

## COST-SAVING SERVICES

If Measure 20-211, the fee to fund city services ranging from Eugene Public Library to Fire Station #2 to Buckley House and CAHOOTS, etc. fails, I hope both its opponents and proponents will get to work to make sure these cuts don't actually happen.

Some dismiss the notion of services being reduced or eliminated as a "scare tactic" while ignoring that such cutbacks are already happening. Buckley, for instance, is constantly in danger of closing its doors, and has been for years. Buckley is staffed by people who make nothing to serve people who have nothing. Closing

Buckley would not only be morally criminal but financially irresponsible: Many Buckley clients would merely end up in jail or the emergency room, at much greater cost to the public, if Buckley weren't available.

The program I work for, CAHOOTS (which I don't represent in this letter), is another cost-saving service that is faced with losing up to 50 percent of its budget. In five years of working on CAHOOTS, I've responded to thousands of calls involving people who are intoxicated, sick, injured, depressed, suicidal, delusional, grieving, etc. If CAHOOTS weren't available, most of those calls would have gone

to more costly and already exhausted 911 services.

Cost-saving benefits aside, I know there are countless people whose suffering would be ignored if CAHOOTS or Buckley weren't available. And business is booming: Society is becoming more sad and disturbing by the moment, with rates of poverty, addiction and mental illness skyrocketing, making these programs more essential than ever. We badly need more of what they offer. The absence of such programs only guarantees our community worse financial and social problems.

Brenton Gicker  
Eugene

## LAW FIRMS CALLING

County Administrator Liane Richardson: Please, please, please take the several job offers you've had from local law firms where your pay will be equal to your overblown and inflated ego. Nor do we need you speaking out of both sides of your mouth, turning down an immediate pay increase while lobbying via emails for said increase.

If you can make more money somewhere else (and this seems to be your driving force), please go there.

P.S. I will admit you have the ability to smell out human feces at the Free Speech Plaza but that is an ability we really don't want or need anymore.

Philip Dietz  
Springfield

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## A MODEST PROPOSAL

Bonny Bettman McCornack and opponents of the city service fee have offered an exhaustive critique of city government, elected officials, spending priorities and budget process. That's great.

Despite their noise, they have not offered any relevant commentary on the city service fee itself. The fee is modest — up to \$10 a month per household and \$30 a month per business — and pays for a specific list of services. Funds raised by the fee would be put into a separate bank account, and a citizen oversight committee would keep the city honest about spending the money only on the services proscribed by the measure. Lastly, there is an assistance program to waive the fee for low-income families. If you are worried your family can't afford to pay the fee, chances are you would be exempt.

McCornack says opponents of the fee value city services, and I believe her. We agree that mental health services, CAHOOTS, libraries and public pools enhance our quality of life here in Eugene.

The difference between us — and the reason why I am voting "yes" on the city service fee — is that I'm willing to put my money (less than \$10 a month) where my mouth is.

Chris Wig  
Campaign Manager, Eugene Cares  
Eugene

## CONTROLLING THE FEE

Support for the proposed city service fee has been confusing at best. Early zealot Councilor George Brown did a 180-degree about face and laid out a combination of the traditional "there's gold in them thar hills" rant about poorly applied resources and thereby calling it an "unnecessary fee," mixed with a city government insider's cynical conviction that, once approved, such a service fee would only be applied to the agreed upon list of services for the first year's budget, but that following year's budget processes would, as always, usurp these fees for whatever general fund priorities suits each year's budgeteers.

Fee supporters speak of an included oversight committee, seemingly to guarantee the intended application of funds, and of a built-in review process in five years to ensure the appropriate next step — elimination of the fee; extension of fee at a different amount; realignment of funding allocations and proportions; assignment of fee resources to new priorities; etc.

Clearly there has been disagreement in-