

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Letter to Council about public decorum and policing budget

From: Joshua Weresch

Sent: February 25, 2023 12:02 AM

To: clerk@hamilton.ca

Cc: Office of the Mayor <Officeofthe.Mayor@hamilton.ca>; Ward 1 Office <ward1@hamilton.ca>; Ward 2 <ward2@hamilton.ca>; Office of Ward 3 City Councillor Nrinder Nann <ward3@hamilton.ca>; Ward 4 <ward4@hamilton.ca>; Francis, Matt <Matt.Francis@hamilton.ca>; Jackson, Tom <Tom.Jackson@hamilton.ca>; Pauls, Esther <Esther.Pauls@hamilton.ca>; Ward 8 Office <ward8@hamilton.ca>; Clark, Brad <Brad.Clark@hamilton.ca>; Beattie, Jeff <Jeff.Beattie@hamilton.ca>; Tadeson, Mark <Mark.Tadeson@hamilton.ca>; Ward 12 Office <ward12@hamilton.ca>; Ward 13 <ward13@hamilton.ca>; Spadafora, Mike <Mike.Spadafora@hamilton.ca>; McMeekin, Ted <Ted.McMeekin@hamilton.ca>

Subject: Letter to Council about public decorum and policing budget

Dear Clerk:

Good morning. Hope this finds you well. Below, please find written correspondence for Council; please include it on the agenda of the next Council meeting. Thank you kindly.

Best,

Joshua Weresch

To the mayor and councillors of Hamilton's City Council:

Hope this finds you well. I write as a settler on Treaty 3 lands, as a White cis-het male, and [REDACTED]. I was born, raised, and am living in Hamilton and am writing to you about the Tweets of Councillor Wilson and Mayor Horwath, as reported in the *Hamilton Spectator* (<https://www.thespec.com/news/hamilton-region/2023/02/07/hamilton-police-chief-defends-budget-as-evidence-based-in-wake-of-protests.html>), regarding the actions of protestors during the general-issues committee meeting at which the proposed policing services' increase of \$12,300,000 to its budget was being debated, and the general sense of public decorum and respectful dialogue that is being fostered by the councillor and mayor's comments.

The comments made online by Councillor Wilson and Mayor Horwath, as reported in the *Spectator* article, above, however, only serve to police the tone of the discussion,

instead of addressing the substance of protestors, those over-policed, surveilled, and harassed, and their allies' legitimate grievances. Both want respectful dialogue to continue in these purportedly democratic spaces, but neglect to realize how many different ways, times, and tactics that encampment supporters and others have sought to have the needs of unhoused people and the poor met. The recent debacle by Council where it again refused to make any meaningful decisions about the locations of tiny shelters in the city is only one example of many. The councillor and mayor seem unaware of the growing disparity, anger, and frustration between those who have an inheritance and those who have been disinherited, those granted dignity by virtue of their wealth and influence and those whose dignity has been torn from them. There was no attempt to bully members of the city's council. This protest was an attempt for those most affected by policing to have their voices heard on their own terms. 'A riot', after all, 'is the language of the unheard' and it is this language to which we must all attend very carefully and considerately, as Councillor Kroetsch noted 'as we listen to hard questions'. All of this discussion is also happening in the light of this article in which an Indigenous police officer violently assaulted another Indigenous man (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/officer-pleads-guilty-indigenous-assault-1.6738544>), which may lay to rest the reformist argument that the cultural diversification of the police 'services' is a helpful step.

I would ask that Council cease its collective pearl-clutching and begin the hard and deeply productive task of listening to those who are not at the table, those who are not delegates, those who cannot afford any of those democratic luxuries. I would also ask that Council refuse to support the proposed police services' budget's increase and move that it be directed in its entirety toward social and humane care in the city. 18 extra police officers on the street is 18 officers too many.

Thank you for your time and consideration in these regards. Power to the people.

Joshua Weresch, 