

## July 28, 2020 Asheville City Council Meeting Email Public Comments

DATE/TIME	SUBJECT	TEXT				
7/15/2020 6:02:00 PM	Black Lives Matter	<p>Excuse me..... Todays issues in the BLACK communities are not from slavery hundreds of year ago..that diatribe has run its course and is out of gas with the majority of citizens. The issue that BLACKS have to look at is THEMSELVES in a mirror.....why democrat lead cities have ignored the root causes and issues, without blaming Cops and Republicans for their woes.... Black families, where are they, where are the Black fathers that father children one night and are gone the next. Who are raising Black kids, where are their role models, where is dad? What about the 20 million BLACK aborted kids that NOBODY wanted but mom and dad sure had fun making them!!! Where are YOUR morals, where is GOD in your lives?? Why with BILLIONS of dollars spent on public inner city education arent BLACK kids learning?? Why are they out on the streets instead of in school??? Its so easy to BLAME others for YOUR issues....YOU BLACKS need to look in the mirror and FIX YOUR issues at the root cause level.. Black Lives Matter, Sure!!! But so do all of our lives and WHY am I racist because I say this?? WHO IS HATING WHO?? Get an education, learn some skills, get a job, earn your own way, earn respect...dont use Slavery as an excuse for you Black A\$\$'s....</p>				
7/15/2020 6:11:00 PM	Not moving to your city, after all.	<p>City council members:</p> <p>I currently live in Virginia and have been working to relocate to North Carolina. I have visited your city in the past and enjoyed my time there. Until I read the recent news about your decision to give black reparations I was planning to move to Asheville. I am not a racist, and I stand firmly against reparations.</p> <p>My father came to the USA from Germany in 1924, and my mother's family came here in 1905 from Canada. I have NO connection to slavery and the history of the USA at that time. I will not move to a city that plans to use my tax money for this purpose.</p> <p>The history of slavery is in the past. Most black Americans cannot trace their personal history to the 1800's before 1865. In fact, most young Americans today have very little knowledge of our country's history. Whenever a particular group gets special treatment, by default the rest are denied equal consideration.</p> <p>Nancy Gruttman-Tyler</p> <p>Hampton, Virginia</p>				

7/25/2020 5:32:00 PM	BUDGET: 50% Defunding Opinion	<p>*Dear Asheville City Council, *</p> <p> </p> <p>*50% DE-FUNDING DOES NOT MEAN NO POLICE!*</p> <p> </p> <p>*It means putting that money where it can work more effectively, more humanely, and with better community support. *</p> <p> </p> <p>The Asheville Police Department's current and historical *tactics, militarization, weaponry, lack of accountability, documented racism, public perception, and refusal to comply with the demands of the communities they serve* point to a system that is dangerous and flawed.</p> <p> </p> <p>The police are being asked to routinely perform social services that are not appropriate for their training or for their role.</p> <p> </p> <p>Stories of people of color, and others, across our city points to repeated and ongoing fear and abuse.</p> <p> </p> <p>*Even the officers deserve better than what they have now. *</p> <p> </p> <p>*It's time for a change, and that time is now. *</p> <p> </p> <p>CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM IS NEXT!</p> <p> </p> <p>*Join Us in Re-Allocating Funds Towards: *</p> <p> </p> <p>*- Reparations. *</p> <p>- Social Services.</p> <p>- Medical Security.</p> <p>- Income Security.</p> <p> </p> <p>*- Protection for Keeping our Houses. *</p> <p>- Mental Health.</p> <p>- Reducing the Prison Population.</p> <p>- Making our Communities Less Violent.</p> <p> </p> <p>*- Creating More Jobs in Non-Crime Sectors. *</p> <p>- Justice and Equality for Everyone.</p> <p> </p> <p>*EVEN AS WE WORK TO CHANGE THE SYSTEM, YOU CAN HELP US UPHOLD DEMOCRACY. *</p> <p> </p> <p>*We ask You (Police and Officials) To Pledge to Help Everyone: *</p> <p> </p> <p>- Protect the Right To Vote — Both for In-Person and Mail-In-Voting.</p> <p>- Uphold the Right to Gather and Protest, and have Conversations in Public Space.</p> <p>- Join Us in Pushing For Reparations, and for the 50% Police Budget Funding Reallocations.</p> <p> </p> <p>Sincerely,</p>			
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7/26/2020 12:49:00 AM	Budget amendment	<p>Hello,</p> <p>I am writing to urge City Council to make significant amendments to the FY 20-21 budget. Asheville is an increasingly gentrifying city which is influenced by a deficit in living wage jobs, affordable housing (i.e. housing in Fair Market Rent ranges), comprehensive public transportation, and lack of accessible mental health and substance use services.</p> <p>Immediate action City Council can and must take is to cut the Asheville Police Department budget by at least 50%. Police are not equipped to serve in the roles that they are being asked. Homeless camps should be responded to by homeless service providers, mental health crises should be responded to by peer support workers and/or licensed mental health professionals and intoxicated individuals should be met by substance use providers. Currently, we're asking police officers to do a job that isn't theirs. It's unfair to police and it's unfair to the community. Further, police have demonstrated aggressive and dangerous responses to the community, violating human rights and causing harm.</p> <p>Asheville lauds itself as a "progressive" community. If this were true, we wouldn't be among the fastest gentrifying cities in the country. It's time to walk the walk; make adjustments to FY 20-21 budget immediately. The police are grossly overfunded and must have their budget cut by at least 50% to be re-allocated to meaningful community programs to serve Asheville residents.</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Kate Caton</p>				
7/26/2020 3:30:00 PM	Interim Budget and silencing the community	<p>Greetings All,</p> <p>I just wanted to say, I find it fairly disturbing and disappointing to see my city's government attempting to silence the voices of this community. You are choosing to not play public comment recordings or consider emails while making it harder and more daunting to make a live comment. This seems an attempt to repress voices and squash the movement that the community is creating to reform police (tear gas abolition? where is that item on the agenda?) and reallocate funds to the black community. You have taken some steps towards supporting black folks in Asheville (i.e. mural, removal of monuments, supposed reparations committee), but they seem to be hiding that fact that you won't take true steps towards the reforms this community needs and is demanding (defunding the police and actually giving reparations to the black community). Your superficial actions also seem geared towards improving the city's image in the news back to a positive one (away from the brutal actions of the police during protests), which this city doesn't deserve until TRUE reform happens.</p> <p>We are still watching and will not give up on this.</p> <p>Also, when and how will the "public engagement" be rolled out for the 2020/21 city budget that you keep pushing back? You continue to buy yourself time with this promise, it allows you to adopt more interim budgets that don't include cuts to the police. We know this, you cannot fool people.</p> <p>All the best, Jason Linguanti (A very concerned resident)</p>				

7/26/2020 4:09:00 PM	Defund APD	<p>My name is Ebonie Morris, I'm emailing to demand an immediate defunding of the Asheville Police Department. For far too long this racist institution has terrorized our communities and neighbors. Myself included. We do not need funds for more cops, tear gas, and hatred. The Asheville Police department is the largest per-capita department of any city in the state. Every dollar spent on this bloated police force is stolen from the rest of us. Defund the Asheville Police Department by 50% immediately. Those funds need to be under direct community control to address this city's long oppression of Black communities. We are sick of the council's delay tactics and refusal to act. Defund now. No Excuses. This is not an ask, this is a demand.</p>				
7/26/2020 4:29:00 PM	Budget vote	<p>Hello, all,</p> <p>I'm writing to reiterate the urgent need to defund the Asheville Police Department by at least fifty percent in the budget you will vote on July 28th, &amp; by the same amount or more in all future budgets as part of the process of abolition. These funds can be used for community safety, support &amp; wellbeing in other more pointed &amp; anti-racist forms.</p> <p>Past comment to the council suggests that this city can lessen crime by focusing on eliminating poverty, improving &amp; expanding public housing, high (fair) wage work, accessible childcare &amp; education, &amp; transportation. Please vote to work toward the realization of a healthy community with safe, non-discriminatory, anti-racist options for support &amp; one that must not fight over material resources.</p> <p>With thanks for your work,</p> <p>Johanna Zalesky Asheville 28806</p>				
7/26/2020 7:41:00 PM	Open Public Comment for Meeting 7.28.2020	<p>DO NOT Defund the police. Asheville is already a dangerous city thanks to the city council tying the hands of the police and it's a laughing stock. Vacation sites all over the US are listing Asheville as dangerous. I only go uptown for dance recitals and am terrified for those young girls and their families once they begin again. Why have you allowed thugs to take over the city? I would love to stand with the Back the Blue meeting but won't come up town because you are backing the thugs you have bowed down to. Why are you doing this? Are you going to make the thugs pay for the damage - I certainly don't own for any.</p> <p>P.T.Kanipe Asheville</p>				
7/26/2020 8:09:00 PM	Defund the Police	<p>City Council Members:</p> <p>My name is Amanda Citro, and I am urging you all to take action to defund the police department in Asheville by at least 50%. All eyes are on the City Council's upcoming budget meeting. The community of Asheville is full of frustration, as we have yet to see movement toward substantive change on racial justice in Asheville, just more committees and delays. We need more money going toward deeply affordable housing, transportation, and resources for the community. We know that social support within communities decreases crime. We need stronger communities, not tear gas and violence against our community members. Defund the police, now. We are waiting on you to act on behalf of the welfare of the community.</p> <p>Amanda Citro</p>				

7/26/2020 8:18:00 PM	Comment for Public Hearing item E (Budget Proposal)	<p>My name is Ursula, I live in West Asheville, and I'm demanding an immediate defunding of the Asheville Police Department. For far too long this racist institution has terrorized our communities and neighbors. We do not need funds for more cops, tear gas, and hatred. The Asheville Police department is the largest per-capita department of any city in the state. Every dollar spent on this bloated police force is stolen from the rest of us. Defund the Asheville Police Department by 50% immediately. Those funds need to be under direct community control to address this city's long oppression of Black communities. We are sick of the council's delay tactics and refusal to act. Defund now. No Excuses. This is not an ask, this is a demand.</p> <p>Ursula Marie Wren</p>				
7/26/2020 8:33:00 PM	City Council public hearing subject 'E'	<p>Hello Asheville City Council, my name is Harris Wagner. I am writing to you again about the budget for the 2020-21 fiscal year. I understand that there will be 3 months in which the proposed budget will be in effect, and during said period there will be public engagement to decide on potential changes to the APD budget. It is imperative that concrete steps are taken in order to ensure the process of defunding the APD and reallocating those funds to more appropriate non-armed/militarized response units. This change of armament will inherently reduce the budget along with the reallocation of funds to other facets of Asheville City Government.</p> <p>I also propose that before September there be reallocation of APD funding towards the approved reparations for black residents of Asheville. The unanimous vote to approve said reparations is a wonderful step for which I commend the City Council, however now is the time to act, plan and allocate. There are currently no specifics on how the reparations will be delivered, please change that. Allow for public input, especially from said black residents, as to what resources are needed.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and understanding.</p> <p>-Harris Wagner</p> <p>--</p> <p>*Harris Wagner* harris.r.wagner@gmail.com</p>				
7/26/2020 8:48:00 PM	Item E: We Believe in a Better Future	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I'm writing in regards to public hearing item E and to demand an immediate defunding of the Asheville Police department - this means now. No more empty promises. This structure of racist institutions has terrorized communities and beloved neighbors for far too long (too long, meaning it never should have happened). We do not need to fund more cops. Defund the AVLpd by at least 50% immediately.</p> <p>The AVLpd is the largest per-capita department of any city in the state. Every dollar spent on them is a dollar wasted investing in communities and truly healthy, safe communities - not communities that are disproportionately policed and bodies disproportionately disposed of in the streets. The funds of the AVLpd need to be under direct community control. We believe in a better future. We are sick of the city council's refusal to act, and their empty promises, and the straw man that is the "health and healing" of this town. We don't want your excuses. We see through them, and you. As city council members you have a duty to follow the demands of the people and we have one, simple one: defund now.</p> <p>In expectation,</p> <p>Catelynn Hendrick AVL resident</p>				

7/26/2020 9:27:00 PM	Basic human rights and equal opportunity	<p>Hello council,</p> <p>I'm writing to you to say that I demand reparations be implemented in the black community here in Asheville IMMEDIATELY.</p> <p>We need to defund the police by at least 50 percent.</p> <p>What I mean and what I'm asking for when it comes to implementing these changes:</p> <p>*We need to reallocate our city's budget and funding to care for, protect, and rebuild opportunities in the black and brown community here in ASHEVILLE, starting by doing some of the following:*</p> <p>*Affordable and accessible childcare for low income families</p> <p>*Affordable housing IN town, in all neighborhoods and - in an actual real way.</p> <p>*We need focus and funds being re-allocated to shelters and nonprofit organizations *that in practice we can be sure are welcoming to those in our LGBTQIA + community at all times, especially now during this pandemic. *</p> <p>*We need free and accessible mass transit in general!</p> <p>*We need mass transit to run later in the evening and earlier in the day. * Many people who have been pushed out by our inflating tourist culture can not afford to live where they work, they rely on getting there *and* getting home</p> <p>* We need to spend the time to radically diversify our city loans by approving more grants, loans and funding to the *black &amp; brown entrepreneurs in our community !*</p> <p>Angel Olsen</p>				
7/26/2020 10:09:00 PM	Increased property taxes	<p>I understand there is a move to pay for local Covid19 expenses, &amp; perhaps the civil rights demonstrations &amp; related costs by raising property taxes as the source of revenue.</p> <p>The burden of these costs should be shared by the local community and or county community not just property owners.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>Kieta Osteen-Cochrane</p> <p>Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android</p>				
7/26/2020 11:25:00 PM	Defund APD	<p>My name is Kelly Sanderson and I am asking you to defund the Asheville Police Department. Please channel at least 30% of the previous budget to other community programs, most importantly COVID relief.</p> <p>I will be watching the council meetings and your ability to earn my vote depends on this.</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Kelly</p> <p>Sent from my iPhone</p>				

7/27/2020 12:03:00 AM	Written Comment	<p>Dear city council,</p> <p>I am a resident of North Asheville and the community is demanding an immediate defunding of the Asheville Police Department.</p> <p>We do not need funds for more cops, tear gas, and hatred. The Asheville Police department is the largest per-capita department of any city in the state. Every dollar spent on this bloated police force is stolen from the rest of us.</p> <p>Defund the Asheville Police Department by 50% immediately. Those funds need to be under direct community control to address this city's long oppression of Black and Brown communities.</p> <p>We are sick of the council's delay tactics and refusal to act.</p> <p>Defund now. No Excuses. This is not an ask, this is a DEMAND.</p> <p>We also will be seeking action if our public comments continue to be censored. Be aware of this.</p>				
7/27/2020 12:34:00 AM	Interim Budget	<p>Dear Asheville City Council,</p> <p>My name is Claire Solomon and I live in Asheville. You recently voted to provide reparations through funding for programs that will uplift Black people in our community. While I believe your decision was an excellent first step in bringing racial justice to our city, I am still concerned about the resolution's lack of concrete details. The next step in this process is to defund the racist, dangerous, ineffective APD by at least 50% and invest these funds into community programs in accordance with Black Asheville Demands. This is how we will strengthen our community. This is how we will prevent crime and keep people safe. This is how we will begin to hold ourselves accountable for the injustice Black people and people of color have suffered at our hands for hundreds of years. We demand a detailed draft budget and the promised community engagement process. We urge you to listen. Thank you.</p> <p>Sincerely, Claire Solomon</p>				
7/27/2020 1:28:00 AM	Public Hearing E	<p>My name is Dennis Byrne, I'm writing in because I refuse to allow you to spend \$450-\$700 per officer on riot gear to use on citizens of this city. You were elected by us and work for us. You cannot allow the citizens become victims of macho ego and under trained, under vetted, cops. I am demanding an immediate defunding of the Asheville Police Department. For far too long this racist institution has terrorized our communities and neighbors. We do not need funds for more cops, tear gas, and hatred. The Asheville Police department is the largest per-capita department of any city in the state. Every dollar spent on this bloated police force is stolen from the rest of us. Defund the Asheville Police Department by 50% immediately. Those funds need to be under direct community control to address this city's long oppression of Black communities. We are sick of the council's delay tactics and refusal to act. Defund now. No Excuses. This is not an ask, this is a demand. You must act, your jobs are at risk. We won't stop and there are more of us than there are of you. We are energized, educated, united and unrelenting.</p>				

