

***Correspondence Sent to Chief Mark Crowell via email, copied to Councillors James and Huinink and forwarded to Regional Council***

Oct. 14, 2023

Dear Chief Crowell:

I am writing today as a resident of the City of Waterloo to express concern about your public remarks about the motions put forth by Councillors James and Huinink regarding the use of police service surplus funds. I preface this email by stating that I am unable to locate a full copy of the letter you sent to Regional Council and thus rely solely on reporting by *The Record*.

From my perspective, I view your characterization of these motions as an attempt to "defund" the police as at best inflammatory and at worst an attempt to intentionally provoke public rebuke of two councillors, both of whom share identities with equity-denied communities disproportionately targeted by police services. I would expect that even the most superficial understanding of the "defund the police" movement would suggest that the proposals from Coun. James and Coun. Huinink bear few similarities with the core principles of the movement you invoke. Even the quickest glances of the Defund the Police website reveals intentions to "abolish the police," create an "alternative to police services," "eliminate our reliance on surveillance and enforcement," "disarmament, demilitarization, [and a shift of] funding away from military-grade weapons and invasive technologies." Neither proposal to explore the sharing of surplus funds for regional priorities comes close to the principles articulated in the defund movement.

Respectfully, your remarks are irresponsible and dangerous. At best, they reveal a profound lack of awareness of the implications of your remarks and the unconscious biases inherent within them. (I note your 2020-22 EDI Strategic Plan harrralds the implicit bias training your force took part in -- I suggest a refresher may be needed.) They are ignorant of the potential weaponization of these remarks against two councillors from equity-denied communities who do not support the defund movement and are engaged in good-faith debate about how we create the most livable, equitable, and inclusive communities possible. For low or minimal information voters who will only see the word "defund," you are -- on your own accord -- putting two councillors in vulnerable and dangerous positions. You note your disappointment at not being "consulted" on these proposals before they come forth. I note my own disappointment that this is more concerning for you than the dangerous implications of your remarks. At worst, you were aware of the potential weaponization of your remarks and made a political calculus that public opposition would be unleashed on these councillors. I sincerely and profoundly hope that was not the case.

Finally, I take your issue with your characterization that these proposals "likely" violate the *Police Services Act*. While it's language you likely received in a legal opinion, it has no place in public discourse. You are surely well aware that the use of surplus funds is

an open legal question, and the *Police Services Act* is silent on this precise question. Multiple municipalities in this province are currently contemplating the legality of such motions. To suggest this is a legal question with a likely conclusion favourable to your outcome is false, and I see no similar irresponsible rhetoric from Councillors James and Huinink. To the contrary, they are aware of the deferral of these motions until legal opinions are sought.

Respectful discourse between us (as residents of this region), the police service, and municipal officials is imperative. There are *many* of us in progressive communities who believe in different and more inclusive approaches to funding services without calling for what you term "defunding" the police. I would urge you to retract your inflammatory statement against Councillors James and Huinink and also engage in more respectful dialogue with those of us who are actually the funders of your services: the taxpayers.

I am cc'ing Councillors James and Huinink on this email, as well as my own regional councillors in Waterloo.

All best,

Joseph Pazzano, JD MA (they/he)