

26 February 2021

To the Corporate Services Department, Tax Division, of the City of Hamilton, Ontario:

Good day. I hope this finds you well. My name is Joshua Weresch. My family and I live in Ward 8, non-Indigenous people on Indigenous Anishinaabeg land, and I write as a Christian, a socialist, and as a parent to my wife and I's four children. I write particularly in regards to the payment of property taxes and use of those taxes for the support of the Hamilton Policing Services. I have carbon-copied my ward councillor's office as well as the city clerk so that my letter to your department can be included as public correspondence on the agenda of the next city council meeting.

The first installment of our 2021 property taxes is due on 26 February 2021 and I write to inform you that I will be with-holding \$138.51 from that installment, 50% of the \$277.02 police levy, and that the equal amount will be with-held from 30 April 2021's second installment. I understand that this will put our property taxes into arrears for this amount and that interest will be charged on the outstanding amount; however, it is the only option left for tax-payers to exercise. We have come now to the place where words must be fulfilled by action (though I know I have come to this struggle so much later than so many others and than I should've), where the propertied class must put the fiction of private property, all of which is built upon stolen Indigenous land, at risk of re-possession by the State and the families that live upon it at risk of being unhoused. City council's refusal to pass any motions in regards to policing services' abolition or its precursor, de-funding, to move the amendment of the *Municipal Act* so that a municipal peace-tax fund (or its equivalent community-resilience fund) be established, or to amend or question the police-services Board's budget has placed me in this position. It is to be hoped that other tax-payers throughout this city similarly with-hold the amount of municipal property tax that equals their current police levy and continue to organize and build trust within their neighbourhoods and neighbours such that 'no calls to police are warranted', as the mayor of Winnipeg, Manitoba recently stated (Money taken from police budget could fund support programs, community safety initiatives, groups say, *C.B.C. News*, 10 Jun 2020).

In this Lenten season, in the Christian faith, the abolition of policing is quite clearly the giving of alms to, the things foregone by fasting for, the poor, an act of justice, however, and not of charity, and a way to give what communities truly need so as to flourish as those communities determine for themselves. In these regards, I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for reading and for your time.

Kindly,

Joshua Weresch