

**Minutes of the  
TROY CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING  
July 9, 2020  
7:00 P.M.**

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, this meeting was held remotely via videoconference.

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Council President Mantello.

Pledge of Allegiance

**Roll Call:** The roll being called, the following answered to their names: Council Member Gulli, Council Member Ashe-McPherson, Council Member Steele, Council Member Cummings, Council Member Zalewski, Council Member McDermott, Council President Mantello, Chair.

In attendance were Mayor Patrick Madden, Deputy Mayor Monica Kurzejeski, Corporation Counsel Richard T. Morrissey, Deputy Comptroller Andrew Piotrowski, and Commissioner of Planning & Economic Development Steven Strichman.

Council Member Zalewski made a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the prior meeting and approve as posted.

**Public Forum**

Written statements were submitted and are appended to these minutes:

**41. Ordinance Adopting The City Of Troy, New York Credit Card Policy (Council President Mantello) (At The Request Of The Administration)**

Ordinance passed 7 ayes, 0 nos, 0 abstentions.

**42. Ordinance Transferring Funds Within The 2020 General Fund Budget (Council President Mantello) (At The Request Of The Administration)**

Ordinance passed 7 ayes, 0 nos, 0 abstentions.

**60. Resolution Of The Troy City Council Appointing Patricia Reilly To The Troy Community Landbank (Council Member Zalewski)**

Resolution passed 7 ayes, 0 nos, 0 abstentions.

**63. Resolution Appointing A Commissioner Of Deeds For The City Of Troy (Council President Mantello)**

Resolution was amended to add Phyllis Raymond and Sarah Wohlleber 7 ayes, 0 nos, 0 abstentions. Resolution passed 7 ayes, 0 nos, 0 abstentions.

**66. Resolution Of Troy City Council Authorizing A Public Hearing For Changing Traffic Direction On Jacob Street Between River And King Streets (Council President Mantello) (At The Request Of The Administration)**

Resolution was amended to change date of hearing to July 23, 2020 at 5:30 p.m., 7 ayes, 0 nos, 0 abstentions. Resolution passed 7 ayes, 0 nos, 0 abstentions.

**67. Resolution Of Troy City Council Authorizing A Public Hearing For Changing Traffic Direction On State Street Between First And Third Streets (Council President Mantello) (At The Request Of The Administration)**

Resolution was amended to change date of hearing to July 23, 2020 at 5:45 p.m., 7 ayes, 0 nos, 0 abstentions. Resolution passed 7 ayes, 0 nos, 0 abstentions.

**68. Resolution Of Troy City Council Authorizing A Public Hearing For Changing Traffic Direction On South River Street Between Main And Polk Streets (Council President Mantello) (At The Request Of The Administration)**

Resolution was amended to change date of hearing to July 23, 2020 at 5:50 p.m., 7 ayes, 0 nos, 0 abstentions. Resolution passed 7 ayes, 0 nos, 0 abstentions.

**70. Resolution Recognizing And Celebrating The Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) For Providing 50 Years Of Safe And Efficient Public Transportation In The Capital Region (Council President Mantello, Council Member Ashe-McPherson, Council Member Steele) Unanimous Consent of Council**

Resolution passed 7 ayes, 0 nos, 0 abstentions.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:42 p.m.

A video recording of this meeting is on file at the City Clerk's office.

## Public Forum for Regular Meeting, July 9, 2020

1. Dan Phiffer, 9th Street
2. Ellie Irons, 9th Street
3. Melissa Bromley, Springwood Manor
4. Colie Collen, 2nd Street
5. Sarah Cadieux, 15th Street
6. Daniel Lander & Hana van der Kolk, Oak Street
7. Van Tran Nguyen, 4<sup>th</sup> Street
8. Kathleen Zilch, 5th Ave
9. Erin Sickler, 2nd Street
10. Caroline Nagy, 2nd St
11. Christopher Scully, 6th Ave
12. Ezra Teboul, 5th Avenue
13. David Banks, Belle avenue
14. Denise L. Pickering, 2nd Street
15. Cherokee Lynn, 5th Avenue
16. Graham Haley, 1st Street
17. Kristoph DiMaria, 2nd Street
18. Andrew Lynn, 9th St.
19. Angela Beallor, Jacob Street
20. Elizabeth Press, Jacob Street
21. Rafael Varela, Hill st.
22. Jennifer Bartels, 2nd Street
23. Amy Halloran, Tenth Street
24. Raquel Velho, 4th Street
25. Laura Rabinow, Madison Street
26. Ashley Ferro-Murray, Maple Avenue
27. John Johanson, Mill Street
28. Michelle Temple. 3rd street
29. Emily Brown and Ryan Rose, 2nd Street
30. Marissa Peck, 2nd Street
31. Nathan Meltz, Sausse Avenue
32. Zachary Hayes, 4th Street
33. Karyn Dyer, Jay Street
34. Alison King, Waterford NY
35. Kathryn McTeigue
36. Elon Michaud, River St
37. Stephannie Stoyale, 5th Ave
38. Jacob Shipley, 2nd St
39. Raurri Jennings, 4th Street
40. Victoria Kereszi, Hillside neighborhood
41. Abby Kinchy, Sausse Avenue
42. Kimberly Brown, South Lake Avenue, Troy
43. Mickey Dobbin, 2nd street
44. Olivia Hoover-Mahoney, Glen Avenue

45. Christian Grigoraskos ,2nd avenue
46. Nancy Bush, Troy
47. Scott Stafiej, 15th St
48. Linden Horvath, 2nd Street
49. Marvin Rios, Troy
50. Alicia Bernson, 4th Street
51. Chris Bassett. 4th Street
52. Kevin Lovelady, 2nd St
53. Ross Kunze, South Lake Avenue
54. Ian Mahoney-Hoover, 65 Glen Avenue
55. Eric "Guy" Schaffer, 161 2nd St
56. Molly Dreher, 3rd street
57. Amanda Wild, no address
58. Adam Retzlaff, Broadway

My name is Dan Phiffer, and I live on 9th Street in Troy.

