



## **Committee of the Whole Report**

### **For the Meeting of October 25, 2021**

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**To:** Committee of the Whole **Date:** October 21, 2021  
**From:** Councillor Potts, Councillor Dubow and Councillor Isitt  
**Subject:** Council Member Motion: Advocacy for Mental Health and Support Services

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#### **BACKGROUND:**

The City of Victoria and Township of Esquimalt Councils received a presentation from the Victoria Esquimalt Police Board on October 19, 2021. The Board presented both Councils with a significant budget increase request of 7.05%, including 6 new officers and 5 new civilian staff.

During the meeting, the Chief of Police stated that an additional 18 officers and 3 civilian staff -- totalling 32 new positions -- would be required to address our community challenges. The Chief of Police attributed this requirement to downloading of responsibilities by senior levels of government: "There's been so much downloading" on police; "There needs to be investments in health, social work, mental health response, addictions."

But, health matters are not crimes. On September 12th, just 40 days ago, in Victoria, a man in mental health distress was shot and killed by police. We are losing our community members to the overdose epidemic at an unimaginable rate. Officers are being personally impacted, some unable to work due to the stresses of addressing health matters for which they are not equipped or trained for.

Evidence, experience, and police themselves tell us that health matters cannot be solved by responses that are not health based.

We look to our Provincial government, who hold the jurisdiction of health and housing matters, and who are leaders in deploying evidence-based responses, for support and a response to our local health challenges.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Mayor write, on behalf of Council, to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, the Minister of Public Safety, the Minister of Housing, and the Victoria-Beacon Hill MLA asking the Province:

1. What measures is the Province taking to address the areas within provincial jurisdiction of health, social work, mental health response and addictions in the City of Victoria?

2. What provincial health measures will be in place in the next 12 months in the City of Victoria?
3. What investments can the City of Victoria make through the 2022 budget to support the Province in the rapid implementation of measures to address the opioid epidemic, the mental health emergency and the intersecting housing crisis?

Respectfully submitted,

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Councillor Potts

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'A' followed by a loop.

Councillor Dubow

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'B. Isitt'.

Councillor Isitt