

Ottawa Police Services Board
Agenda 46- Monday November 22, 2021
COMMUNICATION: *Email dated November 22, 2021 from Stephanie Mar*

From: Stephanie Mar
Sent: November 22, 2021 3:24 PM
Subject: OPSB Meeting Written Submission

In solidarity with the Coalition Against More Surveillance (CAMS) Ottawa, I would like to formally reiterate their calls to stop allocating more money to surveil, harm, and brutalize our communities. Policing was never meant to and will never be able to address the cyclical and racialized nature of criminalized behaviours and the myriad of conditions that leave people disproportionately vulnerable to human caging which does absolutely nothing to rectify any harm that has been done, meaningful rehabilitation, or meeting people's immediate needs. Please acknowledge the very real experiences and pleas from HUNDREDS of public delegates in the past year to allocate more money to services and people who actually have the capacity to reduce harm as opposed to responding to it with more violence, more death, and more trauma.

"The Ottawa police force has done absolutely nothing to demonstrate that they are deserving of yet another massive budget increase. Although we have heard repeatedly from OPS and the Ottawa Police Services Board that 'change is happening' within the force and that 'real change takes time' - residents across Ottawa have waited long enough.

We have been waiting since 1991 when Vincent Gardner, a Jamaican immigrant, was shot and killed by Constable John Monette. We have been waiting since 1995 when Wayne Johnson, a Black man, died after being pepper-sprayed and chased by police to the Rideau River, where he fell in and drowned. In the same year, Terry Norris, an Indigenous man, was also pepper-sprayed by police and died shortly after. We have been waiting since 2008 when Stacey Bonds, a Black woman, was violently assaulted by three male officers and left half-naked in a cell for hours. We have been waiting since 2016 when Abdirahman Abdi was pepper-sprayed, beaten with a baton, and punched by Constable Daniel Montsion, who wore assault gloves. We waited, and Anthony Aust died. We waited, and Ottawa police officers terrorized an entire family after forcing their way into the wrong home.

We are tired of waiting.

CAMS would like to remind members of the FAC and the OPSB that the City of Ottawa spends almost 20 percent of taxpayer dollars on the police, a "service" that has proven over and over again to be violent, racist, sexist, and corrupt. As a result of this spending, other necessary community health and social services remain deeply underfunded, and people across the city are suffering as a result.

Furthermore, this irresponsible spending does not reflect the six priorities outlined in Ottawa's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan:

1. Discrimination, marginalization and racism.
2. Financial security and poverty reduction.
3. Gender-based violence and violence against women.

4. Housing.
5. Mental well-being.
6. Integrated and simpler systems.

This irresponsible and misguided spending pattern has a particularly negative impact on Indigenous, Black, and racialized communities in Ottawa as these communities remain the target of police surveillance and violence. We also want you to consider the impact of these budget directions on our neighbours who live in poverty and/or who experience homelessness - investing more money in policing does nothing to prevent either. Policing as a response to poverty and homelessness only perpetuates the cycle of criminalization and incarceration and completely fails to address the root causes of harm.

Support the hundreds of Ottawa residents who have spoken out at OPSB meetings to echo the calls to defund the police. Councillors, support communities in your wards who are desperate for enhanced community health and social services and act according to your votes at City Council through which you declared both a climate emergency and a housing/homelessness emergency in Ottawa.

The City of Ottawa does not benefit from a bloated police budget, and residents across this city are counting on all of you to do the necessary work to ensure the police do not get one more dime. We deserve a city that prioritizes care over punishment, and we deserve leaders who understand that policing is never the answer to questions about safety and well-being." - CAMS

Thank you,

Stephanie