

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Stevenson, Kirsten](mailto:Stevenson.Kirsten@hamilton.ca); Anna.Filice@hamilton.ca; Eric.Girt@hamilton.ca
Subject: Hamilton Police Services
Date: Thursday, June 25, 2020 3:22:41 PM

To Police Chief Girt and the Police Services Board,

I am a home-owner and tax-paying citizen of Division 2 (Ward 4) in Hamilton. I am hoping that you can address this in your upcoming meeting. I just received my Hamilton tax bill for 2020. The greatest percentage of my taxes, after municipal levy, is going to police. The police get 10% more than education in Hamilton. Because of this, I have a few requests:

As a tax-payer, I am asking Hamilton Police Services to release accounting on taxes used to surveil and police Black, Indigenous and racialized communities in our city.

I urge Hamilton Police Services to:

- cease purchases of weapons, high-tech surveillance equipment, and cease surveilling communities
- stop targeting activists and communities pushing back against white supremacists
- stop ticketing and surveilling homeless and disabled people for existing in public

At the very least, I am requesting that Hamilton Police Services please use a portion of your budget to invest in body cameras for every officer at all times. Body cameras, when used properly (i.e., not turned off, removed, or tampered with), help to both protect citizens and to keep police officers free from accusations.

Please also use a portion of your budget to establish non-police alternative to 911 calls involving people with mental illness. These calls can be diverted to a team of mental health first responders instead of police.

Another portion of the budget should also be used to implement policies governing use of force by police in Hamilton. Specifically:

- require officers to de-escalate situations by communicating with subjects, maintaining distance, and otherwise eliminating the need to use force
- prohibit officers from being allowed to choke or strangle civilians
- require officers to intervene and stop excessive force used by other officers and report these incidents immediately to a supervisor
- restrict officers from shooting at moving vehicles
- develop a Force Continuum that limits the types of force and/or weapons that can be used to respond to specific types of resistance
- require officers to exhaust all other reasonable means before resorting to deadly force
- require officers to give a verbal warning before shooting at a civilian
- require officers to report each time they use force or threaten to use force against civilians

Finally, I would like to see the Police's adoption of the 84 recommendations in the 2014 report by Frank Iacobucci, aimed at reducing fatal encounters with people in emotional distress.

The safest neighbourhoods are not those with the greatest police presence, but those with the most resources (food security, social services, mental health supports, infrastructure, education). Every 10 additional organizations in a city reduces property crime by 4%.

If you truly care about the citizens of Hamilton, then I am urging you to please invest police budget into body-cameras, mental health first responders, and use of force policy.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Melissa Dowdall
Division 2, Ward 4 Resident
Hamilton, ON