

Dear Council and City Staff,

Last meeting, there was a public comment submitted regarding Sebastopol's high rates of violent crime.

<https://www.cityofsebastopol.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/How-safe-it-Sebastopol.pdf>

What I notice in this report, was that Sonoma and Windsor are at the bottom of the incident rate while Sebastopol is at the top.

Sonoma and Windsor are both cities which contract with the Sheriff's office.

<https://www.sonomasheriff.org/contract-cities>

I also noticed that Sonoma and Windsor have significantly less homeless people (40 for Sonoma and 26 for Windsor) than Sebastopol (87).

<https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Main%20County%20Site/Health%20and%20Human%20Services/Health%20Services/Documents/Homelessness%20Services/Homeless%20Data/County%20of%20Sonoma%202023%20Point-in%20Time%20Count%20Results.pdf>

I read this article in the paper regarding weapons and drugs in a multi-location arrest, which included Sebastopol. This article shows that Sebastopol is a tiny town within a much larger region of unincorporated West County and Santa Rosa.

<https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/santa-rosa-vehicle-burglary-arrest/?ref=home-morelocalheadlinesfeatured>

I would like the Council and City Staff to consider contracting with the Sheriff's office as part of the process of looking for a new Chief of Police.

Sadly, Sebastopol's Police Department was underfunded for decades and has been through too many Police Chiefs in the last 6 years. I believe the Sebastopol Police are functioning as best as they can given the circumstance of underfunding and what seems to be somewhat high turnover in all levels of the Department.

Given that crime rates and homelessness are statistically very high in Sebastopol, it would be prudent to explore contracting with the Sheriff's office as they seem to have the money to full staff, train and retain employees at all levels. In addition, they work all over unincorporated Sonoma County. It seems that contracting with the Sheriff's office would alleviate much of the Police staffing issues that City currently has and also might be able to employ techniques to help reduce crime rates and connect more homeless people with services.

Public safety was citizen's number one concern and priority. It looks like people had good reason to name that as their top priority for the City's funding and attention. Working with the Sheriff's office might be the exact solution to solve part of the public safety issues.

As the police department is looking for new leadership, now would be the time to explore a contract with the Sheriff's office.