

Dear Council Members,

I am writing in regard to the City's unhoused services.

At this point in time, the City of Sebastopol is in a fiscal emergency.

We do not have money to pay for basic City functions.

This means we cannot provide social services for the unhoused as we cannot provide basic service for the citizens and businesses.

Why is there \$18,000 going toward a warming center when we are in a fiscal emergency? That doesn't make sense. Every single other City in Sonoma County is not in a fiscal emergency; they should be hosting a warming center. The County is not in a fiscal emergency. I believe 11 people were sheltered for \$1000. The average tax payer only receives \$1200 in tax benefit per year.

I have read a letter by Arthur George, chair of West County Homeless Advocates, and his concerns for the unhoused.

Arthur George is not a resident of Sebastopol. He does not own a business in Sebastopol. He is not an elected official. He is a volunteer and advocate for homeless people who lives in Sonoma County.

Arthur George's concerns need to be addressed by the County. The County has over \$2,000,000,000 in revenue. Sebastopol has less than \$11,000,000.

Sebastopol lost critical revenue and tourist traffic when the Sebastopol Inn was turned into homeless housing.

The negative financial and social impact of having homeless services and an increased homeless population in our community has taken a toll on Sebastopol.

I have asked several times what percentage of fire, police and public work calls and time are devoted to matters involving the unhoused. I have never received an answer. I know it's at minimum 20%. This is money the City has to pay without any reimbursement from the County.

During Horizon's Shine tenure, I myself have witnessed police cars and fire equipment on numerous occasions. Recently, there was a large number of emergency vehicles. In addition, Horizon Shine evicted its own members due to violent behavior. Where did those people go? Sebastopol does not have the budget to police people who are evicted from Horizon Shine.

Sebastopol, not Petaluma, opened their warming center. Why is that? Petaluma has a huge budget and is not in a fiscal emergency. What about Cotati? Rohnert Park? Windsor? Sonoma? Healdsburg?

Sebastopol should cease any and all homeless program until it is able to pay its bills. Sebastopol should be seeking \$400,000 per year from the County – not as EIFD – but as a reimbursement from lost hotel funds and lost tourist money.

Residents of Horizon Shine have received free rent, free utilities, free insurance and a host of social support for two years. Each resident has had the equivalent of \$72,000 worth of money. That is more than many people make working full time. It is unclear why they have not saved money and created a path forward. At this point, Sebastopol can do nothing more. \$72,000 is more than many low-income kids receive for college. It's more than working mothers receive in childcare benefits. It is a large sum of money, which seems to have been spent without any plan and strategy. It's tragic to see such a terrible outcome of public funding because there are so many needs within our current environment from mental health services for youth to money for rent subsidies for working families.

Arthur George needs to focus his time and energy into County wide programs where the County is responsible for the extra payroll incurred by the unhoused. The County can write the checks for the increased law enforcement, fire, emergency services and public works. Sebastopol can't write the checks anymore; the City is in a fiscal emergency.

Council, now is the time to set your financial goals and re-prioritize the basic functions of the City which service the majority of residents and business owners.

Thank you,
Kate Haug