

# Halifax Board of Police Commissioners

## Terms of Reference - Committee to Define Defunding Police

### Background

Following the death of George Floyd on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020 in Minneapolis, a global movement calling for rethinking and reconstituting police and their role in public safety, resulted in protests and demonstrations with a rallying cry to defund police. In Halifax, the Board of Police Commissioners (BoPC) sought to define defunding and on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020 voted to commission El Jones, poet, professor and activist, to develop a proposal and recruit a committee to recommend a definition that the BoPC could consider.

### Purpose

The role of the committee will be to review relevant research and conduct community engagements to allow citizens to express their view regarding the definition of Defunding Police. Given the current pandemic it is anticipated that the community meetings will be virtual.

### Term

The start date for the work was originally September 2020. Due to the municipal election held in October 2020, the BoPC did not meet in October, delaying approval. November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the BoPC unanimously passed a Motion to begin the process of recruiting members for the committee while a sub-committee of the BoPC examined the administrative support needed. It is anticipated that a final report will be submitted in May 2021.

### Membership

- El Jones,
- Chair of JRJ Chair in Black Canadian Studies at Dalhousie
- Physician with expertise in mental health, addiction, incarceration and an understanding of the impact of policing on marginalized communities
- Representative from the Decade of People of African Descent Coalition (DPAD)
- Representative from the Nova Scotia Policing Policy Working Group (NS PPWG)
- A member from each of the following organizations will be invited to add a member to the committee:
  - Mi'kmaw Community
  - LGBTQ2S+ community
  - Disability Advocacy Community
  - Housing and Homelessness
  - Youth
  - Gender-based and intimate partner violence
  - Newcomer/refugee community

**Role**

The Committee will

- Collaboratively review research relevant to policing, board policy, municipal precedents and current literature
- Conduct virtual public meetings to invite citizen submissions and to gather feedback that will inform the final recommendations
- Provide a report with recommendations for the BoPC to consider how to define defunding police
- Follow HRM's practice of making meeting minutes and agenda's available to the public.

**Budget**

The work of the committee will be supported by the Municipal Clerk's office. This includes but is not limited to:

- Assistance with messaging to invite the community to participate
- Coordination of technical support for virtual meetings
- Email address to receive written submissions from the public
- Social media support as required
- Reimbursement for non-waged participants to cover child care and/or transportation if required

**Report**

The final report will include:

- A definition of defunding
- Overview of the current research and debate around defunding
- Practices from other municipalities
- Summary of community presentations
- Summary of what defunding could look like in HRM