

RESOLUTION NO. _____

**STATEMENT OF SUPPORT AND APPRECIATION OF THE WHATCOM COUNTY
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT, WHATCOM COUNTY SHERIFF DEPUTIES, WHATCOM
COUNTY CORRECTIONS DEPUTIES AND SUPPORT STAFF**

WHEREAS, Whatcom County Sheriff's Office Corrections Deputies are responsible for the custody, security and safety of many potentially dangerous people and are exposed to many inherent dangers; and

WHEREAS, Whatcom County Sheriffs and Corrections Deputies perform services that are vital to public safety and the administration of justice; and

WHEREAS, as a community we ask our Whatcom County Sheriff Deputies to respond to a wide variety of issues ranging from auto accidents, burglary, locating missing children, human trafficking, child abuse, assaults, and domestic violence; and

WHEREAS, when trouble arises our Deputies are willing to accept the responsibility to run towards danger, rather than away from it; and

WHEREAS, as a community we ask our Whatcom County Sheriff Deputies to be prepared at every call to determine if they need to prevent, detect, and investigate criminal activities or connect victims and others in need to social services, mental health, drug, and alcohol treatment options; and

WHEREAS, for decades, governments across the nation have asked law enforcement to provide front line intervention and assessment of cases of mental illness while often being unwilling to provide the additional funds necessary to equip officers with the tools to identify and respond to mental illness effectively; and

WHEREAS, due to longstanding existing fiscal constraints we ask our Sheriff Deputies to patrol large geographic territories, often on their own and with limited access to help if needed; and

WHEREAS, for the period of January 1, 2020, through September 23, 2020, 38 law enforcement and correctional officers were feloniously murdered in the United States representing a 38% increase from the previous year and many more were feloniously assaulted and seriously injured; and

WHEREAS, the recent unprovoked ambush shooting on September 12, 2020, of two LA County Sheriff Deputies serves as a stark reminder of the risks members of law enforcement face every day – a profession where not all who leave for work will return home to their families; and

WHEREAS, Nationwide people are rightly asking for more money to be spent on alternative ways to respond to situations that don't involve the use of law enforcement; and

1 **WHEREAS**, one of the root causes some communities have been unsuccessful in
2 reducing racial injustice and aggressive responses by members of law enforcement who
3 have proven to be poorly suited to the job, is these communities have been unwilling to
4 properly fund the budgets necessary to hire strong leadership capable of change
5 management, extensive screening and testing of new applicants, adequate ongoing training,
6 adequate supervision and oversight; and
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8 **WHEREAS**, recognizing that alternative programs are not a new concept to our
9 community and that unlike other communities across the country, the Whatcom County
10 government has for many years, worked alongside the Whatcom County Sheriff
11 Department, Whatcom County Jail Deputies and Staff, the Whatcom County Courts, the City
12 of Bellingham, the Bellingham Police Department and other local law enforcement agencies
13 to fund programs and training in de-escalation and other non-traditional law enforcement
14 techniques and justice options; and
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16 **WHEREAS**, listed in "Alternatives" (attached) are some of the things our community
17 has already been funding for many years to promote racial justice, reduce incarceration and
18 recognize that many need mental health or substance abuse treatment rather than
19 incarceration. We all acknowledge it is but a base from which further progress must and will
20 be made; and
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22 **WHEREAS**, the community wants us to continue (a) reducing the number of
23 incidents involving the use of deadly force by funding our long-established, on-going
24 training of Sheriff and Corrections Deputies on force response and de-escalation; effective
25 techniques for intervening with those undergoing behavioral health crisis; and use of non-
26 lethal techniques and equipment, and (b) leveraging our Mental Health Deputy program;
27 Crisis Negotiation Team; Community policing through Neighborhood and Resident Deputy
28 programs etc.; and
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30 **WHEREAS**, calls to cut local law enforcement funding in response to problems
31 experienced elsewhere in the country would negatively impact local law enforcement's
32 involvement in the existing alternative social and criminal justice programs our community
33 has been investing in for years; and
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35 **WHEREAS**, calls to cut local law enforcement funding would by necessity result in
36 the delaying deployment of Sheriff Deputies body cameras, which hold both officers and
37 offenders, accountable to the objective reporting standards that only video can provide; and
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39 **WHEREAS**, calls to cut local law enforcement funding would result in reduced
40 training, supervision and oversight – which cost money but have been proven across all
41 professions to be the most certain way to improve and maintain standards.
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43 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that Whatcom County Council supports and
44 appreciates our Sheriff's Deputies, our Corrections Deputies, the Whatcom County Courts
45 and their respective support staff, plus the many other local agencies who work alongside
46 them to keep the safety and health of all members of Whatcom County our top priority; and
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48 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Whatcom County Council supports and
49 appreciates the need to promote further racial and economic justice, that in doing so we
50 acknowledge both our historical failings and progress, and fully commit to continue to do
51 more in the future; and

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Whatcom County Council asks our community to step forward, to promote racial justice by (a) continuing to provide financial support for: (a) our investment in a qualified and skilled law enforcement agency, (b) the Alternatives listed along with the law enforcements ongoing participation in these programs; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Whatcom County Council asks all our community members to continue to partner with us in the elimination of racial and economic injustice by being vigilant in eliminating the (often unconscious) implicit bias that can exist in hiring, renting accommodation, providing or purchasing goods and services, in education and other opportunities.

ADOPTED this ____ day of _____, 2020.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council

Barry Buchanan, Council Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

WHATCOM COUNTY EXECUTIVE
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Civil Deputy Prosecutor

Satpal Singh Sidhu, County Executive

() Approved () Denied

Date Signed: _____

Alternatives

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4 PREVENTION PROGRAMS
- 5 Incarceration Reduction and Prevention Task Force
- 6 LEAD (Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion)
- 7 GRACE (Ground-Level Response And Coordinated Engagement)
- 8 Gang Prevention Programs
- 9 Community Paramedic
- 10 Homeless Outreach Team
- 11 Youth Street Outreach Team
- 12 Neighborhood Policing/Sheriff
- 13 Opiate addiction Outreach & Engagement
- 14 School-based programs (mental health / drug prevention etc.)
- 15 Crisis Triage Facility
- 16 Crisis Prevention & Intervention Team (CPIT)
- 17 CIT Training for Law Enforcement
- 18 Intensive Case Management
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- 20 COURT DIVERSION PROGRAMS
- 21 Teen Court
- 22 Drug Court
- 23 Family Treatment Court
- 24 Mental Health Court
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- 26 RE-ENTRY PROGRAMS
- 27 Jail Re-entry program
- 28 Medications and community-based treatment following release
- 29 Interim Housing
- 30 Case Management
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- 32 RECOVERY SUPPORT SERVICES
- 33 New 32 bed Mental Health facility (under construction)
- 34 Specialized Behavioral Health Unit in Probation
- 35 Juvenile Court Behavioral Health Services
- 36 Housing Support Services
- 37 24/7 Staffed/Structured Supporting Housing Programs
- 38 Semi-independent Housing Programs
- 39 PACT (Program for Assertive Community Treatment)
- 40