

Girdwood Board of Supervisors
Girdwood Public Safety Advisory Committee
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November 4, 2021

Anchorage Assembly
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RE: Areawide Alcohol Tax distribution and Girdwood needs

Dear Anchorage Assembly Members,

The Girdwood Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) is responsible for acting as a liaison between Girdwood's public safety providers and the community. The PSAC has been reviewing current plans for distribution of the 5% Areawide Alcohol Tax levy. The purpose of the tax as presented to voters and approved in the April 2020 Municipal General Election is:

- 1) Funding of police, related criminal justice personnel, and first responders;
- 2) Funding to combat and address child abuse, sexual assault and domestic violence; and
- 3) Funding of substance misuse treatment, prevention programs, detoxification or long-term addiction recovery facilities, mental and behavioral health programs, and resources to prevent and address Anchorage's homelessness crisis

The concern of the PSAC relates to the ability of Girdwood Public Safety providers (Whittier Police and the Girdwood Fire Department) and residents to access the services funded by this Areawide tax. Girdwood businesses and consumers are participating in the tax accrual as the tax is assessed Areawide, however Girdwood is in a separate Police Service Area, and therefore is outside of the current distribution of benefits through the Anchorage Police Department. The PSAC has the following concerns to bring forward to the Assembly and Administration:

1. Girdwood PSAC understands that the Whittier Police Department will be attending 40 hours of training in Crisis Intervention Training scheduled for late November 2021. PSAC has been advised that sending 2 officers (50% of the entire patrol force for Girdwood) will require officers to incur overtime to backfill the shifts.

Below is a calculation of the cost for WPD to attend this training:

Hourly OT rate plus benefits:	\$67.64
40 hour class x 2 officers attending:	\$5411.20

- PSAC requests that \$5411.20 is budgeted and reimbursed to Whittier Police Department in the 2022 budget, and that this item is specifically addressed in future budget discussions involving alcohol tax distribution.
2. Because of the small size of our Police and Fire departments and our geographic isolation from both Anchorage and Whittier service providers, the Girdwood Fire Department is often the first responder to domestic violence, abuse and other mental illness calls. Girdwood EMS and Fire Department members are frequently on scene for a considerable amount of time without police back-up, and therefore must also be provided with Crisis Intervention Training commensurate with their exposure to these calls.

Below is a calculation from Girdwood Fire Dept Chief Weston for attendance at Crisis Intervention Training:

6 volunteers X \$11/ hr X 40 hrs.	\$2640
6 admin. X \$21/hr X 40 hours.	\$5040
3 backfill* X \$30/hr X 40 hours.	\$3600

Total budget for Crisis Intervention training: \$11,280

(*to cover admin attending training)

- PSAC requests that \$11,280 is budgeted and reimbursed to Girdwood Fire Department in the 2022 Areawide budget for the purpose of Crisis Intervention.
3. Girdwood Valley Service Area residents experience drug and alcohol abuse, child abuse, domestic violence, homelessness, sexual assault and mental illness as do other neighborhoods in Anchorage. However, with a 50 mile commute and no public transit, access to services for many is unachievable presently. Inclusion of Girdwood-based services and access to treatment programs in Anchorage is integral to keeping these issues from becoming a crisis. The PSAC is encouraging mental health providers, the local food pantry, and other sites that currently serve in this capacity to apply for tax-based funding from the Anchorage Health Department. As this is a new program that Girdwood providers are just becoming aware of, additional time may be needed for qualified applications to be submitted to the Anchorage Health Department.
- PSAC requests that the Anchorage Health Department, which is administering distribution of funds for program support, is specifically directed to ensure that programs that are accessible in Girdwood and funds for transportation to Anchorage-based services are included in tax-funded distributions.
 - PSAC requests that 2.5% of the alcohol tax-based funding for Anchorage Health Dept is set aside for distribution to Girdwood-based programs in the 2022 budget.

We understand that Girdwood is an anomaly in the Anchorage tax and budget realm as we are part of the Areawide tax but not part of the Areawide services. Please help us to make training and programs available so that our community can benefit as voters intended when they approved Proposition 13 in 2020.

Sincerely,



Ken Waugh
PSAC Co-chair

Cc: Mayor David Bronson: Mayor@Muni.org
Girdwood Board of Supervisors: GBOS@muni.org
Girdwood Fire Dept Board of Directors: BOD@girdwoodfire.com