

Hello Mayor, Councillors, City Officials

I have delegated many times on this issue. Below please find my delegation of October 5 which is on you tube. It has many more views than any other Police Service Board meeting that I could find – which tells you how serious the situation is.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YtRvylG8l18>

Also, I am including a hard copy of my in person delegation of November 15. We must be critical of the status quo that has been allowed to evolve in our city, but be kind in our approach. Thank you. Barb Minett

**Good evening everyone. Thank you for listening to me once again. My name is Barb Minett and I started the bookshelf 50 years ago.**

**On October 5 I delegated to the Police Service Board to describe the situation that we face as stakeholders in downtown and to basically plead for more useful funding. If you are interested in graphic details of my concerns I encourage you to go to you tube and put in october 5 guelph police board ... I know that you are all aware of food insecurity and housing insecurity...but I ask you also to be aware of burgeoning downtown insecurity everywhere. Cities are literally falling apart.**

**In the last couple of years, I have read as many articles as I could about the intractable world wide reality of the unhoused, and the proliferation of substance abuse and mental illness. Housing is certainly a part of the solution and as a city we are working slowly towards solving that, but opinions keep changing about helping those caught in the trap of addiction and the realities of life with mental illness. Of course safe injection sites prevent death, that seems to be irrefutable, but there are also those who think that they enlarge the population of people using drugs. I have no idea – I just know that opinions are in flux, and substance abuse is a growth industry.**

**The most successful constant strategy though, seems to be having a mental health professional accompany police when mental health and/or drugs are the issue. Mental health professionals are more able to help stream some folks into services which could help avert calls to 911 - which bring, police, fire and ambulance to a scene. and sometimes they even help the individual open a door to wellness.**

**That is why I support this part of the Police budget – to fund at least 3 dedicated downtown community officers and a dedicated downtown mental health professional. Perceptually, friendly officers will make visitors to the downtown feel more relaxed. Also, these officers will get to know some of our more unlucky citizens. This is a relationship that is not to be underestimated.**

**I chatted with Kevin Coghill this week, executive director & pastor at Royal City Mission. He has some interesting observations and I encourage the police to work closely with him. For instance, to target these services for the best results possible he would say employ staff during the peak troubled hours which are 11am to 7pm – six days a week. Anxieties brew and boil over as the day progresses. Hours between 8 and 11 in the morning are fairly quiet. Kevin has given me permission to tell you that lately cars from other cities have been dropping off unhoused people on his doorstep. He fears that this will only grow.**

**Obviously dedicated downtown community police and mental health workers will not solve the bigger societal problem of growing inequality, but this initiative may bring some relief to those suffering and also help downtown stakeholders do their job - to welcome people to a downtown that we all love. I have made it a habit to talk to people who sit on the bench outside of The Bookshelf – people who use The Royal City Mission. Many of them are also dismayed and sometimes frightened by all of the drug use on display constantly. Please stand up for our downtown and all of its citizens by approving this part of the Police Budget. Remember that the downtown of Guelph is the most revenue dense in the city for taxes. The whole city benefits from us....We are in this together!**