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Sent: Friday, February 2, 2024 8:05 PM

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Subject: Public Feedback on Review of Police Budget

Hello, A news item in the Spectator indicates that you are receiving submissions on the proposed police budget increase for 2024. The following is my input on the subject which I'd like included in this process.

The current inflation rate is 3.4%. This should be taken by all politicians and those who get their funding from the Hamilton taxpayer as a general guideline to what the annual tax increase for 2024 should be. After all, it's a measure of cost increases across the country and a measure of what the taxpayer can afford.

The requested Hamilton police budget increase is three times the annual inflation rate. This alone should be a red flag that the chief and police board are failing miserably in their request for an increase of 10%+.

It's understandable that the police would like an increase of this level. Perhaps they even feel it really is what they need to do the job to their high expectations. But what one thinks they need is only half the equation. The chief and board and councillors have an equally important duty to ensure that what they are asking for is affordable to their customers, namely the taxpayer. It is this consideration that the aforementioned seem to be ignoring. And taking a rather arrogant attitude that " We want what we want and whether it's realistic or affordable is of no concern to us".

It is not the job of the Hamilton taxpayer to go through police expenditures line by line and suggest efficiencies. That's the job of the board and the chief.

My opinion is and has been that the model we are following is outdated and needs to change. The model that has council asking all departments what they need and then wrestling to make it affordable. Council should decide on a 2024

tax increase based on the current economy and affordability. Then tell each department how much of an increase they will get.

For instance in my opinion, a reasonable increase for the police in 2024 is around 5% (still above the rate of inflation). Then the chief can sharpen his pencil, and based on priorities, the most important of which is public safety, allocate those funds in the most efficient manner. And it will probably mean postponing or cancelling capital expenditures, perhaps even leaving positions unfilled. But that's reality and happens in the private sector all the time.

Please chief, get off your high horse and consider how much of an increase a retiree, struggling to stay in their home, can afford. Or a young couple, not making police wages, struggling with mortgage payments, can afford.

If these types of increases continue, rest assured that the " defund police" voices will grow louder and that won't serve anyones interest.

respectfully

Peter Meyer