



Equity network is asking the Hamilton Police Services Board to re-examine the proposed \$16.7 million increase to the HPS budget for 2024. We oppose any and all increases to the Hamilton Police Services Budget. The police services board including the budget committee does not represent Hamilton communities and is devoid of transparency and accountability.

Ward 2 Councilor Cameron Kroetsch was quoted in a CBC article by Bobby Hristova as saying, the police budget committee "doesn't take this seriously" and seems to have governance processes designed to merely "receive the reports ... and pass them along." He described how the budget committee "doesn't have enough meetings and how it only reviews the presentation of the budget, instead of going through the budget line by line."

["I'm deeply concerned ... I deeply object to the whole process," Kroetsch said in a November 2023 Board meeting.](#) Equity Network agrees with Councilor Kroetsch that these deliberate attempts to keep the community in the dark by way of excluding an elected official who values accountability are deeply concerning and objectionable.

The public has a right to know how these budget numbers came about, how this decision was made and who was included.

[We still want to understand the inner workings that led Fred Bennink back on the board.](#) The Board appears committed to resisting meaningful change. On January 26 the HPS Board voted to elect 'Yes' members Pat Mandy and Fred Benink as Chair and Vice Chair. The board's failure to elect Dr. Anjali Menezes, who would have represented the community and brought critical and desperately needed perspectives as Vice Chair is an act of doubling down to maintain what she rightly calls the "echo chamber" of the HPS Board.

In her own words, Dr. Menezes explained on January 26, "There are very infrequent dissenting votes and it's not about us creating havoc on the Board and not being able to make decisions, it's actually about us recognizing and being able to broaden our perspectives of what the needs of our diverse, very diverse, Hamilton community are. Accountability is about being transparent. It's about demonstrating to community that we are listening. That we welcome dissent. Dissenting opinions allow us to broaden that perspective."

We are tired, both at city hall and the HPS Board of the dominance and centering of white, cis, straight male, moneyed voices upholding the structures of whiteness, cisheteropatriarchy and colonialism. Those on city council and the Police Services Board who like to cozy up to each other will always be protected. Their white CIS affluence affords them that.

Hamilton Police Services under the leadership of Chief Fred Bergen perpetually deny, dismiss and evade the fact of systemic racism. Hamilton Police Services refuses to name anti-Black racism, Islamophobia and anti-Indigeneity despite the ongoing data proving this remains a deeply flawed and systemic problem and gives HPS plausible deniability. The data shows that more funding does not reduce 'crime'. Investing in social programs, education and public, community services does reduce 'crime'. Why are we not seeing the evidence?



