

Pilon, Janet

Subject: A Response to Councillor Collins' Motion RE: 20% HPS Funding Reduction

From: SWAP Hamilton

Sent: Thursday, June 11, 2020 1:51 PM

To: Office of Ward 3 City Councillor Nrinder Nann; Alex Bishop; VanderBeek, Arlene; Clark, Brad; Johnson, Brenda; Collins, Chad; clerk@hamilton.ca; Gately, Cole; Pauls, Esther; Office of the Mayor; Farr, Jason; Danko, John-Paul; Ward 8 Office; Partridge, Judi; Ferguson, Lloyd; Pearson, Maria; Wilson, Maureen; Nann, Nrinder; Pottle, Jan-Marie; Merulla, Sam; Whitehead, Terry; Jackson, Tom

Subject: A Response to Councillor Collins' Motion RE: 20% HPS Funding Reduction

To Mayor Eisenberger and Members of Council,

My name is Jelena Vermilion and I live in Hamilton, Ontario in Ward 3.

A response to Councillor Collins' motion that requested a "review" of what a 20% reduction in the HPS budget would look like (a review written by HPS):

The information released about Councillor Chad Collins motion to review the implications of a 20% reduction in the police budget is not welcomed. While any reduction to the Hamilton Police is important, if the overarching goal is not to fully defund the Hamilton Police and work towards abolition, then this motion is simply an attempt to undermine the demands and the efforts of Black and racialized people in the city. To be clear: the community is calling for a full defunding of the Hamilton Police and a reallocation of those funds into the community.

This motion aims only to consider what a reduction of 20% would look like for the Hamilton Police services and does nothing to address the demands of the community calling for the defunding and demilitarization of the police. This would be a waste of taxpayer dollars and serves only to distract from the community's demands. Over 3,000 community members have signed on to the demands to defund the Hamilton Police and reallocate those funds into social programs that benefit marginalized and vulnerable communities.

This motion is a delaying tactic to distract from the call to reimagine community safety in Hamilton. We are calling for the full defunding and demilitarization of the Hamilton Police, not to only reduce their budget by 20%.

The Hamilton Police Services board should not be involved in the decisions around how money should be divested and reallocated - the community should determine, based on the needs of

vulnerable and marginalized people, where money divested from the HPS should go. The Hamilton Police Services board is simply incapable of engaging with and honestly considering what the community needs.

The “Whereas” statements below are in no way able to fully capture the ways the Hamilton police are funded to continue to oppress and harm Black, Indigenous, racialized and Queer folks in the city of Hamilton. The only way forward is to fully defund, demilitarize and abolish the Hamilton Police service board.

To the police board, we’ve helped you out by writing out a new motion. Take a look below:

Motion:

Whereas members of Hamilton City Council and members of the Police Service Board have received correspondence requesting the ‘defunding of the Hamilton Police Service’; and,

Whereas the same correspondence requests the reinvestment of the proposed budget reduction into other City funded services (ie. food security, anti-racism and affordable housing); and

Whereas a budget reduction of 20% would substantially alter the current services provided by Hamilton Police Service staff;

Whereas the city of Hamilton has claimed a \$23 million dollars deficit due to the COVID pandemic and,

Whereas the city of Hamilton will spend \$171 million dollars on the police budget, but only \$11 million on children's services; and,

Whereas the city of Hamilton will spend \$171 million on the police budget but only \$44.3 million of housing services and,

Whereas the city of Hamilton will spend \$171 million on the police budget but only \$4,804,750 on unhoused people and,

Whereas the Hamilton Police Service CEO has been approved for a \$10,000 raise totalling a \$308,250 salary in 2020 and,

Whereas the city of Hamilton will spend \$31,300 on a pipe band, police choir and chorus but will reduce funding for food for prisoners by 5.97% totalling \$31,500 and,

Whereas the Hamilton police will spend 78,806 on ammunition and \$61,409 on Tasers, whose sole purpose is to physically harm people while they could be spent on any social services. The city and police should not have the power or tools to physically assault residents and should not have access to these weapons or a budget for them.

