Laura Iliescu

Citizen of Toronto, Church Wellesley

**FAO: Members of the TPSB**

**RE: Town Hall 2020**

I am a citizen of Toronto, I am white, high income, highly educated and have dedicated my career to health care.

After days of mental health experts, community leaders and social services providers presenting clear, incisive evidence-based arguments on the dismal failures of the police services in Toronto and the dire need for change – one thing is certain – you are not qualified to represent civilian interests in the oversight of Toronto Police.

You have done nothing to advance or represent the interest of Toronto communities and like so much of the police services system today you are a waste of Toronto taxpayer money. Not only do you as the members of the board lack the expertise and qualifications to deliver true oversight and represent citizens’ interest – you have shown that you have no desire to do so.

***By supporting arbitrarily increasing*** police budget at a time when Toronto’s citizens are demanding defunding and increasing mental health, community and social services budgets you have shown clearly your disregard for representing the interests of citizens. Town halls are the pitiful least you could have done, with no real commitment to accurately representing citizens’ wishes and interests.

**You have demonstrated no regard for our tax dollars**. You have shown that you **would sooner support throwing out more of our tax dollars on a ‘quick fix’ measure - body cam technology that evidence does not currently support** as effective in addressing police behavior, let alone systemic racism, scope creep and other system failures in policing. The citizens of this city are not stupid, we see this for exactly what it is, wasting our money to avoid you having to do any meaningful work on our behalf.

It is clear that, we the citizens of Toronto, view the following as *meaningful* actions that you board should (though we know you will not) support:

* **Issue a statement of apology** to the citizens of Toronto for wasting our money and failing to represent our interests
* **Issue a statement of support for defunding the police by 10% *AT A MINIMUM* – your opinions don’t matter, you are here to represent the citizens and we have spoken –** if you feel that’s arbitrary, welcome to the world of competing budgets – *we the citizens value mental health, community services and social services more than police services* – your opinion on whether this is arbitrary or not and whether it’s ok to have arbitrary cuts is as *worthless* as your expertise on this subject
* **Issue a statement of support for** the following changes that advocates and experts have called for:
  + **Defunding police** and reallocating budget to preventative community services
  + **Demanding independent oversight of police** **and sweeping changes to the Police Act** – no citizen of this city views the current system of oversight as anything but an abject failure from start to finish
  + **Demanding that officers who are being investigated for any misconduct are NOT given pay** – my tax money should not be wasted on criminals in uniform – *how dare you?!*
  + **Treating any police officer suspected of misconduct as any other suspect would be** – no access to evidence, no access to team members involved, no access to work/pay
  + **Removing lethal weapons from officers in the community** – police don’t need lethal weapons to stand around my grocery store, harass homeless people, pick on poor people who have no choice but to shoplift or walk around Toronto’s streets – which is the majority of what the police service actually does here. Police in the UK do not get lethal weapons for community work and 5000 Toronto police officers sure don’t need guns when based on 2018 violent crime arrests data only 600 people are arrested for violent offences per year. That’s 2 per day. Paying 5000 cops per day and arming them with guns to arrest 1.8 violent criminals per day is a mockery.
  + **Removing police as first line of response to mental illness crisis calls immediately** – this grotesque scope creep into mental health work that should be done by experts with degrees and experience is particularly despicable and must end now – it is not ok for police services to justify their staffing and exitance by killing and harming people in mental health crisis. It is sick and abhorrent and must end.
  + **Demanding that police services be rescoped completely,** with a modern approach to community safety and above all with expertise in leadership not cronies, unions and career politicians looking for one more way to suck up tax payer money for nothing
  + **Requiring a University level education from anyone who is going to touch a gun** issued by this city. **Requiring a Masters level degree for any police officer playing any part in mental health crisis calls**. The days of giving a gun to any white man who barely passes high school and a physical test and calling that quality in policing are long over.
* **Dissolve the TPSB** and replace it with a coalition citizen oversight body that includes true experts and community leaders – *you are not qualified for this role* and your days of sucking up taxpayer money for nothing are numbered

**Every one of you sitting on this board should be deeply ashamed of yourselves for failing this city so blatantly and so despicably.**

*Shame on you,*

Laura Iliescu

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