

October 30, 2019

Grand Traverse Board of Commissioners  
400 Boardman Avenue  
Traverse City, MI 49684

Public Input - No Need to Increase Police and Prosecutor Staffing

Although the County Sheriff and Prosecuting Attorney are pressing the Grand Traverse County Board to increase the payroll for police and court personnel in the 2020 budget, the basic premise used to justify their requests are flawed, and should not be allocated at this time.

First, even though “the population of the county has increased by more than \$12,000 [sic]” since 1998, there should be no presumption that there has been a proportional increase in the number of lawbreakers. Maybe the “gangs of rapists, murderers and drug dealers” are stuck in Mexico, and we are just being invaded with wealthy elites and old retirees. Not your typical criminal types.

Second, both the Sheriff and the Prosecuting Attorney seem intent on sensationalizing drug crimes and the culture of fear that was created to justify draconian government action against drug users and drug suppliers. Times have changed, and history has demonstrated that the individual right to “pursuit of happiness” may detrimental to a person’s well being, but it is a problem that should at worst be addressed by medical services, but not law enforcement.

Third, Michigan citizens voted overwhelmingly to legalize both medical and recreational marijuana possession, use and distribution. If there is a need to increase law enforcement personnel, it should be to ensure police and prosecutors are complying with the intent of the new marijuana laws. Adding personnel to continue pursuing the same failed policies, will only put cops and prosecutors on the same level as gangsters.

It is understandable that once bureaucracies are formed they tend to grow roots and it is hard to get rid of them. They have good paying jobs and they want promotions and pay increases, but the top priority presented with today’s budget requests seems to emphasize drug interdiction programs. If they want more from us, wouldn’t it be better to focus on the aggressive, reckless and dangerous activities that actually threaten our civil society?

Perhaps the lure of easy money from drug busts is too addictive for them to just quit cold turkey.

Please, just say NO.

*David Petrove*

David Petrove, Interlochen