

**From:** [Stephen](#)  
**To:** [Stevenson, Kirsten; Office of the City Manager](#)  
**Subject:** HPS BODY CAMERAS FOR POLICE CONSTABLES  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 15, 2020 7:51:35 PM  
**Attachments:** [Brave new videoworld.odt](#)  
[HPS Body Cams Mayors copy.odt](#)  
[Mayor letter -HPS Body Cams.odt](#)  
[Media request for action FORM letter.odt](#)

---

I have attached for your attention/action some info concerning the history of the HPS Body Cam issue in Hamilton relevant to the current BLM movement and public perceptions and safety in general. PLEASE take a few moments to read the info which includes a letter to the Mayor for action at Council and a request for the Media to get involved in raising public awareness of the issue; pros and cons.

The Mayors assistant suggested I also send these documents (attachments x4 below) to your offices for consideration.

The technology has been around for decades and proven to be effective all over the world. Just turn on the TV to watch the latest polices hooting or tune into one of several network reality shows based on Dash/Body cam footage.

Who among us would not want to have the benefit of an audio/video recording of what may have been an assault, abuse of authority, excessive force, brutality of just plain lying to cover up anything that might be considered conduct unbecoming for a HPS PC?

Originally sent to the Mayor and T. Whitehead on August 19, 2020.

Stephen Pipe  
Hamilton ON

Within the acorn sleeps an oak.

## A Brave New 'VIDEO' World

As we move ever closer to a "1984" like "Brave New World" it is a fact that even in your own home you can be hacked, watched and A/V recorded. Even spoken to! It might be through a baby monitor cam, door bell cam, security cams, tablet, PC's, and/or phone(s).

Step outside and smile your on a neighbours' security, door bell, and drivers dash cams. There are neighbourhood cams monitoring buildings, downtown streets and intersections, traffic and red light cams. Most stores, residential and commercial buildings and parking lots have surveillance cams. Step on bus with 8-12 cams on board, take a taxi or subway and you are on cam. There is no escaping today's surveillance technology! Cities like London have cams on every street corner and there are over 4,000 satellites overhead some able to read license plates from space.

All over the world governments are capturing and storing any and all digital data from cell phones, voice, video and data transmissions; even your selfies!

There are numerous hidden cam comedy and police reality shows. How many times have we seen unspeakable crimes committed on camera by citizens and police. In many court cases video evidence can reduce court time, appearances and police down time testifying. For defendants, a blessing for the innocent in cases of "he said-she said". The defendant has a level playing field with the "benefit of the doubt" no longer given to police. Let's face it, cops are human, trained to lie, and some will even do so in court to CYA. Video may be open to interpretation but ultimately it is defacto irrefutable proof!

About the only place you won't be on camera in Hamilton is standing in front of a Hamilton Police Constable and sitting in an HPS vehicle! Why? Ask our Mayor!

Stephen Pipe  
Hamilton Mountain

## **Hamilton Police Services (HPS) – Body Cameras**

I have no doubt that the vast majority of Hamilton's' Police Constables (PC) are outstanding defenders of the law, the City and, it's citizens. Our PCs are well trained, well equipped and do respect their privileges and powers. However, there are and continues to be quite a few examples of "bad apples" involving Hamilton Police Constables.

Based on news reports, court records and HPS disciplinary cases officers of the law have been accused, charged, convicted, and disciplined unto and including firing for crimes ranging from abusing sex trade workers to dealing drugs and other conduct unbecoming to the HPS. Constables and detectives are human and subject to bad judgment, self interest and greed! Such cases are a minority but, they are equally devastating for the victims. More so with respect to the damage to the public's opinion of policing as a service as opposed to a para-military oppressor!

HPS has a powerful union and is the City's' most expensive line object in the budget and has considerable influence on Councils' decision making though the Police Services Board. Understandably, nobody wants to PO the PD, eh!