Tomorrow will mark one month since an estimated 11,000 people gathered peacefully in Troy to lift up and support our Black friends and neighbors. Today I ask each member of the Troy city council, but especially my own representative, Anasha Cummings: what will you do to address police accountability?

Anasha, in the weeks leading up to your your last election victory, I canvassed with you around Hillside. We walked up and down 9th and 10th streets, talking to many of my Black neighbors about the coming election. You asked me that day what issues were most important to me. I told you that I had one important issue: police accountability.

Anasha, I believe we agree on the importance of racial justice in this moment, yet I am uncertain whether you heard me then. I cannot tell if you heard 11,000 of us demanding police accountability last month. I cannot say with conviction that you truly represent my Black neighbors in this council. "What will you do to address police accountability?" is what I asked you that day canvassing and it's still my question for you today.

To those others on the council hearing my words spoken aloud on this call—each of you get to decide whether we really do have civilian control over Troy Police, you get to decide to what degree my Black friends and neighbors can count on the Constitution's 14th Amendment of equal protection under the law "without regard to any differences of race, of color, or of nationality."

Are you listening? I ask of each of you, and especially Anasha, to hear the demands of the group Troy For Black Lives, formerly called Justice For Dahmeek.

We demand: cops stop killing us and our children.

We demand: a newly formed civilian review board. The review board must have subpoena power and representation of no less than 60% of people most impacted by violence and police violence.

It's been one month. You can begin the process of reforming the civilian review board, today, if you choose to. Not using that power would represent a complicity in a racist system that denies equal protection under the law. Do not shirk your responsibility to the Black residents of Troy, and to all of us who would also benefit from the same police accountability.

If you did hear us one month ago, it's time to act like it.

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My name is Ellie Irons and I live on 9th Street in the Hillside neighborhood of Troy. My statement today addresses the lack of movement on the city council with regards to meaningful reform of the Troy Police Department to address anti-Black police violence here in Troy. As a white woman raising a white child in Troy, I know that no one is free until we're all free, no one is safe until we're all safe. It's time to listen to the Black leadership of this city, who have articulated a way forward, specifically with regard to creating a civilian Police review board with

the power to enact real oversight. On June 7th I stood in solidarity with thousands of fellow residents as we lifted up and listened to the voices of our Black neighbors, friends, and community members at the Troy Rally for Black Lives. I listened to Gertha Depas, the mother of Edson Thevenin, relate a moving account of her son's murder by the Troy Police Department in 2016, and the ongoing turmoil, lack of transparency, and incomplete investigation in its wake. On June 10th I heard the demands of Troy 4 Black Lives loud and clear at a press release at City Hall, including the call for "a civilian review board with subpoena power that is at least 60% representative of communities most impacted by police violence." On June 30th I listened the voice of Zamir Thevenin, Edson Thevnin's twelve year old son, describing life without his father in an interview on WOOC. In response to all these voices, I've heard nothing from you. Your silence in response is dismaying and disheartening. For the Black lives directly affected and all those entangled with them, I repeat Troy 4 Black lives first demand: "Cops stop killing us and are children."

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Dear Troy City Council Members:

I hope you are all doing as well as could be right now. I know you all care about our city and our neighbors. Me too. How can we work together to build a peaceful and thriving community?

In Troy police officers are the first line in responding to calls that would be better addressed by mental health professionals, social workers, and mediators. This puts community members going through their toughest days in contact with officers sent to subdue them instead of fix the root of their problem. It's a disservice to community members and to officers who don't have the necessary expertise to deal with these difficult situations. Evidence has shown that past negative encounters with officers can inform how some people in crisis respond to interactions with police. When things escalate, the use of force can be a likely outcome. And individuals struggling with behavioral-health distress getting thrown in jail doesn't make us any safer in the long-term.

Can you all propose an alternative?

Cities like Eugene, and Springfield, OR have been successfully operating a mobile crisis-intervention program called Cahoots for decades. Cahoots (Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets) is a 24 hour service that dispatches a medic and crisis worker to respond to non-criminal crises. Cities like Denver and Olympia are piloting similar programs, and cities across the country are exploring a variety of models where mental health professionals take the lead on responding to non-criminal crises. (Citation included in postscript.)

Can you explore a diversion away from criminal justice involvement toward community-based treatment alternatives? Especially for youth and the mentally ill. And how can we reduce incarceration for non-violent crimes such as drug use and sex work? These are questions that have already been posed to you by the group Troy for Black Lives, but I would also like to know the answers.

Eileen McDermott, you are the Chair of Public Safety and you are my city councilperson. Can you please follow up with me directly to respond to these questions?

With gratitude,  
Melissa Bromley  
Springwood Manor

P.S. You can find more information about the Cahoots program and others like it in this article: <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/long-before-defund-the-police-mental-health-advocates-have-been-redefining-public-safety-2020-06-11>

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I am a resident and home owner in South Troy (2nd Street), I run a business here, and I own two separate parcels of land that I grow flowers on. I'm really invested in this town, which is where my grandparents grew up, where they raised my mom, where I'm raising my own baby, and where I have lived since 2011.

During the summer of that year, I was headed home late one night after a concert when I happened to see a man standing on the guard rail of the Green Island Bridge. I was with friends; we dialed 911 and quickly turned around to cross the bridge again. Police responded very quickly, which was a relief, but I was shocked to see them charge toward the man, tackle him to the ground, and kneel on his back while handcuffing him. This wasn't how I imagined a desperate person would be treated by those who came to help. While I'm glad he wasn't able to hurt himself, I'm still upset by what I saw.

This was obviously a minor moment in the history of law enforcement in this city, and a particularly non-violent one, really. But it was my own very personal moment of reckoning with regard to the efficacy of policing, and the vast and serious ways in which it is completely counterproductive and counter-intuitive.

We have a responsibility to think critically in this moment about how we utilize our resources, as a municipality and a community. We KNOW that there are grave problems with policing as a whole, and specifically within Troy's own police force. It's time to rise to the challenge and take advantage of the work being done by other cities and members of our own community who are conceiving of new and better forms of response.

I echo the demands of Justice for Dahmeek, and I ask you to make progress on these demands now.

