



# City of South Bend Common Council

441 County-City Building • 227 W. Jefferson Blvd  
South Bend, Indiana 46601

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Karen L. White  
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Sixth District

Karen L. White  
At Large

Rachel Tomas Morgan  
At Large

Lori K. Hamann  
At Large

## **A Letter from the Democratic Caucus of the South Bend Common Council**

### **To Our City Residents:**

Contrary to what was reported and politicized on social media, the Council did not vote to “defund the police”. The Council also did not vote against the proposed police officers’ pay raise. Instead, the Bill is alive in Council Committee where it will be considered in due course after the Committee has heard everything the Administration wishes to present, had its own questions answered and, most importantly, has heard from the community. Only one member of the public spoke on the proposed pay raise at the Committee meeting. The Council will not rush into any decisions on a Bill without conducting due diligence, including hearing from the public in the formalized setting of Council meetings. This is standard practice for the Council. What is not standard practice is for a petitioner to reject the Council’s request to delay to give the Council an opportunity to gather more information.

We Councilmembers hear and feel the pain, anguish, and division in our community during these moments. We hear and value all voices speaking out.

What exactly does “defunding the police” mean? Does it mean we tear the department apart or strip it down to nothing? No. We believe it means: 1) taking some of the funds used for what the public see as traditional policing; and 2) spending them on non-traditional policing, programs and services such as Big Brothers/Sisters, Boys & Girls Club, Youth Services Bureau, Center for Homeless to help minorities and people of color in the heaviest crime and lowest income areas of the city. We also believe that “defunding” incorrectly assumes that the two are mutually exclusive, programs & services can only happen after defunding.

The Council very strongly supports providing service-based programs. We can and must enact these programs or our neighborhoods will continue to see crisis, turmoil, despair, and violence. This can be



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done while supporting our police department and having a police force that is responsive to and diversely representative of the community.

## **To Mayor Mueller:**

In April you announced the City was opening a COVID-19 quarantine isolation center in a Roseland motel without informing Council or seeking its input. This month you want the Council to pass a Bill giving police officers a pay raise during unprecedented times when the role the police in creating and perpetuating racial division and inequality in our country is under strict scrutiny. We now know that you filed this Bill after having discussions with the Chief of Police and the F.O.P. since January. Any promises you made either during your campaign or after your election are not binding on this Council. We need you to communicate with the Council and the citizens better during the entire process.

This proposed raise comes just six months after all SBPD officers received a negotiated 2% pay raise. However, you have not told us, the fiscal approving body, how much this second pay raise will cost the City. We have been only told it is “budget neutral.” Is that a \$200,000? \$400,000? \$600,000 or \$800,000 budget neutral transaction for this year? More importantly, we have had no opportunity to discuss other ways these “budget neutral” funds could be spent for other programs and services.

What about next year? Your controller has told us that due to COVID-19 “next year we will not be able to do all the things we did this year.” We cannot realistically expect to take this raise back next year, especially when the police collective bargaining agreement is about to expire. That raise will be expected to be the base in a new agreement. Do we know that we can afford this next year and the following years?

If it can be afforded next year, how will this affect the raises of all the other city employees? Will other collective bargaining employees expect to get the same 4.5% that SBPD would be receiving this year? Will other employees also be getting 2.5% raises when your controller has told us that revenues are expected to be down in 2021?

Lastly Mr. Mayor, we need you to avoid creating division in the community and move forward on your commitment on police reform. You forced the Council to delay hearing the Bill. Your refusal to delay this proposal and allow the Council to do its due diligence has brought havoc and division. We need you to repair that division. Members of the Council were disappointed by your inability to provide a timeline on the reforms discussed through much of last fall and winter. You MUST end the talk and enact some of the reform measures to which you and the previous administration committed together with



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other possible reforms that we are now acutely aware are needed. These include not only the past promises regarding the disciplinary matrix and the recommendations of the 21CP Solutions study, but also discussion of new reforms such as a Citizens' Police Review Board, yearly diversity training for police, public access to arrest logs, elimination of no-knock warrants, eliminating stops for motor vehicle equipment violation thereby reducing racial profiling, state universal police complaint system, mandatory use of body and dash cams, pairing officers with mental health or other professionals.