7/27/2020 1:40:00 AM	V. Public Hearing E. Fiscal Year 20-21 Annual Operating Budget - Divest from APD	<p>City Council Members,</p> <p>My name is Jody Escaravage and I am an Asheville community member who works, volunteers, and spends money in this City. As a person concerned about my neighbors who are Black and Brown people, I am writing to you regarding the upcoming budget hearing to ask you to *please divest from the Asheville Police Department and reinvest in Black communities in Asheville*.</p> <p>It is my understanding that during this budget hearing you will approve funds for the general and enterprise funds through September 2020, as stated in the agenda &lt;<a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Sg4mHD_HAUCVHvKhoQ1zUT_9f51-LIJ5/view">https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Sg4mHD_HAUCVHvKhoQ1zUT_9f51-LIJ5/view</a>&gt;.</p> <p>When the Budget approval was cancelled on 6/9/2020, it was reportedly because the City was willing to consider changes to policing in Asheville, and that those changes would be identified and explored by engaging the community in a transparent process. The City's residents have yet to be engaged in the rethinking of City policing and there has been no word from you as the City Council on whether you are committed to the community's demand for a divestment from the Asheville Police Department (APD) of at least 50%, a reinvestment of those funds into our communities, and what kind of draft budget for the Asheville Police Department might be considered in the process.</p> <p>I have also come to understand that the Asheville Police Department has developed a proposal for something they call "Community Engagement" that involves a homeless outreach team, a mental health addiction coordinator, an integrity unit, and a gun violence reduction strategy. I could see how on the surface, these things might sound like they could be good for our community, but I implore you to see that they are not, and that *these are not issues to which Police Officers should be responding*. Homelessness and addiction are not crimes and people experiencing them are too often harmed by police "responding" to them. APD has not behaved in a way that leads me as a community member to believe they should be trusted with ensuring their own integrity. Prevention of gun violence can be expected to occur by meeting communities' deepest needs. It does not seem appropriate to put any of these programs in the hands of the police, but it does seem appropriate to divest from the police and put those funds into actual community safety and well-being.</p> <p>Please, during this public budget hearing, heed the call by Black Asheville and *divest from the APD starting now*, *pledge to divest from the APD at least 50% for the future*, and *plan for engagement with the Black community on how those funds can be reallocated to truly ensure public safety*.</p> <p>Thank you for your time,</p> <p>Jody Escaravage</p>				
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7/27/2020 1:41:00 AM	Public Hearing E	<p>Hello City Council,</p> <p>I am a City of Asheville Employee. I've been waiting patiently to see how you and the City Manager's office would respond to the events of the last several weeks. It's been disappointing to see nothing tangible. Yes, the Vance has been covered up and yes there is a shiny new BLM mural on the ground, and there was a weak and meaningless resolution passed on reparations. But there has been no movement on an investigation of the actions of the police department, the police chief, or the city manager during the protests. There has been no response to public records requests that have been submitted asking for the communications that took place between the chief, the city manager, the council, the city attorney, etc. And it appears that there is being nothing proposed in the budget to respond to the demands of the black community.</p> <p>Transparency is what is needed right now, and nothing you are doing is transparent. The budget that you are being asked to pass tonight is less than 8 pages. Yes, I know it is only a 2 month budget, but you should not be approving something that has literally no information in it. It is merely a bunch of total expenditures by department. What is this evening telling you? It certainly isn't telling the public anything. You can not adopt a budget that includes zero information. What is the \$7 plus million for the police department going to be used for? This amount appears to be more than 2 months worth of budget for the police department.</p> <p>I'm disappointed that you haven't asked for a more detailed line by line budget from your city manager and finance director. The least that could have been provided was a detailed interim budget.</p> <p>Sam Smith</p>				
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7/27/2020 1:53:00 AM	Funding the Asheville Police Department	<p>Dear Asheville City Council Members,</p> <p>My name is William H. Schlosser and I reside in Asheville. I wish to voice my opposition to defunding the Asheville Police Department. I believe that to defund the police, especially in these increasingly chaotic times, would constitute a breach of your primary obligation as governing officials to maintain law and order to the benefit of all Asheville citizens and visitors to our community.</p> <p>Day after day we are witnessing mass outbreaks of rioting, vandalism, looting, arson, murder and other major crimes in cities across America. It is shockingly apparent that wherever law enforcement services are inadequate, especially in cities where police officers are ordered to stand down, violent crime will explode out of control, to the endangerment of all.</p> <p>People will choose to visit a city or not, reside in a city or leave, depending on whether or not they feel safe and secure. Who now wants to take their family to visit, much less to move to, Portland, Seattle, Minneapolis, Chicago or even NYC? To the contrary, I'm hearing that people are moving out of those cities in droves, particularly the more affluent, who pay more in taxes. Why stay and pay taxes to governments which fail to provide security?</p> <p>Having lived and worked here for a quarter century, I've seen Asheville blossom into a major tourist destination. But increasingly in recent years visitors have told me that they were disappointed by the uncleanness of our sidewalks, or were intimidated or threatened by a growing number of panhandlers and drunken or disorderly persons they encountered on our downtown streets. Some said they won't be visiting Asheville again. And several people I know are planning on moving out.</p> <p>Evidently police personnel were stretched too thin to thoroughly patrol our downtown area even before any current unrest. If in the future our police force, diminished by defunding, is no longer able to maintain any reasonable semblance of civil order, might not the federal government then be inclined to step in, as we're seeing with DHS and other federal agencies now deployed in Portland, Chicago and other cities? How much of our civic institutions and authority do we wish to yield here, and at what ultimate cost?</p> <p>There is much nobility of purpose and of spirit among the dedicated men and women who comprise the APD. They are our fellow citizens who are vital to the safety and well-being of all members of our community. They are indispensable guardians of our civil order. We need to let them know we value their service and appreciate the dangerous and difficult work that they do. Please do not reduce funding for our law enforcement professionals. Invest in them instead with better training and equipment options to make them the best guardians of our mutual security that they can be.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>William H. Schlosser</p>				
7/27/2020 2:41:00 AM	Demand	<p>My name is Jodie Karr, I am writing to demand an immediate defunding of the Asheville Police Department. For far too long this racist institution has terrorized our communities and neighbors. We do not need funds for more cops, tear gas, and hatred. The Asheville Police Department is the largest per-capita department of any city in the state. Every dollar spent on this bloated police force is stolen from the rest of us. Defund the Asheville Police Department by 50% immediately. Those funds need to be under direct community control to address this city's long oppression of Black communities. We are sick of the council's delay tactics and refusal to act. Defund now. No Excuses. This is not an ask, this is a demand!!</p>				

7/27/2020 3:56:00 AM	Public Input _ 2021 Budget	<p>Hey,</p> <p>My name is Dani -- I live in West Asheville and have been a resident of Asheville for over 10 years. I am commenting on the 2021 proposed budget for the Asheville Police Department. It's astonishingly high compared to other sectors or of our city's fiscal budget and likely one of our least important departments when compared to our city's education, transportation, affordable housing and homelessness resources. When doing research on what our Police Department actually responds to, I found out that less than 1% of calls are for violent crimes. Most of the time the police are contacted for a suspicious person, cars parked in places they shouldn't be and welfare checks. The reality is that police are dangerous and tend to escalate situations, puts people at risk (especially bipoc folks) and leads to violence. We as people and as a city are capable of building more trusted networks of safety and mutual aid, which allow us to handle issues and conflicts on our own. If I'm concerned for my well being or my property, I will call my neighbor.</p> <p>I want to see the AVLDP defunded by at least 50% and prohibit them from using money from other budget lines. This is also in effort to stand in solifarity with our black community, who we need to be investing in.</p> <p>Defund the police and re-allocate that money to help guarantee meaningful job opportunities for our black community members, offer affordable housing and property tax breaks for our black residents, provide restorative justice programs, public transportation, education, physical and mental health services.</p> <p>We need to get rid of all police surveillance, which is targeted at low income housing projects and black and brown neighborhoods. We also need to drastically decrease police funding as a way to de-militarize our police force, who used tear gas and rubber bullets against children at protests. There is also no need for our police to have access to assault rifles. Defund and disarm!</p> <p>Dani Giannone They/Them/Theirs Project Manager 914.406.5505</p>				
7/27/2020 4:44:00 AM	Public Comment Defund APD	<p>AshevilleCityCouncilJuly282020@PublicInput.com DEFUND APD!!! The Asheville Police department does NOT protect its citizens. It has been proven by arrest data that Black citizens are disproportionately charged. This is because APD targets Black citizens. We want Asheville to be a safe place where ALL citizens are safe and can prosper, not just the white and rich. All aspects of our budget need to be re-evaluated to ensure the money is going to our community and to help the people who actually live here. You must make this commitment to protect your citizens. Funds must be reallocated to the Black community, and Black voices must be involved in these decisions. Do what's right and best for your community for once. Defund the Asheville Police Department by at least 50%.</p> <p>I'm commenting to demand an immediate defunding of the Asheville Police Department. For far too long this racist institution has terrorized our communities and neighbors. We do not need funds for more cops, tear gas, and hatred. The Asheville Police department is the largest per-capita department of any city in the state. Every dollar spent on this bloated police force is stolen from the rest of us. Defund the Asheville Police Department by 50% immediately. Those funds need to be under direct community control to address this city's long oppression of Black communities. We are sick of the council's delay tactics and refusal to act. Defund now. No Excuses. This is not an ask, this is a demand.</p>				

7/27/2020 1:06:00 PM	Defund APD	<p>Dear Council,</p> <p>I'm writing to demand an immediate defunding of the Asheville Police Department. For far too long this racist institution has terrorized our communities and neighbors. We do not need funds for more cops, tear gas, and hatred. The Asheville Police department is the largest per-capita department of any city in the state. Every dollar spent on this bloated police force is stolen from the rest of us. Defund the Asheville Police Department by 50% immediately. Those funds need to be under direct community control to address this city's long oppression of Black communities. It is time to act, and not symbolically. This demand is clear and consistent.</p> <p>Thank you, Sarah</p>				
7/27/2020 1:06:00 PM	Public Comment	<p>Good morning,</p> <p>I am writing in regard to the upcoming budget decision and asking that you listen to the voices of the citizens asking you to defund Asheville PD. The police are meant for citizen protection and, until they are doing this job well, they do not need full funding. Funds should go to other aspects of public life such as housing or education.</p> <p>Summer Winkler West Asheville</p>				
7/27/2020 1:56:00 PM	City Budget 2020	<p>Hello, I am writing to add my voice to the many demanding a 50% budget cut for the local Asheville Police Department. This agency is overfunded and does not protect or serve the vast majority of the local community- only the wealthy and business owners. There are many areas where this money can go that will actually help- investing in communities of color, working toward fixing the effects of rampant racism that has always (and still) exists in our country. Also, programs that help low income folks of any color will go further toward preventing crime than any police department ever could. I am a 20 year resident of Asheville, a public figure with a wide audience, and I will not vote for and will actively and loudly campaign against any elected official who does not vote to defund, by at least 50%, the police force.</p> <p>Sparrow Kettner</p>				
7/27/2020 2:00:00 PM	Citizens want to defund Police. Hear us	<p>Asheville has taken steps toward reparations, but we need that to be more than a publicity stunt. Real action needs to include defunding the Asheville Police Department by 50% immediately. Those funds need to be under direct community control to address this city's long oppression of Black communities. The community is watching your actions and will not be swayed by empty promises. It's time to be a real leader and role model for the rest of the country. Do not miss this opportunity to be on the right side of history.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Bethany Kurrus, Buncombe county resident</p>				
7/27/2020 2:01:00 PM	Citizens want to defund Police. Hear us	<p>Asheville has taken steps toward reparations, but we need that to be more than a publicity stunt. Real action needs to include defunding the Asheville Police Department by 50% immediately. Those funds need to be under direct community control to address this city's long oppression of Black communities. The community is watching your actions and will not be swayed by empty promises. It's time to be a real leader and role model for the rest of the country. Do not miss this opportunity to be on the right side of history.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Bethany Kurrus, Buncombe county resident</p>				