- We demand a civilian review board of police actions, with subpoena power and representation of at least 60% of people most affected by police violence in our community.
- We demand a full and impartial investigation every instance of use of deadly force by a police officer, whether or not it results in a death (this includes injury) and whether or not the victim is alleged to have been armed. Where there is evidence of abuse, a vigorous grand jury presentation and prosecution.
- We demand that Troy Police be defunded, and that money from the police department be redistributed. This redistribution is to be run by, determined by, and

decided by communities most impacted by violent and murderous policing. This process must center our local Black-led groups such as Troy for Black Lives (formerly known as Justice for Dahmeek) who have, again, been making these demands for years.

Thank you for reading this letter. I'd love to hear from you and hope you'll follow up.

Best,  
Colie Collen

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I am writing to express my concern that Mayor Patrick Madden has not yet issued a timeline to address Gov. Cuomo's executive order 203 on police reform and state funding. It is extremely disheartening to learn that there has not been a public safety meeting to discuss police reform.

This is an issue facing our community, and city council and the Mayor needs to take these issues seriously. In Troy, there still has not been justice served for Edson Thevenin who was murdered by the Troy police in April 2016. The suppression of official reports in this case is vital to understanding and service justice.

When will the Mayor address this executive order? The time for action is now!

Thank you,

Sarah Cadieux  
15th Street, Troy NY

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We are residents and taxpayers in Troy. We are writing to urge you to take immediate and sweeping action to meet with and listen to Black leadership in our city, end police racism and violence, stop the suppression of official reports in the case of Edson Thevenin, and protect the lives and well-being of Black community members. This is a profound moment in civil rights history. Which side will you be on?

We are disheartened by the fact that no Public Safety meeting has been called to discuss police reform, the Police Objective Review Board, while nominated, remains toothless and with no subpoena power, and Mayor Madden has yet to issue a timeline addressing Gov. Cuomo's executive order on police reform and state funding (order no. 203). Utica, Rochester, and New York City have stated they will release police disciplinary records to the public, but there has yet to be word on any move towards police reform and accountability in our city.

We currently live at 40 Springwood Manor, are renovating our house at 63 Oak St., and plan to live in Troy for a long time. We love our city and want to see it thrive, which we believe is inextricable from it being a place where Black individuals and families are safe, heard, and empowered. Please make the aforementioned issues of utmost priority until we see major changes, and seek counsel and leadership of those most affected. Troy for Black Lives



(<https://troy4blacklives.com>) has extensive demands we ask you to familiarize yourselves with and then contribute to enacting.

Sincerely,  
Hana van der Kolk & Daniel Lander  
Oak Street

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I am a resident of Troy, I live on fourth street and my name is Van Tran Nguyen. Please relay my message during the Public Forum of tomorrow's city council meeting.

"As a resident of Troy, I am disgusted at Mayor Madden's inaction in regards to addressing Gov. Cuomo's executive order no. 203 on police reform and state funding. No Public Safety meeting has been called to discuss police reform. The Police Objective Review Board, while nominated, remains toothless and with no subpoena power. While neighboring towns and cities have stated they will release police disciplinary records to the public, there has yet to be any move towards police reform and accountability in our city. I demand this city council to take matters in regards to Black Lives seriously. You owe us your due diligence to stop suppressing information that brings justice to families in Troy."

Thank you,  
Van

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My name is Kathleen Zilch. I live at 5th Ave. I would like to make the following comment:

I request that the Mayor and City Council Address systemic racism and police violence, in particular these points:

- The release of all official reports regarding the murder of Edson Thevenin.
- The City of Troy's plan regarding Executive Order no. 203 on police reform and state funding.
- A concrete timeline for the implementation of police body cameras if one has not yet been announced.
- The lack of power and authority of the The Police Objective Review Board.
- The public release of police disciplinary records.
- A new system in place for dealing with domestic violence calls, calls regarding mental illness, sexual violence, etc. so that citizens in this city get connected with the resources they need/deserve.
- A new plan for allocation of funds to resources that help to solve social issues in this city rather than punish communities through over-policing and incarceration.
- A policy ensuring all police officers are wearing masks when around the public, and that those detained are being kept as safe as possible in times of a pandemic.
- A review of the police union and protections for officers who have committed egregious misconduct.

Thank you.

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My name is Erin Sickler. I live in Troy at 2nd Street.

On June 12th, 2020, Governor Andrew Cuomo issued Executive Order Number 203, which recognizes the systemic nature of police brutality and the over-policing of Black people across New York State. It underscores that all people in our communities have the right to be treated fairly and equally before the law.

The order makes an explicit call to local governments to review policing procedures. It states:

Each local government entity...must perform a comprehensive review of current police force deployments, strategies, policies, procedures, and practices, and develop a plan to improve such deployments, strategies, policies, procedures, and practices, for the purposes of addressing the particular needs of the communities served by such police agency and promote community engagement to foster trust, fairness, and legitimacy, and to address any racial bias and disproportionate policing of communities of color.

Furthermore, the organization Justice For Dahmeek, which organized the Troy Rally for Black Lives on June 7th, 2020, has issued a set of demands for the City of Troy that include:

- A civilian review board with subpoena power including representation by no less than 60% by people most impacted by police violence--BIPOC at the intersection of LGBTQIA, young people, people with disabilities, and the formerly incarcerated
- The creation of diversion programs away from criminal justice actions towards community-based treatment models

Thus far, besides the nomination of the Police Objective Review Board, you have not taken substantial action to address either the governor's mandate or the demands of community stakeholders. As a concerned community member, I urge you to acknowledge the hurt and harm done in our community by systemic racism and take up these demands with greater seriousness and public input.

Sincerely,  
Erin Sickler

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My name is Caroline Nagy and I live at 2nd St in Troy.

A month ago Troy saw one of its biggest demonstrations in its history with over ten thousand people marching its streets to state unequivocally that Black Lives Matter; to oppose police

brutality; and to call for justice for the Black lives lost or permanently harmed at the hands of Troy police, including Edson Thevenin and Dahmeek McDonald.