At our next Council meeting the Council will set your Bill for a Personnel & Finance Committee Hearing to be held on its own night. As Councilor Warner stated at the end of the last Committee, "this discussion really needs three hours." We expect you to attend this meeting and answer these questions regarding your police wage Bill, how that Bill fits in with other possible reforms. We also expect you to provide dates for the enactment of long discussed and promised reforms. If you are not in attendance or cannot provide the information we need or enact reforms you have committed to, your Bill will likely be tabled once again.

We are also asking you to commit to presenting the findings of the CP21 Solutions review at a public meeting in July.

## **To Our Police Officers and F.O.P:**

If you are upset about the tabling of the wage Bill, you should be upset at the Mayor for making a commitment he could not keep. If he promised you this raise before full Council consideration, that is not the Council's fault. Shame on him. We have seen where your pay ranks against other departments. We also know the number of calls you respond to and the horrible situations you handle and witness daily.

We will take a big picture look at the budget and the proposed raises and decide on the raises based upon all relevant considerations. We will do what we feel is right for the entire City. We will do our jobs.

We value our police department and support its officers. We did not and will not vote to defund the department. We are grateful for the work you do, and we know of the heroic actions you do daily.

We understand that you are not just police officers. You are also part medic; trained in CPR, first aid, Narcan use, tourniquet and stop the bleed techniques. You are part counselor; trained to defuse domestic violence, assist victims, break up and prevent large group fights, trained to assist an addict going thru detox, and recognize and help someone in



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psychosis or schizophrenia. You are forced to deal with some things no one can train for; a fatal motor vehicle accident, a young girl being hit by a train, a teenager taking their own life, the aftermath of a gun fight, responding to a call of a husband/father who tragically dies at home mid-life. Beyond that, you must prepare for all circumstances surrounding large crowds at University and other events ranging from minor traffic issues all the way to risk of mass injuries. We ask more and more of our officers and you deserve suitable compensation.

We need you in our City. We need you on our streets. We need you to be champions for our residents. We also must not have things that have occurred in the past in our City and in our other cities, ever happen again. We must not tolerate racism great or small in our police department. We need you to never let that happen. We you need to unite and raise up this City to make it the best it can be.

## **To those marching & protesting:**

Thank you for participating in democracy. We know that changes need to be made and have been working on reforms before the recent incidents increased everyone's awareness. We have met with neighborhoods to learn their needs and requests. We have allocated funds to evaluate the police department's policies and practices on the use of force, body-worn cameras, biased-informed policing, accountability, and community engagement and participation. We have encouraged the Mayor to implement a fair and just matrix for exercising police discipline. We are currently considering implementation of a citizens' review board to add community input into South Bend policing. But we also need you to take actions to unite and raise up our City. We need you to work with us to bridge the gap to needed police reform. We need you to volunteer to mentor young disadvantaged children. We need those with opportunities to share them with those without. We need you to help our City's amazing non-profit agencies such as Big Brothers/Sisters, Boys & Girls Club, Youth Services Bureau, Center for Homeless, Broadway Christian Parish, Our Lady of the Road, to mentor in one of our schools, or even become a teacher and change and guide the lives of our youth. Reach out and raise up those in our community that need lifting!



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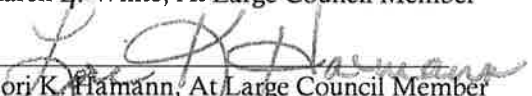
  
Henry Davis, Jr., 2<sup>nd</sup> District

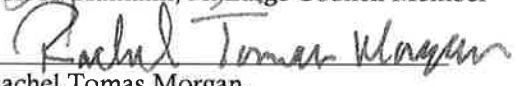
  
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