

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Defund the Hamilton Police Services

From: Rebecca Johnson

Sent: Monday, August 3, 2020 5:31 PM

To: Farr, Jason

Cc: clerk@hamilton.ca; Defund HPS and HWDSB Kids Need Help Coalition

Subject: Defund the Hamilton Police Services

Good afternoon Councillor Farr,

My name is Rebecca Johnson and I live in Hamilton, Ontario in Ward 2. A few weeks ago, Black organizers released the following demands in light of police brutality happening in Canada and in the United States.

We want to see Hamilton Police Services (HPS) defunded and for funding be reallocated to community services that can prevent and address the root of crime, not just respond to it. Police services are rooted within white supremacy, colonization, and systemic racism; this is undeniable, and police reformation cannot change the devastating effects of this. While some members of the community may feel supported and safe within our community as a result of police presence, many do not, and therefore our systems and services must change. We are conditioned to believe that police are the only way to ensure community safety and order; this is not true. Our community is bountiful with community organizers, organizations, and professionals, activists and community members with lived experience who can effectively provide expertise and practices to ensure community safety, resilience and support, if only they had the resources to do so. Turning to these resources and supporting their work comes down to a matter of values. In recent weeks, the city's and police departments priorities have been quite clear; with resources and energy spent to remove and criminally investigate demonstrators public demand (painting on Main St.) to defund the police rather than responding with empathy, humility, and dialogue. I am aware that there is not a simple solution to this complex problem, however, there is an abundance of research and evidence to support this movement and experts who can provide [anti-oppressive, trauma-informed, restorative justice, anti-colonial] informed pathways forward; their knowledge and expertise to map out what defunding the police would entail is essential to moving forward. It is also essential for our leaders to critically investigate the systems, protocols, resources and statistics that demonstrate the true competency and values of the HPS. I truly believe that if community safety and wellbeing is a priority of HPS and our city representatives, they would address this problem and the demands of thousands of Hamilton residents with openness to new ways going forward that would truly protect and grow communities in equitable ways that center human rights and humanity.

To support this stance, here are some facts about why the police budget needs to be reduced by 20%.

- We spend \$171 million on policing but only \$158 million on social services here in Hamilton.
- There are 675 police officers on the sunshine list. That equates to 36.51% of city employees on the sunshine list employed by the police.
- The percentage of all Hamilton Police on the sunshine list is 61%.

- The percentage of sworn officers on the sunshine list is 79%.
- Average salary of a Constable \$116,527
- Average salary of a Detective Constable is \$123,073
- Average salary of a Sergeant 1st Class is \$135,110
- Average salary of a Sergeant 2nd class is \$122,979
- Policing costs are the highest cost to Hamilton's taxpayers.

A timely and whole hearted response to this movement and subsequent robust actions to defund the police are of utmost importance. My support for city councillor is dependent on our representative's position on these issues. As a citizen of Hamilton, I will not settle for leaders who do not rise to the demands of their community; in this case, with honest and transparent dialogue, increased awareness and education, a sincere commitment to a solution, and further demands for action. I ask you [to join councillors Wilson and Nann in their support to defund the police.](#)

I look forward to hearing from you and learning more about how you are supporting this movement during this dire time.

Kindly,
Rebecca