So, when the idea of having HPCs wear "body cameras" comes up, councilors cry "too expensive!" and "there's no evidence" that Body Cams have any benefits for the public or HPS. The matter of body cams has been before City Council at-least three (3-4) times in the last six (6) years, (see Council agenda items #17-124, #16-127, #14-141) . In 2017 Councilors decided, once again, to "back burner" the proposal based on the Police Services Boards recommendation (Nov.16/17) that: **"continued investigation occur prior to accepting, rejecting or engaging in a Body Worn Camera pilot deployment program."** There were at-least four City Councilors serving on the PS Board including Fred Heisenberg, T. Whithead (12 yrs), L. Furguson and M. Levy.

One of the reasons the Police Services Board (PSB) deferred implementation of a Body Cam pilot project again is, I think, because of an Ontario Police Association (OPA) study/report on the subject, referred to Council by the PSB which concluded "body cams" have little or no effect on crime rates and out comes. I've read that report and it seems to me to be very superficial, not comprehensive and simply reflects the position that various police services and their unions who clearly do not want to be held to that level of accountability. Why would anyone be afraid of the truth?

A full and proper analysis of the benefits, costs and savings would have to look far beyond the limited consideration of the cost/benefit for just the HPS. There are so many other potential savings and efficiency improvements for the over all operation of the City. For example, reduced court time for prosecutions, fewer court appearance, less police time spent waiting to/and testifying, reduced amounts and frequency of expensive law suites, higher conviction rates (proven) and greater trust and respect for COPs.

I wonder if any "further study" has actually been done on the effectiveness of body cams over the past three years. Toronto Police Services recent tragedies have raised sufficient public out cry there to persuade the "politicians" to go ahead and fund the full scale implementation of Body Cams for all PCs by the end of next year. Did Toronto police services conduct studies we might see and use? Maybe is it just time to check reality and use the widely available and proven technology to defend serve and protect the people too.

The original Body Cam “pilot” was estimated to cost one million dollars, for the additional police officers to manage the IT and storage requirements of all that data. There is a growing call to “defund” the police. I for one am not a fan of anarchy but would definitely support a proposal to have outside management consultants conduct an operational review of HPS programs and resource utilization vs essential core mandate requirements. Sunshine list cops directing traffic etc, etc really! Case in point: this year PSB recommended and Council approved spending \$1.8 m on new and used vehicles and bicycles for the HPS. Also this year, HPS hired 10 additional officers to patrol traffic on the Line, noting that these “additional” officers will recover their cost writing tickets to ‘improve safety’ on our roads. If these resources were re-allocated to the Body Cams project they would also improve public safety and also address the growing BLM movement by showing tangible action on complaints involving police violence and harassment, at no additional cost to the City. Imagine, City Council actually voluntarily taking immediate steps to address community concerns, not just for the BLM movement, but for every citizen.



I wonder, how it is that HSR can put 8 to 12 cctv cameras on every HSR bus in the city and traffic department can put cctv cams all over town at intersection but HPS can’t put one camera on each PC and patrol vehicle without demanding +\$1,000,000 additional funding to do something they really don’t want to do? Go figure, eh!

Police enjoy a distinct advantage in any given encounter with the public. PCs are trained professionals sworn to uphold the law and “protect” the public, right? So, they (PCs) always get the “benefit of the doubt” particularly when more than one officer is involved. Unless you can prove your case with multiple ‘credible’ witnesses or VIDEO evidence, you’ll lose every time! Most video evidence currently comes from concerned citizens cell phones. We can and should do better to protect and facilitate fundamental justice; *so please Mr. Mayor, level that playing field!*

Stephen Pipe  
Hamilton Mountain

July 28, 2020

The Honourable Mayor Fred Eisenberger  
and, all Hamilton City Councilors,  
City Of Hamilton

**Re: Body Cameras – Hamilton Police Officers**

Refs: A. Past City Council Agenda items #14-141, #16-127, #17-124.  
B. PSB Standing Committee (Body Cam) Meeting minutes of November 16, 2017.  
C. “HPS Body Cams” article, for media release, attached.  
D. “A Brave New Video World” document, attached.

