

## Pilon, Janet

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**Subject:** Council/Committee meeting

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**From:** clerk@hamilton.ca <clerk@hamilton.ca>

**Sent:** Thursday, June 11, 2020 12:30 PM

**To:** Pilon, Janet <Janet.Pilon@hamilton.ca>

**Subject:** Fw: Council/Committee meeting

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**From:** Sarah Warry-Poljanski

**Sent:** Thursday, June 11, 2020 11:30 AM

**To:** [clerk@hamilton.ca](mailto:clerk@hamilton.ca)

**Subject:** Council/Committee meeting

Dear Council, Mr Mayor, and other recipients of this note,

I am writing to you today to discuss the recent events unfolding all across the world in regards to the horrific murder of George Floyd by an on duty police officer, and the call to defund police services locally and world wide. It has come to my attention and to that of others across the city that council and police board members are considering cutting our police services due to the request of political groups within the city. Something I feel is wrong, as do others who have asked me to send this email and speak on their behalf.

While I'm not going to even pretend to know, or say I understand how the family of George Floyd feels, or how it feels to be part of the African American community and see acts of racism still occurring in the year 2020, I can say I know why many people are angry in general with the police. I can also say that the rule of law and public safety of the community should not be used as a political gesture or pseudo apology as it may create more issues for our own citizens than finding where the problems are and attempting to solve them to prevent further issues.

I have had my own issues with police, but I know that in any profession, there will be some bad apples. And while I've experienced police using excessive force and demeaning language to myself, it is nothing compared to what others may have, or near the issue at hand being protested which is severe police brutality and murder by the very people we trust to serve and protect us. I can say I get why people are upset and demanding change, but I have also seen the other side of the police officers in this city. I've seen first hand the hard work and dedication they display to the community. And defunding any amount to the police services may cause more issues than the ones we face now.

From my research, and someone can correct me if I'm wrong, in the past 20 years, Hamilton has seen 7 deaths of civilians by on duty police officers. From 2009 to 2019 there were 98 murders of Hamilton civilians by other civilians. . <https://www.hamiltonnews.com/news-story/9487837-hamilton-homicides-what-do-10-years-of-cases-tell-us-about-killings-in-the-city/>

In Canada, the estimated death by cop rate per year is between 15 and 25 people. Also in Canada the estimated death by medical malpractice is estimated at 28,000. Between 1250 and 1500 people are killed each year by drunk driving. 45,000 people die from smoking. And 1000 people from the flu. No doctors, booze, cigarettes, car, or flus are being defunded and banned. Better policy and protocol is being put in place to lower those deaths. This is the most logical and rational thing to do.

There have been 5 (on record) murders in Hamilton alone this year as of May 21, 2020. 2 less deaths than police murders in 20 years . How many could there have been with less police? I am not sure but I think we shouldnt be willing to risk that and find out. Id like to point out that when people become afraid, they do strange things. Recently we saw store selves emptied of food , toilet paper and other resources with Covid panic. I want to ask what do you think people will be stocking up on if they know police resources are being lowered or even removed? How many people at city hall will take responsibility for blood on their hands when someone cant get help from a 911 call because some social engineering experiment is being tried?

Id like to be provided with answers to the following questions along with estimated times of arrival of officers after 911 calls are placed if we cut the police budget.

Who will respond to the calls for help with domestic abuse for both straight and same sex couples, and sexual assaults? Slower response times due to cut backs mean abusers will have more time to flee or stay on the scene and harm their victims.

Who will tend to calls about child abuse, violence and acts of crimes between youth, catching and prosecuting child predators who are on our streets and hiding behind computer screens, and who will help find runaway children and those who have been abducted? Children will be victimized and harmed at higher rates and more will be lured to gangs and drugs without reasonable police intervention due to cut backs .

Who will respond to incidents of harrassment and hate crimes against the LGBTQ community, minority groups, or religious citizens being targeted ? Hamilton is said to have the highest numbers of hate crimes , per self reported incidents.

Who will arrest those who are committing crimes of theft, assault, B and E, and murder? I dont know how many crimes go unsolved each year and suspects arent caught, but I am sure it will go up.

Who will keep our streets safe from large amounts of gun and gang violence, and drug and human trafficking? We might as well start dropping bricks laced with carfentanil and watch the over dose rates jump to several hundred people a year in Hamilton alone. if we are spreading our resources out thin, time will be lost in areas that are becoming growing concerns.

Who will police the streets so drivers arent acting reckless and endangering other drivers and citizens. We just saw police nab many people for acting like idiots on our streets. Why go to the track when no one can stop you racing down King St at 10 am. With less police resources, traffic policing would be lowered to tend to other issues.

Who will help the Mayor when the Mayor wakes up to masked people on his private property harassing and yelling at him, it's the police who provided protection and cleared his yard when this happened . Will he hire private security or will my tax dollars still fund this service?

Now add every other duty and task our officers perform at he station and behind the scenes.

My educational background is in addictions and criminal psychology and behaviour. The recitivism rate for convicted criminals is never going to be 0. With that, it is questionable as to what programs the city will throw in to place that will make criminals stop. I have worked front line with the homeless population, those experiencing addiction and mental health, and male young offenders. As much as some uninformed people like to think these are targets for police, these populations will suffer without law enforcement or lessened services due to cuts. As will most of society's most vulnerable populations. Cutting services and attempting to reallocate other professions to do policing work may very well endanger all parties involved, physically and psychologically. If we are going to discuss moving police duties to professionals working in mental health, addiction, and homelessness, we will need those who work in those areas as well as stats and other research to look at viable solutions before a reinventing the wheel situation occurs quickly.

As someone who has personally lobbied locally for police to carry naloxone to make sure as first responders they can save the lives of those who may be having an overdose, I know officers are doing more and more progressive work in the area of becoming educated on addiction, mental health and poverty. Change takes time, but Ive seen we are moving forward. Without a doubt the ongoing training and use of technology will provide promising results in regards to those who use excessive force, racial profiling, and other wrong doing.

The bottom line is there are good people and there are bad ones in any job and any career. We can't generalize an entire group of people based on the behaviour of some of them. This would make us no different when we demand the end of stigmatization and generalizing of entire bodies of people by police and others. We cannot let the bad overshadow the good and ignore the need for public safety. And we can't let those whose safety may be compromised, be left without help.

This is a time for us as a community and society not to rally for the disbandment or defunding of those who took an oath to serve and protect, but to demand they do just that. That those police who do a disservice to the community and their fellow officers become more accountable, and justice be served to those who take advantage of their position. To ensure that in any hierarchy which places a person in a position of power above another, that there be very clear and enforceable consequences for those who wish to take advantage of that position. This be not only for police, but government and people in positions who work for the betterment of society. The public needs trust, and all people in a position where a power struggle can occur need to be held to a higher standard with real transparency and accountability. If an officer is found to have taken a life of a citizen, they should serve the same sentencing as any other person convicted of murder. Cutting services isn't going to stop a problem, better policy and training is.

We have the opportunity at this time to mourn those who've suffered at the hands of those in power and get justice by ensuring change, while also respecting those in the police force who work hard and make our communities a better place.

Thank you,

Sarah