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### **Hamilton Police Service – Budget**

Expectations were high that new Hamilton Police Service Board members could break down silos, build relationships, create, and monitor a value for money-based police budget. This has not occurred, in fact anecdotal evidence suggests the current Hamilton Police Service Board “rubber stamps” budget proposals with a minimum of due diligence. This is not “governance” and offends the duty of the Police Service Board members as prescribed in the Police Services Act of Ontario.

Over the years I have served on a board of a charitable organization as past chair and currently as vice chair. Based on my experience, the main components of a board of directors must monitor and address governance, financial awareness, and fiduciary responsibility. Yet, after a quick review of past agendas of the Hamilton Police Services Board meetings, I do not see any mention of any financial statements. Every board member must know exactly where the agency stands at any given moment to properly address a budget issue that may arise and monitor financial compliance. Budget deliberations were lacking at best with only 24 hours to review multimillion-dollar budget request. This is negligence on the boards part.

The turbulent demand and cost of delivering police services in Hamilton requires a long overdue value for money policing assessment. A reasoned assessment that challenges long standing inputs, assumptions, policies, procedures, cost projections, and funding allocations. An assessment viewed through the lens of your customer, the taxpayer.

The Hamilton Police Service must allocate funding on a need vs nice to have basis. A “mounted unit” is a “nice to have,” not a need to have product. No rational argument can be made to justify such \$864,048. Is there an audited business case to support a new armoured vehicle at \$530,000 by 2031, \$1M for a new marine vehicle by 2033, \$350,000 to replace an existing marine vehicle, or \$190,000 to replace the existing prisoner van.

The Hamilton Police Service model must be sufficiently agile to deliver evolving workforce strategies, digital transformation, and police compensation structures. Where both visionary strategic planning is legally, socially, and emotionally competent and delivers high quality value for money performance and accountability, where police behaviours value personal mastery and Public Service. Where customer service exudes professionalism and is publicly accountable for ethical, trustworthy decision making.

Where human resources decision-making uniformly balances equity, diversity, and inclusiveness with applicant competence and organizational hardships.

In 2010, on the verge of national bankruptcy, Theresa May, then UK Home Secretary, directed Local Police Authorities to submit "Value for Money Police Budgets" while sustaining front line service delivery. Police culture falsely assumed Armageddon. May's opportunity unmasked police ingenuity, creativity, and innovation. Adequate policing is now delivered more efficiently, and as effectively. Adapt or fail. Adapt they did.

Similar adaptations are required in Hamilton. In today's high-performance, high-risk, highly judgmental policing environment, so much collective identity and energy is wrapped up in wanting to be right. STOP. You are losing sight of how our community works. Work towards better outcomes for everyone.

Step outside your comfort zone. Discard the Group Think paralysis. Learn from a broader range of well-informed experiences outside of police culture. World class brain power resides on our doorstep. McMaster Innovation Park, University, Health Sciences, startups galore, industrial and business influencers abound.

Seek to understand. Start by inviting the City Auditor to conduct a value for money audit of the Hamilton Police Service. Use the results as a baseline to begin the Value for Money conversation. Involve all stakeholders. Value Proposition is not a new concept. It is an antidote to those who wish to irrationally dictate the police funding conversation.

The City Council can temporarily approve the police budget until the audit is completed while maintaining the status quo. Should the audit provide innovative budget constraints adopted by the Hamilton Police Services Board, the excess money can be returned to the city reserves.

Hamiltonians care. We support fairness, legal and social justice for all. We support law and order. Trust in the Hamilton Police Services Board, Chief Bergen and our police officers has waned as it has in other cities. Taxpayers expect value for our policing tax dollars. Taxpayers no longer accept deferred decisions, rationalizations, closed door decision making, or analysis paralysis.

Do not interpret asking for citizen input as a marketing tool to quiet discontent. Action is required based on transparent due diligence, justification, and accountability.

You have one opportunity. Please do not waste it.

Yours

David Broom