7/27/2020 2:02:00 PM		<p>For far too long this racist institution has terrorized our communities and neighbors. We do not need funds for more cops, tear gas, and hatred. The Asheville Police department is the largest per-capita department of any city in the state. Every dollar spent on this bloated police force is stolen from the rest of us. Defund the Asheville Police Department by 50% immediately. Those funds need to be under direct community control to address this city's long oppression of Black communities. We are sick of the council's delay tactics and refusal to act. Defund now. No Excuses. This is not an ask, this is a demand."</p>				
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7/27/2020 2:10:00 PM	Public Input 7/28 ACC mtg	<p>Dear Asheville City Council Members,</p> <p>I'm writing to you as a twenty plus year resident of Asheville, NC. Voting for the Reparations Commission two weeks ago was a big step, and congratulations on making national news headlines, though they are meaningless without implementation.</p> <p>Now for the next step, actually making the budget changes to invest in the community. Defunding from the APD budget by 50% will solve a lot of issues.</p> <p>I realize that this is a departure from what people have considered to be the norm. Policing was created to defend property, and came out of a connection to lynchings and the work of the hate enacted by the ku klux klan, which eventually melded completely into law enforcement. We have seen an increased militarization of all law enforcement, though the U.S. certainly has always been engaged in wars and this culture extends to its citizens, as well. This is brutality at its core, and to change it, policing needs to shift. Police have too many responsibilities, and reforms can redesign the ways that police members can engage with their communities and completely change the face, also, of law enforcement. I haven't seen any evidence of the APD engaging with the community with this renewed opportunity to do so, and attempting to make their own reforms. It will have to be a statement from the community speaking through their policies. Don't you believe that it's time for a humane approach to our societal issues that have inequity at their heart?</p> <p>There's a lot to focus on right now, but healing our past has to be part of our future. We need to recognize that we stand on the land of the Eastern Cherokee that was stolen and colonized by white settlers who enslaved Africans and used their labor through sheer brutality, rape, which created massive generational trauma to both colonizers and the brutalized. We need new thinking on every level of society to look at the past as we move forward with awareness, and social programs that actually meet the needs of our community during this pandemic and beyond.</p> <p>The abolitionist movement continues because slavery continues through the systems of white supremacy that are embedded in every layer of the united states government. policing and incarceration are part of some of the more intense versions of that system because Black and Brown folks are disproportionately pulled over, jailed, and incarcerated at percentages that are glaring, alarming, and intolerable any longer. TAKE MONEY AWAY FROM THESE PUNITIVE AND RACIST SYSTEMS OF OPPRESSION and instead, invest in community programs that make the city of Asheville a more humane place that gives back to its citizens, and invests in the Black and Brown folks who have lived here for generations—and been marginalized, silenced, and left out of the financial gain that came to white developers and restaurateurs.</p> <p>Instead of just posing like a shining gem of progressivism from afar, do something real.</p> <p>DEFUND THE ASHEVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT AND STOP PADDING LAW ENFORCEMENT WITH MORE AND MORE EXTRAS. These times call for our humanity, not a hands-off approach to slow genocide. Criminal Justice reform is CRITICAL at this juncture. Do not be afraid to help make big changes happen in our small community—we can be a model for other communities, and we can also learn how to value people who have been part of the police department in a new way, rather than looking at this as a simple issue that takes away from one group and gives to another. This calls for collaboration and critical thinking to solve the problems, but the budgetary piece is the first step.</p> <p>We will be watching and listening. Our community has spoken on this issue, and action is needed.</p> <p>Jeni Asheville Resident since 1992</p> <p>Look at how a single candle can both defy and define the darkness. ~Anne Frank</p>				
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7/27/2020 2:26:00 PM	Invest in the Black Community/Budget Transparency	<p>Dear Council Members-</p> <p>I am a homeowner and resident of Asheville. I live the historically Black neighborhood of Southside community, in which many Asheville Black residents suffered losses due to redlining in the 1960s. I am proud that Asheville leaders took the first step towards reparations with the resolution. However, the Asheville City Council needs to keep engaging the community that it serves. The community is calling for Asheville to divest from the police and invest in the Black community.</p> <p>As a member of the community, I urge City Council and leaders to release a detailed draft of the budget in order for the community to see what money is being allocated for and for a process of deep public engagement to determine the way forward, rather than a secretive process with minimal participation from community members.</p> <p>Thank you for your time.</p> <p>-Marie Mohsen Asheville, NC 28801</p>				
7/27/2020 2:29:00 PM	Community Involvement	<p>I hope that we will listen and learn what People of Color have to say about Reparations, creating relationships with law enforcement, policies that need to be eliminated/ changed/ created to insure equity. As a White person, we/I need to work on a better understanding of history, what privilege means, intentions vs impact and how we can all create and re-imagine a path forward.</p> <p>Big order. Wont be easy. I think once we can ferret out the fears behind the anger on both sides we may be able to find common ground, humanness will prevail.</p> <p>Thank You Carol Anders 28804</p>				
7/27/2020 2:33:00 PM	We demand a clear response	<p>Dear Asheville City Council,</p> <p>We demand community participation and a clear response to the economic disenfranchisement and police brutality that plagues the Black community of Asheville.</p> <p>I'm a resident in business owner in Asheville. We have elected you to serve us and to listen to us and it is long past time for Asheville to truly unite as a full integrated community.</p> <p>The extreme segregation that persists in Asheville dating back to slavery and reconstruction is just horrific and does not represent the Asheville values of equality, quality of life, and the peaceful love of nature.</p> <p>Frankly, I am embarrassed about the state of unfair housing, economic segregation and gentrification in our town especially when visitors of any race come here.</p> <p>This is our chance to be an example to the world to do the right thing and move forward as a humane society. We don't have time. The world is watching. Please do not keep trying to sweep this under the rug and use lengthy bureaucratic processes to try to wait this issue out.</p> <p>We will not stop demanding justice for all people of our city especially the black folks who were and are the most harmed by the continuation our of brutal racist legacy. We have the power to change this once and for all now.</p> <p>Thank you, Phillippe -- Phillippe</p>				

7/27/2020 2:48:00 PM	budget hearing	<p>Hello!</p> <p>I am Alexis Dunn and I am a constituent from west Asheville. I'm writing today for public comment on the Asheville city council interim budget. I'm advocating for the reduction of APD's \$29.6 million budget, with no additional additional funding allocated to the APD in Asheville's 2020-2021 fiscal year. I am also advocating for divesting APD funds by at least 50% and for those funds to be directly invested back into the community, and particularly our communities of color. Asheville has made a good choice in the development of a Reparations Committee, which do tend to be rare in government, but it is all only about face if there is no follow through. We the people are holding you accountable to take action in the promises made for reparations and community engagement. The community demands are: to divest from APD with direct investment back into the community, to ban the use of tear gas in our city, to NOT create a Community Engagement Division within APD, to demilitarize APD and remove officers from our schools, to remove symbols of white supremacy from street names, schools, and public parks, to implement the promised community engagement process, and to release the entire detailed draft of our city's budget that we have a right to see. It's called action, transparency, and integrity, my friends. Let's actually make history in our beautiful city by holding ourselves and each other accountable to making the changes that actually benefit a diverse and inclusive community. Thank you for your time, again please vote against the increase in budget for APD and vote for the divestment from that department.</p> <p>with gratitude, peace, and hope,</p> <p>Alexis Dunn</p>				
7/27/2020 3:01:00 PM	Black Asheville Demands and transparent budget	<p>To the members of Asheville City Council:</p> <p>In early June, Asheville's Black community came together to develop Black Asheville Demands &lt;<a href="https://www.blackavldemands.org/">https://www.blackavldemands.org/</a>&gt;, the first of which was to *divest from the police by at least 50%, and invest that money into the Black community. *City officials at the time insisted that they needed time to develop a new budget. They promised to engage the community in a transparent process. They promised that big structural changes to the Asheville Police Department were coming.</p> <p>Now, almost two months later, *City Manager Debra Campbell and many members of City Council have not offered a clear response to the divest/invest demand.* Are they prepared to commit to divesting at least 50% from the police department in order to invest more deeply in the Black community?</p> <p>Another key ingredient for meaningful change in our city is transparency. So far, *no detailed draft budget has been released*, so the community has had no opportunity to weigh in on how the city is planning to spend our money.* Where is the detailed budget we were promised?*</p> <p>Kathryn Blau</p>				



7/27/2020 3:02:00 PM	Public Comment For City Council Meeting 07/28/20	<p>City Council Members,</p> <p>My name is Brailey Sheridan. I'm a resident of Asheville and a student at UNCA. I'm writing to demand the immediate defunding of the Asheville Police Department. This institution has terrorized our community and neighbors for too long. We do not need to fund hatred, bigotry, and violence at the hands of AvIPD, the largest per-capita department for any city in the state, instead, we need to fund community projects such as equal access to housing, education, and mental healthcare. Immediately defund AvIPD by at least 50% and keep going. I'm sickened at the council's refusal to act and it's complicity in this racial injustice. Defund Now. No more excuses.</p> <p>Brailey Sheridan -- *Brailey Sheridan* News editor, *The Blue Banner* *(980) 241-4322* She/her/hers</p>				
7/27/2020 3:02:00 PM	Fiscal Year 2020-21 Annual Operating Budget	<p>Hello, my name is Jen Chandlee and I am an Asheville City Resident, writing to comment on Fiscal Year 2020-21 Annual Operating Budget.</p> <p>In June, city officials promised to engage the community in a transparent process, and that big structural changes to the Asheville Police Department were coming. Now, almost two months later, many members of City Council have not offered a clear response to the divest/invest demand from Black Asheville Demands.</p> <p>The community has asked for a process of public engagement to determine the way forward, and instead we're seeing a secretive process with minimal participation from community members by doing things like announcing last Friday that people wanting to make a live public comment for the meeting this Tuesday, July 28 must pre-register by noon Monday. The community is entitled to a transparent process that encourages participation, rather than one that is designed to drown out all but a few voices.</p> <p>Please do your jobs, and allow public participation in the process. After all, we are the reason you hold your positions to begin with. Jen</p> <p>Jen Chandlee, PDT(DONA), CD (DONA), CLE(CAPPA), ICCE(ICEA) Postpartum Doula Trainer; Lactation &amp; Postpartum Educator; Doula She/Her 828-989-9821 @luminouspostpartum jenchandlee@gmail.com luminouspostpartum.com ashevillehomegrownfamilies.com</p>				

7/27/2020 3:04:00 PM	Revised Budget - Defund AVLpd	<p>Dear City Council,</p> <p>I've grown up in Asheville and have always been proud to call it home. But I can't be proud of a city that has the power to change, to own up to its racist past and present, to defund its massively bloated, violent, national embarrassment of a police force (the largest per-capita department of any city in the state) and doesn't. And so I'm demanding an immediate, overdue defunding of the Asheville police department. We cannot let this deeply anti-Black institution continue to terrorize our community, our neighbors; we cannot continue to fund more state-sanctioned murder. The memory and legacy of Jerry Williams, may he rest in power, should be reason enough. One life lost at the hands of our police department is one too many.</p> <p>I demand that City Council defunds the AVLpd by at least 50% immediately. Those funds need to be under direct community control to address this city's longstanding oppression of Black communities. I am tired, my community is tired of the Council's refusal to act and attempts to seek out surface-level solutions to a deeply rooted problem. Defund now. The city is watching, the country is watching, please do the right thing.</p> <p>Sincerely, Madison Fiedler</p>				
7/27/2020 3:05:00 PM	DIVEST FROM APD	<p>To Whom It May Concern,</p> <p>My name is Andie, I'm a West Asheville native. I'm writing to comment on Fiscal Year 2020-21 Annual Operating Budget or Informal Discussion and Public Comment.</p> <p>For too long, liberal asheville has benefitted off the backs and labor of Black people. There is a reason that Asheville's Black population has dropped so dramatically in the past decade. I urge the council, at this time, to prioritize these things;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- divest funds from the police department in order to invest in Black Asheville, and a clear timeline for that process;</li> <li>- release a detailed draft budget, so that the community can see where and how money is being allocated;</li> <li>- a public comment process that encourages participation, rather than one that is designed to drown out all but a few voices.</li> </ul> <p>I urge Council to commit to a divest/invest strategy with a timeline and a more transparent process that truly engages the community. Please, divest from APD and invest money in the lives of Asheville's Black Community.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>Best,</p> <p>*Andie Morgenlander (she/her)* filmmaker + actor + producer *RYT 200-hr // Program Coordinator for Light A Path &lt;<a href="https://www.lightapath.org/">https://www.lightapath.org/</a>&gt; * cultivating compassion and healing through conscious narrative and intentional breath *<a href="http://www.andiemorgenlander.com">www.andiemorgenlander.com</a>* &lt;<a href="http://www.andiemorgenlander.com/">http://www.andiemorgenlander.com/</a>&gt;</p>				

7/27/2020 3:09:00 PM	Fiscal Year 2020-21 Annual Operating Budget or Informal Discussion and Public Comment	<p>Hello. My name is Paula Hayes and I live in Asheville, 28806. I am also an ESL teacher who has seen first hand the discrimination, criminalization, and bias directed towards our communities of color. Imagine my surprise and pride when City Council made headline news when you announced a reparations plan for AVL. Now I feel disappointed because you have taken no clear action on moving forward with this plan, nor have you included the black community leaders in your preparations.</p> <p>I urge Council to commit to a divest/invest strategy with a timeline and a more transparent process that truly engages the community.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration.</p> <p>Paula Hayes</p>				
7/27/2020 3:10:00 PM	Budget Comment	<p>Hi,</p> <p>My name is Molly Clay, I am a resident of Asheville and I'm emailing you to demand that you divest fifty percent of the Asheville Police Department's budget and invest it into the Black Community.</p> <p>It is increasingly worrisome that you all have made the process of making a Public Comment more difficult for us, from having to register to make a live public comment to removing all the emails and phone numbers of Council Members, Mayor, and Vice Mayor off of your page. You were voted into this position to listen to the community, and it is your duty to listen to the public's concerns. The fact that you are making it more difficult government repression and it highlights who you are really in solidarity with. The public is outraged, and until you defund the Police Department, we will continue to be, and you will continue to receive phone calls, emails, and public comments.</p> <p>So, I am once again, demanding that you immediately defund Asheville Police Department by at least 50% and invest in Black communities.</p> <p>You have heard from us, now it is time to make your call. We all will be watching.</p> <p>Thank you, Molly Clay</p>				
7/27/2020 3:10:00 PM	Divest and invest	<p>My name is Amanda and I live in West Asheville, and I would like to comment on the FY 2020-21 Annual Operating Budget. I am urging you today to divest from the Asheville Police Department by at least 50% and establish a timeline to invest this money in our city's Black communities. This needs to be done in a transparent way that actually engages the communities most affected by police violence- release the draft budget, seek input from our city's most marginalized residents, and do your jobs.</p> <p>Amanda</p>				
7/27/2020 3:14:00 PM	Divest from police and invest in community	<p>I stand with the Racial Justice Coalition in demanding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>divestment from the police department in order to invest in Black Asheville, and a clear timeline for that process</li> <li>release of a detailed draft budget, so that the community can see where and how money is being allocated</li> <li>a public comment process that encourages participation, rather than one that is designed to drown out all but a few voices</li> </ul> <p>Thank you, Jodi Rhoden West Asheville, NC</p>				

7/27/2020 3:17:00 PM	Public Hearing Item E - The only humane budget is one that defunds AVLPD by 50% or more!	<p>Hello,</p> <p>My name is Noah Hall. I'm a father, a small business owner, and an active member of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Asheville. I'm writing to once again implore the council to respond to Black Asheville Demands by reducing the Asheville Police budget by at least 50%. It's long past time for us to admit that the current model of policing is inhumane, unjust, and deeply resistant to reform. There are no small tweaks or trainings that can resolve this; We can only fix the problem by ending the current regime and redirecting that money into other social programs. I believe that most of you on the council want to be on the right side of history when it comes to issues of racial and social justice; the recent reparations vote is evidence of this. This budget vote is a chance for you to put our money where our mouths are and bring us closer to a future of true justice and equality.</p> <p>Thank you for your time.</p> <p>Sent with [ProtonMail](https://protonmail.com) Secure Email.</p>				
7/27/2020 3:19:00 PM	Meeting for budgets	<p>My name is Elijah I am writing in to demand the defunding of the asheville police. This institution has terrorized minority and POC communities. I do not believe the police need the budget for more cops, teargas, rubber bullets and hatred. The APD is the largest funded department of any city in the state. They don't need any more funds these resources should be relocated to fund black communities and black schools. We are tired of delay tactics and inaction.</p>				

