

# THE PROPOSED BUFFALO POLICE BUDGET: 6 STRATEGIES TO REALLOCATE MORE MONEY

## The Big Picture

Overall, the proposed police budget for 2021 is much the same as 2020. Last year's operating budget was \$86 million, this year it's \$85.3 million, with a cut of around \$700,000. When fringe benefits and pensions are included, total city spending on police (current and retired) is closer to \$145 million.

## Move More Money

More money can still be moved from punitive policing to what really builds safe and healthy communities: youth employment; affordable housing; green space and block grants; local food justice; health + mental health programs; drug user health programs; community-led safety and violence prevention.

## Six Strategies to Reduce the Police Budget

Before budget negotiations end, the City should explore six ways to further reduce the police budget, and reallocate the savings into community needs.

1

### Refuse new increases in the police budget.

This year, BPD proposed these increases:

- New vehicles is up \$650,000 from \$750k to \$1.4 million.
- Clothing & Uniforms is up \$117,000 from \$484k to \$601k.
- Furniture/equipment is up \$363,000 from \$345k to \$708k.

Potential savings: \$1,130,000

2

### Cut vacant positions from the budget.

The 2021-22 budget funds 798 officer positions, but estimates only 735 will be filled in 2021.

The City should cut 63 vacant positions, saving at least **\$2.9 million** in salaries alone--even if all the positions were the lowest salaried rank. (This number includes **34 proposed new officers.**)

Potential savings: \$2.9 million +

3

### Move civilian positions out of the police department.

The proposed budget funds 186 civilian positions at an operating cost of \$11 million, not including benefits.

Vacant positions should be cut and Buffalo should follow the lead of Austin, Texas by moving duties like forensics, dispatch, and body camera oversight out of the police department. Savings can be set aside in a special fund while this transition is made throughout the year.

Potential savings: \$11 million

4

### Reduce maintenance on unnecessary and excess equipment.

Reduce the \$407,000 spent maintaining equipment including assault weapons, aggressive crowd control devices, and excess gear. The City should request a list of all equipment, and compel BPD to sell or dispose excess items. (Police vehicle and building maintenance has separate funding of \$1.3 million.)

Potential savings: \$300,000

5

### Make bigger cuts to over-time and court time pay.

The proposed budget cuts overtime from \$8 million to \$7.5 million, and court time pay from \$3.3 million to \$2 million.

Increase these cuts at least an additional \$1 million. As LEAD and other alternatives to arrest are implemented, overtime and court time especially should decrease.

Potential savings: \$1 million +

6

### Cut unnecessary expenses.

The police budget contains line items that other department budgets do not, such as \$156,500 for "miscellaneous supplies" and \$113,000 on "other services."

Potential savings: \$260,000+

## TOTAL POSSIBLE SAVINGS: \$16.6 MILLION

Using these strategies, the Buffalo Police Budget can be brought down below \$70 million. This would reduce the police operating budget by about 19.5%, instead of the current proposed cut (of under 1%).