

Deborah Liske

Subject: FW: Support for increased police funding/resources

From: Kim Gray <[REDACTED]>

Date: November 13, 2021 at 4:16:13 PM PST

To: mayorandcouncil@victoria.ca, Mayor and Council <mayorandcouncil@esquimalt.ca>

Subject: Support for increased police funding/resources

To Mayor Lisa Helps and Council, and Mayor Desjardins and Council

I am a student at the Victoria Conservatory of Music (VCM) and we've just been told that our beloved Christmas concert at the VCM can not go forward as planned due to the situation "outside". This is tragic.

It breaks our heart that students, faculty, patrons are impacted by this and it's unfathomable that other venues can go ahead with re-opening such as Herman's and the Victoria event centre, but the VCM can't.

How can Victoria even consider labelling itself as the "new hub, global destination for music...." when the Victoria VCM cannot even host a concert in a facility that teaches music?!!

Victoria is in a "State of Crisis" with an alarming escalation in violence, anarchy, and criminal activity – statistics prove that Victoria has become one of the most dangerous cities in Canada. Public safety is critical for everyone.

It is well-known that the Vic PD has been underfunded, under-resourced and understaffed for many years and no longer have the necessary resources to counteract the rise in criminal activity and public disorder.

An increase in police funding is not intended to criminalize homelessness, mental illness, addiction, or poverty – it is simply necessary to counteract the escalating criminal activity that has emerged in our city.

It is critical that the Mayor and Council also begin a co-ordinated and aggressive advocacy effort to the BC Provincial Government for more funds to fulfill the drastic need for more support and social services for the homeless, mentally ill and addicted.

It is essential that the Mayor and Council vote to invest in the safety and protection of its citizens by approving Vic PD's upcoming budget which includes an increase in police officers, mental health support positions and civilian staff.

This should not be a political issue ...it is an issue of safety and security and the long-term sustainability of the City of Victoria.

As for this December, I would expect the city to be doing all they can to support the VCM in welcoming back guests and the well-loved concerts that are so important to our community, and to not allow the VCM to be held hostage to the escalating situation outside the VCM's doors due to homelessness. I have empathy for the complexity around the homeless issues in this City but holding the VCM ransom rather than taking the steps needed to not only add more support and social services for the homeless, mentally ill and addicted, but to immediately address the day-to-day issues that are impacting **our community** is not acceptable!

Sincerely,

Kim Gray

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