

**July 10, 2020 Contact:**

[defundworchesterpd@gmail.com](mailto:defundworchesterpd@gmail.com) \*All quotes attributable to Defund WPD\*

### **Defund WPD Opposes \$3 million Body Camera Program for Worcester Police**

Before allowing the FY 2021 budget to pass, the City Council heard five hours of public testimony – along with hundreds of phone calls and emails – from Worcester residents advocating for a reduction of the \$53 million police budget. Rather than engaging with these community demands, the City Council and police union believe that a body camera program will placate their constituents who have rallied around the Defund movement.

Defund WPD is unequivocally opposed to instituting a body camera program.

- For body camera programs to have even a minimal effect on police behavior, participating police departments require a culture of transparency and a reliable internal system for accountability. Due to the WPD's decades-long history of hiding misconduct records from the public and its resistance to both civilian and governmental oversight, we do not have faith that WPD meets this criteria.
- Body cameras do not make the criminal justice system any less inherently biased against Black, Brown, and economically disadvantaged communities, nor do they make the criminal justice system any less systemically racist.
- The \$3 million price tag is just the startup cost for the program. This does not include the annual hundreds of thousands of dollars it will cost to manage the footage collected by these cameras.
- The Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy, the government of Washington, D.C., the National Institute of Justice, the American Society for Criminology, Police Quarterly, and other reputable sources have all concluded that body camera programs have had no consistent or significant effect on officer behavior or citizen opinion of police.
- The WPD's body camera pilot program ended in November 2019, but the department still has not released a final report. The council's "legislation first, data second" approach taints the credibility of any final report that may be generated by the WPD and presented to the council.
- Another increase to the WPD budget at the expense of underfunded social services demonstrates that city officials continue to prioritize reactive policing rather than proactive crime prevention.

A body camera program may have been a welcome development five years ago. Unfortunately, the city council is a half-decade behind the national conversation.

-###

- [Website](#) [Twitter](#) [Instagram](#)