

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Expressing Support for Defunding the Police

From: Mikayla Zolis

Sent: July 20, 2020 6:18 PM

To: Jackson, Tom <Tom.Jackson@hamilton.ca>

Cc: clerk@hamilton.ca; info@defundhps.com; hwdsbkidsneedhelp@gmail.com; info@hcci.ca

Subject: Expressing Support for Defunding the Police

Hello Tom,

I wanted to reach out to you as you are a member of the Police Services Board to express my support for defunding the police and support for HWDSB Kids Need Help demand for a 20% police budget reduction.

Police are doing an ineffective job at providing safety and security to people of colour, especially Black and Indigenous folks in this city. Additionally, the police budget has significantly increased in the past 5 years which limits the amount of funding that can be used for other supportive programming and social services.

There are national and international conversations about the role of police in society and how a reduction in scope from the police and a re-allocation of funding to other services can generate better outcomes for people who live here. I think it is a worthy conversation our city should explore, especially considering the folks that are most affected by the problem are asking us to.

It would be rather ignorant and insensitive to ignore the experiences Black, Indigenous and People of Colour have had with police in this city. It would also be rather ignorant and insensitive as a board with NO people of colour and NO people with lived experience from the community to dismiss and de-legitimize the requests from community groups.

Why can't we explore new models of community safety? Why can't we re-imagine emergency response that results in better outcomes? Why can't we reduce the scope of police? Why do police need military style weapons and why do we keep funding it? Why are police that are making \$100k+ being used to direct traffic, provide security at events, and patrol people for rolling stop signs when unarmed folks or technology can do the same thing for less?

Of course police services budget cuts are possible (Edmonton's already done it). Budget cuts can happen for any service the city provides, it just means that that particular service would have to reduce their scope. What services are the police providing today? What services could other organizations (whether they exist already or would need to be created) provide? What does payroll look like in the budget? What has been and can be done to curb overtime pay? Why can't we have less police officers?

There are a lot of questions here that deserve an honest thought. These questions also deserve an honest answer, and to most of them the answer is why not! Change is possible when there is community support and political will. There is already large community support for this initiative by the most prominent community orgs in the city + over 3500 signees. What we now need is political will and that starts with you.

Please put forward a motion to reduce the HPS budget by 20%.

I'm happy to further discuss my position over a phone call equipped with all the facts and evidence you need! Or refer to HWDSB Kids Need Help and all the community orgs in the city who are asking the board to listen.

Best,
Mikayla Zolis