

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Covid Protocols and City Priorities**From:** Emily Kulpaka**Sent:** November 23, 2020 3:35 PM**To:** Office of the Mayor <mayor@hamilton.ca>; clerk@hamilton.ca**Cc:** Partridge, Judi <Judi.Partridge@hamilton.ca>; Ferguson, Lloyd <Lloyd.Ferguson@hamilton.ca>; VanderBeek, Arlene <Arlene.VanderBeek@hamilton.ca>; Johnson, Brenda <Brenda.Johnson@hamilton.ca>; Pearson, Maria <Maria.Pearson@hamilton.ca>; Clark, Brad <Brad.Clark@hamilton.ca>; Ward 8 Office <ward8@hamilton.ca>; Pauls, Esther <Esther.Pauls@hamilton.ca>; Jackson, Tom <Tom.Jackson@hamilton.ca>; Collins, Chad <Chad.Collins@hamilton.ca>; Merulla, Sam <Sam.Merulla@hamilton.ca>; Nann, Nrinder <Nrinder.Nann@hamilton.ca>; Farr, Jason <Jason.Farr@hamilton.ca>; Wilson, Maureen <Maureen.Wilson@hamilton.ca>**Subject:** Covid Protocols and City Priorities

Hi Folks,

I wanted to touch base with you today, as I muddle through paperwork and phone calls.

On Saturday, I was informed that a family member of a participant in our facility tested positive for covid and their children were in class that day. We shut down immediately and called public health. The hotline for covid is closed on the weekend, so we couldn't get any further advice, despite businesses being told to defer to public health.

We follow all protocols strictly- but we're talking about kids here - I watch them lick the inside of their mask most of class - any protocols are just adults doing their best, never perfect. Both kids were tested immediately, and their tests came back positive this morning.

We still couldn't get through to public health this morning. All of our staff have been tested. Paid \$7.50 for parking. We're waiting on our results, and in the meantime will keep our facility closed. We contacted all families who were in class on Saturday, and followed up today. Students of ours who attend the school these positive children were in were sent home from school, with directions to "sit tight" until public health calls. Those families don't know if they can go back to work, if the sibling should stay home, if they're eligible for testing...they're just waiting for a call that will come, at some point. This exposure happened because a family stopped "sitting tight" when they felt better and still hadn't heard from public health, and didn't understand it was important to tell us this during screening.

Now, all this to say, our healthcare system is SEVERELY defunded. Every single element of this process (including just trying to sort out guidelines for our space initially) has been a nightmare and delay after delay. Everyone spouts the same "lack of resources".

But our police have a surplus of \$567, 875 and are asking for a 4 million dollar increase. And when a completely peaceful encampment went up at city hall today, with very clear, evident covid protocols, the police were out in DROVES. As I drove back from getting my test, I counted 6 police cars just parked around main street and 15 visible officers from the road.

They aren't protecting anyone, they're waiting to punish. Our contact tracers, doctors, nurses, and other medical staff are actively working to protect, and they can't begin to get on top of the backlog. Stop funding punishment in our system and start funding preventative healthcare - emotional, physical, and mental. Do the work to implement real restorative justice practices.

I am so pleased to see my ward councillor, and Councillor Wilson, publicly align themselves with this defund the police movement. I'd urge the rest of you to do so as well. Our city is in a health crisis, it's time to show you're pushing to protect your citizens, not just punish them.

Sincerely,

Emily Kulpaka