

From: [Lester Krames](#)
To: [Stevenson, Kirsten](#)
Subject: defunding the police
Date: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 11:31:24 AM

Hi

I sent this letter to the Mayor's office, Maureen Wilson and the deputy chief.

The mayor's office suggested I forwarded this letter to you. If I can be of any assistance please let me know. I have volunteered with John Howard and set up the Welcome Tables mentioned in the letter.

Thank you
working for a better Hamilton

Lester Krames

Dear Mr. Mayor

I am writing regarding your proposed virtual meeting regarding defunding the police. Citizen input on government decisions is a cornerstone of our democracy. We elect representatives to be our voice in those decisions. When we are unhappy with how they express our concerns, we show our displeasure at election time.

An angry crowd with yellow paint cannot and should not become the people's voice, particularly when there is little or no tolerance for opposing opinions. A fairly run virtual meeting may generate some good ideas, but will not reach all citizens affected by defunding.

It is time for the City Council to step up and take a stand. Changes to the budget should not be made without the same deliberation spent on making the budget. There may be room for reallocation of funds. Still, I want my representatives to consider: at what cost, who will be affected, are the services we are taking away from the police available elsewhere? How have these proposed changes affected other cities?

Further, As my representative, I feel strongly that city leaders should be

more vocal about promoting our police and recognizing the challenging job we ask them to do. If we judge every occupation by rare improper behaviour, we would be defunding city hall, universities, clergy, and almost every profession. We also need to educate the public about the problematic protocol the police follow to keep us safe and alive. For example, containing a person exhibiting a condition known as excited delirium may look bad on video, but is a severe threat to the officers and the public's lives. Before you judge, you need to know all the facts of the case.

Hamilton has always been a city with an open democracy. We have leaders who live in our neighbourhoods and to whom we can communicate. Critical decisions are sometimes hard to make, i.e. the stadium and LRT. Still, we find consensus by listening to all sides. Our police deserve respect for what they do and who they are.

We need to open channels of communication; people should not be shouted at but need to be heard. Organizations like the John Howard Society instituted Welcome Tables to encourage open dialogue between Canadians and new immigrants. They were fashioned after Welcome Tables in the Southern United States to nurture racial discourse and harmony. I think it's time to engage our Welcome Tables and bring the parties to an open, honest discussion allowing each opinion to be heard and respected.

Thank you for taking the time to read my comments
wishing you well
Keep safe

Lester Krames

Dr. Lester Krames

Hamilton Ontario
Canada

Life can only be understood backwards
but it must be lived forward
S. Kierkegaard

be kind to yourself