

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Stevenson, Kirsten](#)
Cc: [Office of Ward 3 City Councillor Nrinder Nann](#)
Subject: Re: Police accountability
Date: Monday, June 8, 2020 11:15:38 AM

Hi Kirsten,

I'd like to add the following to my previous email for the next Police Services Board.

To the Hamilton Police Service Board,

Like Minneapolis, it is time to defund the police and reallocate these funds towards improved community care:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/minneapolis-dismantle-police-department-george-floyd-1.5602543>

Like Toronto, it is time to end the Student Resource Officer program:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/school-resource-officers-toronto-board-police-1.4415064>

Last week I wrote an email expressing my disappointment that the use of body cams was not being prioritized. I had thought that using body cams would help build trust and improve relationships between the police and community. In the time since I wrote that email I have attended webinars and read a dozen articles and studies about how attempts to reform police across North America, including the use of body cams, have failed.

The following NPR article and audio discuss a national study which show body cams do not result in a change in behaviour amongst police:

<https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/10/20/558832090/body-cam-study-shows-no-effect-on-police-use-of-force-or-citizen-complaints>

Videos continue to come out across America of Police officers using violent and deadly force against citizens including members of the media, the elderly, children and those living with disabilities. Knowing that the world is watching has not changed the tactics used by police. It would be naive to think this will not impact the way policing is done in Canada.

This article records the 461 deaths by police between 2000 and 2017. More than 70% of those who died at the hands of the police lived with mental health or addition concerns:

<https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform-custom/deadly-force>

On June 4th 2020 Chantel Moore, an Indigenous, woman was shot to death during a wellness check.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/chantel-moore-police-shooting-investigation-1.5599715>

Locally, Steve Mesic, Fred Penner, and Tony Diver were all experiencing mental health distress when killed by police. Why do we continue to send people with guns to help support those experiencing mental health distress?

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/chantel-moore-police-shooting-investigation-1.5599715>

<https://journalcswb.ca/index.php/cswb/article/view/9/24>

By defunding police, these funds can instead be allocated to improve services in Hamilton for those living with mental health and addictions concerns, including affordable housing.

<https://ontario.cmha.ca/documents/housing-and-mental-health/>

If you are white and economically privileged, like me, your gut response may be that defunding the police is dangerous. I am asking you, at the bare minimum, to commit to learning about alternatives to policing. I have included resources throughout this email and can send many more. Please read them.

Desmond Cole, a Canadian Journalist, wrote a book, *The Skin We're In*, in which he documents Canadian Police violence against Black individuals over the course of one year. You can also read more about his work in the following article or listen to him in conversation with the CBC here:

<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/the-current-for-june-1-2020-1.5592953/police-brutality-continually-treated-like-a-one-off-in-canada-says-desmond-cole-1.5592954>

Sandy Hudson on her podcast explains in simple terms what it means to defund the police:

<https://sandyandnora.com/episode-103-abolish-the-police/>

You can read more about Ms. Hudson's work in this Maclean's article:

https://www.macleans.ca/society/life/we-must-defund-the-police-it-is-the-only-option/?utm_medium=organic&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1591379713

I am asking you to commit to meet with community members (including Black Lives Matters) and Canadian experts on what defunding the police could look like in our city.

If you do not move towards defunding the police, I would like to know how you have come to this conclusion. What data and research is being used to inform this decision?

Sincerely,
Deborah Tomlinson-Veit

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From: Deborah Tomlinson [Redacted]
Sent: Thursday, June 4, 2020 11:10 AM
To: Stevenson, Kirsten <Kirsten.Stevenson@hamilton.ca>

Cc: Nann, Nrinder <Nrinder.Nann@hamilton.ca>

Subject: Police accountability

To the Hamilton Police Service Board,

I am a concerned citizen writing to express my disappointment that body-worn cameras are not being made a priority for our City's police service.

I am also asking that the Police Services Board engage and respond to the demands made by Black Lives Matters activists earlier this week. These activists have raised how the large, and growing, police budget could be used to support communities in new and creative ways.

I learned this week that the Hamilton Police Service was approved for a total budget of roughly \$171.6 million this year. This budget included a bid to hire more traffic safety officers, but left out of the conversation about the roughly \$2.6 million annually needed to run a body-worn camera program. I find it troubling that our city is prioritizing the hiring of traffic safety officers over a recommendation from the Ontario Human Right Commission to eliminate racial profiling in Law Enforcement with the institution of body-worn cameras for police officers. There have been many studies and recommendations made on how to improve traffic safety that do not involve police and are more fiscally responsible and sustainable. The safety of citizens on or near roads should not be at the expense of marginalized communities.

We *must* protect the Black, Indigenous and People of Colour members of our City. Racialized and marginalized communities are saying police in their communities do not make them feel safe. Recent events in the US and Canada have shown enormous abuses of power by police and the loss of black lives. Had these incidents not been captured on camera they likely would have gone without consequence.

Critique of police in Hamilton is not a new conversation. There has been much critique of the police response at Hamilton Pride in 2019. MP Mathew Green also raised the issue of carding in Hamilton after his own experience in 2016 with being carded in his neighbourhood.

When police refuse to prioritize body cams it confirms for me that there is something nefarious happening in our city. Body cams do not resolve all my concerns nor the issues presented by Black Lives Matters activists but it is a start. For *many* Hamiltonians, body-worn cameras = transparency of policing, and the opportunity for trust-building and relationship-repairing between law enforcement and the people of Hamilton.

There are many creative ways to use the police budget to expand policing to include a multidisciplinary approach and to decentralize power.

The work of Desmond Cole, Sandy Hudson and Malcolm Gladwell have helped shape my understanding of how policing has harmed racialized communities and how policing can be reimagined.

I leave you with this, it is not a coincidence that one of Berlin's police training academies is located outside of Sachsenhausen. It is a vivid reminder of the consequences of abuses of power by government and police. This is one way the German people hold themselves accountable for their history. Canada has its own history of abuses of power and violent atrocities. How can we acknowledge this and move forward to create a better system of

care here in Hamilton?

Please let me know how I can continue to be apart of this conversation.

Deborah Tomlinson-Veit

