

**From:** [Determination Martial Arts](#)  
**To:** [Stevenson, Kirsten](#)  
**Subject:** Arrests and Response to Encampment Support  
**Date:** Thursday, December 2, 2021 3:17:52 PM

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Hello,

I'm writing today as a business owner, as well as a citizen of Hamilton. It was suggested to me by a councillor you are the one to address this to for Police Board recognition

The use of "you" here is primarily directed to the City of Hamilton Police force, but as Mayor and council, watching over community members, you are complicit in the harm being caused, particularly those of you who are taking no steps to rectify or even at a bare minimum, address it. Each ward has unhoused community members, this should be your top priority going into the freezing weather.

I have spent the last few days, after my initial e-mail about Beemer, contemplating what next steps are going to be most effective, and to be honest, I'm at a loss.

We know that in Ontario, you can not be punished for apologizing. And yet, despite overwhelming evidence that Hamilton Police force reacted with violence, harmed citizens, and broke community trust, the Hamilton police chose to put out a video statement (with no captions, continuing your lack of focus on accessibility) with vague goals and shifting responsibility for the police's action, to the supporters. No apology for Police actions, no apology for how the situation escalated, no apology at all.

An apology, no matter how empty, goes a long way. And you couldn't even bring yourself to start there. Over, and over again, we see your actions don't change, and your words continue to flow without substance.

So let's recap where we're at: police storm out to a group of supporters, outside the police station ( a place where clearly police hold the power). Police direct supporters to remove their things from the property (which, is property we as citizens help pay for, but that's a whole other complaint). Black youth goes to do so, while indicating what he's doing (because Black youth know, from a very young age, they need to be clear in their actions and intentions so there's no misunderstanding). Police officer tackles said person. Pile on begins. Youth are arrested, and held, for hours. No one from the station, where Police hold the power, comes out to do any sort of debrief or explanation or conflict resolution. Then, HPS spends more community money making a video, rambling on without saying or committing to anything.

However, Police did manage to impose conditions on these youth that prevent them from bringing food, blankets, and emotional support to community citizens though, so, clearly the station is ready to make the jobs of police staff easier rather than the lives of community members.

I have attached a photo of one of the HPS officers, who I'm sure you're well acquainted with, based on the number of news reports of horrific "alleged" (otherwise known as, police get away with when it's marginalized folks) behaviour. One hand on his gun, one hand on his taser. When your hands are on your taser and your gun, they sure can't be ready to de-escalate calmly, your brain is telling you to pick one of the two, not the third option. There were no weapons present at the demonstration; except on your side. Why is the gun even a go to? Why is this a police officer that is still on the front lines of any protest/support event. Why is he still on the force? You tell us the supporters escalated, that it was necessary police response, but the photos and videos tell a different story.

When we ask, demand, request, beg, policing to be entirely re-thought, dismantled, and rebuilt, these are the reasons why. Because your officers see a scene of youth and young adults, on your property, and their only skills are physical violence. Because when a community tells stories of their religion being mocked, their health needs being ignored, and their dignity being stripped during basic bodily functions while in police custody, you don't respond with any reassurance or counter-story, you simply ignore it. You know it's the truth, but you're ok with this narrative. The police believe this is justice, this is deserved, that this is acceptable because of "their" actions. You victim blame, and shame, to avoid having to change your ways that allow you to hold all the power.

You haven't changed the needs of unhoused people through these arrests. You haven't changed the needs of Black, Disabled, and/or LGBTQ2s+ community members through these arrests. You HAVE incited more anger, more exhaustion, and more burden on the healthcare system. You have further isolated marginalized community members. You have made your city look "more presentable" for the Super Bowl (it's clear this is a motivating factor for clearing up encampments; hide the poor!).

You continue to be an international embarrassment for your actions.

Drop the charges. Drop the conditions. Apologize for your actions. Stay out of work you aren't meant to be doing (and where you aren't needed) and give the funds you prolifically waste standing there and assaulting people, to strands of our systems that can use them for long term change.

This is exhausting. Do better.

Sincerely,

Emily Kulpaka