

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Letter to Council re: 2018 City of Hamilton budget

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From: Joshua Weresch

Sent: January 24, 2018 6:15 AM

To: clerk@hamilton.ca

Cc: Gord Bowes <gordbowes@hamiltonnews.com>; Matthew Van Dongen <mvandongen@thespec.com>

Subject: Letter to Council re: 2018 City of Hamilton budget

Dear Rose Caterini, City Clerk:

Good afternoon. I hope this finds you well. My name is Joshua Weresch, a resident in Ward 7. I write in regards to the upcoming approval, in the next two months, of the City of Hamilton's budget, particularly in regards to the Boards & Agencies meetings happening today and this coming Thursday at 0930 hours. Please include this letter in the correspondence to City Council at Council's next meeting. I have carbon-copied my letter to workers at the Hamilton News and the Hamilton Spectator, for their interest.

This past year, our house was assessed at a value of \$270,500, rising from \$252,000 the year before that; our property taxes rose from \$3,444.38 to \$3,549.43 in the same time period. While I do not mind paying higher property taxes for services received by the city, I do mind the manner in which those portions are allocated, particularly within the Boards & Agencies portion of our tax bill. City and Provincially Shared Programs, Area Rated Services and Education Tax rates certainly deserve my taxes' support; however, the Boards & Agencies portion needs to be more clearly addressed.

Currently, Hamilton Police Services receives \$517 -- the largest percentage of all listed services -- 15 cents of every tax dollar heading in that direction. The Library receives \$102 and Boards, Agencies, and the City Enrichment Fund receive \$77. I would recommend that funding continues, as it has, if not increased toward public health, community-based programs for mental-health care, and, especially, residential-care facilities -- see, in this latter regard, this article in the Hamilton Spectator: <https://www.thespec.com/news-story/8086789-residential-care-facilities-squeezed-by-minimum-wage-hike/> -- as well as all the arts (and public housing for the poor, the construction of which should be celebrated by the city instead of the same celebration wasted on the passing of one million dollars' worth of condominium and commercial building). I would recommend, more, that Hamiltonians invert that particular pyramid, either by pressuring the city to give its police services \$77 of taxes -- 2 cents of every tax dollar instead of its customary 15 cents -- or by refusing to pay that \$517 altogether in a concerted tax strike, a venerable tactic of non-cooperation that has had, according to Wikipedia's 'annals' and, better, Gene Sharp's work on non-violence, a long, rich, and fruitful history.

Thank you for your time and attention in these regards. I certainly hope and will work toward this year's municipal budget reflecting what are surely the priorities of most Hamiltonians: a love of the arts and the compassionate community they engender as against the increased militarization and arming of a police force and the fearful fiefdoms such actions create.

Sincerely,

Joshua Weresch