Sir, I have attached for your consideration documents which I submit to you as a plea and request that you and council re-visit the proposal to have Hamilton Police Services (HPS) Constables (PC) wear Body Cameras while on duty. I believe Body Cams should be a priority that needs to be dealt with sooner rather than later. I also believe doing so would be a welcome tangible action to show the people of Hamilton that you are listening and willing to act definitively to deal with the growing discontent with police services and their para-military behavior. I suggest to you that the community would be best served by Council moving quickly to appease social concerns high-lited by the BLM movement and, all of our concerns about escalating police brutality, violence issues and ethics.

There will likely never be a good time to commit to an estimated (?) million dollar annual recurring cost to fund the “pilot project”, let alone full implementation across the HPS. The current pandemic related economic crisis and associated revenue losses certainly pose even further challenges to moving forward with PC Body Cams anytime soon. However, the fact that CCTV surveillance and video monitoring is already used extensively all over the continent (probably world) in every segment of our lives except the one that would level a crucial playing field for ordinary citizens of all walks of life, caught in the cross hairs of the justice system! Body Cameras do not lie!!!

I wonder how it is possible that HSR can put 8-12 CCTV cameras on every bus in the city and we can put up traffic cams up all over the city, but HPS can’t put one camera on each and every “on patrol” police constable without needing an additional million dollars + per year? Fairly common knowledge that if you ask a contractor to do something they really don’t want to do, they’ll bid/quote high. I think more and better independent estimates of potential costs and savings, city wide benefits and funding options is required **once the “pilot” data is collected, analysed and evaluated!**

With all due respect sir, do you and your colleagues honestly believe that having a real time audio/video record of a contested police contact is of no use or value what so ever to anyone? Wouldn’t you agree that the actual beneficial impacts of Body Cams (savings) could accrue to other aspects of the City’s operations, such as the justice branch and legal department. I think that the potential for reduced/dismissed liability settlements alone could pay for the project in just one case. Lots to consider, but I think society in general has long moved past valuing platitudes and promises of studies and investigations that only delay confirmation of the extent and obvious: CCTV is everywhere and Police Body Cams is a good thing **for the people!**

Folks all over the continent are demanding that municipalities “defund” police services and direct savings to social programs”. Possibly a viable consideration if based on independent/objective analysis of the resource requirements of the HPSs core mandate and actual operations; allowing consideration of the value, benefits and options to maximize best use of scarce resources to fund non-core programs and services. (ie: no more sunshine list officers directing traffic!)

Consider, for example, that by simply reallocating the 10 additional officers recently hired to write tickets on the Link to establishing the pilot Body Cam project with the 100 camera option to start with, and *VOILA*, a no/low cost solution addressing significant social unrest/issues with huge political capital, unless you’re a COP! Nobody wants to PO the PD but at some point we need to decide: “Who’s driving the bus, the people or the unions?” You sir can, with Councilors on-board, make that choice! You all can proactively help make “fair” happen sooner than, maybe later!

In conclusion, I can not imagine a more impactfull, empathetic (human) and appropriate response by the Citys’ leaders to not only aknowledge current smouldering social issues and civil unrest but also to definitively show the citizens of Hamilton that the HPS's powerful associations and unions need to face the facts and let logic, reason and good governance practices prevail! To “Serve and Protect” is about the PEOPLE and is not the same thing as “officer safety”!

Respectfully,

---

Stephen Pipe  
Citizen

cc: councilors and certain local media outlets

attachments: two (2) see refs “C” & “D” above

July 28, 2020

To: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Re: **Hamilton Police Service – Body & Dash Cameras**

Refs: A. Letter to Mayor & Councilors July 28/20, attached.  
B. A Brave New Video World, attached.  
C. HPS Body Cams – Mayors copy, attached.  
D. HPS Body Cams Parts 1, 2, & 3 (for media), attached.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to ask you for your support raising public awareness concerning a matter of some significance which the City has been considering (?) for the past six years. The background and time table of events surrounding the long and mysteriously lengthy and controversial history of this pilot project proposal is detailed in the attached documents and is, I believe, self-explanatory. The proposal has been “back burners” by City Council at least three times now (2014, 2016 and 2017). The last time was 2017 when, based on a report and recommendation from the (civilian/police) Police Services Boards’ Standing Committee on Body Worn Cameras meeting held Nov.16/17 that: **“continued investigation occur prior to accepting, rejecting or engaging in a Body Worn Camera pilot deployment program.”**

