Council and Mayor Marlin for their fragrant disregard of the concerns of their constituents. A few meetings ago I engaged with City Council via email for the first time ever. I was and still am DISGUSTED by the tactics used by Urbana Police to "apprehend" Ms. Lewis on April 10th and wanted to let the people who represent me know that it would be an absolute perversion of justice to reappoint Chief Seraphin - the man who found "no wrongdoing" in his Use of Force Review of this case. If you deemed it appropriate to hire in an independent review, how could you all in good faith hand him a reappointment?

If the independent review finds differently, will he then be demoted for protecting his fellow officers over the citizens he swore to serve? None of this passes the smell test with the public - from the arrest- to the unnecessary violence used to detain - to the officers telling a citizen with rights and agency to "act like a lady" - to the Chief's "no wrongdoing" findings. Frankly, it stinks like cops protecting cops.

Luckily, I was not alone in my email!

Many of my neighbors and fellow Urbana residents also voiced their opposition to being policed this way.

We are not "going away".

Rip all 250 pages of your budget to shreds and start over by dramatically reallocating funds FROM the police, TO community development in low income neighborhoods. The people you represent believe we are spending entirely too much on the bloated, armed-to-the-teeth police force.

Diane Marlin referring to the fact that we are cutting funds to public education in order to pay for necessities in the Fire Department as "unfortunate" is an egregious misnomer. It doesn't HAVE TO get taken from education.

Take money from the grossly overfunded police.

Enough talk! The public is losing faith in you as a way to enact change. Enough pushing these changes down the line for the next council members or mayor to deal with. YOU have the power to force these systemic changes to policing and Urbana is urging you to do so.

DROP ALL CHARGES AGAINST MS. LEWIS

Nicholas Stine
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: PUBLIC INPUT June 22, 2020
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 1:05:25 PM

I'm writing in support of decreasing the amount of money for police FY 20-21 proposed budget, and increasing budget allotment for community development. Considering the actions of Urbana PD during the arrest of Aleyah Lewis (failure to de-escalate, punching a woman who was already pinned down by two officers, inexplicably carrying rifles), it's clear that the people of Urbana need more options—we need to invest in social services to support the well-being of our community.

Sincerely,

Miriam Tworek-Hofstetter

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: Public Input for 6/22/20
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 1:00:29 PM

Using more than 30% of the proposed budget, or even 20% of the budget including grants, while investing 5% to community development is unacceptable and shows a lack of attention to constituents as well as a non-regard for the need for societal progression.

Police officers hold responsibilities that they are simply not qualified or trained for. The implementation of community development investments on a scale that measures to that of the police will balance those scales and allow the police to focus on issues that require their specific set of training, lessening the load on officers and building strength in communities that desperately need these resources.

Social workers, addiction specialists, and other agents of community development will help treat the root cause of crime. This will further lessen the load on officers and create space to develop a healthy relationship between the population and police.

I request, as a constituent standing alongside many constituents, the council readdress this budget to move funds out of the police department and into necessary community development programs.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT: 22 June Budget Hearing
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 3:14:59 PM

Dear Urbana City Council Members,

As cities across the country begin to rethink their budgets in the wake of ongoing racist police violence, I am happy to see council members Jared Miller, Dennis Roberts, and Bill Brown express their interest in defunding Urbana police and reallocating funds for other community services, as they did in a recent Smile Politely survey. In the same piece, Mayor Diane Marlin, Maryalice Wu, and Shirese Hursey express an openness to the possibility. I am disappointed that Eric Jakobson and William Colbrook refused to respond. I think that Mayor Marlin and other members' expressed interest in "community input on [these] decisions" calls for another look at the city budget, which currently allocates more of the city's general operating fund to the police than to any other expenditure. The question of policing is not simply a matter of trust but the actual form of a community. The ongoing calls for local justice, which I support, the fact that black people are disproportionately stopped relative to Urbana's larger population, and concerns about the effectiveness of the Citizen Police Review Board are about structure, and budgets are moments in which communities can take new shapes, where funds can be reallocated for public education, community, and social services. I want to call on the Urbana City Council to vote on a budget that has taken community input into account.

Aidan Watson-Morris
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: [*** SPAM ***] PUBIC INPUT 6/22/20
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 3:18:13 PM
Importance: Low

Dear Urbana City Council,

Please defund the police by allocating the majority of the proposed police budget of \$11,197,190 to social services. The current proposed budget for social services is not enough to meet the needs of our community, while the police's presence in our community is unwelcome and overfunded.

Respectfully,
Lilly Wright