

**Pilon, Janet**

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**Subject:** Delegation

**From:** Michelle Gauthier

**Sent:** Friday, June 5, 2020 10:35 AM

**To:** [clerk@hamilton.ca](mailto:clerk@hamilton.ca)

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Mayor Eisenberger and Members of Council,

I am sure that you are aware that the world is in anger right now, trying to bring light and justice to a corrupt system. I appreciate the time that will be taken to read what I have to say. Now, while there are many things that I feel Hamilton could be doing differently, I want to bring your attention and interest to a couple points specifically.

The first one, is my inquiry and concerns about why the Hamilton Police Board has voted against the use of body cameras for a 4th time. I understand that there will be a cost at the beginning getting everything set up, but for the safety of police officers and civilians I fail to understand. I know that the CBC article had stated "There were 331 police complaints between 2016 and 2018, the report said, which makes up "less than one percent of interactions with the public", but that is 331 filed complaints. How many riots/protests have happened from our indigenous, LGBTQ+ community, and our black community in response to how the police have responded to circumstances? How many of those included in the previously mentioned groups fear to file a complaint or to fight back (peacefully) against a system that targets them?

Wearing body cameras would hold the police accountable as well as protect them. With evidence of situations, not only would the police board be able to stand behind police actions (if they were in the right), but they would also be able to protect the citizens with disciplinary action towards any officer that has crossed a line. There would be no grey area of doubts. In an article I've recently read, it was stated that

" In a 2014 study funded by the Office of Justice Programs Diagnostic Center, researcher Michael White noted that earlier evaluations of body-worn cameras found a number of beneficial outcomes for law enforcement agencies.<sup>[5]</sup> The earliest studies conducted in the United Kingdom indicated that body-worn cameras resulted in positive interactions between officers and citizens and made people feel safer. Reductions in citizen complaints were noted, as were similar reductions in crime. The studies found that the use of body-worn cameras led to increases in arrests, prosecutions, and guilty pleas.<sup>[6]</sup> From an efficiency standpoint, the use of the technology reportedly enabled officers to resolve criminal cases faster and spend less time preparing paperwork, and it resulted in fewer people choosing to go to trial."

As you can see, there are benefits to the whole community, police officers included. Less costs for the court system, less paperwork for police which means they have more time to be in the field PROTECTING our citizens.

Even if the Hamilton police start with some cameras. One per pairing of officers, or even half-shift rotations that they would have to upload the footage between officers to keep everyone accountable. I am willing to do more research and to write my concerns to the police chief as well. But as you are the mayor of the city, I felt that you also needed to hear these concerns, to protect your city-folk.

I had mentioned I had a couple concerns. The second one is just to make sure the police are on top of their trainings. How to de-escalate situations without force. I know how beneficial that can be, as I took a non-

violent de-escalation course in school for working with individuals with disabilities. Officers NEED to be trained to know how to de-escalate situations. It will reduce violence, unnecessary deaths, and even keep the police officers safer. While I am appalled that I feel the need to state the positives for the police force, instead of just civilians, I know that is the way the system works. What is most beneficial for those implementing these changes. I can tell you, the benefits of protecting the community and creating trust and respect will be insurmountable. While I fear (and know) that our minorities (black, indigenous, LGBTQ+) fear their lives every day, many times from police and authority, I know I cannot single-handedly change it. We need your support and action.

The time is now to change. We're in 2020 and yet there is still huge discrimination and oppression, and Mr. Eisenberger, Black lives do matter. Changes in Hamilton can ignite change throughout the province. I know you want to be part of that change. If these concerns and suggestions are not things the Police Service are willing to incorporate, please consider re-distributing funds and resources to a team/force that will be willing and have the power to de-escalate situations properly and to accountability.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this, to understand how important it is to not only me, but the community as a whole.

-Michelle Gauthier