7/27/2020 3:19:00 PM	Divest/Invest	<p>We have not forgotten what the city of Asheville promised. We have not forgotten about police brutality against blk ppl. Black lives matter is still very much alive. We made national news for being one of the first cities to agree on reparations to blk residents of Asheville who are descendants of slaves. We have not forgotten about that either. Please do your job. The fake promises to get ppl to shut up are not going to work this time. We're not going to forget. The police still haven't learned anything. You can find videos everywhere over the past 2 months of them still putting their knees and feet on the necks of blk ppl they have already handcuffs... And ankle cuffed in some instances. Asheville started a great thing with agreeing to reparations. And now we are waiting on that to pass with the Buncombe County Commissioners also. We expect and demand that you do what you promised. Racism is literally killing Americans.... Dividing Americans and destroying America. Asheville has the chance to be an example for other cities to follow. Defund the police by 50% and invest in blk communities. Invest in social work programs and mental health services. The police don't need automatic weapons and military style training. They don't need quotas that make them even more likely to pull over and harass and possibly worse ppl of color and everyone for that matter. We pay them. And in return a lot of us get harassed and some beat and murdered. Do your job. How will you feel if they pull your kid over and end up doing a lot more than giving a ticket. The abuse of power is disgusting. They enjoy harassing and abusing ppl... Especially blk ppl. They don't care about consequences because there are no real consequences.</p> <p>At worst they get fired and then rehired in another city or state due to their unions supporting any disgusting action they take. They beat and murder blk ppl and some wht ppl too and they don't go to jail.... Which is exactly where they belong because that is not police work... It's city and state sanctioned criminal activity by the police. They ask questions that nobody has to answer... Like where are you coming from? And where are you going? And when someone dares refuse to answer these questions that they have no right to ask they start their intimidation tactics which include fake charges so they can arrest ppl and excessive force and sometimes murder. I'm white and I've been harassed by cops on simple traffic stops. I know it's much much worse for blk ppl who get targeted and pulled over. I was sitting at a gas station and had a police officer not in uniform demand my ID saying I looked like some suspect he was looking for but it looked like I had lost some weight. I reported him and of course he got away with his actions. I had only been back in Asheville for one day when that happened and so I couldn't have been his "suspect" and I don't have to show ID for some nonsense like that. What exactly do the police need more money for? I think their abusive enough without providing them with more weapons and more training to shoot to kill and ask questions later. They don't do their job... They do as they please. Divest from the police like you promised and invest in blk communities and other programs that ACTUALLY help ppl. Otherwise your helping to destroy America and certainly the city of Asheville. We will vote you out and keep protesting and take any action we can to remove members who simply don't care and are lying to us... Yet again. Be the example.</p> <p>The Asheville City Council needs to listen to the community that it serves. The community is calling for Asheville to divest from the police and invest in the Black community. The community is asking for a process of deep public engagement to determine the way forward, rather than a secretive process with minimal participation from community members. Council needs to commit to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the goal of divesting funds from the police department in order to invest in Black Asheville, and a clear timeline for that process;</li> <li>releasing a detailed draft budget, so that the community can see where and how money is being allocated;</li> <li>a public comment process that encourages participation, rather than one that is designed to drown out all but a few voices.</li> </ul> <p>J Gaines</p>				
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7/27/2020 3:22:00 PM	Budget Vote	<p>Dear City Council,</p> <p>Dear Asheville City Council,</p> <p>I am a resident of Asheville, NC. I am writing in support of the Black Asheville Demands that were presented on Saturday, June 6th 2020. *I advocate for a reduction of APD's \$2.5 million budget, with NO additional funding allocated to the APD in the 2020-2021 budget.*</p> <p>Despite years of community advocacy following instances of police brutality, extensive de-escalation training, and an overhaul of APD leadership, *police brutality targeted against Asheville's Black community members persists in this city. *</p> <p>In the context of nationwide protests bringing attention to the violent and deadly consequences of policing on Black communities, APD chose to meet protestors with tear gas and rubber/pepper bullets. APD also needlessly destroyed medical supplies while protests were peaceful.</p> <p>We cannot continue to invest in this department. We demand not just individual accountability for officers after lethal or violent use of force, but for accountability for the entire Asheville Police Department.</p> <p>*Ban tear gas. Do not create a Community Engagement Division within APD. Demilitarize APD and remove officers from schools. *</p> <p>*We demand to end the systemic harms inflicted on all Black people (including Black trans, queer and gender-nonconforming people). This includes reparations to the Black Community. We demand repair for the past and continuing harms inflicted on Asheville's Black Community. *</p> <p>The only sufficient action moving forward is to divest funds from the Asheville Police Department and to invest those funds into Asheville's Black Community for long-term emergency response programs, community-led health and safety strategies, supporting Black startups/businesses, eliminating the racial opportunity gap in Asheville City Schools, and much more.</p> <p>Follow through on all promises for reparations and community engagement. This MUST include defunding APD. This MUST include removing symbols of white supremacy from street names, schools, and public parks. This MUST include budget transparency. Provide a detailed draft budget. Implement the promised community engagement process.</p> <p>And finally, I am so angry that city council has tried to limit public input for this meeting by forcing folks to register for live comment. As I know you're aware, not everyone in this city will be informed of/be able to adjust to this sudden change in procedure. This is government suppression. But we will not be silenced. If anything, we're going to fight that much harder.</p> <p>Sincerely, Lia Purdy</p>				
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7/27/2020 3:34:00 PM	DEFUND APD	<p>Good morning,</p> <p>The actions of the City Council that have been used to distract and gaslight the citizens of Asheville, especially the Black community, cannot continue. People will not be satisfied with measures that hold no substance and only seek to make Asheville look progressive to the outside world. If the City Council is committed to reparations for the Black community, that means defunding Asheville Police by 50% IMMEDIATELY. The community will not stand for the continued brutalization and murder of our citizens. Cut APD's budget by 50% and put that \$15 million back into community programs that will actually improve people's lives. Additionally, the Council can no longer put off banning the use of tear gas in Asheville. Your citizens are still facing health complications from the actions of APD back in June and tear gas must be banned NOW. The APD must be demilitarized and removed from schools. No programs should be created that give more scope and power to the police. We want the community's money back in the community.</p> <p>The people of Asheville deserve a say in where our money goes.</p> <p>Olivia</p>				
7/27/2020 3:43:00 PM	Public Comment on Budget	<p>Hi there,</p> <p>My name is Katherine Toumazou and I'm a resident of Asheville, and have been a resident for 16 years. I have worked in and prioritized spending \$\$ in downtown local Asheville businesses for that entire time. Sadly, I have observed the way that downtown business has capitalized off of historically Black neighborhoods while a disproportionate number of our Black community members suffering from any number of issues related to their disenfranchisement, often far from able to benefit from the ways that our local economy has so greatly capitalized off of them. Our answer as a city has, for far too long, been to not only continue to cut programs that support communities thriving, but to respond to said lack of support with increased policing.</p> <p>It is well past time to pivot our strategy as a city.</p> <p>The answer is not to ask police to bear the full burden of a struggling community. It is not, and never should have been, their job. Divestment in the police department and a clear outline for short- and long-term reinvestment plans in Black Asheville is necessary.</p> <p>Asheville citizens deserve a detailed draft budget and a public comment process that supports citizen participation. You all have made a beautiful statement with the commitment to reparations in our city - one that I am proud of. Divestment from police department and budget accountability are solid first action steps in that process.</p> <p>Thank you for leading the way to be on the right side of history for our country.</p> <p>Katherine Toumazou</p>				
7/27/2020 3:47:00 PM	Comment on Public Hearing Item E	<p>My name is Joseph, I'm emailing to demand an immediate defunding of the Asheville Police Department. For far too long this racist institution has terrorized our communities and neighbors. We do not need funds for more cops, tear gas, and hatred. The Asheville Police department is the largest per-capita department of any city in the state. Every dollar spent on this bloated police force is stolen from the rest of us. Defund the Asheville Police Department by 50% immediately. Those funds need to be under direct community control to address this city's long oppression of Black communities. We are sick of the council's delay tactics and refusal to act. Defund now. No Excuses. This is not an ask, this is a demand.</p> <p>Joseph Chavez</p>				

7/27/2020 3:47:00 PM	Comment on Public Hearing Item E	<p>To whom this may concern,</p> <p>My name is Tatiana, an Asheville resident. I'm emailing to demand an immediate defunding of the Asheville Police Department. For far too long this racist institution has terrorized our communities and neighbors. We do not need funds for more cops, tear gas, and hatred. The Asheville Police department is the largest per-capita department of any city in the state. Every dollar spent on this bloated police force is stolen from the rest of us. Defund the Asheville Police Department by 50% immediately. Those funds need to be under direct community control to address this city's long oppression of Black communities. We are sick of the council's delay tactics and refusal to act. Defund now. No Excuses. This is not an ask, this is a demand.</p> <p>Sincerely, Tatiana</p>				
7/27/2020 3:57:00 PM	Public Hearing on Fiscal Year 2020-21 Budget	<p>Dear City Council and Mayor,</p> <p>I am writing to urge you to cut the police budget by 50% for fiscal year 2020-21. Ashevilleans have been clear in their demands. Black Asheville Demands has listed this as one of their top priorities in order to invest that money (\$15 million) in the Black community instead of spending it on over-policing and incarceration. Asheville Police Department has shown how they use our tax dollars in their disgusting displays of early June when they fired on and gassed members of the community exercising their First Amendment rights. You voted on "reparations" a few weeks ago, yet if you truly believed in reparations, defunding the police and using that money to pay reparations to the Black community would be your top priority. Instead of listening to us, you have made it increasingly difficult to make our voices heard during this budget process, first threatening to hold this meeting in-person with no call-ins during a pandemic when Mission Hospital's COVID ward is reportedly full, now requiring us to register more than 24 hours in advance and fill out forms in order to call in during the meeting. This is censorship, and these rules are completely arbitrary. You are afraid of the overwhelming support for defunding the police and you are shielding yourselves from much-deserved criticism by muting our voices. This is cowardly.</p> <p>In addition to defunding the police by 50%, I urge you to cap all salaries for senior staff at \$100,000, pay firefighters a minimum of \$17.25/hour (starting pay for the APD) and that Mayor Manheimer resign, Chief Zack resign, and Vijay Kapoor step down immediately so that we can democratically elect his replacement.</p> <p>- Camille McCarthy, Asheville resident</p> <p>&lt;<a href="https://www.avast.com/sig-email?utm_medium=email&amp;utm_source=link&amp;utm_campaign=sig-email&amp;utm_content=webmail&amp;utm_term=icon">https://www.avast.com/sig-email?utm_medium=email&amp;utm_source=link&amp;utm_campaign=sig-email&amp;utm_content=webmail&amp;utm_term=icon</a>&gt; Virus-free. <a href="https://www.avast.com">www.avast.com</a> &lt;<a href="https://www.avast.com/sig-email?utm_medium=email&amp;utm_source=link&amp;utm_campaign=sig-email&amp;utm_content=webmail&amp;utm_term=link">https://www.avast.com/sig-email?utm_medium=email&amp;utm_source=link&amp;utm_campaign=sig-email&amp;utm_content=webmail&amp;utm_term=link</a>&gt; &lt;#DAB4FAD8-2DD7-40BB-A1B8-4E2AA1F9FDF2&gt;</p>				
7/27/2020 4:03:00 PM	Regarding- Budget Comment- Fire Fighter Wages	<p>77 Fire Fighters make less than \$15.00 per hour. Please right this wrong. Fire Fighters take care of all of us! They place themselves in dangerous situations over and over. They work 2,912 hours per year! They deserve the same or more pay as all of the other city employees. The incompletion of the compensation study should have no bearing on this decision. Please and thank you, Carol Marks</p>				



7/27/2020 4:04:00 PM	Please Reimagine the APD and Reflect This in Your City Budget	<p>Dear Members of the City Council:</p> <p>In June, Black Asheville representatives asked you to reduce funding of the police by 50% and invest more in the Black community. At the very least, please change how policing is done in Asheville so as to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*reduce police violence against people of color by completely changing police training and developing positive long-term relationships between the police and the people</li> <li>*increase funding to address mental health, drug addiction and homelessness by hiring the types of professionals who know how to do this, not police officers</li> <li>*separate traffic law enforcement from enforcement of criminal laws</li> </ul> <p>These are just some ideas. What is really needed is for the city to reach out to the Black community and totally reimagine policing in Asheville.</p> <p>Thank you for listening,</p> <p>Phoebe Kilby</p> <p>57 Morningside Drive</p> <p>Asheville, NC 28806</p>				
7/27/2020 4:12:00 PM	Defund APD	<p>My name is Ciera Sweitzer, I'm a lifelong resident of Buncombe county currently living in Asheville. I'm writing to demand an immediate defunding of the Asheville Police Department. For far too long this racist institution has terrorized our communities and neighbors. We do not need funds for more cops, tear gas, and hatred. The Asheville Police department is the largest per-capita department of any city in the state. Every dollar spent on this bloated police force is stolen from the rest of us. Defund the Asheville Police Department by 50% immediately. Those funds need to be under direct community control to address this city's long oppression of minority communities. We are sick of the council's delay tactics and refusal to act. Defund now. No Excuses. This is not an ask, this is a demand.</p>				

7/27/2020 4:12:00 PM	Interim Budget	<p>Dear Council Members,</p> <p>I am writing as a long time citizen of Asheville and the surrounding area. In June, amidst calls to defund the APD, the budget meeting was postponed in an effort to consider the demands of the citizens in response to the ongoing racial injustices committed on behalf of the APD, and their perpetuation of violence within our community. I hope that within this past month council members have been able to utilize that time to strategize and</p> <p>come up with some plans to implement this radical but necessary shift in the way our city is governed. The actions and inactions of the APD in response to the demands for racial equity in our city have confirmed that the department intends to continue acting on behalf of established white supremacist paradigms, and will remain passive in their reliance on the inherently violent and racist notions of implementing the law. David Zack has completely failed to be a strong voice or advocate for the community that he has taken an oath to serve, and his vague and uninformed presence at public meetings confirms his lack of ability to adapt to scrutiny.</p> <p>The demands of Asheville BLM, in collaboration with other leaders within the African American community have been made abundantly clear. I,</p> <p>along with many other citizens, businesses, and organizations support every single one of them. They are as follows:</p> <p>The revised budget must divest in the APD by at least 50%, and use that money to fund actual reparations to individuals in the black community.</p> <p>The APD must be demilitarized and tear gas banned.</p> <p>A Community Engagement Division within the APD is not a viable solution. We</p> <p>already have established organizations that can more effectively handle situations of homelessness, mental illness, rape, addiction, domestic violence, and many other challenges our city faces. Police officers are primarily and mainly trained in the use of violence. By relying on and funding the APD to handle these situations, City Council is effectively promoting violence as a solution to these challenges.</p> <p>For the reasons outlined above, regarding the nature of the police and their relationship to violence, they have no place in our schools.</p> <p>City Council must tangibly follow through on the reparations measure</p> <p>City Council must establish avenues for community engagement</p> <p>All symbols of white supremacy must be removed from schools, parks, street names and other public areas</p> <p>The budget draft must be detailed, and public, with an implementation of community engagement.</p> <p>As I am sure you are aware, the city and nation is watching, and we will not hesitate to respond to performative, vague, or intangible responses.</p> <p>Emily Cadmus</p>				
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7/27/2020 4:17:00 PM	Fiscal Year 2020-21 Annual Operating Budget	<p>Dear Council,</p> <p>My name is Rachel Reeser and I reside in Buncombe County. I am writing today about the annual operating budget. As a white woman who holds privilege, I eventually learned that we need to do more to lift up Black and Brown folks who have too long been oppressed. One way to do that is to divest from APD and invest in the local Black community.</p> <p>Additionally, I am curious how the budget is coming along. Do you have a draft that the community can view?</p> <p>I urge Council to commit to a divest/invest strategy with a timeline and a more transparent process that truly engages the community. Thank you for your time and your investment in our community. I feel my white community has your investment. I sincerely hope the black community can feel that investment as well.</p> <p>Best regards, Rachel</p> <p>*Rachel Parks Reeser* 264 Hazel Mill Rd Asheville, NC 28806</p> <p>828.301.4020 rachelpreeser@gmail.com</p>				
7/27/2020 4:18:00 PM	Divest/Invest strategy	<p>Greetings Council,</p> <p>As a native Ashevilleian with a vested interest in our City's future as a community member, property owner and father of small children I urge you to follow through on your very public rhetoric to engage the community in a thoughtful budgeting process that advocates reinvestment in communities of color. Your historic initiative to address the conversation of reparations is inseparable from this issue; backpatting is done and now the real work of building sustainable and equitable opportunity in our City begins. Pull back on the militarization of our police force and you will find that this faith build trust and combats the notion that fear is critical to political success.</p> <p>I've had a multitude of personal conversations in the white community with folks ranging from people associated with the Sons of Confederate Veterans to average working class families and can tell you that while the verbiage "reparations" may ignite a hot button, the need for reinvestment in our communities of color is glaringly obvious and the support is there. Political winds may shift, budget capacities may change, but your moral and ethical stances of courage need to be on display right now. Show us that it is more than words, demonstrate to us how you build wealth opportunities that benefit our community as a whole by rejecting the legacy of disinvestment and disenfranchisement. Stand boldly in the face of difficult discussions and let the long standing excuses wither on the vine of history.</p> <p>Let's get down to the work, provide us with a transparent process and timeline for how you propose to do this. Prove to us that you mean what you say and are truly worthy of leadership in our City.</p> <p>Thanks,</p> <p>Chip Howell</p>				

