



Councillor Paul W. Ainslie
City of Toronto Councillor
Ward 24 Scarborough-Guildwood

Chair, General Government and Licensing Committee
Chair, Board of Management of the Toronto Zoo



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Ward 24 Scarborough-Guildwood

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July 2, 2020

Dear Ward, 24 Neighbours,

At this week's City Council meeting, Council passed motions seeking to reform the Toronto Police Services, while rejecting a motion to cut the police budget by 10% in 2021. I voted in support of motions around greater transparency of data collected and used by the Toronto Police. I firmly believe funding needs to be invested into our communities for better services for those who need them the most, while ensuring we end systemic racism everywhere. Unfortunately requesting a budget cut of 10%, which could have a dollar value anywhere from \$110 - 150 million from the Toronto Police Services budget, without a serious review of what programs or personnel will be cut, in a meaningful manner, is not possible during a City Council meeting.

In the past few weeks, many residents not only from Ward 24, but across Toronto and even the United States have reached out to me regarding issues of policing, calling for the defunding of the Toronto Police Services with a variety of differing approaches. Some expressed an opinion the police budget should be cut by 50%, others favoured 10% in cuts, while others didn't give any concrete amount, just "Cut the budget!". In general, what was universally consistent in theme was Toronto City Council needs to divest funds from the police budget, reallocating them to non-police forms of public safety and community support. These calls come from real concerns, which I agree with. City Council must fix the way policing is done in Toronto.

In summary, during City Council this past Monday, we had a long debate about policing. We discussed the need to change how policing services are provided. We must continue to fight against not only systemic Black racism, but racism in all forms. To make sure we best utilize the myriad of city provided services for a much stronger vibrant Toronto. What emerged was a clear commitment, change needs to occur. Council had before it two very distinct approaches, but we did have consensus from a majority of Council on the fact change must come.

Most of our time on Monday centred around a debate on these two different approaches. Mayor John Tory put forward a motion with 18 different clauses. This was the result of him reaching out, and consulting with most of City Council. It represents a massive change to the way policing will take place in Toronto. These motions for the most part focused on de-tasking the Toronto Police Services, reallocating funds from the budget, addressing systemic racism, and creating distinct and separate response mechanisms for those with mental health issues. They will increase oversight, reduce the risk of police-involved deaths, and eventually reduce the cost of policing. I am very confident, from my experience on City Council that this approach will reduce the police budget and reallocate funding to community services.

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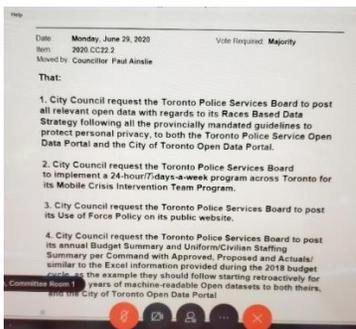
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City Councillor Josh Matlow put forward several motions constructed in a similar manner, which would have amended Mayor Tory's motions, along with one which called for the Toronto Police Services to reduce their budget by 10% from their 2021 budget. A 10% reduction could be anywhere from \$110 to \$150 million from a billion-dollar budget. This arbitrary cut would have, most likely, resulted in appeal to the Ontario Civilian Police Commission, (OCPC). The OCPC is a Provincial agency which has a mandate under Provincial law to adjudicate budget disputes for police departments. This might have resulted in months, or possibly years of stagnation (Toronto has the largest municipal police budget in Canada) while the OCPC reviewed the matter before issuing a ruling. I was told the resulting decision would be far from certain, with the possibility of seeing an increase to the Toronto Police Service budget. Within this legislative framework, any budget reduction which would also see Toronto Police Officers and/or civilian members of the Toronto Police Services laid off, can also be appealed to the OCPC. This process in all likelihood would have resulted in a protracted period where the culture shift in policing we all want to achieve would be stuck in limbo.

