

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Police concerns

From: Debbie Davies

Sent: Monday, June 15, 2020 6:45 PM

To: clerk@hamilton.ca

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As suggested by the mayor's office, I am forwarding you an email that I sent to his office and to 2 councillors, Tom Jackson and Nrinder Nann. . I have also sent a copy to the police services board.

As a senior who has lived in Hamilton all my life, I am very concerned about the size of the police budget and the militarization of their equipment and their behaviour towards many people in the community. I addressed my concerns in the email below.

I am writing to all of you because I have a concern about Hamilton police, and a variety of perspective is important. .

I am 63 years old and have lived in this city my whole life. I grew up with no police in the schools I attended, and my son, who is now 30, attended schools that had no police on site.

I have been listening for years and reading about the experiences of non whites with police right here in Hamilton, and in the rest of the province and the country.

I attended an event at Central Library not that long ago held by high school students in Hamilton who feel surveilled and intimidated by police in their schools. These students are non white. . They were saying that schools with a nonwhite majority are being monitored while schools with a majority of white students do not have police on site. This is not a good base for education. This needs to be known by Hamiltonians, and we need to know who makes the decision to patrol these schools, and why. And the police need to leave.

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I am also concerned about the events at Pride last year and I am waiting for the report about that which is late in coming. I wanted to go to Pride but that would not have been a pleasant experience last year, under the circumstances.

When an oppositional group arrived to cause problems at Pride, police who were in the area did not intervene. I worry about vulnerable people who attend that event. and the possibility of harm they could face. I want those at the event to be protected, without the police being miffed that they were refused a recruitment booth. And with Police Chief Eric Girt's view of gays, it's no wonder they don't want police around.

I am also concerned that a yellow vester drove his vehicle right at peaceful protesters in front of city hall, and was not charged. What kind of enforcement is that? Is that what we pay millions of dollars for? To let someone threaten families? This is bizarre and dangerous and unacceptable.

I am concerned about the homeless being ticketed for not social distancing. How can these people expect to pay tickets? What they need is a home, and social services. I want my city to provide them a home, not harassment.

I am also very concerned about the lack of diversity on the police board. Many members have had to leave over issues. Why do we not have diversity? This is a huge issue. How can you represent the population of Hamilton this way?

I am very concerned about the size of the police budget. Six HUNDRED MILLION dollars in total? The budget needs to be whittled down, and fast, and delegate some jobs to other social services, especially mental health issues, as well as others. As a taxpayer, this amount just can't be justified. We are police poor. It's a leaking sieve.

Changes need to be made in policing this city. and most other cities. Let a diverse crowd pull up their sleeves and do some work.