Despite the clear demand for urgent action, I am disappointed to see so little from Mayor Madden and the Troy City Council:

- Mayor Madden has yet to issue a timeline addressing Gov. Cuomo's executive order on police reform and state funding.
- No Public Safety meeting has been called to discuss police reform
- Despite the repeal of 50-a and the commitments of New York City, Rochester and Utica to publicly release police disciplinary records, Troy has not followed suit.
- No reforms have been proposed to address police brutality or over-policing, nor to reduce the Troy PD's massive budget.
- All the while, there is still no justice for Edson Thevenin, and no justice for Dahmeek McDonald, their families, and the communities who care about their lives.

Together this paints a picture of an administration and City Council that seems wholly incapable of rising to the moment and addressing the demands of the movement for Black lives in Troy.

I urge all of you to take action tonight to chart a new course for a Troy, one that values Black lives and as a city that we can be proud to call home. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best,  
Caroline

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Mara & Jim,

My name is Christopher Scully, and I live on 6th Ave in the Lansingburgh area of Troy. I hope you both are as well as you can be. I am writing today to express my outrage with the mayor and city councils' inaction in response to the brutality and violence perpetrated on members of our community by officers of the Troy Police Department. As a city resident of over 16 years, I have borne witness to the violence the TPD has enacted on many of its citizens, and there has never been any meaningful change, or accountability for the offenders. I would specifically like to know why there is still an ongoing cover-up in regards to the death of Edson Thevenin at the hands of Sgt. Randall French, and what the mayor and city council are going to do to end it, and bring justice for the family of Edson.

Disgraced ex-Rensselaer County District Attorney Joel Ablove rushed the case to a grand jury within days of Edson's killing, failed to call two witnesses and allowed the shooter, Sgt. Randall French, to testify without signing a waiver of immunity, thus precluding the possibility of his being indicted.

However, that is not the only scandal here. The internal investigation into the killing, done by Joseph Centanni of TPD, found that French's account didn't hold up to the evidence and testimony available, and it concluded that French had lied, acted recklessly, and needlessly and summarily executed Edson Thevenin. This knowledge was brought to Mayor Madden's attention, by then chief of police Tedesco, and instead of firing French, Madden and Tedesco conspired to

use taxpayer funds to purchase a second opinion in the form of a still secret memo by the ex-chief of police from Glenville, Michael D. Ranalli.

The original internal investigation was then leaked to the widow of Edson, and subsequently published in the Times Union. Citizens were outraged and protested, I was among them. The entirety of the city council was given the unique privilege to review Ranalli's still secret memo, and they all paid lip service in the press to the idea that it somehow refuted TPD's own findings, allegedly on psychological and emotional grounds. This seems to make the council complicit in this ongoing cover-up. What will this council do to correct this egregious mistake, end the cover-up, and bring justice to the family of Edson?

I support the demands of Troy 4 Black Lives, and I strongly suggest you do the same, including the call for “a civilian review board with subpoena power that is at least 60% representative of communities most impacted by police violence.”

I hope you do the right thing.

Sincerely,  
Chris Scully

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I am emailing to echo the message put forth by Troy For Black Lives, in the streets and online.

I believe their requests - for the Troy Police Department to stop killing, for the city to form an effective civilian board including those most affected, and for all of us to scrutinize more closely the use of deadly force, to stop working with ICE, and to develop non-police based community assistance - represent the minimum the city of Troy can do to prove it is willing to work to address the systemic biases of its police department.

The governor has asked for plans - Troy could set the example by working with those who have taken the time to tell you what was most urgently needed. 11000 people came to support change be enacted now: how will you hear their requests?

For the moment, your record is not shining. How was Sgt. Randall French able to get away with what even his superior called an "unjustifiable act of deadly physical force" ? Edson Thevenin was murdered and his murderer was not held accountable. Troy must do better. Troy 4 Black Lives has suggested how, and now it is your turn to give the community the tools it needs to be what it deserves to be.

With my regards,

Ezra Teboul  
5th Avenue, Troy NY

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My Name is David Banks and I have lived in Troy for ten years, lately at Belle avenue. My concerns are over the total silence from both the Mayor and the City Council with regard to the movement for Black Lives and police brutality that has swept the national and Troy itself.

Now that state lawmakers have repealed section 50a of the civil service law, it is now possible for our city government to release any and all police personnel records. Utica and Rochester have already announced steps to offer these records with Rochester going so far as to create an online database that residents can query using a FOIL request.

The availability of police personnel records to the public is particularly important here in Troy because—as was reported in the Times Union—Mayor Madden’s legal team cited 50a in keeping secret a September 2018 internal affairs report that clearly stated that Sgt. Randall French had forced Thevenin's car off the road, causing it to crash into a concrete barrier, and later lied about it. French also appeared to have lied about the circumstances surrounding his subsequent murder of Mr. Thevenin using his service weapon. The public, but especially Mr Thevenin’s family, deserve all the records related to his murder as does Dahmeek McDonald who thankfully survived a shot to the head from officer Jarrod Iler in August 2017.

We may also hear about the many other incidents that involve the Troy Police department since I have lived here, including the June 2010 incident when Officers Christopher Pollay, Charles Castle, Joseph McNall and George Anderson assaulted James Foley during a needlessly violent arrest of Shakim Miller. (Who died under mysterious circumstances a few years later.) We could hear about what led to the \$60,000 settlement for James Houle who was beaten by Officer Kyle Jones who, according to the Troy Record, allegedly did so because Jones "disagreed with how Houle administered a Facebook page."

Do the K-9s have files too? If so we might hear about the 2013 case of Theodore Relf who was bitten by a Troy K9 that had previously bitten two other bystanders but was nonetheless still allowed to be on patrol.

We may also learn more about the Kokopellis saga and how, as owners Barry and Joseph Glick put it, the Troy PD "harassed their business by parking cruisers outside the bar almost every night, scaring away potential clientele."

I hope we also learn more about the 2014 FBI civil rights investigation that the Troy PD had to undergo. Perhaps we will find out how Dominick Comitale was able to rack up hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of court settlements before he was finally allowed to resign. Maybe we'll also hear about the details of Sgt. Ron Epstein and Detective John A. Comitale Jr who were allowed to retire after they were involved in a 2017 illegal search and seizure that had them charged with bribery in addition to illegally entering a property.