During the debate, I continued my push for better accountability through a more transparent and open release of data from the Toronto Police Services Board for policing in our City. Open Data will help fight systemic racism which is real, and my motion takes steps to combat it. Racial profiling must be recognized and stamped out. (I moved one of the first motions to have data from street checks/stops posted publicly.) Collecting race-based data from the police will help us track and improve the relationships between marginalized communities and the police. We will clearly be able to see what the police are doing, and when they are doing it.

Toronto City Council is committed to eradicating racial profiling and unequal treatment for everyone. All data needs to be placed on the Toronto Police Services Open Data Portal and the City of Toronto Open Data Portal (Although I would prefer it all be on the Toronto site)



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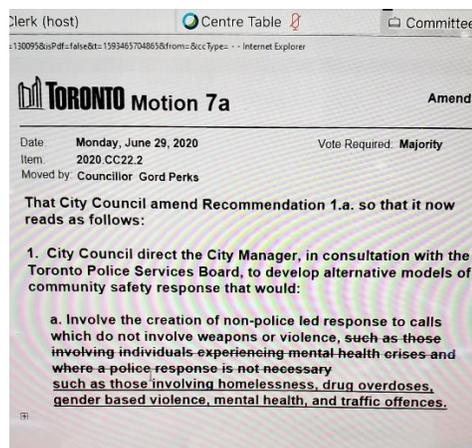
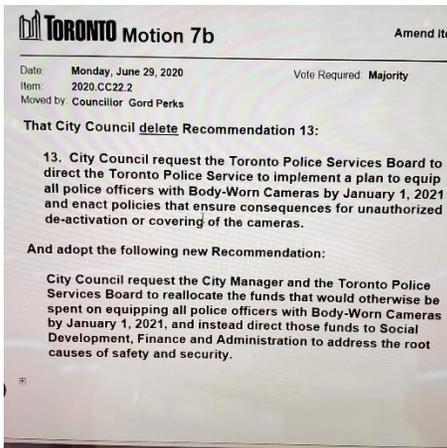
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Part of my motion requested the Toronto Police Services to ensure their “Use of Force” Policy is clearly placed on their website.

Another part of my motion was a request for the Mobile Crisis Intervention Teams (MCIT) to operate 24 hours seven days a week. I was quite surprised to hear Chief Saunders say the units stopped work at 11PM each day, and he could not give me a concrete answer as to when they start work each day. Until we decide if this is a service a team of police and health care professionals deliver... we can do better. 24/7 service in a timely manner must be delivered by MCIT until it is decided otherwise.

City Council did pass a motion to look at the CAHOOTS program. CAHOOTS, deploys unarmed, medically trained crisis intervention assistance personnel to deal with a range of community challenges including homelessness, intoxication, substance abuse, mental illness, dispute resolution, and basic medical emergency care. It seems to be very successful in the state of Oregon.

Link here: <https://kval.com/news/local/theres-a-growing-awareness-that-alternatives-to-law-enforcement-are-needed>



Above are two motions put forward by my colleague Councillor Gord Perks, which I supported, but both lost on votes during City Council. I do not support the use of body cameras by Toronto Police Services members. I have not seen any concrete evidence they do much to decrease crime or make

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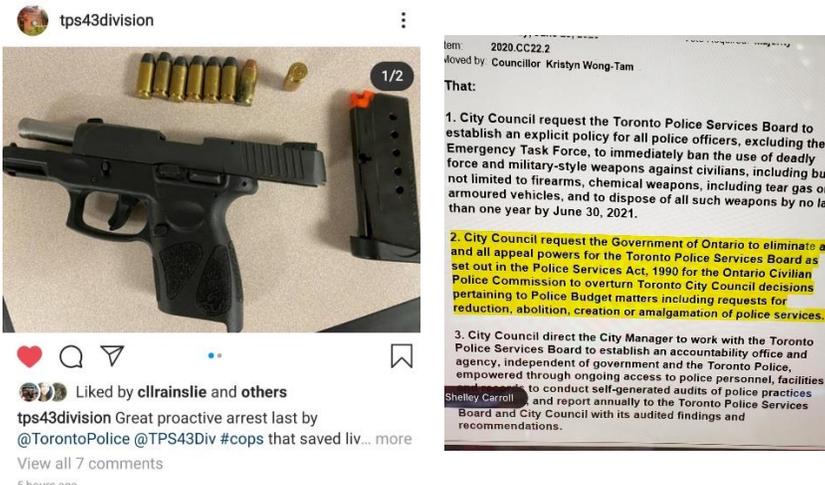
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Officers more accountable for their actions. Their implementation comes with a \$2.5 million-dollar price tag to purchase, and \$5 million dollars annually to operate, monitor, and maintain.

