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All quotes attributable to Defund WPD

Statement on Worcester City Council's Postponement of the FY 2021 Budget

We are encouraged that the City Council held the budget in order to gather more information on policing alternatives. We are still concerned, however, that there is not sufficient will on the council to hold a special meeting and that the budget will pass with the original \$254,000 increase to the WPD.

This evening did not have to be as chaotic and confusing as it was. Councilors had weeks to propose solutions and research their positions. Nonetheless, it gives us hope that certain councilors may be changing their tune when it comes to police funding and community investment.

While it is exciting to finally feel heard, making a meaningful change to the budget is still a significant challenge. Even if the special meeting occurs, we fear that the new proposals will be paid for with funds sourced from other departments besides the existing police budget. Our public schools, public health, the public library, and other services cannot afford to lose their meager funding.

If the Council does not change the budget with a special meeting, they are sending the message that

- Spending at least 63 times more on policing than on the departments of public health, elders affairs, civil rights, and youth services is a responsible way to run a city
- Funding reactive policing measures is a better use of money than funding the services that are proven to proactively reduce crime
- The voices in our community who say the police make them feel unsafe do not matter as much as the voices who have the time and resources to go to neighborhood watch meetings
- Police officers comprising 90 of the 100 highest paid city employees does not warrant scrutiny
- Police officers with disciplinary history are immune to accountability
- The 30,000 students in our public schools deserve only 0.17 percent funding increase over the bare minimum required by law

We demand the City Council hold a special meeting this week again to resolve these issues. We encourage Worcester residents to continue calling and emailing City Councilors, demanding that the \$254,000 increase allotted to the WPD be steered to other city departments.

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