For many of these infractions I suspect internal documents will reflect what we already know, that many of these officers have been allowed to, as State Supreme Court Justice Peter Lynch who presided over Sgt Epstein and Detective Comitale’s case put it, leave with "clean records if they avoid future legal problems." That is part of the problem here, that a bit of transparency can help solve. It is a small step in the right direction, which would also include giving the newly

formed but still inactive PORB subpoena powers and the ability to fire officers they deem a danger to the public.

Finally, let us also remember that PBA President officer Nicholas Laviano stood in front of the City Council as you were considering a resolution affirming Troy's Sanctuary City status and blatantly stated that he would, "gladly violate this resolution every day I work." If this sort of brazen disregard for you, our elected officials, is allowed to continue then I do not think it would make sense to call our city a democracy. It is a police state in the most literal and direct way I can imagine. Either you start to assert yourselves as elected representatives of this city now, or we lose the very basic foundations of what it means to be an American.

Regards,

David A. Banks  
Troy Resident

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Dear Mayor Madden and Troy City Council Members-

I moved to Troy, NY in 2016 after living in Vermont for 10 years. Part of my reason for moving here was for work as I am an educator and was working full time at The Sage Colleges but the other reason for coming here was that the city seemed to be diverse, growing, and welcoming to many people. As I have lived here, I continue to be inspired by these attributes. And I have also been concerned by trends that have plagued other communities that are diverse and growing--gentrification and related over-policing of communities of color.

The recent deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, as well as so many other Black lives lost previously, has laid bare the fact that that our criminal justice system is broken and that Black lives are being lost in part, because of these problems. There are many reasons for this and one thing is for certain, the solutions will need to be thoughtful and multi-faceted. And it is possible. I saw neighborhoods walking together to attend the protests in Troy on June 7. I'm confident that this community and you, as leaders, can come up with creative solutions.

To start, I am asking you to do the right thing for Troy (and our country) and immediately call a Public Safety meeting to discuss police reform. It is my understanding that a Police Objective Review Board has been nominated but has not been empowered (e.g., no subpoena power, etc.) and that Mayor Madden has yet to issue a timeline addressing Gov. Cuomo's executive order on police reform and state funding (order no. 203). Other New York cities (i.e., Utica, Rochester, and New York City) have agreed to release police disciplinary records to the public, but to my knowledge, there has NOT been any word on any move towards police reform and accountability in Troy. This greatly concerns me and many of my friends and neighbors in Troy.

This is a critical time in our country. Antiracism policies must be created and implemented as soon as possible to address the racist policies (e.g., structural inequities, over-policing of communities of color, etc.) that exist in Troy, NY as they do in other towns and cities in New York and around the country. Please meet with and LISTEN to Black leadership in our city, end

police racism and violence, stop the suppression of official reports in the case of Edson Thevenin, and protect the lives and well-being of Black community members.

Though I have owned several homes previously, I am not a homeowner here YET; however, I plan on living in Troy for the foreseeable future. I want it to be a place where ALL individuals are safe and cared for and have equitable opportunities and fair treatment. That is not currently the case for Black residents and communities of color in Troy. Mayor Madden, please make good on your letter when you said: “Troy should be proud to add its voice to that outcry – that Black lives do matter.” Make the issues I've mentioned a priority. Make thoughtful changes by seeking the counsel and leadership of those most affected. Troy for Black Lives (<https://troy4blacklives.com>) has shared thoughtful demands and I ask you to please familiarize yourselves with them, seek appropriate and diverse counsel, and then take action to make them policy.

Thank you for your service. You have been elected to serve our community. Please take this responsibility seriously.

Sincerely,  
Denise L. Pickering  
2nd Street

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Dear Troy City Council Members,

My name is Cherokee Lynn. I live on 5th Avenue in downtown Troy.

For far too long, we have lived with discriminatory policing. It has been one month since 11,000 of us gathered in Troy, but it has been 400 years of fighting in resistance to the inequities experienced by me and my Black neighbors. In low income communities of color, police and prisons have become the answer to nearly every social problem. The group Troy 4 Black Lives has planned direct actions to demand justice in policing. To my representative, Anasha Cummings, will you hear their demands and commit to the movement for police and criminal justice reform?

Take action. Reimagine what policing looks like in Troy. Spend less on police and invest more in efforts that will benefit the Black community. Take the steps to create community-based alternatives that focus on prevention, intervention, treatment, and education, especially for youth and the mentally ill. Encourage police to deprioritize enforcement of low-level offenses and invest in diversion programs, which have been proven to promote safer and healthier communities.

Do you hear us? What will you do?

Sincerely,  
Cherokee Lynn

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Mayor Madden has yet to issue a timeline addressing Gov. Cuomo's executive order no. 203 on police reform and state funding. No Public Safety meeting has been called to discuss police reform. The Police Objective Review Board, while nominated, remains toothless and with no subpoena power (this is not a dig at those on the board, but on the powers that be). While Utica, Rochester, and NYC have stated they will release police disciplinary records to the public, there has yet to be word on any move towards police reform and accountability here in Troy.

I demand that the city council and Mayor of our city begin to take these issues seriously.

We are at a tipping point right now in America, including right here in Troy. People are dying, and we urgently need to rethink how policing is going to be funded and conducted going forward. Nothing short of dramatic change is acceptable. The status quo has resulted in nothing but violence, death, and erosion of the community's trust.

As a Troy resident and a voter, the silence on this issue from Mayor Madden, Council President Mantello, and the Council at large has been incredibly disappointing and disheartening, particularly in light of Troy PD's own recent history of firing upon unarmed African-American men, one of whom was killed.

That dead man's name was Edson Thevenin, and Mayor Madden's response to that killing was botched at best, and at worst looked an awful lot like a cover-up.

Mayor Madden, there is more to being mayor than attending restaurant openings in the presence of a laudatory Press. This is where the rubber meets the road. You can't avoid controversy forever. You can't ignore these issues of race and policing in Troy and hope they'll go away or that people will just forget. We the people of Troy will not allow that to happen, and in fact, are not allowing that to happen.

