



A CITY IN CRISIS

Good afternoon and thank you for being here. We would like to take a few minutes to respond to recent discussions about defunding the Grand Rapids Police Department (GRPD).

Before starting our discussion, we would be short sighted not to acknowledge that our community is in crisis. There are frustrations about incidents across the country involving law enforcement. There are frustrations by the members of both the Grand Rapids Police Officers Association (GRPOA) and the Grand Rapids Police Command Officers Association (GRPCOA). However, we believe the individuals who are the most frustrated in our community live in neighborhoods that either do not consistently see police officers or live in neighborhoods that are experiencing significant increases in violent criminal activity. The GRPOA and GRPCOA does not condone criminal acts committed by police officers, but also believe we need to transparently address the violence we are currently experiencing on behalf of our residents who we have not heard anybody support. Please be clear, the residents, mentioned above, who continue to call the GRPD for help will be disparately impacted if the GRPD is defunded.

The primary local discussion has been to return the GRPD's budget to 32% of the General Operating Fund (GOF) from approximately 39%. This reduction equates to a \$9.4 million reduction. This is on top of our previous reductions that equate to over \$2 million. This reduction will obviously be multi-faceted, but with 80% of our budget consisting of personnel costs there would be a significant reduction in sworn personnel. To equate \$9.4 million strictly to officers it equals approximately 78 of our 298 Officers. These officers would represent the most diverse segment of our department. We would also be forced to layoff all of our interns, which has a direct impact on our "Grow our Own" hiring initiative that is designed to increase diversity as well.

What does a significant reduction like this mean to the residents and businesses within Grand Rapids? If we were mandated to make this cut, it would be our entire night shift and approximately half of our investigative unit. To ensure enough officers to respond to and investigate violence within our community, we would have to shut down almost every specialty unit in our department (VICE, Community Engagement Unit, Special Response Team, Traffic Unit and etc.). We would then only be able to respond to violent and/or in progress 11 calls and we would only have enough detectives to investigate the most violent crimes in our communit

We have only heard minimal discussions about how crime in Grand Rapids is impacting the residents. For context, there have been 17 individuals violently killed up to this day in 2020. This is the same number of people murdered all of last year and more importantly that is 17 different tragedies for the friends and families of each of these victims. Further, in the first quarter of 2020, Violent Crimes have increased 10.9% and gun crimes are up 32.3%. More specifically, willful killings with guns have increased 400%, Weapon Firing incidents have increased 80%, and murder attempts have increased 14.3%. We have also been experiencing consistent incidents where large groups of individuals have unlawfully been interfering with traffic in major intersections in our city. We have received calls about guns being fired in and/or around these groups. Further, these groups have interfered with and delayed responses to medical, fire and police emergencies in the vicinity of these intersections. Due to call volumes and current staffing levels, GRPD personnel have not been able to adequately address these obvious safety hazards within our community.

The GRPOA and GRPCOA are fully aware that it is up to the community to determine how they want to be policed. Today we are simply attempting to provide information directly to our residents and businesses. If the outspoken minority that are demanding the GRPD return to 32% of the budget are the only voice, we fear the ability to keep our community as safe as our department and our citizens have come to expect.