7/27/2020 4:19:00 PM	Now is the Time	<p>Asheville Council,</p> <p>We have all witnessed nationally in the last week the fast advancement of a military mindset of dominance and entrenchment of seated power which regards its neighbors as subjects, children as threats, people as pliable and expendable.</p> <p>We make a stand against this creep of tyranny here, in Asheville.</p> <p>We will implement our values, build the beginning of a true democracy here.</p> <p>We won't mimic the box this mindset presents us.  We will write our own book, and be unboxed.  We will not be held by tyranny,  of past, present or imagined shadows.</p> <p>We are starting today, ending the confederacy, building a just nation for all.</p> <p>KAPOOR RESIGN TODAY, GIVE US OUR VOTE</p> <p>DEFUND POLICE 50% MINIMUM, ALLOCATE TO BLACK COMMUNITY  RESTORATIVE OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p>GIVE US BUDGET TRANSPARENCY</p> <p>STOP SELLING OUT US WHO LIVE HERE  FOR A TOURIST INDUSTRY THAT EXPLOITS US</p> <p>*END MILITARIZATION OF POWER*</p> <p>NO TACTICS OF PUBLIC REPRESSION  BY COUNCIL OR POLICE</p> <p>NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE</p> <p>With love,  Rafi Bookstaber</p>				
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7/27/2020 4:21:00 PM	Fiscal Year 2020-21 Annual Operating Budget	<p>Hello Asheville City Council,</p> <p>My name is Kelly and I've lived in this area for approximately 14 years. I live and work in West Asheville, and pay property taxes, as well as a lot in business taxes every year. We invest in our local community over and over, and would like to see our community via your leadership doing things that represent the values we say we have.</p> <p>We have been urging you to divest in the police and invest in the local Black community, and community based solutions instead of policing. We need to see this reflected in the budget that is being discussed in the next council meeting. The updates to the budget should have already been shared with the community weeks ago so we could comment on proposed changes, but I haven't seen the new budget. I also haven't heard anything about council looking for feedback from the Black community about how best to provide the reparations that were approved in the last council meeting. Obviously, reparations need to be part of the new budget. I urge you to engage with Black Asheville Demands and the Racial justice Coalition to work on an updated budget that reflects reparations and investing in the local Black community. We need this to happen in the next week so that discussions and change is underway prior to the first council meeting in August.</p> <p>Sincerely, Kelly</p> <p>-- Kelly, she/her/hers</p>				
7/27/2020 4:22:00 PM	Divest funds to Police, Invest in our community.	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>My name is Annie Rogers, and I am a resident of Asheville living in the Kenilworth neighborhood. I am commenting on the Fiscal Year 2020-21 Annual Operating Budget or Informal Discussion and Public Comment</p> <p>I have been a citizen of Asheville since 1979, when my parents moved here just before my first birthday. I know that doesn't make me a native, but it's pretty close. And through the many years, from as far back as I can remember, I have loved Asheville dearly. Before investment in downtown. Before growth and gentrification, before all the breweries, my town was special and I knew it. And I have always welcomed progress, welcomed the influx of people, even as many I knew were forced out of living in the city by the high cost of living and lack of jobs.</p> <p>I don't expect us to be able to reverse that. But I do think we owe our community, particularly our Black community, the respect and deep investment it takes to ensure the long-term sustainability and integrity of our mountain town. I believe that divesting funds from the AVL PD and investing those funds into community development is one important step to our city government putting its money where its mouth is. Council voted unanimously in favor of exploring reparations for Black citizens, and I consider divesting/investing the next step in making good on that promise.</p> <p>*I urge Council to commit to a divest/invest strategy with a timeline and a more transparent process that truly engages the community.*</p> <p>Thank you, Annie Rogers</p>				

7/27/2020 4:50:00 PM	Divest in Police, Invest in Communities	<p>I am emailing to demand that the City of Asheville DEFUND Asheville Police by at least 50%.</p> <p>This cut in budget needs to be put back into the community in the form of actual reparations for Black folks. Not just appointing a committee to think about it. The community needs to see action. To start, remove public representation of white supremacy (street names, schools, parks, etc.).</p> <p>We will not stand for sustained or increased funding for Asheville PD under the guise of "community engagement". The police are over-equipped for brutality and drastically under-equipped for any proposed reforms. This means that the police should not get funding for homeless outreach, gun violence reduction strategies, a mental health and addiction coordinator, and especially not an integrity unit. If these are areas that truly need our focus as a community, there are far better qualified people that should not be involved in the institution of policing.</p> <p>Do the right thing for the citizens of Asheville and begin defunding APD.</p>				
7/27/2020 5:04:00 PM	Fiscal Year 2020-21 Annual Operating Budget or Informal Discussion and Public Comment).	<p>Dear City Council,</p> <p>I have lived in Asheville for over 20 years. I love this city and marvel at how much it has changed, in some ways for the better and in some ways not. I have watched as Black Communities and businesses are pushed further and further to the edges not only of our city but of our thoughts. It saddens me and it's not right. Please invest in these vibrant communities and give them the resources they deserve and are due. Commit to divest/invest and do so with a clear timeline, budget, and a transparent process. We have waited much to long.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Melissa Engler</p>				
7/27/2020 5:09:00 PM	Defund Asheville Police	<p>I am writing to demand an immediate defunding of the Asheville police department. This institution demonizes the communities of color that you say you wish to help. If you do not divest in the Asheville police department by ATLEAST 50%, it will be clear that you do not actually wish to help these communities. The small city of Asheville made</p> <p>INTERNATIONAL</p> <p>NEWS for the brutality shown by the Asheville police department. You are allowing your city to be known GLOBALLY for having oppressive and hateful institutions. The Asheville police department is the largest per-capita department of any city in the state. Every dollar you spend on this department is stolen from Asheville citizens. The funds allocated towards the Asheville police department needs to be redirected and under direct community control to address Asheville's history of oppression. I sat and listened to the five hour council meeting, and all I heard were excuses. Defund AVLPD by ATLEAST 50%. Invest in Black communities. End Police Surveillance. Demilitarize AVLPD. Dismantle White Supremacist Monuments.</p> <p>The revised budget MUST divest Asheville Police Department by atleast 50% and invest in community. Fund reparations through the divestment of police.</p> <p>Ban tear gas. Do not create a Community Engagement Division within APD. Demilitarize APD and remove officers from school. Follow through on all promises for reparations and community engagement. Remove symbols of white</p> <p>supremacy from street names, schools, public parks, etc. We need budget transparency. Provide a detailed draft budget. Implement the promised community engagement process.</p>				

7/27/2020 5:34:00 PM	Request update on community engagement process	<p>Dear Mayor and Councilmembers,</p> <p>The Staff Report for July 28th FY20-21 Budget Public Hearing includes the following under "Background:"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Following presentation of the FY 2020-21 Proposed Budget, the City decided that adopting an interim budget would allow time to plan a public engagement process around reallocating resources to address equity, social disparity, and policing concerns voiced by the community.</li> <li>* Per Council's direction, each General and Enterprise Fund operating department will only receive funding in its budget for operations through the end of September with the remaining budget being held in reserve in a non-departmental account while the City Manager's Office completes the community engagement process to determine investments in the Asheville Police Department, other City departments, and various community programs.</li> </ul> <p>I have not seen any public information on the City's community engagement plan to meet the objectives from the staff report. This planning and communication cannot wait. As opportunities for public gatherings are limited due to COVID, creating an open and inclusive engagement process will likely take additional resources and time. When can the public expect a presentation of the community engagement plan that will shape important budget decisions council will consider in September?</p> <p>Greg Borom, Director of Advocacy Children First/Communities In Schools of Buncombe County 828.423.0698   gregb@childrenfirstbc.org Pronouns: He/Him/His</p> <p>Mailing Address: PO Box 16695 Asheville, NC 28816 Physical Address: 37 Brickyard Rd. Asheville, NC 28806</p>				
7/27/2020 5:37:00 PM	Investment in the Black Community	<p>Dear Councilmembers,</p> <p>I am submitting a comment on the Fiscal Year 2020-21 Annual Operating Budget.</p> <p>When reviewing the city's budget I was disturbed to see the amount of resources that are designated toward policing and the lack of resources for public health, housing, and investments in addressing the significant equity gap between the Black community and the white community in Asheville. The city has this evidence and data on the education gap, the State of Black Asheville, etc. It is long past time to stop exacerbating these disparities, and instead shift funding to reflect the city's real priorities. I am writing to urge you to commit to decrease the police budget by 50% and shift those funds to invest in the Black community. I urge you to provide a clear timeline for this divestment and investment, to outline a process for deep public engagement on the details of that investment, and to provide a draft budget.</p> <p>Thank you, Gretchen Gordon Weaverville</p> <p>--</p> <p>Gretchen Gordon (202) 330-3305 gracielaagordon@gmail.com skype: gracielaagordon</p>				

7/27/2020 5:40:00 PM	Budget Comments- Invest in Community	<p>Dear Asheville City Council Members,</p> <p>My name is Alexandra and I have been a resident of Asheville for 7 years. I am emailing today to demand an immediate defunding of the Asheville police department. For years the Asheville police department has terrorized communities and neighbors. AVLpd has the largest per-capita department of any city in the state, yet an analysis of police data found by 'AVL Watchdog' show African-Americans in Asheville are three times more likely than white drivers to be searched by police in traffic stops and are disproportionately charged with common crimes. Why do you continue to award this behavior with a larger budget every year?</p> <p>During your last meeting, held on July 14th, the council passed a resolution 'supporting social reparations'. Since then I have seen this news being shared far and wide, but committing to fighting racial inequity is one thing. The City of Asheville is notorious for keeping things practically the same and continues to have rampant gentrification and a violently racist police force. I demand that these reparations begin NOW, starting with defunding the AVLpd immediately. Those funds need to be under direct community control to address the city's long oppression of Black communities. I am sick of council's refusal to act. For the past several years the City of Asheville has taken similar steps to address racial inequity yet racial injustice has only become worse. I am tired of excuses and the need for more studies. The City of Asheville is on its fifth police chief in nine years, and still fails to guarantee equal treatment under the law for all its citizens.</p> <p>I demand the revised budget divest in Asheville Police Department and invest in community. Fund reparations need to come directly through this divestment. I demand that city council provide a detailed draft budget and implement the promised community engagement process. We do NOT need more engaged policing as proposed by Chief David Zack's 'Community Engagement Division'. We must divest from policing and adopt an alternative crisis response system that prioritizes the safety and health of all our neighbors, especially those of margin.</p> <p>These are my demands and I will not be silenced, Alex.</p>				
7/27/2020 5:47:00 PM	City Council Meeting	<p>I am writing to urge you to vote to encourage participation by the community in decision making regarding the issue or divert/invert funds from the police to the community. Action needs to be taken now to change the situation and the participation of members of the community is crucial. Please make the budget transparent and include the voices of those directly affected in bringing about a fair and just police/criminal justice system in Asheville. You can become a beacon of light for our area and for the country by standing for what is long overdue. racial equity, and freedom for all.</p> <p>There needs to be a trust in the system for the system to work.</p> <p>Sincerely, Jill Stephens, property owner</p>				



7/27/2020 5:47:00 PM	Public Comment for Fiscal Year 2020-21 Annual Operating Budget	<p>Hi,</p> <p>I'm Lindsay Miller, and I'm an Asheville citizen. I'm writing to provide public comment on Fiscal Year 2020-21 Annual Operating Budget.</p> <p>I believe it's time for the city to take serious steps towards racial justice and racial equity. I don't think we, as a community, can achieve either without defunding the Asheville Police Department.</p> <p>It is time for City Council, City Manager Debra Campbell, and Mayor Esther Mannheimer to take clear action. It is time for you to commit to divesting at least 50% from the police department in order to invest more deeply in the Black community.</p> <p>I ask that you take clear action on this matter at the Tuesday, July 28th council meeting. Please commit to a divest/invest strategy with a timeline and a more transparent process that truly engages the community as part of the Fiscal Year 2020-21 Annual Operating Budget.</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Lindsay Miller</p>				
7/27/2020 6:14:00 PM	FY20-21 Operating Budget & Vijay Kapoor Resignation					
7/27/2020 6:22:00 PM	budget	<p>My name is Mikaila Mills and I am a resident of Asheville.</p> <p>I have been watching the virtual council meetings this summer with my son and I would like to request for our city to commit to concrete plans for assuring that future harm to our black community will not continue and reparations be a priority. Tonight, I would like to hear a clear timeline for the process of divesting funds from the police department and investing into community support and Black Asheville with a detailed draft budget. The budget details are most important to be transparent so that the community can make reasonable recommendations.</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>--</p> <p>Mikaila 828-713-3511</p>				
7/27/2020 6:40:00 PM	Police brutality					

7/27/2020 6:48:00 PM	public input	<p>Hello Councilmembers,</p> <p>My name is Lea McLellan, and I am a new mom, educator and business owner who has lived in Asheville for seven years. I am writing to support a ban on tear gas and to encourage a divestment from police funding towards reparations and other deserving community endeavors.</p> <p>I am encouraged by the council's decision to approve reparations for black citizens, and I hope to see more action on that front soon, especially in the educational sector. In my professional experience preparing students for college, the "playing field" for white students and BIPOC students is far from level.</p> <p>While it may seem like a good idea at first glance, creating a Community Engagement Division within the police department is not the answer. Unfortunately police reform and likeminded initiatives have proven to be ineffective. Instead, we need to bolster the BIPOC community and find ways to serve the public that do not involve the police.</p> <p>I also think removing officers from schools is the best move for Asheville. Research does not support the continued presence of officers in schools. Here is a good article on that perspective, including pertinent research and potential alternatives to in-school policing :  <a href="https://www.npr.org/2020/06/23/881608999/why-theres-a-push-to-get-police-out-of-schools">https://www.npr.org/2020/06/23/881608999/why-theres-a-push-to-get-police-out-of-schools</a></p> <p>"Research doesn't definitively show SROs are effective at improving school safety. The good news, say Morris and Parris, is that there *are *evidence-based alternatives. These include restorative justice programs, a program called Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports &lt;<a href="https://www.pbis.org/">https://www.pbis.org/</a>&gt;, and having mental health counselors and other support staff available when students are acting out."</p> <p>Thank you for your time!</p> <p>Lea</p>				
7/27/2020 7:01:00 PM	Police Funding and Community Engagement	<p>Dear City Council,</p> <p>As a clergy person serving for the past 22 years in Asheville I have had engagement with parishioners who live throughout the city as well as engagement through ecumenical relationships with citizens involved in many aspects and areas of life here. I urge you to make use of the wider community in determining the course of policing in Asheville. I am not anti-police and have had parishioners serving APD. I am desirous of a community policing model that focuses on communal needs. I am desirous of a community policing model that is less militarized and more communally related in its approach. I am desirous of a community policing model that engages community development including mental and physical health resources and other community involvement that creates a proactive rather than a reactive environment. I am desirous of a transparent, communally informed process - meaning informed by engagement with the wider community. The evolution of the police in Camden, NJ demonstrates that nothing will be problem free and yet shows that wide sweeping changes can make a difference in the quality of life for all persons in our community, particularly the most vulnerable in our community, particularly for Persons of Color. I again urge you to be transparent and deeply intentional about community canvassing and engaging in this process.</p> <p>The Reverend Todd Donatelli</p>				