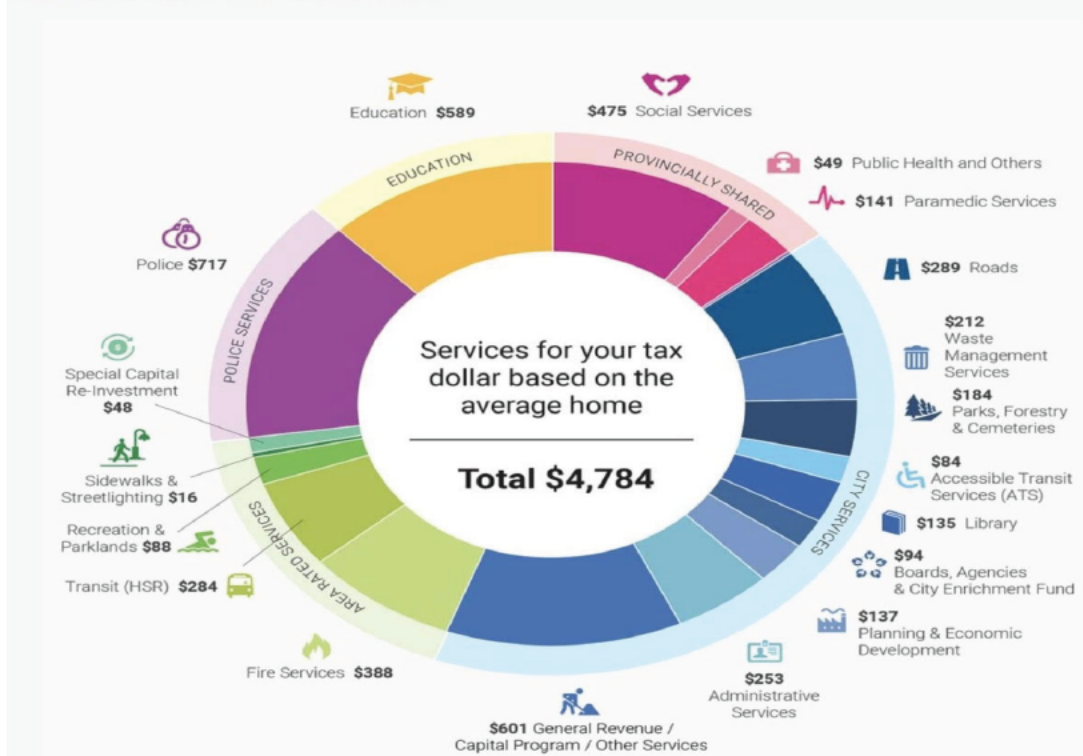
Hamilton Police Services demonstrate no serious interest in changing. The privilege and entitlement continues by HPS claiming they want to “rebuild trust”. HPS did not have trust to begin with. Having a few marginalized (by your very systems) individuals on a board changes nothing, in fact if they were serious they would open these conversations up regularly, and in transparent and accessible spaces.

Years and money have been spent on consultations about the disproportionate use of force on Black, Indigenous and racialized community members. When will Chief Bergen say there's a systemic problem and get on with some concrete solutions? How can we “build trust” when there’s no acknowledgment of the work of prior consultations and the clear implications of race based data? Our members/communities demand to know how many more Black bodies need to be harmed, killed and incarcerated?

Hamilton Police are overfunded and most other city services are desperately underfunded. For example, as of January 1, we saw the end to programs that granted free HSR fares to disabled residents. Impacted residents were not consulted about this change, which was a cost cutting measure for the city, and many residents heard about it from their bus drivers. The Spectator recently reported that DARTS is stopping transit for group outings for special needs clients. "City says it doesn't have the resources to accommodate group outings like the mall or bowling for Cornerstones Special Needs Services" Why is every service other than Police Services subject to austerity measures?

We support the work of the Hamilton Encampment Support Network and we want to see free, safe, accessible, barrier free housing funded immediately.

**2023 DISTRIBUTION OF TAX DOLLARS**



This graph was published in the article mentioned above. The discrepancies here are ridiculous. This chart is infuriating. People are freezing in the streets with children. Disabled children have no services while the police ask for more funds for modes of surveillance and criminalization of marginalized community members.

(she/her) 🍉 · 2024-01-09 ...

I just had to witness a mother and her 7 children age 3 to 20 be denied access to the only family shelter in #HamOnt and denied hotel stay. All other family shelters in the GTA also full.

💬 47

↻ 81

❤️ 162

📊 36K



[Investing in people, programs and humanitarian services reduces crime rates.](#) This is a fact that cannot be disputed. The propaganda balloon has burst and the data continues to roll out quicker than you can spin it.

How much more money is HPS willing to take from vulnerable Hamiltonians to push their racist agenda as seen in the data and despite all evidence showing additional taxpayers money does not reduce crime? Hamilton communities have unequivocally and repeatedly said NO to Police Services budget increases. Residents delegated against the 2024 increase in January and expressed their desire to see major investment in services that result in material improvements and enhanced liveability for communities.

Many delegates spoke from personal, communal, historical, work and volunteer experience. Delegates explained brilliantly for the umpteenth time how policing harms unhoused residents, people who use drugs, Black, Indigenous, racialised, migrant, disabled, Queer, trans, youth and communities forced into poverty.

For all the above reasons we reassert our demand that the Hamilton Police Services Board re-examine their ask for a \$16.7 million budget increase and deny any increase to the HPS budget for 2024.

