

Council, staff, and residents,

Firstly, I want to emphasize the importance of considering alternative models of policing as we move forward with this recruitment. The departure of the current Police Chief presents a unique opportunity for the City of Sebastopol to re-evaluate our approach to public safety. As we know, the landscape of policing is evolving, and many communities are exploring models that go beyond traditional law enforcement. These models often emphasize community-based strategies, mental health support, and alternative responses to non-violent incidents. I strongly encourage the council to take this moment to consider whether our current model truly aligns with the needs and values of our community. By exploring alternative approaches, we can ensure that our public safety strategy is not only effective but also deeply connected to the community's well-being. Council can take steps in this direction by prioritizing such efforts into the hiring criteria for the position of Police Chief.

Secondly, I urge the council to carefully consider the fiscal impact of the proposed salary increase for the new Police Chief. The recommended salary and benefits package represents a significant rise from the current level, which, while necessary to remain competitive in the recruitment process, also poses a challenge in our current fiscal environment. It is crucial that any increase in expenditure be matched with a thoughtful review of our budget to identify potential savings or additional revenue sources. This could involve looking into ways to offset the costs through efficiencies in other areas or even revisiting certain budget priorities to ensure we can sustain this commitment without compromising other essential services.

In summary, while I support the need for competitive compensation to attract a qualified Police Chief, I believe it is equally important to take this opportunity to consider broader changes to our public safety model and to ensure that our fiscal approach is balanced and sustainable. Thank you for your time and consideration.

- Kyle Falbo