

CITY OF HAMILTON

MOTION

General Issues Committee (Budget): February 11, 2021

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR N. NANN.....

SECONDED BY MAYOR / COUNCILLOR.....

Reallocating Hamilton Police Service Surpluses and Investing in Community Resilience

WHEREAS, the Hamilton Police Service (HPS) has stated a focus on providing excellence in the core business of policing defined as: property crime, violent crime, illegal drug control and enforcement, guns and gangs, traffic safety and enforcement;

WHEREAS, it is well documented that many residents, including Indigenous, Black and racialized people, feel unsafe and under-supported in the presence of uniformed and armed officers attending a non-violent crisis call;

WHEREAS, in a 2015 report, the John Howard Society highlighted alarming rates of people experiencing crises end up being criminalized for treatable health needs instead of receiving the care and treatment they deserve in order to participate in society;

WHEREAS, the City of Hamilton is home to the most people living with disabilities, including mental health challenges, per capita;

WHEREAS, the City estimates over 150 residents have been living in tents and informal structures since April 2020 and recognizes there are compounding factors that lead to homelessness;

WHEREAS, the Women Housing Planning Collaborative has stated that in the past year over 400 women accessed emergency low-barrier drop-in supports without permanent housing options available to them;

WHEREAS, in 2018 there were 123 opioid related deaths in Hamilton, one of the highest rates in Ontario, and Hamilton City Council has declared an opioid overdose emergency;

WHEREAS, it is imperative to provide services using a trauma-informed approach where an individual's safety, choice and control are a priority;

WHEREAS, best practices in social services across Canada point to the importance of de-prioritizing policing as the primary response to residents facing crises in mental health, homelessness, substance use and sex work and point to investing in

community-led, trauma-informed, harm reduction and safety supports and services in these areas;

WHEREAS, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities notes that the unsustainable increases in policing costs to municipalities are “crowding out” investments in early intervention and prevention;

WHEREAS, the Hamilton Police Services annual variance reports continue to show surpluses;

WHEREAS, the City of Hamilton has no governing policy on the reallocation of surpluses from Hamilton Police Services; and,

WHEREAS, investing in community-led services and infrastructure supersedes policing in effectiveness of building a sense of safety and belonging among residents who face systemic barriers;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- (a) That staff be directed to set out a policy to ensure that any year-end surpluses for Hamilton Police Service comes before the General Issues Committee for disposition, prior to the appropriation by the Hamilton Police Services Board;
- (b) That staff be directed to create a new City of Hamilton Community Resilience Reserve Account expressly to invest in housing and community-led supports and services to address homelessness, mental health, addictions and substance use that center prevention and intervention; and,
- (c) That, subject to the City having a year-end surplus, the above referenced policy is to set out that any Hamilton Police Service year-end surplus, be transferred to the Community Resilience Reserve Account.