Here is the link to yet another report saying studies show no consistent evidence body cameras reduce police violence: https://beta.cp24.com/news/2020/7/2/1_5007709.html



I also supported a motion by Councillor Krystin Wong-Tam to ask the Provincial government for authority to make changes to the Toronto Police Services budget without any involvement or appeals to the OCPC.

A motion I could not support was a request to the Toronto Police Services Board to establish an explicit policy for all police officers, excluding the Emergency Task Force, to immediately ban the use of deadly force, armoured vehicles, and military-style weapons against civilians. The motion would have greatly restricted the use of hand guns which uniformed Officers carry daily, as well as tasers.

The picture above is a gun and ammunition along with heroin which was seized by Officers from 43 Division which covers most of my Ward. When these illegal weapons are on our streets the Police Officers who are expected to deal with them must be adequately protected. (I do not support the police having armoured vehicles....and they have no intention of buying any)

City Council in 2018 approved the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism. The report is to be fully implemented by 2022, but the motion directs this process to be fast-tracked. The Plan has 22 recommendations, with 80 actions focusing on five key areas:

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- Children and youth development
- Health and Community Services
- Job and Income Supports
- Policing and the Justice System
- Community Engagement and Black Leadership Creation

City Council will also continue to advance the need for community supports contained in the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the Indigenous-led Poverty Reduction Strategy, as well as previous reports we have on gun violence.

My decisions on how to vote on the motions brought forward during the City Council meeting were not taken lightly. I did quite a lot of research, including speaking with constituents, and getting their feedback. I truly believe City Council must take the most effective and rapid actions possible to address these issues, as well as to take the steps needed to create long-term change, including increasing accountability and transparency in the Toronto Police Services. I firmly believe this, even if this includes transitioning funding and programs away from them to address the root cause of inequality and violence. Mayor Tory's motions does not recommend an arbitrary and unachievable monetary reduction in the Police. We approved motions which reform police services and will see their budget reduced. I am committed to ensuring those savings are reallocated to communities in need.

The targets and goals we set this week during City Council will also require action by the Provincial government, as it is their legislation which dictates how we manage some aspects of policing and police budgets. I ask if you do support the course of action we have taken as a municipality to please raise these issues with your local Member of Provincial Parliament (M.P.P.). We will need their support at Queen's Park. In Ward 24 Scarborough -Guildwood Mitzie Hunter is our M.P.P. Her contact information is:

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I know this is not an easy topic to deal with. I have spoken and communicated with many residents who don't feel the police have their best interests at heart. We must change this viewpoint to a positive one. As I wrote earlier, I have heard from a large number of people with different perspectives.... many telling me their path is the only one I should be taking. Saying this.... I do believe everyone does share a common goal. We all want to adopt a very different approach to

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policing and public community services. My commitment in this regard will be unwavering and focused, especially during the 2021 budget cycle. The police budget needs to be reviewed in line by line detail in order to find those funds which can identified and moved. I am sure there are programs, like mental health services, which may be much better delivered by public agencies other than the Toronto Police Services, with monies reinvested into the community.

Further details on this item can be found [here](#). You can watch the [June 29](#) and [June 30](#) City Council meeting on the [City's YouTube Channel](#).

I hope you and your families remain safe and well during this current COVID-19 health crisis.

All my Best,
Paul

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