While police services and network TV programs all over North America, most recently Toronto police services, have adopted and embrace the readily available and widely used “TRUTH” technology, the Mayor and City Council is still dithering over and puddling about the cost, value and benefits vs expense of body worn video cameras for on-duty police constables (PCs) in Hamilton. Why.....???? Truthfully, knowing certain respected and influential Councilors have served as members of the Police Services Board for a decade or more and having developed strong “political” and “personal” interests. Given the power, influence and fading prestige of Police everywhere, some Councilors may choose to ignore reality, disregard the facts and simply appease the police associations, unions and local/regional police services over the expressed concern and wishes of the community. Others may just be afraid to step out of line and be the one to take such ‘radical’ action against the recommendations of colleges, the Police Service and BPS It is after all, ultimately POLITICS at play!

***I would very much like to hear the Chief of Police answer a few questions from the public and community through local TV and News outlets. Such as, for example:***

1. What is the Chiefs’ honest opinion concerning: A. The value and benefits to the police service and the justice system as a whole related to Body Worn Cameras?; and B. The value to the general public, as he sees it, related to Body Worn Cameras; not only from the perspective of the Chief of Police but as a citizen with family and friends out and about in the community?
2. What **“further study”** has been done by HPS and/or the PSB since 2017 on the subject matter in general, and specifically by the PSBs’ Standing Committee on Body Worn Cameras? If none, why?

... 2

3. Given the ubiquitous presence of CCTV in every other aspect of north American culture/society (and the world) why does the Chief think/believe HPS should be an exception? Particularly now that Toronto police services is moving full steam ahead after years of the same “back burner” delay tactic. Isn’t it time for the City and HPS to get on the same page bite the bullet and get on with it sooner rather than later? Isn’t the use of body cams in the best interest of the people/citizens of Hamilton more important than continuing to shelter and protect the police service and officers from having to be accountable for their own actions and the reality of our times?

4. Does the Chief really truly believe that an unedited, clear and focused real time audio/video recording of any negative out come or contested encounter with police services **would not** be of any significant benefit, value or use for either Police or the average citizen caught in the cross hairs of “the system”?

5. What are the immediate, short and long term plans for the HPS dealing with the growing civil unrest such as the BLM movement, general distrust and fear of police in general, the increasing number of civilian complaints about unwarranted use of force, bullying, abuse of authority and indiscriminate and excessive violence in encounters with the public?

For the record, and in conclusion, I’d very much like to state that I do not believe that either the original estimated cost of implementation for the “pilot project” or that the facts and conclusions of the OPA report/study are empirically true, accurate and comprehensive in terms of having been thoroughly examined in detailed studies by objective non-partisan experts taking into consideration the broader social and economic factors and context with respect to potential savings, costs and funding options. I can not fully express or stress how much I believe in the rule of law and justice as a cornerstone of modern society. Anything that we the people can do to strengthen and improve accountability, fairness and equality in the democratic system has got to be a very good thing for us all!

MLK famously said: *“Tolerance of in-justice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere!”* Ultimately this whole Body Cam political boondoggle is a threat to true democracy if our leaders and decision makers really can not see the simple truth, that “truth” is the quest in the face of para-military armed forces who, to date, have had the rule of the roost, the benefit of the doubt and the lions’ share of the City’s’ budget. Let’s all speak up and out and just stop accepting, allowing and defending that behaviour and mentality.

I’m asking YOU to help raise awareness, stimulate discussion and move the Body Cam project ahead, full steam!

Body Cameras on COPs is unquestionably a good idea for the people; thank you for your time!

Stephen Pipe  
Hamilton Mountain

Attachments: 4

Ccs: CHCH, Cable 14, Hamilton Mountain News, The Spectator, The View