

(25:02)

Nikkita Oliver: We have been talking about this participatory budgeting process -- we've been talking about lots of research that's gone into identifying aspects of the budget that can be trimmed down and defunded right now, and there are Black researchers that have been on the forefront of that work -- helping, assisting, identifying -- alongside community organizers what we need to be putting before the City Council. And two of those organizers are LeTania Severe and Shaun Glaze, and we are so honored to have you here today on the call, representatives/organizers with King County Equity Now. LeTania, thank you so much for being here. We're excited to hear from you.

LeTania Severe: Thank you. I'm very privileged to have the opportunity to work with King County Equity Now's research team and with these brilliant people who you've heard from prior and those all working behind the scenes. We're very excited about the community-led research process. We know that those closest to the problems are closest to the solutions. Those who have been harmed by policing have specific wisdom, expertise, and leadership needed to explore what would create true community health and safety. Our research methodology is rigorous. We use a blend of qualitative and quantitative data to inform our planning. We've looked at historical data as well as real-time data that we've pulled down from the City of Seattle. With that, we've crafted a 13-page 2020 blueprint for police divestment and community reinvestment. We looked at several models about what creates community safety and health. We looked at what's been happening across the U.S. and across the world. We talked to people here in Seattle who are involved in crisis intervention, as well as violence prevention and violence response. And we designed the blueprint to be open-ended so that it allows as many people as possible to become involved in the process and creating new solutions. As part of this process, we also talked to, interviewed, and collaborated with several of the communities who are targeted by harming, harms of policing. We identified the many ways that institutions like the police hurt, and in many cases kill, our BIPOC community members - particularly those who are Black, Latinx, Indigenous and poor. We're moving into the summer/fall research process. Some of our research questions from that are: what creates true community safety, what creates true community health, and what would create the conditions to enable people to thrive. The way that the summer/fall research will happen is we will fund the community organizations and small teams of community members to elicit answers to those questions from those most impacted by policing surveillance, policing violence, and divestment. We will also share preliminary findings throughout this process to allow for accountability, incubation, and cross-pollination of new ideas and recommendations. As a result of this process we will create the priorities for a safer and healthier future for our community -- what we should be investing more in and in order to generate true public safety and true community health. We will inform the budgetary decisions that are happening this fall for the 2021 budget. We will also inform the contract policy, priorities like the police contracts that are up for negotiation later this year. Having community decide how to spend part of the city budget isn't new. It's important to recognize that we have already done it, this kind of thing before in Seattle, and this year our research will be piloting a way to do this in a way that centers the expertise of BIPOC community priorities. Next up we have Shaun Glaze who I've

been working very closely with for quite a while now to talk more about how we'll go from community recommendations to action.

Shaun Glaze: Yeah? Am I unmuted? There it is! It's kind of a horror story for me when I'm just like talking into a muted mic. Hello everyone. I'm Shaun Glaze, G-L-A-Z-E. I use they/them pronouns. I'm Research Director at King County Equity Now, and I'm also with Inclusive Data. And today like I really wanted to highlight the idea that those who have the expertise, the wisdom, the leadership to do this work are BIPOC communities -- are Black and Brown folks. It's really common for a research process to end in recommendations that don't turn into anything else. And so to avoid that and to be really intentional about honoring the hard work that community members will be putting into this process, we are connecting and piloting the participatory budgeting process, like LeTania said, to focus on BIPOC priorities. And we're doing it in a way so that the research that is being generated -- all that knowledge, that expertise, that new vision for this world where people can really thrive -- gets turned into dollars, in terms of our budgeting priorities, gets turned into budgeting priority decisions, gets turned into contracts, and gets turned into our next years, our 2021 PB process. The future of our findings doesn't stop in 2020, then. It moves on to 2021. So before we have our, the ground set by all of this research that LeTania outlined, and then in January, we'll have the citywide PB process kickoff. What's really important - so participatory budgeting is probably not the most exciting phrase in the world. I've talked to a lot of community members, they're like, "what are you even talking about?" I will say, it is basically a process where we as community members, as people who like live, work, you know, are related to Seattle, decide where the money goes for a part of the budget. This is a new way of collaborating with community around budgeting, and we've actually been doing it in Seattle for a few years with our, with the Parks budget and with like smaller projects, and so this is just a scale-up and one that allows us to focus on creating community safety and community health. The Mayor has already made clear that she's committed to putting a hundred million dollars to supporting BIPOC communities. We are asking, we are asking, we are demanding that the Mayor commit to the distribution of a hundred million dollars through a participatory budget process, one that is designed with BIPOC priorities in mind, this 2020 process that we're engaging in this year, and one that is focused on creating true community safety and community health. It's not enough to invest in our communities if you're not allowing communities who are most impacted by disinvestment to direct those investments. We are the experts on what will keep us safe and what will make us whole. We live this. We breathe this. And unfortunately too many times we have died because of this. So it's crucial that in 2021 we take the brilliance that comes out of our community-led participatory research process and allow it to inform the future investments that are made for our communities. When we start the 2021 participatory budgeting process, we're gonna start with the creation of a steering committee. That steering committee allows us to build a model of collaboration, so it's important that the steering committee not be just some like group of political appointees disconnected from the community. We need a transparent process. We need something where community members can apply, can make the case for the expertise, wisdom, and leadership they bring to this role, and where the criteria for the steering committee is informed by the priorities outlined in the summer/fall research process. Again like as I wrap up my time today I just want to say defunding the Seattle Police Department by 50%

remains our goal. We expect that City Council and the Mayor to meet that goal. All of the participatory processes in the world won't truly generate true public safety and public health for Black community members -- for our Black and Brown community -- unless we are divesting from the Seattle Police Department, the courts, the jails at the same time that we take that money and we reinvest in community, we reinvest it where we know the solutions are. The money being reinvested in community needs to be coming out of the budgets that have been growing, bloated, for so long and have failed to create true public safety and have failed to create a true public safety infrastructure. So it's crucial today like as we are talking about creating this future vision and how the many pieces of it, often relying on our expertise, are connecting to the structural/systemic levers that are going to allow for that future to come to place, again: budgeting decisions, contracts, etc. Thank you so much.

(34:25)