7/27/2020 7:21:00 PM	Fiscal Year 2020-21 Annual Operating Budget or Informal Discussion and Public Comment	<p>*This email is regarding the Fiscal Year 2020-21 Annual Operating Budget or Informal Discussion and Public Comment:*</p> <p>As a resident of Asheville, NC and a mental health therapist in the community, *I am requesting that Asheville divest from the police and invest in the Black community. *I see the ways in which racism, poverty and oppression are impacting the Black community and how this creates a traumatic impact on individuals and the community as a whole. As a provider of mental health services, I am requesting that funding be invested in support systems, resources and businesses created by and for the Black community.</p> <p>I am asking for an open process of deep public engagement to determine the way forward as opposed to a closed process with minimal participation from community members. I am asking that the City Council commit to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Divesting funds from the police department in order to invest in Black Asheville, and a clear timeline for that process</li> <li>- Releasing a detailed draft budget, so that the community can see where and how money is being allocated;</li> <li>- Creation of a public comment process that encourages community participation</li> </ul> <p>With appreciation for your time and consideration, -- *Sarah Frick, LCSW*</p> <p>*www.fricklcsw.com &lt;<a href="http://www.fricklcsw.com">http://www.fricklcsw.com</a>&gt;*</p> <p>*ph. 828 424 5160*</p> <p>*Licensure # C011419*</p> <p>CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This message may contain legally privileged and/or confidential information intended only for the use of the individual or entity to which it was addressed. Re-disclosure of this information is prohibited by law. If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any dissemination, distribution, or reproduction of this material is strictly prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please immediately notify us.</p> <p>STATEMENT OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION: Please be aware that email communication can be relatively easily accessed by unauthorized people and hence can compromise the privacy and confidentiality of such communication.</p> <p>A non-encrypted email is even more vulnerable to unauthorized access. Please notify me if you decide to avoid or limit, in any way, the use of email, or if you prefer the use of encryption. Unless I hear from you otherwise, I will continue to communicate with you via email when necessary or appropriate. Please use phone rather than email in case of emergency.</p>			
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7/27/2020 7:37:00 PM	Divest from APD and invest in community	<p>I live in Asheville, and I demand that the revised budget must divest from the Asheville Police Department by at least 50% and invest in community efforts. From that 50% divested you should fund the reparations discussed at the previous council meeting. Do not create a Community Engagement Division within the APD. Demilitarize the APD, ban tear gas, and remove officers from schools.</p> <p>The community also needs you to follow through on all promises for reparations and community engagement: remove symbols of white supremacy from street signs, schools, and public parks.</p> <p>The budget should have full transparency with a detailed draft budget and it should implement the promised community engagement process.</p> <p>-William Drew</p>				
7/27/2020 8:12:00 PM	Demands	<p>-Hi,</p> <p>Please consider the demands of Asheville's black community. Recognize their pain and repair trust by doing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Divest in Asheville Police Department by at least 50%</li> <li>-Ban tear gas</li> <li>-DO NOT create Community Engagement division within APD</li> <li>-Demilitarize APD And remove officers from schools</li> <li>-Follow through on all promises and reparations</li> <li>-Remove symbols of white supremacy From street names, schools and public parks</li> </ul> <p>Get Outlook for iOS&lt;<a href="https://aka.ms/o0ukef">https://aka.ms/o0ukef</a>&gt;</p>				

7/27/2020 8:17:00 PM	<p>Divest from the Police, Invest in Asheville's Black Community - Fiscal Year 2020-21 Annual Operating Budget</p>	<p>Dear Asheville City Council,</p> <p>My name is Jennifer Nathan. When I moved to Asheville in 2007 I was in awe of this vibrant, loving community.</p> <p>Over the last 13 years, I've witnessed how white supremacy is a persistent barrier to the health, happiness, and safety of Asheville's Black community. This happens every day - underfunded schools, barriers to home ownership, and lack of meaningful support for initiatives led by Black community members.</p> <p>Now is the time to right these systemic wrongs.</p> <p>I urge you to use your power to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Divest funds from the APD and invest in Asheville's Black communities. Create an equitable budget that defunds the APD by 50%. Invest those funds in Black-led social programs.</li> <li>- No more secret budgets. It is irresponsible to refuse to release a detailed budget. Asheville residents have a right to know how their tax dollars are spent and to weigh in during these pivotal times. Release the proposed budget now!</li> <li>- Engage Black community members in all efforts to create a more equitable city. Listen to Black leaders and step back so they can lead the way.</li> <li>- Do not allow the City Council to appoint its next member. It is unfair and undemocratic to block the community from voting on its representatives.</li> <li>- Again, divest from the APD. Invest in Black communities.</li> </ul> <p>Use your power to improve and protect people's lives.</p> <p>Sincerely, Jennifer Nathan Asheville resident, tax payer, and voter 2017-2020</p>				
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7/27/2020 8:23:00 PM	Defund APD / Special Election	<p>Dear Members of Asheville City Council,</p> <p>I am writing to you to express my opinion and concern about two very important topics.</p> <p>1. At the last meeting, y'all unanimously voted to approve reparations for the Black members of the Asheville community. That was a big step to take, and because of that, Asheville has received national media attention. But now you have to take the next step - you have to follow through. Black Asheville has demanded that you defund the Asheville Police Department by at least 50%. In order for you to make good on your promise to do right by the historically disenfranchised members of our community, you must listen to their demands and take action. Reparations = defunding the police. The people of this city are expecting you to do the right thing here and if you are unable to meet our expectations, we will not give up. We will continue to protest and vote and fight until we see a just outcome. ADP has proven time and time again that they are not worthy of the funding that they receive, so this is really a no-brainer. Come on, y'all - listen to what the citizens of this city are saying and take the appropriate action to move forward and move past just a lip-service promise.</p> <p>2. It is my understanding that Councilman Kapoor no longer resides in Asheville. As such, I want to see his resignation EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY. The city council is an elected body of residents of this city who represent other residents of this city. Because Mr. Kapoor no longer qualifies as a resident of this city, he should absolutely no longer have the privilege and responsibility of representing those of us who still do call Asheville home. There is no need to wait until later this month or into August. We have a vacant seat on the council and consequently, we need to hold a special election. I do not want to see an appointment to his vacant seat. An appointment would be seen as a blatant suppression of the will of the electorate and while this country is slipping into fascism, I do believe we have the power to stave it off on the local level at present.</p> <p>Thank you for carefully considering my thoughtfully chosen words.</p> <p>Clare Beumer Hill</p>			
7/27/2020 8:36:00 PM	Defund AVLPD by 50% minimum. Invest in communities.	<p>Dear City Council,</p> <p>Thank you for voting for reparations. Now it is time to take action on that vote.</p> <p>As you vote today on the interim budget, here are my requests: Divest from AVLPD by 50% minimum and Invest that money into communities. We also need budget transparency with a detailed draft budget with a community engagement process as promised.</p> <p>Thank you. Cara Steinbuchi Asheville NC 28806</p> <p>--</p> <p>*Cara Nicole Steinbuchi* *Founder + CEO + Maker*</p> <p>*Pronouns: she/her or they/their*</p> <p>(828) 280-5659 www.CaraMaeSkinCare.com</p>			

7/27/2020 8:40:00 PM	Budget meeting, public comment	<p>Hello to all,</p> <p>I would like to join in the many voices of the Asheville community by asking the council members to commit to divesting from the police in the new budget, banning tear gas, demilitarizing the police, and remove police from schools in our community. Instead, invest in our community - especially the black community. Lastly, be transparent in your use of money and commit to following through with the reparations you have promised.</p> <p>Thank you, Abigail</p>				
7/27/2020 8:47:00 PM	Public Comment: Listen to the demands of Black Asheville	<p>My name is Holden Mesk and I am a citizen of Asheville.I urge Asheville City Council to listen to the demands of Black Asheville:</p> <p>"Revised budget MUST divest in Asheville Police Department by at least 50% and invest in community. Fund reparations through the divestment of police. Ban tear gas. Do not create a Community Engagement Division within APD. Demilitarize APD and remove officers from schools. Follow through on all promises for reparations and community engagement. Remove symbols of white supremacy from street names, schools, public parks. Budget transparency. Provide a detailed draft budget. Implement the promised community engagement process."</p> <p>Additionally, Vijary Kapoor NEEDS to resign.</p> <p>Thank you, Holden Mesk</p>				

7/27/2020 8:59:00 PM	Supporting Our Police	<p>Dear Asheville City Council Members,</p> <p>My name is Susan Phipps and I have been a resident of Asheville for 25 years now . I have owned a small business in downtown Asheville for 16 years. I'm sending this email so hopefully you all will all understand what exactly "Defunding the Police" means for me, other business owners and residents of this town.</p> <p>1) When we have fewer police out on our streets, crime will rise dramatically. It's just human nature unfortunately. The criminals will know that there is no consequence for vandalism, burglary, theft, mugging, murder and so on and so on.</p> <p>2) Our town will become overrun with criminals who move in, knowing that they can steal from stores, mug people and commit all sorts of crimes at will because there are no police around to stop them. It's already happening all over our country, if you watch the real news.</p> <p>3) I'm a 58 year old female who owns my own store downtown. If we have fewer police I will become a bigger target for thieves and a profitable target for people who need money for drugs. I will now have to carry my own gun to protect myself and my business.</p> <p>4) The likelihood that I will be robbed, held up at gunpoint, shot and possibly murdered is huge. I have already been held up at gunpoint when I worked at another store, so I know what happens. It's not something you ever want to experience twice.</p> <p>So if you care about our town, our residents and businesses, you hopefully will take into consideration what defunding the police means for all of us. Social workers cannot do the job of trained police officers. You never know when a situation will turn violent, and police are trained for that. I'm not saying the police don't need to do a better job. What I'm saying is that we need to help them be better with better training and education. How can we blame all the police officers for the actions of a few bad ones? Is that not discrimination too?</p> <p>I do hope you understand this. I can't say it any simpler. This will be our new reality if you choose to defund our Police!</p> <p>I hope I can count on you all to do the right thing. Thank you, Susan Phipps</p>				
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7/27/2020 9:01:00 PM	public comment	<p>Hello,</p> <p>My name is Roslyn Clapp. I am an Asheville city resident. I am commenting on the Fiscal Year 2020-21 Annual Operating Budget. Asheville has so many great things going for it. I want to believe that we as a community genuinely care about the people, land and culture of our community. I want to believe you are on City Council because you love and care about this community. We are in a critical time where we can be change makers for the better. You won the right to lead our community and with that comes your responsibility to listen to me and all the other voices advocating for divesting in the police department. I am standing in solidarity with our local Black leaders. Black AVL Demands have been made. Now it is your turn to take those demands and help them come to fruition. This isn't just about divesting in the police, it is about investing in the Black community. I believe in you. You can do this. You can do hard things. I urge Council to commit to a divest/ invest strategy with a timeline and a more transparent process that truly engages the community.</p> <p>--</p> <p>*Roslyn Clapp*</p> <p>*(She, her, hers)*</p> <p>*Third Grade Classroom Teacher*</p> <p>*Francine Delany New School for Children*</p> <p>*119 Brevard Rd.*</p> <p>*Asheville, NC 28806*</p> <p>*(828) 236-9441 ext 224*</p> <p>*FDNSC Social Justice Statement:**Francine Delany New School for Children</p> <p>is an inclusive community that is committed to promoting social justice and preserving the inherent worth and human dignity of every person.* *As individuals and as a school we will:* *Practice fairness and equality for people of every race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, ability, socio-economic status, religious belief, political view and other identities.* *Analyze multiple perspectives on historical and contemporary issues.**Build a community of critical thinkers who are active in the world. We are committed to ongoing learning, raising awareness, and fostering dialogue around issues of social justice.*</p> <p>Confidentiality Notification: This message and its attachments may contain confidential and/or legally-sensitive information intended for the sole use of the addressee(s). Any unauthorized review, use, disclosure or distribution of the information contained in this message and its attachments is prohibited. If you have received this message or any of its attachments in error, please destroy all originals and copies of the same and notify the sender immediately.</p>				
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7/27/2020 9:02:00 PM	Public comments for July 28th council meeting	<p>Hello,</p> <p>My name is Megan Beaver, I am a long standing Asheville resident. I would like to offer public comment on item E under the Public Hearings agenda and item G under the Consent agenda, respectively.</p> <p>While I can appreciate the Council wanting to take time to gather more information on the community's feelings regarding policing in Asheville in order to make a more informed decision on the departments budget, I fear that that isn't what is actually happening here. The community has been more loud, more open, more involved, and more sincere in the past two months than I have seen in my entire life in this city. We have been screaming at the top of our lungs with our needs and demands regarding Asheville policing for weeks on end. I worry that if you feel that you do not have enough information, perhaps you are not listening. Perhaps you are waiting for the timer to run out on the public's interest in this topic so your eventual decision can be easier, quieter, and less radical than what your community is asking for, what your community NEEDS. I regret to inform you that we do not plan on quieting down.</p> <p>Department reformation is not an option. We have tried and failed at successful police reform many times already. The system is broken beyond the point of reform. We need a relocation of funds to community benefiting systems that will provide social support to prevent actual crime and stop demonizing and harming our most vulnerable citizens. DEFUND THE POLICE.</p> <p>I appreciate the Council for recognizing the need for a Vance Monument Task Force. I would like to encourage the council towards removal rather than repurposing the monument. There is really no way to dress up the stain of a monument that celebrates slavery and racism in our country. It would be, as my Grandma would say, "like puttin' diamonds on doo-doo."</p> <p>Thank you for your time.</p> <p>Sincerely, Megan Beaver</p> <p>Sent from my iPhone</p>				
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7/27/2020 9:02:00 PM	Public Input for July 28th - From an Asheville Native	<p>Hi, my name is Spencer Kelly and I am a resident of Asheville, NC.</p> <p>This is in regards to the 2020 - 2021 proposed annual budget for the City of Asheville.</p> <p>Please vote against the current proposed budget. This is specifically because of the \$30 million dollar budget including a \$400k increase proposed for the Asheville Police Department. The use of these funds needs to be critically examined.</p> <p>*We ask the Council to provide a line item budget by department. *Last year the budget was 131 pages. This year it is only 37 pages. Where is our money going? We demand transparency and ask that the council addresses equity in every department.</p> <p>*We demand a divestment from the police and investment in Black communities. *At least 50% of the APD's budget should be invested in long-term safety strategies including supporting Black startups/business, eliminating the racial opportunity gap in Asheville City Schools, and funding an all-civilian oversight committee with the power to hold the APD and individual officers accountable. It is vital to redirect money away from the APD and into the funds that target the problems of public safety and help promote our communities overall well-being. For example, the Shiloh Neighborhood Infrastructure line item in the budget is scheduled several years out. Make this a priority along with other projects to support our Black Community.</p> <p>*There should be no staffing increases or hiring of any sort to the APD. *We do not need more police. We need more mediators and community peacekeepers.</p> <p>*Examine police union contracts. *These contracts often allow the purging of misconduct records and can allow the reinstatement of fired officers. This is unacceptable. We demand this contract be made public and be critically examined if it is to remain in place while the transition away from police entirely is made.</p> <p>*We demand DIRECT reparations for past and continuing harms inflicted on Asheville's Black Community. *We demand that Asheville City Government remove the Vance and Robert E Lee monuments and replace them with monuments that honor the many Black Asheville's who have built this city. We demand that streets named after former slave owners also be replaced with names of historic local black leaders.</p> <p>*We demand for law enforcement and the community to end the war on Black People.* We demand not just individual accountability for officers after lethal or violent use of force, but for accountability for the entire Asheville Police Department. We demand an end to the systemic harms inflicted on all Black people (including Black trans, queer and gender-nonconforming people).</p> <p>*No more resource officers in schools. *The presence of these officers in our children's places of learning is entirely unnecessary. Have Asheville City Schools show solidarity with our commitment to build a healthy community by removing resource officers from schools and replacing them</p>			
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7/27/2020 9:11:00 PM	Invest in community response, increase transparency and participation	<p>Dear Council Members,I have lived inAsheville for nearly 25 years. I'm a licensed clinical social worker and have worked in the criminal justice system for 15 years. Until recently I would sayI am an advocate for police reform. Now however it is clear we must completely transformour approach to public safety. Policing in our country was not created and wasnever intended to meet our community's most pressing needs, and regardless oftraining or financial resources, the Asheville Police Department does not havethe capacity to meet these community needs. By continuing the current level offunding we are perpetuating policies and practices that are not only wastefuland misguided; but also result in, at the very least, moral injury of our lawenforcement officers and far worse continued trauma for those among us withBlack and Brown skin. To think that a police officer with limited training incrisis intervention is as equally equipped to respond to a mental health orsubstance abuse crisis as I am with a masters degree in social work and yearsof experience is ill guided and frankly dangerous. We must divest funds from the APD and investin community based responses which facilitate safety and security for all Asheville residents. As I'm sure you're aware, multiple cities similar to Asheville haveadopted community based response programs; and they have experienced success, including a decrease in gun violence.</p> <p>Similar to the work of our county Safety andJustice Challenge grant community engagement, I urge you to engage the communityin a process to create a comprehensive plan for investing in services criticallyneeded, especially investment in Black Asheville. Additionally, please do notshirk your duties as elected representatives by anything less than fulltransparency of the draft budget, developing a clear timeline for investment inthe Black community, and providing opportunity for all voices to comment onyour progress. The community has the capacity, along with your leadership, to createprograms and services that better meet our needs; however you must allow thecommunity to participate fully.</p> <p>I'm deeply grateful for your service to ourcommunity and look forward to hearing ways I can support the efforts of Councilin transforming the APD and building greater capacity for our community torespond with compassion and equity to our most pressing needs and desires.</p> <p>Thank you,Noel Nickle, MSW, LCW18 Dalton StAsheville, NC 28803Cell: 828-775-9912 Pronouns: she/ her/ hers</p>				
7/27/2020 9:22:00 PM	Budget	<p>Dear City Council,</p> <p>As residents of Asheville we are writing in regards to the city council meeting. We would like to see a draft budget that is detailed and specific and immediately reduces the AVLpd by at least 50%. Those funds are needed to address and rectify the history of racism that Asheville has perpetuated through history. It is time to commit to investing in our black community. Please no lip service to the public, we are ready for clear and direct action.</p> <p>Thank you for your time.</p> <p>Kelcey and Alex Loomer East Asheville</p> <p>18 Clement Drive Asheville NC 28805</p>				