If you're not up to the task, perhaps you ought to step aside for someone who is. As a Troy resident, a registered voter, and a registered Democrat who never misses a party primary, I can play a part in making that happen.

I hope Mayor Madden, Council President Mantello, my own Councilman Anasha Cummings, and the rest of the City Council will approach these issues with the attention and concern they deserve going forward.

Thank you for your time.

Graham Haley  
1st Street

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Good Evening Council Members Eileen McDermott, Ken Zalewski, Anasha Cummings, Sue Steele, Kim Ashe McPherson, Jim Gulli, Caramella Manatello, and Mayor Patrick Madden, in no particular order,

I am Kristoph DiMaria, long-time resident of Troy, NY living at 442 2nd Street in my beloved South Troy.

Wake up! All of you. Acknowledge the voices present here today and recognize that you are responsible to each and every one of us for what I will identify as an extensive history of misgivings and malappropriations. Your furthering complicity to structural violence, your maligned efforts of cooption as well as coercion, and the deafening silence with which you attempt to hide your sworn duty to accountability is both intolerable and coming to an end. The onus is upon all of you to act with integrity and transparency. You must include us in the dialogue by not only providing empowered seats at the table of shaping our city's policies and the enactment thereof, but also by eating the words now baked and set into this humble pie served before you. Chew carefully, for they are sharp and full of pits.

Black Lives Matter.

Swallow.

It is more than a slogan. It is more than good PR for maudlin city leaders. It is a cultural shift. It is the work. It is the understanding that we have benefitted far too long from exploitation. We can no longer operate on avarice or sociopathic economic practices. We can change. We will change. And those that will not must learn to rotate their hearts and love. It is a tough love and will easily unseat those who resist its beating importunity.

Chew again.

Swallow.

It has come to my attention that the suffering residents of our city and those who support them have become a powerful force calling to task the powers that be. In the last month, we have experienced the collective power of the people to organize around their shared beliefs and values and to observe the ways in which you have erred in acting upon what they implore you, by your persons and your offices, to do. A peaceful rally of a reported eleven-thousand Capital Region community members took to the streets in order to demand these things:

- That all law enforcement, especially those in your employ on our dime, stop murdering Black, Brown, and Indigenous people - as they continue to do - with impunity and malice.
- That the newly reformed civilian review board is given subpoena power and is composed of at least 60% of those most directly affected by the violence you are party to. This includes the communities of BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, Youth, People With Disabilities, the Incarcerated, and the Formerly Incarcerated. Cede the floor to them. Give them real power to change police practices.
- That you explore and create programs that divert the funding and responsibility of the criminal justice system into community-led solutions that address treatment alternatives and mitigate unnecessary incarceration, violence, and loss of life. Stop criminalizing the poor, the young, the undocumented, the sex workers, and those suffering from mental illness including substance abuse.
- That you disentangle yourself and all of Rensselaer County from ICE, 287(g), and that you designate Troy as a Sanctuary City.

This work to organize, support, and protect our right to demand these things was accomplished by Troy 4 Black Lives (formerly Justice for Dahmeek) and their affinity groups. It is your turn to fulfill these demands. We are watching, but we are no longer waiting. We will not be mollified. We are engaging. So listen to us, hear us, include us, and act.

I must also ask why the Mayor and you, Council, are also still, STILL, withholding information from the public regarding the murder and subsequent coverup of Edson Thevenin by the late Troy PD officer Randall French. I demand that you share all records, artifacts, and information transparently and that you ensure our community that an incident of this caliber of caustic cowardice will NOT happen again.

What will you do to demonstrate your adherence to Governor Cuomo's executive order No. 203 - New York State Police Reform and Reinvention? How will the Council respond to those you serve and those you serve under in the wake of recognition that your system and practice of law enforcement is inherently racist and flawed? How will you use your elected, temporary offices and the privilege of \$15,000 a year that we pay you with our labor, our ideas, and our time to right these wrongs and prevent future inequity? Will you work for all people in the City of Troy? Or just those that look, think, and act like you with the same (inequitable) privileges, entitlements, and protections? The same insecurities, fragilities, and ineptitudes? DO BETTER.

Take a long, hard look inside yourselves. Realize that we are much more similar than we are divergent. Realize that your responsibility is to all of us and is grossly lacking, particularly to the communities that are suffering the most. Do you want to see the downturn of corruption, violence, crime? Start with yourselves and those you work with. Then spiral outwards empowering community projects that improve quality of life by providing assured access to healthy food, housing for all, an equitable distribution of resources, and abolishing the institution of police as it currently exists.

Move their bloated budget to creating more educational opportunities for youth and adults. Move money from militarized weapons, improperly used body cameras, and (undeserved) pensions to safe places for children to play, to making it easy for farmers who just need water to provide fresh vegetables to the neighborhood, to supporting arts programming that can inform, inspire, and even provide catharsis to the public at large. If you want us to invest in the government of the City of Troy, prove that you are investing in us. We can no longer abide meek or bloviated responses. We will not tolerate silence and inaction. We will not accept placation or meandering failures. Have another slice of humble pie. Keep chewing. Keep swallowing.

We will be back again soon.

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My name is Andrew Lynn. I have lived in the Hillside neighborhood since 2007. I want to express my disappointment and anger at the lack of action on the part of the mayor and the City Council to promote or propose steps to seriously address police accountability in our city.

The coverup of the murder of Edson Thevenin by Randall French is something that the mayor and city council members are implicated in. The secret memo from Renali needs to be made

public so the people can reckon with their supposed leaders about the lengths to which they go to justify murder and protect the institution of the police.

Anasha, I had hoped to get a clear message in support of the Movement for Black lives from you. Where do you stand on the demands put forth by Troy 4 Black Lives? There's a right and wrong side of history to be on here, and I hope you will use your position as a city council member to push the needle towards justice rather than indifference, or worse. Also, the memo needs to be public. The secrecy surrounding the coverup of Thevenin's murder implicates those who don't speak out. Do you support a newly formed civilian review board with subpoena power and representation of no less than 60% of people most impacted by violence and police violence?

Thanks for your attention,  
Andrew Lynn  
9th St.

