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### **Property taxpayers on the hook for rapidly rising police costs with no way out**

The cost of policing is accelerating at an alarming rate, placing a significant burden on property taxpayers. I support our police and want to ensure they have the tools they need to do their job. Double digit increases to their budgets every year are unsustainable. Peel's police budget increased 14% for 2024 and is now being proposed to climb another 23.3% for 2025!

In recent days we've seen the province intervene to compensate smaller municipalities for their skyrocketing OPP costs. That contract, recently negotiated by provincial appointees, was going to cause huge spikes in the cost of policing. The province recognized smaller municipalities are not equipped with a sufficient tax base to endure unexpected spikes so is providing \$77 million shared transition funding.

No such luck for municipalities that have their own police forces. Their budgets are set by arm's length Police Boards with some provincial appointees, rolled into regional budgets and paid by the residents of the municipality.

In Peel Region the police budget request for 2024 included a 14% increase. The current request is an exorbitant 23.3% on top of last year's increase and we are told the 2026 request will again be double digits.

The 2025 request will see an increase of \$144.1 million, almost the exact cost of the entire Mississauga Fire Department Budget! The final \$749.4 million budget serves the combined Brampton and Mississauga populations of 1.5 million. York Region's police propose to increase their budget 7.7% to \$441.5 million for 1.2 million residents. Toronto's budget for 2024 was \$1.18 billion to serve 3 million people and the plan is for a single digit increases in 2025.

The 2025 police budget proposes to drive Mississauga's property tax bill up 4.5% before any other services are added. For a home valued at \$730,000, the police alone will cost an additional \$302 in 2025.

If Peel Police budgets continue without opposition, their cost for policing will exceed \$1 Billion in 2027. The resulting property tax increases are absolutely unsustainable, especially for seniors scraping by on fixed incomes.

My father was a Toronto police officer for 37 years so I understand how tough the job can be, the toll it takes on family and the equipment required to keep officers protected. But today I am the mayor of a city struggling with food insecurity, homelessness and rising housing costs. What necessary services shall I sacrifice to fund the constant increases in police services?

That is why I resigned from the Police Services Board. That is why I supported a motion to send the 2025 police budget back to the Board for reconsideration. That is why I am so disappointed that the letter of refusal arrived a few short hours later.

I had to leave the Board because I could not properly represent my constituents and the police at the same time. And my first responsibility is to the residents of the city I serve. There is no mechanism residents can use to hold the police board accountable for their budget decisions.

The Brampton mayor on the board, Patrick Brown, has publicly endorsed the police budget. In fact, he has asked the police chief if he would like more than the 300 new officers, sooner. But Brampton only pays 38% of the resulting costs while Mississauga is saddled with 62%. The 50-year formula is based on property values rather than population. Our two populations are almost equal. Perhaps we would have allies on Brampton Council if they were paying their fair share.

The battle is not over yet.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn Parrish". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.