Whereas the Hamilton police have 17 new full time officers that work to violently oppress those made vulnerable in Hamilton while Ontario Works lost 44 hires to provide support to those same people.

Whereas it is likely that the Hamilton Police Services Board will attempt to show a 20% budget reduction that is in their favour and not in the interest of demilitarization

Therefore, be it resolved that the Hamilton Police Service board will defund and demilitarize the

Hamilton Police.

Be it resolved that the Hamilton Police Service Board release a full, line by line, accounting of their dollars to the public instead of deciding where these hypothetical cuts should come from on their own.

Be it further resolved that the city of Hamilton will invest that money into services such as social housing, youth programming, sexual assault services, transit, food security, mental health response teams, and other community based alternatives to policing.

Here is a reminder of our demands:

- We call on the city of Hamilton to defund the Hamilton police.
- We call on the city of Hamilton to invest the tax dollars that would have otherwise gone to the police towards initiatives fighting against food insecurity, racism and towards more affordable housing.
- We call on the City of Hamilton to ensure that HPS are not ticketing houseless people for existing in public.
- We demand that the Hamilton Police Services halt all purchases with tax dollars of weapons (guns, rifles, etc).
- We demand that the Hamilton Police Services cease the ticketing and surveilling of homeless and disabled people in Hamilton, and that there be a moratorium on the hiring of police constables in Hamilton given the documented over-surveilling of homeless people during the pandemic.
- We demand that the Hamilton Police Services stop surveilling communities, and that they halt the expenditure of tax dollars on high tech surveillance equipment.
- We demand that the Hamilton Police Services stop targeting and criminalizing activists and communities pushing back against Yellow Vesters and other forms of white supremacy.
- We call on McMaster University (President & Board of Governors) to immediately terminate Glenn De Caire's contract. De Caire was forced to resign from Hamilton police after he was caught saying incredibly racist things to other police officers. De Caire also has a history of violent policing that targets houseless people as well as Black people.
- In line with the demands of the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board Kids Need Help Coalition, we demand that the HWDSB immediately remove School Resource Officers (SROs) out of all schools and fully fund a public review of police violence that occurred in their schools.
- We demand that the school board refrain from calling the cops on kids.
- We demand that the school board collect and release data that documents the disciplinary action against students by race and gender.
- We demand that the school board implement a community run alternative to disciplinary action based on the principles of restorative justice.
- We demand that the provincial police act be rewritten to give municipalities full control over police boards. Currently, in Hamilton, the Hamilton Police Services operates as an autonomous body, giving municipalities little to no oversight in terms of what they invest in and the ways that they militarize themselves.
- We demand that the province of Ontario work with grassroots groups to divest taxpayer money across the Province (Hamilton - \$171M, Ottawa - \$319M, Waterloo - \$182M, Halton Region - \$162M, London \$123M, Niagara - \$154M, Sudbury - \$63M) from policing and invest it

towards community initiatives with the goal of moving completely toward transformative justice practices.

- We demand that the Special Investigations Unit, which has a provincial mandate, needs to be 100% composed of people living in the city with which the investigation is being conducted.
- We demand that the Special Investigations Unit needs to be composed completely of Black, racialized and Indigenous peoples with no current or former ties to the policing sector.
- The SIU must begin collecting and publicly releasing race-based statistics on all fatalistic encounters between police officers and civilians. No more inquiries-- direct action needs to be taken as a result of the investigation into anti-Black racism that occurred in the 90's and again in 2014 with the establishment and subsequent defunding of the Anti-Racism Directorate.
- In light of COVID-19, We demand that all prisoners being held and who are awaiting trial at the Barton Jail facility be released immediately, and that the outrageous costs of ankle monitors and other means of surveilling those who are released be waived.

Thank you,

Jelena Vermilion
Executive Director



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