

Request to Make a Deputation

Agenda Item 3. Re: Recommendations for the Board Related to Current Events

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Good morning Board and community members,

I am a recent graduate from Osgoode Hall Law School and a Toronto community member.

I have had the opportunity to review the Report authored by Toronto Police Services (“TPS”) Board Chair, Jim Hart. I appreciate the Chair’s recognition that anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism, discrimination, and marginalization exist within policing. However, I am troubled by how the Chair’s proposed recommendations mean enhanced TPS funding, do not challenge the notion that policing promotes public safety, and do not limit police power and position within Black and Indigenous communities.

To the extent that Black and Indigenous persons are those who make up the public trust, that trust would more accurately be described as an imaginary. Policing, as envisioned, was meant neither to be fair nor equitable. The slaveholders whose private property police protected and the slavecatchers who hunted and returned runaway enslaved persons to their “owners” were not singularly American phenomena. In 1873, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police was deployed to “[free up](#)” Indigenous land and enable white Canadian settlement. From then onward, the “state of police and community relations” has continued to be violent, colonial, and mired by white supremacy and anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism.

The [Toronto Anti-Violence Intervention Strategy](#) failed. From 2013 to 2017, a Black Torontonian was nearly [20 times more likely than a white person to be fatally shot by police](#). Black people made up 30% of TPS cases that led to serious injury and 60% of fatal TPS encounters. The Board’s “best efforts” did not protect Regis Korchinski-Paquet, nor Andrew Loku, nor Kwasi Skene-Peters. We do not need another committee, or a task force, or a Community Policing Unit, or a token Black Police Chief. We need an immediate divestment from the \$1.076 billion 2020 TPS budget, and investment into public education, employment, income support, community mental health, harm reduction, youth recreation, and affordable housing. These are policy decisions that would “[put] us clearly on the path to change.”

The Anti-Racism Advisory Panel, much like a civilian review or oversight board, has provided mere “operational perspectives” and has made no real progress towards systemic change. A mandatory Ethics, Inclusivity and Human Rights training program held once every two years would mean allocating additional funding, technology, and power to TPS, furthering the notion that policing serves as an appropriate response to homelessness, mental illness, and [poverty](#). These social problems are disproportionately

occasioned upon Black and Indigenous persons and represent the same “challenges” that the Board acknowledges law enforcement ought not be called to address.

Several reforms falling within the Board’s mandate to “create and support a culture of anti-racism” would more appropriately respond to the “city’s best interests.” The Board may suspend administrative leave to officers under investigation, withhold pensions and refuse to rehire officers who use excessive force, hold officers liable under misconduct settlements, limit overtime accrual and overtime pay for militarized assignments, withdraw participation from police militarization programs, and reduce the overall size of the police force. These reforms would necessarily coincide with funding reallocation to collective safety within Black and Indigenous communities, preventative support and resources, and anti-oppressive de-escalation.

As pled by abolitionist scholar [Mariame Kaba](#), “[when] the streets calm and people suggest once again that we hire more Black police officers or create more civilian review boards, I hope that we remember all the times those efforts have [failed](#).” The Board claims to have prioritized “concerns heard” from the community. The community has called, emailed, marched, and rallied, demanding that you do as you have claimed to have done – examine these issues thoughtfully. “Course offerings” and “community connection” are no longer an acceptable response to Black and Indigenous death by police. Other jurisdictions, from [Los Angeles](#) to [Minnesota](#), have responded to their citizenry and taken seriously the need to start anew. Toronto can and must follow suit.

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