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My name is Angela Beallor. I live in the Hillside neighborhood of Troy, NY. It has been one month since 11,000+ people gathered in Troy, NY to declare that Black lives matter and to demand substantive change in this city, region, country. This is a matter of great urgency that requires more than speaking the correct words or sharing the right rhetoric. We, the Troy community, have many reasons to believe that the city will do all it can to avoid any real substantive change. Most notably because that would mean really addressing the problems of police violence and abuse in this city.

At this June 7th rally, Gertha Depas, Edson Thevenin's mother, described the week following the murder of her son by Sergeant Randall French of the Troy PD in 2016. Gertha describes having been "held emotionally hostage for six days," waiting for answers from the Troy police department. She describes how no one returned the family's calls or provided information. After waiting, the family then finds out that Sgt. French would receive immunity in the murder of Edson Thevenin.

The actions of the city, the police, the mayor in this case clearly communicate the priorities of the administration. A day after the murder, Chief Tedesco rushed to a press conference, declaring that French was not at fault. And District attorney Joel Abelove rushed to clear French of any wrongdoing in a grand jury hearing. All before really reviewing what occurred that morning. Years later, Mayor Madden's office suppressed an internal review, a review that revealed French's lies, carried out by Captain Joseph Centanni. Now, Mayor Madden's office refuses to let the public read the contents of a report by Former Glenville Police Chief Michael Ranalli. The Times Union describes the concern of the city to find the mole who leaked the existence of the Centanni report to the family, again revealing the administration's priorities.

This family has waited and waited. FOUR years later, Edson's family is still waiting. This evasion and silence communicates that Edson's life did not matter. That this family, his wife, children, mother, do not matter. It communicates to the Troy community that Black lives do not really matter to this city. The handling of this case shouts above the statements made by Mayor Madden's office in the wake of the murder of George Floyd. Yes, what the Thevenin case makes

loud and clear is that, as Madden writes, “collectively we have not lived up to our very own ideals...” and this city needs to “STRIVE HARDER.”

Edson’s eldest child is now twelve. He recently spoke out for the first time, sharing what his father meant to him, about the absence of his father, about the fear of the police that he lives with on a daily basis. I speak to my own young child about police violence. I tell him that, as a white child, it is unlikely that he would ever face such violence at the hands of the police. I tell him it is our duty to do all that we can to fight for the lives of our Black and brown friends and neighbors. I teach him that sometimes the work of challenging systemic racism means admitting we are wrong. I ask the city council— how will you work to truly ensure that this city and administration protects, values, and cherishes our Black community members? I say: the city must reverse course, admit that it was wrong in its handling of the Edson Thevenin murder, reckon with the injustice that has been allowed to fester for the past four years and beyond. Edson’s two children deserve nothing less.  
Angela Beallor, Jacob Street, Troy, NY

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My name is Elizabeth Press. I live at Jacob Street in the Hillside neighborhood of Troy.

Last week would have been Edson Thevenin's 42nd birthday. While standing on 3rd Street engaging with passerbys about this case, I noticed John Salka (the Deputy Director of Public Information for Mayor Madden) eating lunch one door down. I approached him and asked his thoughts on the various demands of Troy 4 Black Lives and the Dear Mayor Madden letter. It seemed as if he hadn't heard of either. Which led me to wonder what the Mayor's office and city council are hearing-- did you hear the 11,000+ crowd gathered to demand substantive change for Black lives? The mayor says that he wants to make meaningful change for my Black neighbors and friends. How can you accomplish this if you are not listening to those who are offering up thoughts and solutions?

I've been listening. As a citizen journalist who has interviewed all of you in the run up to your election, I seek to understand what is going on in our City and share it with the audience of the Hudson Mohawk Magazine. We may very well have been the only outlet to give you each 10-minutes to talk about what you would do for Troy. I've asked you about the Edson Thevenin case on and/or off the air. I have spoken to journalists and activists and Thevenin's family members about him. I have been listening and trying to understand. Most recently I spoke to his oldest son (who is now 12) on the air. He is scared of the police as so many young Black and Brown folks are. This should not be the case. Now as a community member, I ask you to do your part to hear this and make real change.

I have also heard about how the city has done everything in its power to obstruct the public from getting access to various pieces of information throughout the Thevenin case. As Casey Seiler, the editor of The Albany Times Union said, it is time to let the information out. For example, over the last year the public has been waiting on the release of the City funded Ranalli Report. The public cannot see it until the federal case is settled. The catch is that the city is doing everything to delay that process. And what about the question of video from that night? In a May 2 2016 Times Union article it says that Defense attorney Joseph Ahearn told the judge he had seen a troubling cellphone video of the April 17 police shooting. He also said he tried to ask

police Sgt. Randy French whether he shot Edson Thevenin before or after he was allegedly struck by Thevenin's car. Where is that video? Why has it not been released to the public? It is time to stop the suppression of information in the case of Edson Thevenin. It is time to let the family have closure in this case.

In general, I am eager to hear what actions Troy is going to make. I read Mayor Madden's statement in support of Black lives issued before the march. Yet Mayor Madden has not issued a timeline addressing Gov. Cuomo's executive order no. 203 on police reform and state funding, why? And, why has this City Council not made any steps toward meaningful reform of the Troy Police Department? Specifically, I want to encourage you tonight to push for "a civilian review board with subpoena power that is at least 60% representative of communities most impacted by police violence." This we have heard as one of the demands that Troy 4 Black Lives put out during their press conference on June 10, 2020. The newly reformed Police Objective Review Board that was announced on June 8, 2020 as an action that has long been in the works does not cut it. It does not meet Troy 4 Black Lives requests and demands for what it should be. I urge you to look at this as a first draft and to work on reform that truly has a chance at success. This is not a time to be silent or to drag your feet. Quick action is needed. Please do not let this city fall behind others that are taking meaningful action. As we just read in The Times Union this week, the Albany Common Council introduced several police reform proposals, including legislation that would tie funding for the city's police review board to a percentage of the police department's budget and give the board enhanced powers. The Board would receive 1% of the Police Budget, or \$540,000, to fund outside investigations into allegations of excessive force or civil rights violations. Another reform would require the city police department to closely track demographic data on police stops and arrests.

