

City Councilmembers, Staff, and Community Members,

I support the approval of Agenda Item Number 8, which will appoint a City Council Liaison and direct the Police Chief to explore a West County Homeless and Mental Health Support Team. This program is essential to addressing critical community needs with a more compassionate, effective, and fiscally responsible approach. Key reasons for support include:

- **Reduced Burden on Law Enforcement:** Civilian responders will address non-violent mental health and homelessness crises, allowing police officers to focus on crime prevention and traditional law enforcement activities.
- **More Effective Crisis Response:** Trained professionals will handle mental health, addiction, and homelessness issues, ensuring individuals receive the right care and reducing unnecessary criminalization.
- **Cost Efficiency:** A shared resource model across multiple jurisdictions is fiscally responsible and feasible for Sebastopol, minimizing financial strain while maximizing impact.
- **Enhanced Public Safety:** SAFE-type teams free up emergency services and reduce strain on hospitals and ambulances by addressing non-emergency issues in the field.
- **Civil Liberties and Human Dignity:** The program ensures a more humane, non-criminal approach to supporting vulnerable populations in our community.

I urge the Council to approve this agenda item and support the formation of this critical team for West County.

Thank you.
Kyle Falbo