

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Defund the Police

From: Lauren Morocco

Sent: Monday, June 8, 2020 9:32 AM

Subject: Fwd: Defund the Police

Dear Mayor Eisenberger, City Council Services, and Police Services,

I wrote to my ward councillor Nrinder last week, but realized I should have sent this to you as well. I am a new Hamiltonian from Toronto, and I am hoping that Hamilton can set an example as a changing city with a lot of potential to do right by its new and long time citizens.

I do not agree with the current distribution of funding within the city of Hamilton's 2020 preliminary operating budget. It is unacceptable that over \$170 million, or what equates to 27.7% of the projected operational 2020 budget, has been marked for Police Services.

In light of the nation-wide Black Lives Matter protests, including the June 1st protest in Gore Park, and knowing that the Hamilton police force has been linked to systemic racist practices, I am urging you to reconsider the allocation of the 2020 operational budget and tax supported final capital budget.

In reconsidering the allocation of the city of Hamilton's budget, I urge you to consider the statement made by Black Lives Matter activists in Hamilton, who urged the city to defund Hamilton Police Service and to stop ticketing and surveilling people who are homeless. Rather, these funds should be diverted into initiatives such as food security, affordable housing, and anti-racism initiatives, including an independent Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre (HARRC), and social outreach.

Funding to the Hamilton Police Services can be reduced in the following ways:

- 1) Cancel the scheduled 3.8% increase, and all future increases, to the Hamilton Police Service's budget.
- 2) Propose and implement a minimum of a 10% budget cut to the 2020 operational budget.
- 3) Withhold pensions from and don't rehire police officers involved in excessive force cases.
- 4) Require police officers to be liable for misconduct settlements.
- 5) Reduce the size of the police force.

With a poverty rate of 15% for all residents and 20.5% for children, Hamilton needs to reassess its priorities. We do not need more policing, more surveillance, and more police brutality. We need affordable housing in a city where 20% of renters spend more than half their income on rent. We need access to affordable and healthy food in a city where more than 13,000 people, of which 40% were children, used the food bank last year. We need funded anti-racist education and advocacy in a city that was ranked number one for police-reported hate crimes.

I know that you and the city's councillors have met to discuss the city's economic recovery on June 4th. As a concerned citizen, I am calling on you to prioritize the financial wellbeing and recovery of Hamilton residents by investing in services that Hamilton residents need rather than further disenfranchise many residents by funding the Hamilton Police Services.

It is very clear to me that it is not financially feasible, or morally feasible that the current set up in North America for the police services to continue and overwhelming change needs to happen for our citizens and members of the community to live in a safe community. When those who are meant to protect and serve are those we have to be most concerned about, it is not the way forward for our society.

Sincerely,

Lauren Morocco