7/27/2020 9:22:00 PM	Council Meeting on July 28th	<p>Hello</p> <p>I am writing in regards to a few issues that I would like to see addressed at the next City Council meeting on July 28th, 2020. I am a Western North Carolina native, an Asheville resident of 13 years, and I own a small business in West Asheville.</p> <p>1. The issue of the continual work needing to be done in regards to the City Council approval of reparations to the black members of our community needs to be readdressed. The unanimous vote in approval of reparations is certainly a positive step forward on addressing the issues created from systemic racism within Asheville and Western North Carolina, but it is not enough. The funding of the Asheville Police Department needs to be addressed. The funds need to be cut by 50% and those funds need to be reallocated to community programs that can make our city better for its people.</p> <p>2. The council seat of Vijay Kapoor needs to be vacated immediately and a special election needs to take place to fill his seat. Mr. Kapoor is no longer a resident of Asheville and has no business continuing to hold his seat. I do not wish to see Mr. Kapoor's seat filled by Council appointment. You need to let the citizens of Asheville vote as to who should take the position. We are witnessing too many examples of our democracy being tampered with across the country, but I never thought I would witness something as blatant as this in our progressive city.</p> <p>Please take time on my thoughts and do the right thing for your community.</p> <p>Thank you for your time.</p> <p>-Donald Pratt -- Thanks! -Donnie Pratt</p> <p>(828)400-9158 The Golden Pineapple 503 Haywood Road Asheville, NC 28801</p>			
7/27/2020 9:22:00 PM	Fiscal Year 2020-21 Annual Operating Budget or Informal Discussion and Public Comment	<p>My name is Elizabeth Hromada. I am a resident of West Asheville where segregation of communities by race is all too real and obvious.</p> <p>Asheville, like all of the U.S., needs to divest in the police and invest in Black communities.</p> <p>The involvement of the community is a must. Council, please commit to this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* the goal of divesting funds from the police department in order to invest in Black Asheville, and a clear timeline for that process;</li> <li>* releasing a detailed draft budget, so that the community can see where and how money is being allocated;</li> <li>* a public comment process that encourages participation, rather than one that is designed to drown out all but a few voices.</li> </ul> <p>Please commit to a timeline to divest in the police and invest in Black communities, and do so with transparency that engages the whole community.</p> <p>Thank you, Elizabeth Hromada</p>			

7/27/2020 9:24:00 PM	Open process	<p>To Members of Asheville City Council-</p> <p>I urge you to establish a process to involve a broad cross section of the community in the discussions as to how to approach changes to the police department and implementation of your resolution on reparations.</p> <p>There is a wide range of perspectives in the community - all deserve to have a voice. Eventual plans will be richer and more broadly supported, if there is opportunity for input to the process.</p> <p>I worked in governmental leadership in another city. I saw the value that comes from dialogue-rich process. Please implement an open process on these issues that are so important to our community.</p> <p>Thank you for your leadership!</p> <p>Bette S Meyer 301 Wesley Drive 28803</p> <p>Sent from my iPhone</p>				
7/27/2020 9:34:00 PM	Fiscal Year 2020-21 Annual Operating Budget	<p>Hi,</p> <p>This is Chloe Tipton. I live in Weaverville and I am providing a public comment on the 2020-21 Annual Operating Budget.</p> <p>I was born and raised in Asheville, and I have lived in nearly every corner of town. I went to 4 different elementary schools (Sand Hill, Weaverville Primary, Woodfin and Oakley) and lived in 13 different homes by the time I left for college. The identity of Asheville and the area have always anchored me. I am proud to live here still and hope to contribute to the continual betterment of this town. The time has come for some improvements.</p> <p>Asheville must begin divesting from the police department and investing in other programs that actually *serve *our communities, especially Black Asheville.</p> <p>Asheville City Council must listen to the community that it serves. The community is calling for Asheville to divest from the police and invest in the Black community. The community is asking for a process of deep public engagement to determine the way forward, rather than a secretive process with minimal participation from community members.</p> <p>I urge the Council to commit to a divest/invest strategy with a timeline and a more transparent process that truly engages the community.</p> <p>Thank you, Chloe Tipton Asheville Local</p>				

7/27/2020 9:36:00 PM	7/28 input	<p>Hello,</p> <p>I am writing in regards to a few issues that I would like to see addressed at the next City Council meeting on July 28th, 2020. I have been apart of the Asheville community for 9 years, am a female owner of a small business in West Asheville and have recently purchased by first home here!</p> <p>1. The issue of the continual work needing to be done in regards to the City Council approval of reparations to the black members of our community needs to be readdressed. The unanimous vote in approval of reparations is certainly a positive step forward on addressing the issues created from systemic racism within Asheville and Western North Carolina, but it is not enough. The funding of the Asheville Police Department needs to be addressed. The funds need to be cut by 50% and those funds need to be reallocated to community programs that can make our city better for its people.</p> <p>2. The council seat of Vijay Kapoor needs to be vacated immediately and a special election needs to take place to fill his seat. Mr. Kapoor is no longer a resident of Asheville and has no business continuing to hold his seat. I do not wish to see Mr. Kapoor's seared filled by Council appointment. You need to let the citizens of Asheville vote as to who should take the position. We are witnessing too many examples of our democracy being tampered with across the country, but I never thought I would witness something as blatant as this in our progressive city.</p> <p>Please take time on my thoughts and do the right thing for your community.</p> <p>Thank you for your time,</p> <p>Katey Ryder -- Katey Ryder The Golden Pineapple 503 Haywood Road Asheville, NC 28806</p>				
7/27/2020 9:43:00 PM	Avl police department budget	<p>The police hold too many roles and too many jobs. Too much money is given towards them to make this city horrendously over-policed. The police do not prevent crimes. They respond to them. It's only logical to move this money being wasted on the police to fund the tool and jobs that can actually prevent crime. If you are not inclined to prevent crimes before they happen by readjusting the budget, then where exactly are your priorities? It's time for change. Let's be a positive example for this country.</p> <p>Caleb</p>				
7/27/2020 9:45:00 PM	Defund APD and invest in our community	<p>Dear City Council Members,</p> <p>My name is Jesse Stewart and I am a resident of Asheville. I am writing with regards to the budget vote and to demand defunding APD.</p> <p>Defunding APD by at least 50% (and prohibiting them from using money from other budget lines) means a greater investment in our community and more funding for reparations. Additionally, there should be budget transparency and City Council must provide citizens with a detailed draft budget.</p> <p>City Council must also follow through on all promises for reparations and community engagement, including removing symbols and names of white supremacy from our streets, schools, and parks.</p> <p>Thank you, Jesse</p>				
7/27/2020 10:02:00 PM	Invest in Black Asheville	<p>Please divest from APD and invest in Black Asheville &amp; reparations!</p> <p>Sent from my iPhone</p>				

7/27/2020 10:08:00 PM	Divest from APD	<p>Dear City Council Members,</p> <p>My name is Virginia Knight. I'm a resident of Asheville, and I'm writing in regards to the Fiscal Year 2020-21 Annual Operating Budget.</p> <p>I've been a resident of Asheville for almost a decade, and frankly I'm still disgusted that members of APD destroyed water and other supplies at a medic station (In the middle of a global pandemic! When unused supplies could have been donated!), but protesters with huge guns can congregate downtown with no repercussions. Did APD forget that's illegal? Who on earth are these cops protecting? Because I'm a lot more scared of known white supremacists with guns than water bottles, but clearly APD feels differently.</p> <p>This is just *one *example of why Asheville is calling for our city to divest from police and invest in our Black community. APD has done and continues to do so much harm, and I add my voice to our community that demands Council commit to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Divesting funds from the police department in order to invest in Black Asheville, and a clear timeline for this process</li> <li>- Releasing a detailed draft budget, so that the community can see where and how money is being allocated</li> <li>- A public comment process that encourages participation</li> </ul> <p>I urge Council to commit to a divest/invest strategy with a timeline and a more transparent process that truly engages the community.</p> <p>Virginia Knight</p>				
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7/27/2020 10:24:00 PM	2020-2021 Annual Budget	<p>Dear Mayor Manheimer and Councilmembers,</p> <p>I am writing to you today to implore you to listen to your city by defunding the Asheville Police Department's budget by at least 50% in the 2020-2021 Annual Budget.</p> <p>Since the last city council meeting, I have had friends, family, and even colleagues from out of state reach out to me in support of Asheville passing reparations. What the national news did not tell them, and what I did, was that we still have a long way to go. I told them that on this same call, our city council tabled a vote proposed by another councilmember to ban the use of tear gas in Asheville. I briefed them on City Council procuring an external vendor to tell them what we already know-that APD's response to the BLM protests was aggressive and unwarranted. And I would be remiss if I did not mention the fact that these external evaluators would be only evaluating the BLM protest response, not the Blue Lives Matter counter-protests.</p> <p>On July 28th, you have the chance to make national news again by deciding to defund the APD and to redirect those funds to community investments. When you passed the reparations proposal, you all started by acknowledging Asheville's racist past. It's time that you also acknowledge that policing is not working. Our community has overwhelmingly voiced and will continue to voice our opposition to a fully-funded APD and if the budget is passed as-is tomorrow evening, you will feel our opposition to your decision when your names show up on our ballots.</p> <p>Lastly, I would like to give you a real example of how policing has failed our city recently. Rachel Ruit became infamously known as "Racist Rachel" this past month when she accosted a group of Black tourists with racial slurs and verbal threats. APD booked and charged this woman and released her back into the public without any assessment of her mental state. A couple of weeks later, Rachel grew more violent. She pulled a hijab off of a woman, threatened to sexually assault a Latinx child while pushing her and violently tearing off her own clothes. She also chased another Latinx child with a knife. APD booked her and she was released on a \$1,000 bond. When I read this, I was terrified. It was clear that this woman was growing increasingly violent and that it was only a matter of time before she inflicted physical harm. Probably over a week after this incident was reported, Rachel Ruit walked into traffic taking her own life. Rachel Ruit needed real help. She did not need handcuffs. She did not need to be arrested. She did not need to pay a bond. She needed someone who was well versed in helping someone in her condition. And had she this help, maybe she would still be around today. Maybe that very first incident would have never escalated, and a woman and two innocent children would not have to deal with the trauma Rachel inflicted upon them for the rest of their lives.</p> <p>This is one of the many reasons why we are asking City Council and the Mayor to vote to defund the police. Because despite her faults, Rachel Ruit had the right to get real help from her city. Because people of color should not have had to leave their homes with the fear that they would run into her or someone like her. We need a real community investment in resources to support our health, our education, and our overall welfare. We do not need more officers. We do not need more weaponry. Enough is enough.</p> <p>I hope you read this. I hope I can count on you to do the right thing tomorrow.</p> <p>-Hanna</p>				
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7/27/2020 10:25:00 PM	Fiscal Year 2020-21 Annual Operating Budget or Informal Discussion and Public Comment	<p>Dear City Council Members,</p> <p>My name is Alyssa Sacora and I am a resident of Fairview, NC. First, thank you for postponing the budget approval meeting to reconsider how much of the city's funding is going towards the Police Department. And thank you for the unanimous decision to move forward with the Reparations Resolution for Black Asheville. Policy change and allocating funds is a crucial piece of this process.</p> <p>The Defund the Police Movement is about using our tax payer dollars to create better programs and systems of support for Black community members who have been repeatedly targeted, oppressed and treated as less than citizens. It's about getting the right people in situations to help those in need. It's about ending police brutality and the imbedded racism that exists with the Police Department and all of our institutions. It is not about abolishing the Police completely. Our community doesn't want chaos- they want the opportunity to thrive.</p> <p>I am writing to ask about next steps. How is the budget review process going? Has the City Council committed to reinvest funds that had previously been allocated to the police department? Are you including the leaders of the Black Community to offer guidance on where we need to start to begin this transition? Can we expect to see a draft budget and will there be a public comment period to get feedback directly from the folks this budget is intended to serve?</p> <p>I am sure you know the importance of transparency and timeliness as you are working for and representing the residents of Asheville and clear communication is so important. Thank you for sharing your thoughts and the process.</p> <p>Alyssa Sacora</p> <p><a href="http://www.thepatchworkunderground.com">www.thepatchworkunderground.com</a> &lt;<a href="http://www.thepatchworkunderground.com/">http://www.thepatchworkunderground.com/</a>&gt; 540-686-0077</p>				
7/27/2020 10:32:00 PM	Divesting Funds	<p>My name is Matt Moore a resident here of Asheville, Nc who works and pays taxes in the community. I am writing in response to the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 annual operating budget. These matters and the budget itself is something that I believe should be transparent to our community. A couple months ago you promised to do just that and we are waiting. I along with many others have called for a divesting of 50% of the police funds and investing in our local black community. Are you willing to do this? Ideas are fixing up parks, more educational and youth programs, build affordable housing, and many other options to help our black community thrive. This is just the beginning of the change we need to see locally. I hope you hear our voices and do the right thing!</p> <p>In Closing I urge you to commit to a divesting/investing strategy this week along with a timeline and clear transparency to better engage the community.</p> <p>Thanks,Matt Moore</p>				

