

**Committee of the Whole  
Meeting Number 01-2021  
Addendum  
January 26, 27 and 28, 2021**

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**Communications**

The consent of Council is requested for the **addition** of Communication Number **01-01**.

- 01-01      Correspondence received from Defund Police Kingston, with respect to Statement for Budget meeting, dated January 26, 2021.  
(Distributed to all members of Council on January 26, 2021)  
**(Attached to Addendum as schedule pages 1-3)**

**From:****Date:** January 26, 2021 at 2:32:07 PM EST**To:** City Clerk <[CityClerk@cityofkingston.ca](mailto:CityClerk@cityofkingston.ca)>**Cc:** "Jaynes,Janet"**Subject:** Statement for Tonight's Budget Meeting

Hello,

Following direction from Janet Jaynes, we would like to submit the attached statement in writing to the City Clerk's office for inclusion as a communication on the addendum for the Budget meetings tonight.

Thank you for including this in your meeting.~ Defund Police Kingston

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*This statement was submitted anonymously on behalf of Defund the Police Kingston. We chose not to disclose our identities because we are concerned that police retaliation and targeting might result if our identities were known.*

Tonight, you will hear from senior Police and members of the Police Services board about why they need a 3.62% budgetary increase. We would like to tell you why this is an inappropriate misuse of community funds.

On January 19, 2021, Police Chief McNeely began by noting the underfunding of housing and social services and healthcare services, more generally. She claimed that the Police are a \*social service\* and, as such, should receive increased funding to address the current gaps in social services funding. We firmly oppose the idea that the police are a social service. Even Chief McNeely herself admitted: [“police do not want to be the primary responders when it comes to addictions, mental health, or homelessness calls. Policing is the only service that operates 365 days a year, seven days a week and 24 hours a day. Other social service agencies are not there 24/7 when these calls come in.”](#) This is exactly why we should reduce funding for the police and increase funding for the social services that deal directly with housing and health. We need these services to be adequately staffed and available when people need them.

As her remarks on the importance of social services suggest, Chief McNeely has clearly been practicing how to incorporate progressive language into her speeches. While we commend her cleverness, we are far from fooled. McNeely mentioned that, to improve policing in Kingston, members of the Police Department recently received implicit bias training. McNeely says that the budgetary increases she asked for are, in part, needed to continue this training. Implicit bias training may represent a very minor acknowledgement that Kingston Police are racist. However, numerous studies have shown that this type of training is largely ineffective, and can actually \*reinforce\* biases. More importantly, implicit bias training is not a response to historic and systemic racism. Implicit bias training targets \*individual\* beliefs and attitudes, not the longstanding and systemic manifestations of racism that are pervasive in Canadian institutions and organizations.

McNeely acknowledged the BIPOC-led response to the violence of policing in her speech. Kingston city councillor Robert Kiley reported receiving [at least 100 emails](#) from constituents

asking the city council to defund the police. Increasing the funding for the police will certainly not meet the needs and demands of those of us in this community who are seeking an end to systemic racism, an end of profiling of Black and Indigenous community members, an end to the criminalization of poverty and homelessness, and an end to the mistreatment of victims of gendered violence by authorities. Reallocating funds *within* police services will not meet these demands nor will it help **our** community. Only defunding the police and reallocating these funds to truly pro-social services would start us on the road to redressing the harm the police have and continue to inflict on our community.

Section 39 of the Ontario Police Services Act limits the power that our municipal government has over approval of the Kingston Police's budget. Section 39 (5) indicates that "if the [Police Services] board is not satisfied that the budget established for it by the council is sufficient to maintain an adequate number of police officers or other employees of the police force or to provide the police force with adequate equipment or facilities, the board may request that the Commission determine the question and the Commission, shall, after a hearing, do so." There is a pattern where police boards have often gotten their way in budgetary matters simply by threatening to go to the Commission, which would result in tying the city up in costly arbitration. Most Kingstonians are likely unaware that this provincial legislation, which is also soon set to be replaced by an updated "Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, 2019," severely limits the municipalities, who are required to **fund** the police, from genuinely determining the shape of funding needs.

We understand that members of the City Council face a lose-lose situation: You can accept the police's requested budget and squander meagre resources away from needed services towards bloated police salaries, invasive technologies, costly & ineffectual bodycams and implicit bias training that risks making racist cops even more racist. Alternatively, you could take a principled stand and deny the police their budget increase, decrease their budget, and reallocate funds to essential community services for those who need it: addressing Kingston's massive housing crisis, opioid crisis, mental health crisis, or sexual violence crisis, and end up in time-consuming and costly arbitration which will ultimately cost the City and local taxpayers more money. We do not envy your position in this decision.

Nevertheless, we ask you to think through your position clearly, be principled and consider the needs of your community, especially those who are and have been treated unjustly by the Kingston Police Department. We urge you to advocate for democratic local control of all municipally funded services impacting local residents, especially those services that involve men with guns walking around in our city streets! Do not wring your hands and capitulate to whatever proposal is brought forward by the police. Do your part. Lobby the provincial government to grant municipalities tangible control over all municipally-funded services.

Traditionally, police have argued for increased funding in response to the perceived threats of criminality. Infrequently, there is an acknowledgement that the police do little to nothing to \*prevent\* harm, while the so-called justice system does little-to-nothing to help change those of us who cause harm or heal those of us to have suffered harm. With McNeely's address on January 19th to the city council, we are seeing a shift in the argument: Now, police are needed not just to deal with *bad guys*, but also to fill the gaps in our inadequate social safety net. This is a dangerous road to go down and we firmly oppose any idea that the police are or can be a positive, effective or "bias-free" response to poverty, inequality and suffering here in Kingston or anywhere.

**CITY COUNCIL  
MEETING OF:  
COW January 26-28, 2021**

**COMMUNICATION  
No: 01-01**