

# CITY OF HAMILTON MOTION

General Issues Committee: August 14, 2023

**MOVED BY COUNCILLOR N. NANN .....**

**SECONDED BY MAYOR HORWATH .....**

**Declaration of Gender-Based Violence and Intimate-Partner Violence as an epidemic in the City of Hamilton**

WHEREAS gender-based violence is defined as violence or abuse perpetrated against a woman, girl or gender-diverse individual because of their gender, gender expression, gender identity or perceived gender;

WHEREAS according to official 2023 UN Women statistics, globally, an estimated one in three women have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner, non-partner sexual violence, or both at least once in their life (30 per cent of women aged 15 and older);

WHEREAS, globally, according to the same report, there is a woman or girl being killed every 11 minutes in their home;

WHEREAS femicide is a result of gender-based violence and 22 countries specifically reference it in their criminal legislation;

WHEREAS Canada does not currently include the term femicide in their criminal legislation;

WHEREAS Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people experience higher rates of gender-based violence;

WHEREAS Indigenous women are more likely than non-Indigenous women to have experienced sexual assault at a younger age;

WHEREAS transgender and gender diverse people are significantly more likely to have experienced physical or sexual assault at least once since 15 years of age;

WHEREAS the Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability (CFOJA) found that in Canada between 2018 and 2022 one woman was killed every 48 hours;

WHEREAS in the same report not all femicide cases have an identified accuser, the majority of identified accusers have been male suspects;

WHEREAS according to the Annual Femicide List published by the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses, the number of femicides from 2019 to 2022 has increased by approximately 30%:

WHEREAS 75% of women reported abuse and conflict with a partner, spouse, or parent as their top reason for their housing loss;

WHEREAS the federal government has allocated 25% of the federal housing budget to housing for vulnerable women;

WHEREAS global data indicates an indisputable intensification of gender-based violence since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, with survivors seeking emergency shelter and community-based supports more frequently;

WHEREAS in 2022 the Ontario government committed to investing \$5.9 million over two years through the [Victim Support Grant](#) (VSG) program to enhance capacity to support survivors of intimate partner violence and human trafficking;

WHEREAS the demand for support services increases as awareness increases;

WHEREAS in 2022, 4,498 women were turned away from women's shelter's due to limited capacity in Hamilton, while only 878 women, some with children, were able to access a shelter;

WHEREAS Hamilton Police Services received 12,514 domestic violence or intimate partner violence calls in 2022;

WHEREAS Hamilton Police Services received 657 reports of sexual violence in 2022 while the average wait time to access counselling services through the Sexual Assault Centre (Hamilton & Area) was six months;

WHEREAS women living in rural areas experience intimate partner violence at a 75 per cent higher rate than women living in urban areas; and currently Hamilton receives only \$5,000 per year stable funding through the MCCSS Rural and Remote stream from MCCSS for rural issues despite 40% of Hamilton's population is considered as residing in rural areas;

WHEREAS violence is one of the priorities of the Community Safety and Well Being Plan and sexual violence has been recognized as a more specific area for attention;

WHEREAS the City Enrichment Fund has made unprecedented investments to equity deserving communities in 2023, an increase in 23.8% between 2022 and 2023;

WHEREAS within the past 5 years, nearly all women-led and/or women-serving organizations applicants have received funding through the City Enrichment Fund; and,

WHEREAS, over 30 municipalities and regions across Ontario have already declared gender-based violence and intimate partner violence an epidemic in their jurisdictions, including Ottawa, Toronto, Peel Region, Halton Region and Renfrew County;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

- (a) That Council declare gender-based violence and intimate-partner violence an epidemic in Hamilton;
- (b) That staff meet with the Women Abuse Working Group (WAWG) to develop recommendations that will further address gender-based violence and intimate-partner violence in Hamilton;
- (c) That staff be authorized to provide one-time funding in the amount of \$30,129.00 from the City Enrichment Fund Reserve (ID112230) to support the Women Abuse Working Group (WAWG) to further identify and help address service gaps;
- (d) That staff continue to actively engage with the Hamilton [Just Recovery](#) Coalition and their recommendations to identify further actions;
- (e) That staff continue to work closely with the Community Safety and Well-Being System Leadership Table to increase awareness of gender-based violence and intimate-partner violence and explore opportunities for further action;
- (f) That Council, by way of a letter from the Mayor, and staff continue to actively engage with the Province of Ontario to advocate for sustainable investments that meaningfully address gender-based violence and intimate-partner violence;
- (g) That the City of Hamilton send a communication to the Honourable Arif Virani, Minister of Justice and Attorney General Canada, and the Prime Minister of Canada, advocating that Femicide be added as a term to the Criminal Code of Canada;
- (h) That Council, by way of a letter from the Mayor, forward this item to Hamilton Members of Parliament and Members of Provincial Parliament, and to Ontario's Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity; and
- (i) That the City of Hamilton send a copy of this Resolution to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) to take action on gender-based violence and intimate partner violence.