

From: bettyboop
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2024 8:54 AM
To: SPPC <sppc@london.ca>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] London Police Service 2024-2027 Budget Amendments

Please place this on the SPPC public agenda. Thank You AnnaMaria Valastro

4.3
2024-2027 Multi-Year Budget Draft Base Budget Amendments

a.
London Police Service 2024-2027 Budget Amendments

Dear Council Members,

As with all cities, the police budget is the heaviest budget for residents to carry with their property taxes, yet the London Police Board has never assessed the duties of the London Police and suggested where some of these duties can be reassigned to other, and perhaps better, services areas.

For example, police should not be answering calls for a person experiencing emotional distress. This is not a police matter and individuals with visible weapons do not calm a situation. These calls should be answered by professionals that are trained in calming techniques such as Emergency Medical Services, EMS, professionals.

The London Police have already removed themselves from many community conflicts. They no longer answer calls relating to break-ins, property damage, property theft, shop lifting, assaults, noise complaints which have, and can, escalate to physical assaults, or redirect active junkies to the safe injection site on York Street for their own safety, and peace of mind for pedestrians, businesses and residents.

In the community, the police are absent unless there is a violent situation. They have removed themselves from being 'Peace Officers'. Being heavily involved in my community, I initially found this frustrating because there was no one else to call when a conflict occurred.

In fact, residents have become disturbed when witnessing police interaction with individuals that may be experiencing emotional distress, and residents have come to understand that break-ins, vandalism and so on will not result in any positive outcomes if police are called. Residents, including myself now deal with these issues on our own or together. We do not call police for these matters. Police are called if we cannot manage the situation on our own, but would prefer to call another agency if only one was available.

The police have long stated that their services should be directed towards violent crime and have voluntarily disengaged from community policing. I now think that is best. Police presence, unless in a violent situation, should not be involved in community policing, simply because they carry weapons and are threatening immediately no matter the situation.

I do not want my taxes going to a police agency that is entrusted to handle situations that are better handled by another agency for better results. I do not want to pay for military style vehicles in city policing. I do not want to pay for new furniture or excessive administrative costs.

While the police want to engage in community interaction to raise their own profile, I think there are better and less expensive agencies that would do a better job, and make people feel safer. The idea of a 'Peace Officer' has long faded.

I wish that Council had the courage to scrutinize the police budget, ask questions and explore a better 'policing' strategy that works better for residents. This budget is greedy and I do not want my taxes used in support of this budget, especially if it places an undue burden on property taxes.

Sincerely,

AnnaMaria Valastro