

Toronto Police Accountability Coalition
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December 6, 2013.

To: Councillor Frank Di Giorgio, chair, and members,
Toronto Budget Committee

Subject: Toronto Police Service 2014 operating budget

Our understanding is that the Police Service operating budget will be considered by the Committee when it meets on December 11.

Our organization focuses on police policy issues, and for most of our existence over the past 13 years we have shown a strong interest in police spending and budgets. We have studied police budgets for many of the past ten years and have made recommendations most years to the Toronto Police Services Board for changes.

But this year was different. The 2014 operating spending was considered by the Toronto Police Services Board on November 7, but the only thing considered was an explanatory report by the Chief on high level changes from the 2013 budget. No budget document itemizing spending by the various divisions in and functions of the Police Service was presented to the Board. When we challenged Board members on refusing to present a document which outlined police spending, they suggested it was a good idea, and perhaps it should be done for the 2015 operating budget.

This means it is not possible for a member of the public to know where police are spending public money, and that surely is why budgets need to be presented and approved.

For example, the police service is undertaking a new initiative, neighbourhood policing, where officers are assigned to a specific neighbourhood for a two year period so individual officers get to know residents in the neighbourhood well, and residents get to know the officers. While only a limited amount of information has been made available about this program, it seems like a good idea. How much money is being spent on this initiative, and where is this money coming from? Maybe more should be

spent on this initiative, maybe less; a good budget presentation would give us the detail needed to assess this initiative.

Another example might be the mounted unit. How much is being spent on it, and is this an important priority?

Another example is the Mobile Crisis Intervention Team. How much is spent on this, and why can't it be expanded from the current 12 divisions to all 17 divisions, and be available 24 hours a day? What would be the financial implications of that, particularly since the chief has reported that the MCIT actually saves the police force money?

These are questions we think need to be addressed but that can't happen in a vacuum: we need a good detailed budget. Yet the Board apparently approved spending in the order of \$950 million without this information. This is not a good way to protect the public interest.

We urge the Budget Committee to require the Police Service to file a reasonably detailed operating budget for 2014, and make same available to members of the public, before consideration is given by the Budget Committee to Police Service spending for 2014.

On the general question of expenditure, the Police Service wants to spend about \$30.0 million more than in 2013. We see no reason why the police force cannot live within last year's net spending. Our letter of November 4, 2013 to the Board suggested how that could be done without cutting programs.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Sewell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "S".

John Sewell for
Toronto Police Accountability Coalition.