

From: Hollie Pocsai
Sent: January 13, 2024 1:57 PM
To: clerk@hamilton.ca
Subject: Request for Written Delegation - January 16 2024

Hello,

I am writing to request that the written delegation below be shared at the council meeting on January 16, 2024 regarding the tax operating budget.

Kindly,

Hollie Pocsai she/her
(prn: POH-chai-ee)

My name is Hollie Pocsai and I am a resident of Hamilton, living in Ward 2. I write to express my deep concern and opposition to the proposed \$13.3 million dollar increase in the Hamilton Police Services budget for the fiscal year 2024. I believe it is crucial for our city to reevaluate its priorities and investments in light of growing concerns surrounding the increasing militarization of our communities.

In every other service sector, and especially in non-profit and social services, there is an expectation to scrupulously account for every dollar spent. However, it is concerning to note that HPS lacks transparency and accountability in its financial practices. A glaring example of this is the request for \$530,000 for a new armoured vehicle, despite the service already possessing one, and the absence of any documented information about its usage over the past decade.

The lack of a tracking system to monitor the deployment, usage, and reasons behind the use of such equipment raises serious concerns about the responsible allocation of resources. It is unreasonable to consider approving additional funds year after year for an organization that has not demonstrated a commitment to transparency and accountability, especially in matters involving the safety and well-being of our community.

How can we, in good conscience, support an increase in the police budget at a time when our city has declared a state of emergency over the opioid crisis, citizens experiencing homelessness, and mental health challenges within our community? It is imperative that we prioritize financial resources towards initiatives that address the root causes of the issues and provide support to those experiencing these challenges.

The disproportionate allocation of funds to the police budget, totalling a staggering \$206 million dollars, while essential services such as public health, social services, education,

libraries, and public transportation remain underfunded is a matter of great concern. Our community's strength lies in its ability to address the needs of all its residents. As it stands, the current budgetary allocations do not reflect a commitment to this principle.

Where does it end? How many more years can we continue to increase police budgets? I ask you to reflect on your notion of the word safety for a moment. Individuals and families experiencing food insecurity or insufficient nutrition are not in a state of safety. Those lacking proper shelter are not safe. Feeling unsafe is common among those who can't access proper healthcare, and experience systemic barriers due to ability, economic status, age, or race. How are any of these very real issues about public safety addressed by the police?

I urge you to reconsider the proposed increase in the HPS budget and instead redirect those funds towards community-strengthening initiatives that truly promote safety, inclusivity, and well-being for all residents. Reallocate these resources in a manner that fosters a stronger and more equitable community.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I trust and have great hope in this refreshed city council to prioritize the best interest of our community in your decision-making process.