

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Black Lives Matter - police brutality

From: Piper Hayes

Sent: Friday, June 5, 2020 11:55 AM

To: clerk@hamilton.ca

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Dear Mayor Eisenberger and Members of Council,

I am writing you today as a concerned resident of Hamilton. In light of the countless ongoing deaths of black and brown bodies at the hands of police I feel it is necessary we begin having conversations in order to move into action.

Firstly I'd like to start with The Police Services Board. Upon visual investigation it seems every single member appears white? Is this truly the case? If so do you really believe this is a board that can do their job properly knowing there is no representation of ANY diversity? In my opinion we need a board that has more people of colour than white folx. The representation genders, sexual orientation, class and abilities are also very important and must change. It's 2020 I know we can do this.

In my understanding the mayor is also still the chair of this board? Seems to me as Mayor that this is a conflict of interest perhaps and would love to hear from you how this will be changing as back in 2018 the mayor was quoted saying this would be a temporary role.

I have recently come across the Hamilton Police's city approved budget - \$78,806 on ammunition, \$95,000 on surveillance and \$61,409 on tasers and only \$28,000 on food for prisoners. These numbers seem absurd to me and seriously paint a picture of how militarized police in my very own city are. I am appalled at this approach and ask that we do better. When black and brown bodies are being killed at the hands of police, carded at school in the streets and kicked out of libraries (something I have personally noticed), it seems to me their voices need to be at the centre of how we address the systemic racism in the police force and our communities. Where are these voices?

If we look at numbers of crime we can also see that the police are not doing their job well. This is not a judgment, rather a reality as we can see this in data provided around crime. I have been listening to Sandy Hudson's research and expertise over the last few days. She has been providing discourse around defunding the police so we can effectively put this money into systems that actually SERVE and PROTECT EVERYONE! I want to encourage you the follow folx like Sandy Hudson as they are the ones who have the lived experiences and direct connections to how communities of colour have already been doing this work. To quote Taj James 'Follow the ones who know the way' (poem and podcast here <https://irresistible.org/podcast/generation4>)

Because it is important to direct attention to the voices who need to be heard right now I'd like to encourage you, if you haven't already, to watch the video and read the article in the Huffpost where Sandy goes into detail how we can restructure our city services.

https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/defund-police-canada-black-indigenous-lives_ca_5ed65eb2c5b6ccd7c56bdf7d
<https://twitter.com/sandela/status/1268270592718860293?s=20>

Please don't stop here. Even if we might have different opinions please share this with your team, your colleagues, your peers and anyone in your community. We must have REAL conversations.

Not being racist is no longer enough, we must actively practice anti-racism and to do this we have a lot of work to do. As a cis-gendered heteroflexible white settler I feel it is my responsibility to voice these concerns with you and help take on the burden that POC's have carried for too long on their own. I believe we can do so much better and this is why I write you today. Canada and Hamilton must come to terms with our racism and actively find ways to unlearn these dangerous ways of being.

With care,

Piper Hayes
she/her