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**Subject:** Fw: Increase Police Downtown  
**Date:** Monday, June 23, 2025 12:51:50 PM

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Updated 6-23-2025

Mayor Hoy, All,

I am concerned about about a request for increased police presence downtown due to the recent UGM incident. I am concerned that stigma of mentally ill individuals increases with these types of requests.

In my opinion Oregon's mental health services should be addressed directly to Marion County and the State of Oregon.

Counselor Nordyke tried to get a response similar to Eugene's Cahoots program for some time. I believe it would make sense to have a Cahoots type response or county mental health response. And then what? Where do people go? Jail, due to being homeless and or mentally ill?

Dehumanizing and Criminalizing?

As someone who has spent my life working with mentally ill, I know for a fact most mentally ill people are more fearful of us than we need be of them.

A mental health response to crisis by qualified mental health personnel is important.

The county crisis center staff are at the crisis center. Not on the streets or with Salem PD?

What is the input of Marion County mental health ?

Mentally ill and unstable people in crisis are located all over Salem and Marion County, not just downtown.

Again, I know Oregon's broken mental health system needs attention at the state and county level. The city can only put a band aid on a gushing bleed too large for a band aid. I believe Salem Police have data that shows where the greatest needs are. I think Chief Womack & Salem PD do a incredible job with emotionally and or mentally ill people in our area. Should they always be the responders?

The reality is these people need intense psychiatric help. Psych beds. People need a place to go and jail is not the answer unless a crime is committed. There is no place to go.

A few psych beds at Salem Health Pych unit & Good Samaritan in Corvallis are not enough.

The real issue is that the state Oregon and the county have ignored the issues for so long that often a person doesn't get help unless a crime is committed.

In the UGM case the person was heading toward the police station. The person clearly fell between the cracks of the broken mental health system. More police would not have prevented

Please consider options other than more police unless police data shows it to be a required need. We clearly know we need more mental health services with inpatient beds. We need real solutions, not bandaids.

People who have worked, are currently working, volunteering in mental health areas know that criminalizing, stigmatizing, dehumanizing, doesn't work. The city should know this.

Not Involving community organizations, advocates, etc. is bad too.

Please don't consider a knee jerk reaction to one incident that was clearly a mental health crisis in the state of Oregon's broken mental health crisis. Please involve others in this conversation.

Respectfully,

Lorrie Walker

Advocate for Unsheltered & Mentally ill

Legal Guardian

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