7/27/2020 10:41:00 PM	Fiscal Year Budget Proposal/Councilman Kapoor's Vacant seat	<p>Hello,</p> <p>My name is Christopher O'Leary. I am a resident of Asheville.</p> <p>First off, I want to thank you for passing the resolution for community reparations for black Asheville. It is high time we start addressing some of the longstanding inequities in Asheville and this is a necessary and welcome move toward real change.</p> <p>I am reaching out today to address the fiscal year 2020-21 annual operating budget, specifically the APD budget. I want to call on City Council to commit to racial justice and defund the police by 50%. The success of the reparations resolution will depend on our ability to overhaul deep systems of oppression across the board. We need to create alternatives to policing with laws and practices that are not based around discrimination. We need to implement concrete plans as to how we can bridge the opportunity gap. And most of all, we need funding—because otherwise all this is just a hollow gesture. For a city with limited violent crime and a well-documented habit of over-policing people of color, we spend far too much on APD's budget. We need to limit the scope of what the police are capable of financially because "legality" doesn't seem to.</p> <p>I also implore you to put Councilman Kapoor's vacant seat up to a vote and not appoint someone in the name of "saving money." It is important that whoever fills his seat be a voice for the people of Asheville.</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Christopher O'Leary</p>				
7/27/2020 10:45:00 PM	Interim Budget	<p>Hello all,</p> <p>I am writing to add my voice to the many of calls you are getting to put actions to the words the council has given in the past weeks.</p> <p>There has been a lot of talk from council about reparations and changes to our struggling city. There has also been a lot of listening as your fellow citizens have found a stronger, more active voice in this moment.</p> <p>We are serious when we say we want a substantial reallocation of the police budget. Cutting this budget frees up money to go towards reparations initiatives. You have to make these investments while also stopping your investment in the city department that has done the most harm. Slimming the police down lets them focus on the most essential of their services and we can then use the money to support our population who are housing unstable or mentally ill in a compassionate way.</p> <p>Your words about reparations will not be enough. You have to back it up with dollars, wherever you can find them.</p> <p>Please trust your neighbors, open up the budget process, do not move from a place of fear. Your neighbors are smart, they are hurting and angry but they are moving from a place of empathy for their neighbors. Help us in that project. Set an example for what it looks like to not just say the brave words, but to do the hard things to make those words a reality. Start our city on that path. Please.</p> <p>Thank you for your service, Rachel</p>				

7/27/2020 11:28:00 PM	City Budget	<p>Hello,</p> <p>My name is Taylor and I am an Asheville resident.</p> <p>I would like to support the 50% decrease in AVL PD budget in order to support community programs.</p> <p>I believe Asheville should support “an equitable and diverse community, “a well planned and livable community” and “quality affordable housing” in accordance with the 2036 vision.</p> <p>Divest from police. Invest in communities.</p> <p>Thank you, Taylor</p>				
7/28/2020 12:08:00 AM	Budget Ideas	<p>-lower the police budget by at the very least 50%. Fund reparations through divestment of police. Ban tear gas. Do not create a community engagement division within the Asheville PD, because the police cannot be reformed. Demilitarize the APD and remove officers from the schools.</p> <p>-follow through on all promises of reparations and community engagement. Remove symbols of white supremacy from all public places such as streets, parks, schools, etc.</p> <p>-budget transparency: provide a detailed draft budget to the public and implement the promised community engagement process.</p>				
7/28/2020 12:22:00 AM	Fiscal Year 2020-21 Annual Operating Budget	<p>Hi there,</p> <p>My name is Emily Haaksma, and I am a lifelong resident of Asheville. I am emailing in regards to the proposed 2020-21 Annual Operating Budget.</p> <p>I want to stress the importance of the city manager's "public engagement" process, and remind council that the public is already very engaged! It is extremely clear that the people of Asheville are asking for the defunding of the police, and that needs to be the main focus of this engagement process. Please be very clear in tomorrow's meeting about your intentions regarding this "public engagement" process, including different organizations and individuals you have plans to consult. My recommendations are: Racial Justice Coalition, Defund AVL PD, Boots on the Ground, Beloved Asheville, and Black AVL Demands.</p> <p>Thank you and good luck tomorrow--we'll be watching to make sure ya'll stay transparent and in integrity!</p>				

7/28/2020 12:23:00 AM	Divest from the Police and Invest in the Black Community	<p>I am a Asheville Community member, homeowner, mother, grandmother, and Veteran of the USAF. I am reaching out to you now to request that you make the adjustments necessary to change this horrible past of White Supremacy and acknowledge the fact that the Civil War was fought and won by the Union 155 years ago. It is time to address the past and make restitution for the future.</p> <p>I am writing to follow-up on the request, made in June, by the Black Community through "Black Asheville Demands." This request was to Divest from the police at least 50% of their budget and invest that money into the Black Community.</p> <p>City officials in June insisted that they needed time to develop a new budget and promised to engage the community in a transparent process. Two months have passed and there has not been a clear response to the community or a new budget proposed to show the commitment to divest and invest.</p> <p>Are you prepared to commit to this request? This is an urgent matter. Too many lives have been lost and too many people have been imprisoned in order to continue the injustices of racism. The lack of inequality in education, housing, healthcare and employment have further disenfranchised the Black community from obtaining the necessary tools to obtain the rights, that we as White Americans,so deeply profess to believe in and strive for -The American Dream.</p> <p>Our further delay in resisting the request to divest and invest is only confirmation that we are not the country and people we profess to be. Instead we are the racist, inhumane, uncaring country who hides behind the pretense of generosity and the protector of global injustices while we continue to treat our own citizens with disrespect and injustice.</p> <p>We as a City can take a stand, show leadership and compassion to our fellow Americans. Be the model of what the American people really are and change the terrible history of racism and discrimination. Make reparations and changes to policing, housing, healthcare, education and include all Americans in the ability to prosper and live the American Dream.</p> <p>I look forward to a time when we are all Americans. When we can drop the subdivisions of African or Asian before American and be one "American". One country, one nationality.</p>				
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7/28/2020 12:48:00 AM	Concerns from an Asheville Citizen	<p>Hello,</p> <p>My name is Arria Williams and I am an Asheville citizen. I am writing to you to demand a 50% budget cut for the Asheville Police Department. At nearly \$30 million dollars, higher than any other department, the police department budget is already far too large. With some of the highest racial disparities in traffic stops and enforcement in NC, coupled with ongoing discrimination and violence towards Asheville's black community, APD has not remotely earned this unchecked funding. The use of tear gas &amp; rubber bullets against protesters coupled with the gruesome killing of Jerry Williams make it clear that the Asheville Police Department cannot protect and serve this community. They have proved their illegitimacy and must be defunded. The police department's existing budget must be reallocated to reinvest in actual needs of our community, like affordable housing and transportation. The misuse of our taxpayer dollars has gone on for too long.</p> <p>Additionally, you must not deprive us of the right to democracy. Vijay Kapoor needs to resign and vacate his seat before August 3rd. You cannot steal this city council position from the people. There must be a special election for his replacement. The leaked memorandum made it abundantly clear that you do not care about the will of the people; this is your chance to redeem yourself. Regardless of the outcome, we will not forget. We will remember your actions at the ballot box every year until you finally step up. Stand up for the people you are supposed to represent if you want to keep your job.</p> <p>One way you can protect our citizens is by banning tear gas. Please do not allow the use of chemical agents to continue. In ordinary circumstances, it is a war crime; in a pandemic, it is a death sentence. Tear gas causes respiratory damage and increases susceptibility to COVID-19. You should be protecting the protesters calling for justice and change, not allowing their endangerment to carry on unchecked.</p> <p>Defund the police. Give us an election. Ban tear gas.</p> <p>Do the right thing or we will vote you out.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Arria Williams</p>				
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7/28/2020 11:05:00 AM	Budget vote	<p>Dear Council Members,</p> <p>Thank you for your time and service. My name is Annie Bennett. I am a local business owner and member of the community.</p> <p>I am deeply troubled by the tactics of late on the part of the City Council, to avoid public input on next year's budget vote, and to suppress a special election to fill Councilman Kapoor's soon-to-be vacant seat. The council has changed the date of this vitally important budget vote multiple times, changed the location of this coming meeting multiple times, and changed the rules for public input to make it less accessible. I want to have faith in my elected officials, but these tactics seem nefarious to say the least.</p> <p>For months now, city officials have placated and avoided the urgent call from Asheville to defund the police. This isn't going away until you answer the call.</p> <p>I want to express gratitude for the measures that have been taken so far, but if it stops here these efforts will be little more than an outrageous ballet that we the people will not accept. Effective reparations can only come in the form of system change, not fashion statements. Asheville's community needs protection and service that APD are not capable of providing, and the organizations that can effectively provide these must be better funded.</p> <p>Defund APD by at least 50%.</p> <p>Councilman Kapoor's seat must be refilled by democratic election.</p> <p>Thank you again for your time and service,</p> <p>Annie Kyla Bennett</p>				
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7/28/2020 11:17:00 AM	Commenting on: Public Hearing Item E	<p>Hi there,</p> <p>My name is Abbie Young and I am a resident of Asheville. I work at a food justice &amp; health equity organization, I am a yoga instructor in Asheville, and I write poetry.</p> <p>*I am writing to demand the immediate defunding of the Asheville Police Department by at least 50%, initially. *</p> <p>#1. We have been defunding our education, our mental health, our basic health care, our reproductive rights, our mental health services, social services and so much more throughout our lives. Defunding the police is not a radical or far-left concept. It's tangible. It's necessary. It's critical.</p> <p>#2. If you understand the history of this country or do a simple google search, you will understand that the police system is REFORMED SLAVE PATROL. Again, a simple google search will confirm this. I hear y'all saying you are here to address systemic racism... I hear that the county now recognizes racism as a public health crisis... and we are telling you that one of the most overt and historic systems of institutionalized racism is the police force. Stop giving them money! Every dollar spent on the police force is a dollar given to systemic racism, to violence, to taking lives of Black, Brown &amp; Indigenous people. The Asheville Police Department is the largest per-capita department of any city in the state. I hear y'all saying you don't know where you will get funding for reparations... but we are telling you--from the police force. You say Black Lives Matter. Put your money where your mouth is.</p> <p>#3. You talk about valuing community input. We continue to say the same things... defund the Asheville Police Department by at least 50% immediately. Why are we still here having to write emails, make calls, and register to have our voice heard (an arbitrary, confusing, intimidating, system that we see right through). It's clear that y'all do not care about community input. If you did... we would not have to use so much of our time during a pandemic to keep saying the same thing... defund AVLPD.</p> <p>#4. Dream bigger. You are in positions of serious power representing the community. And... if you truly represent community... you would have voted to make this happen yesterday.</p> <p>#5. Y'all talk about reparations. BUT, you do not mention anywhere about the #1 reparation being demanded of... to DEFUND THE ASHEVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT. Use this money to prioritize the wellbeing of Black people... the people who built this town and who continue to be pushed out in the name of beautiful Asheville and its tourist economy (which, by the way, is causing the fill up our hospitals with COVID cases... it is shameful...).</p> <p>#6. This is so long over-due. Your time is up. The time is now. Pull the emergency brake because things have been crashing and burning for a long time now. If you take anything away from this email... I hope it is this: The people are awake. We are alive. We are angry. We are powerful. We are dreamers and lovers. We are not stopping. We are just warming up.</p> <p>Defund the Asheville Police Department immediately by 50% to begin! --</p> <p>*ABBIE YOUNG *(she/hers- What's This? &lt;<a href="https://www.mypronouns.org/what-and-why">https://www.mypronouns.org/what-and-why</a>&gt;) *  Program Manager * Registered Dietitian Nutritionist LDN, Registered Yoga Instructor, Certified Meditation Instructor</p> <p>*Support Bounty &amp; Soul's COVID-19 Response TODAY! &lt;<a href="https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink/weblink.aspx?name=E39643&amp;id=11">https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink/weblink.aspx?name=E39643&amp;id=11</a>&gt; *</p> <p>*  t.* 828-419-0533 *  **a.* 999 Old Hwy 70 Black Mountain, NC 28711 *  w.* <a href="http://www.bountyandsoul.org">www.bountyandsoul.org</a></p> <p>[image: Facebook] &lt;<a href="https://www.facebook.com/bountyandsoul">https://www.facebook.com/bountyandsoul</a>&gt; [image: Twitter] &lt;<a href="https://twitter.com/Bounty_andSoul">https://twitter.com/Bounty_andSoul</a>&gt; [image: Instagram] &lt;<a href="https://www.instagram.com/bounty_and_soul/">https://www.instagram.com/bounty_and_soul/</a>&gt; [image: YouTube] &lt;<a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrgT2y6pJ3mpTaK-wkpUryQ">https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrgT2y6pJ3mpTaK-wkpUryQ</a>&gt; [image: Pinterest] &lt;<a href="https://www.pinterest.com/bountyandsoul/bounty-soul-">https://www.pinterest.com/bountyandsoul/bounty-soul-</a></p>			
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7/28/2020 11:24:00 AM	Defund Asheville Police Department and Hold a Special Election	Hi, I believe that Asheville City Police Department budget needs to be cut by 50%. I also believe that the council should vote to hold a special election to fill Vijay Kapoor's vacated seat on the council. To block this special election is fraudulent and bypasses the standards of our locally ELECTED government officials. Thank you.				
7/28/2020 12:03:00 PM	Defund Asheville police department	My name is Ariel Shefsky. I'm emailing to demand an immediate defunding of Asheville Police Department. We do not need more funds for cops, tear gas, and blatant hatred against our community. Your job is to serve your people. We demand an immediate 50% cut to the Asheville PD budget. The APD is the largest per-capita department of any city in the state. Every single dollar spent on this bloated police department is money and support stolen from the rest of us. Defund Asheville police department by 50% immediately. These funds needs to be directed to direct community control to address the cities long standing oppression against our Black communities. We are sick and tired of the councils efforts to delay and avoid doing their duty to serve us and refusing to act. Defund now. There is no excuse. This is not an ask, this is a demand from your citizens.				
7/28/2020 12:10:00 PM	Public hearing item E	My name is Ariel Shefsky. I'm emailing to demand an immediate defunding of Asheville Police Department. We do not need more funds for cops, tear gas, and blatant hatred against our community. Your job is to serve your people. We demand an immediate 50% cut to the Asheville PD budget. The APD is the largest per-capita department of any city in the state. Every single dollar spent on this bloated police department is money and support stolen from the rest of us. Defund Asheville police department by 50% immediately. These funds needs to be directed to direct community control to address the cities long standing oppression against our Black communities. We are sick and tired of the councils efforts to delay and avoid doing their duty to serve us and refusing to act. Defund now. There is no excuse. This is not an ask, this is a demand from your citizens.				