



## Finance Committee

### Operating Budget Challenges - Code Enforcement Briefing

**Agenda Date:** 9/20/2017  
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#### **Title**

Operating Budget Challenges - Code Enforcement Briefing

#### **Recommended Action**

##### **Committee Recommendation:**

Not referred to a committee.

##### **City Manager Recommendation:**

Receive the information. Briefing only; no action requested.

#### **Report**

##### **Issue:**

Whether to receive a briefing on the evaluation of the need for a third Code Enforcement Officer position by utilizing public safety funding.

##### **Staff Contact:**

Todd Cunningham, Building Official, Community Planning and Development, 360.753.8486

##### **Presenter:**

Todd Cunningham, Building Official, Community Planning and Development

#### **Background and Analysis:**

The City of Olympia currently employs two code enforcement officers. While activity for code enforcement has continually increased as Olympia has grown; officer staffing remains the same. In recent years' code enforcement caseload realized a 95% increase from 2013 to present. Additionally, there has been an influx of homeless encampments in Olympia; abatement of encampments is at an all-time high with our code enforcement team responding to an average of one encampment per month in 2015, two in 2016 and 43 encampment responses thus far in 2017; an average of six monthly.

As staff continues to provide for compliance of our various Olympia Municipal Code (OMC) provisions, we are hard-pressed to cover all cases with the attention and timing needed. Instead, staff must prioritize each case and provide immediate attention where needed while placing less urgent items such as graffiti, vehicles, sign enforcement, vegetation and sometimes neighborhood

abatement violations on the back burner. Encampments have been at the forefront taking a great deal of attention this fiscal year as the caseload has increased dramatically. The cost for encampment abatement this year alone has reached over \$100,000 dollars, while we still have many abatements pending.

Should funding be available we would be able to maintain better enforcement timings and response prioritization. Additionally, our response times would improve. The idea of having an officer assigned to encampments and the downtown is a model we would like to develop while the two other officers attend to their respective areas and assignments providing periodic support to the investigative and abatement process of encampments.

**Neighborhood/Community Interests:**

Many neighborhood groups, property and business owners maintain contact with our team to report ongoing issues. Homelessness as it relates to encampment enforcement is a community interest and continues to be a topic of interest for many community groups attempting to discover avenues to address this important subject.

**Options:**

Briefing only.

**Financial Impact:**

The cost of a third officer is considered in the upcoming public safety ballot measure. Should the measure pass; this funding source would establish an annual budget for this position. Should the measure not pass, there would still be a need for an officer of which the funding source would be evaluated for future consideration and in which case there would be a direct financial impact in approving the position to the general fund budget for future years.

**Attachments:**

None