

From:
To: [Stevenson, Kirsten](#)
Subject: HPS budget
Date: Wednesday, February 7, 2024 11:20:52 PM

Hi there.

My name is Nicole Tollenaar and I live in Hamilton, Ontario). My phone number is

I'm writing to urge the council to reject HPS's increased budget request of \$16 million (over what was allotted in 2023).

The 2024 City budget offers a fresh start to do things differently and meet the needs of residents, and that is why I am emailing you to ask that you do the right thing and step up to meet the growing and vast needs and priorities of Hamiltonians.

As the city plans for the budget, one line item that stands out and requires an immediate and drastic change is Police Services. They have asked for a \$16 million increase from 2023. Police costs make up 20 percent of the city's budget. Aka, more than any other service in the budget.

While community supports, services and resources (such as secure, long-term housing, food security programs, free childcare, transit, and community-led anti-violence and crisis support programs) have been underfunded, the HPS has been overfunded.

Although the police respond to several types of situations, it is often the wrong response to meet community and resident needs and has too frequently led to violent situations.

Consider Sgt. Brian Wren assaulting Patrick Tomchuk; repeatedly kicking an indigenous man in the face.

Consider veteran Hamilton police officer, Const. Michael LaCombe, found guilty of two counts of sexually assaulting another Hamilton police officer.

Consider Marcus Charles, who was tazed by an HPS officer, while experiencing an epileptic seizure while at work.

As someone who works in social services, I don't believe more policing addresses the root causes of violence. Giving more money to the HPS does not help keep or get people housed or fed. It certainly doesn't seem to be minimizing overdose deaths, It doesn't keep people from getting reconvicted, it doesn't increase shelter beds or medical services.

If we want to find equitable solutions to systemic issues, these are the supports we need to be investing.

In urgency,
Nicole Tollenaar.