

To the members of the Hamilton Police Services Board:

Hope this finds you well. I write, as a resident in Ward 8, and as a life-long resident in Hamilton, Ontario. I write to you about the presentation by Kojo Dampsey during the Board's meeting in July 2024.

Kojo asked, at the conclusion of his presentation on the services' use of force report of 2024, whether there would be an action item on the Board's agenda addressing both 'officer bias' and 'institutional and cultural practices'. In his subsequent presentation on the hate crimes review, he relayed concerns about the way that the voting for representation on the review team did not acknowledge the intersectional identities of people in the Black community. He was clear that training of policing services was useless, if that training wasn't implemented by the members of the policing services, and wanted to know how policing interactions, particularly but not only with people who identified as Black, could be radically improved. I write in support of Kojo's presentation, concerns, and questions and would like to add my voice to his to ask how officer bias and institutional and cultural practices in the policing services is being addressed by the Hamilton Police Services. Further, as the training of policing is apparently and demonstrably ineffective, what other avenues are in place to improve relationships between citizens most harmed by policing services and policing services itself? I understand that a community advisory panel is being invoked, as well as the collection of race- and identity-based data, yet neither is without flaw as advice can be ignored, data not at all made instrumental in systemic reform. If no other avenues exist beyond training, what is the next step for policing services, if it cannot clearly alter its practices in the community, keeping those whom it's sworn to serve and protect safe?

I write, also, with concerns about Member Pauls' questions to Kojo after his presentation (57:26-58:20 on the meeting's video). She stated:

Thank you for that. I just wanted, when you were talking about that incident that you saw, the 911 call with a child and had gun, and the police came with gun. I didn't get any training. I'm not a police officer. You're not a police officer. They're getting trained. They know what to do. They have a split second to decide what to do. If somebody told me somebody had a gun, even myself, without being a police officer, would go and protect myself as well. So I don't understand how you not being a police officer want to impose on what the police does. It just doesn't make sense. Have you taken a course? I went to do the force and it was scary. I could never be a police officer. So, anyway, I just wanted to note that.

Member Pauls stated that the policing services is getting trained, despite Kojo's assertion, moments before, that training was useless if it wasn't being implemented. As that training isn't being

implemented, it is clear, then, that policing services doesn't know what to do, contrary to the member's statement. Her statement begs the question: if training isn't being implemented, are members of the policing services truly being trained? Clearly, the answer is, No, as their actions aren't changing. I am further concerned with the member's statement that the delegate cannot impose on what the police does because the delegate is not a police officer, hasn't had any training, and hasn't taken a course. Policing services receives, year over year, the highest percentage of all municipal-tax payers' levies, eighteen cents of every tax dollar, and its budgets are never queried, nor its surpluses returned to municipal coffers: the delegate, even the member herself, pays their salaries and benefits from their taxes and so, as a tax-payer, citizen, and person who, wrongfully, isn't given any choice whether policing services should exist or be completely abolished and the money re-invested in social services, housing, and humane supports, they do, in fact, have a deeply vested interest and stake in how policing is done in the city. Is Member Pauls stating that only police are able to hold themselves accountable? If so, what does that accountability look like, to her? Further, how do Member Pauls' questions uphold the Board's Code of Conduct, which asserts that members are "not to conduct themselves in a manner that undermines or is likely to undermine the public's trust in the police services board or the police service maintained by the police services board" (3[1])? Her questions about the fitness of the delegate to query policing services in any way – and, by extension, any member of the public, who is, likely as not, not a member of the policing services – could be construed as ones asked in a manner that is likely to undermine public trust in the police services. If a member of the public, a citizen, is being policed, has genuine questions about the nature of that policing and its over-reach, and comes to the legislative body tasked with over-seeing policing services with those questions and a deep stake in the answers to those questions, that citizen should not be greeted with queries whose sub-text reads, How dare you question us? I would ask that, at August's meeting, Member Pauls responds with a public statement with answers to these questions, as those answers deeply concern the public trust that past and future delegates, citizens in the city, have in the policing services.

Thank you for your time and attention in these regards. I look forward to your replies and to your actions.

Respectfully,  
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