Anasha, you are my council representative and I directly ask you as a resident of the diverse Hillside neighborhood, please stand up for my Black neighbors and friends and begin to take these issues seriously and please push the Mayor to do something right in the Thevenin case.

As a parent, teacher and active community member, I beg you to listen to our Black neighbors and leaders and make decisions that really show that Black lives matter in Troy.

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Thanks,  
Elizabeth Press

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Dear Mayor Maden, and City Council members,

I am writting to you to demand the release of all the disciplinary records of all Troy Police Officers including the records of Police officers who are not in the TPD anymore, under NYS law 50-A.

It has become apparently clear that this country, and particularly this city is asking you as an elected official to do your part in this historical moment. Do your part, stop hiding.

I am also concerned about the cost of not releasing ALL of these records now; how many hours of Troy employees will be dedicated to process, and answer thousands of FOIL requests that will be coming if you don't release these records?

Please become part of the solution, stop being part of the problem,  
Black Lives Matter, Stop Police Violence in Troy NY.  
thank you,

Rafael Varela  
Hill st.  
Troy NY 12180

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Mayor Madden stated in a June 4th letter that, "Troy should be proud to add its voice to that outcry – that black lives do matter."

What actions have been taken since this statement was made to show that you, the council and the Mayor, are responding to this movement with real policy change?

Have you met any of the demands from Troy 4 Black Lives (formerly Justice 4 Dahmeek)?

I have yet to see, or hear, anything from the leaders of this city to assure me that you feel as passionate about Black lives as the 11,000 protesters (voters) who showed up on June 7th.

Troy has a long way to go before we can be proud of our city. This is time of unraveling, unlearning, and learning. What have you learned in the last month that surprised you, that you felt you should have been aware of all along, that you are now committed to changing? This is a huge movement and an historical moment. Do you want to play a role in healing, in facilitating a great leap forward? Or do you want to just watch it happen, while you keep the status quo, do the least amount possible to appease your constituents?

11,000 people. That's a lot of voters who are paying much closer attention now.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Bartels  
2nd Street

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To the City Council and Mayor:

I grew up here, and need to see my city step up to the challenge of reinventing its policing situation. We are a city that is 69% white, and yet the policing and justice culture of our municipality skews against our Black and Brown residents. Several horrible situations prove this, such as the 2016 murder of Edson Thevenin; the 2017 shooting of Dahmeek McDonald; and the ugly cooperation of Rensselaer County with ICE.

The racial reckoning that America is facing needs to come home, and our government must respond to our particular crises. Why are the Troy City Council and Mayor Madden still withholding information from the public regarding Mr. Thenevin's murder? How will the city council and mayor respond to the recent protest for Black lives attended by over 11,000 people, and Governor Cuomo's executive order on police reform? Most importantly, will the city invite the people most affected by police crimes to participate and guide citizen review of police failures?

Troy is very proud of its history of abolition and the Underground Railroad, and we need to act now to find some pride in how we are helping each other today. This begins with acknowledging the destructive racially-influenced police scenarios happening in our midst. What will Troy do to reconfigure its current approach to protecting people against crime, and dedicate funding and effort to supporting communities?

Thanks very much for your work for our city.

Sincerely,

Amy Halloran  
Tenth Street  
Troy, NY 12180

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Dear Council Members,

My name is Raquel Velho, I am a resident of 4th Street here in Troy. I am writing today to, yet again, urge you to listen to your constituents who have made continued demands regarding police reform and accountability in our city.

On Wednesday, June 10th, Troy For Black Lives held a press conference at City Hall, making a clear list of demands from our administration. Neither the mayor nor a single member of this council has followed up on these demands nor have they made a statement responding to them. In fact, many of you opted, instead, to congratulate the Troy Police Department for the success of the Troy Rally for Black Lives. You failed to recognize the work that grassroots organizations and our communities did to ensure that day ran smoothly, including the coordination of volunteer medics, safety teams, water and food distributors, legal observers, child care services, and the list goes on. Our communities kept us safe and cared for us every step of the way. You should have recognized that, too. So it does not go unnoticed that after that historical rally, which united over 11,000 protestors in our city, this city council and our mayor have yet to make substantive moves towards responding to demands laid at their door stop.

All over the country, municipalities are being pressured by their residents to seriously scrutinize police departments and the money allocated to policing our communities. Some cities have already stated they will become more transparent by releasing police disciplinary records—something you could be emulating at a much quicker pace. In our State, as you are all very well aware, Gov. Cuomo has issued executive order no. 203, and it requires that you develop a plan to

reform and reinvent our Police Department in ways that account for racial discrimination and the historical anti-Black violence of police practices. Troy is fortunate to count among its residents the organizers of Troy For Black Lives who have been making similar demands of you to work towards racial justice in our city for years. You have been given, through the executive order, an ideal opportunity to take those demands and turn them into legislation.

Council, as last time, I urge you to take this opportunity to move towards something bolder. Last time I wrote, I gave you three of the demands formulated by Troy for Black Lives. I summarize them again for you tonight:

- The Police Objective Review Board is currently toothless. We demand a review board with subpoena power and at least 60% representation on the board of those most impacted by policing and police violence in our communities.
- We demand full investigation into every instance of deadly force by a police officer, whether or not it results in death.
- We demand a divestment into policing and incarceration and a redirection of those funds towards community-run and -led programs, including education and restorative justice services.

What will this council do to substantively respond to what 11000 people gathered to demand? We want accountability. Transparency. Justice. Black lives matter.

Thank you.

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My name is Laura Rabinow and I live on Madison Street, in District 5, in South Troy. Last month, around 11,000 people came out in Troy to affirm that Black Lives Matter. This was a tremendous show of support and love in our city, one which highlighted our too often underrecognized history of police brutality and injustice.

It is important that we affirm that Black Lives Matter as a city. But, we cannot both affirm that Black Lives Matter - and recognize the inequity, pain, and violence in our broader society with respect to racism - and not at the same time recognize our own part in that inequity, pain, and violence. Including, and perhaps especially, the violence against Black residents due to police brutality. It would be a kind of grand cognitive dissonance that is, unfortunately, too common. We need instead to close the chasm between laudatory rhetoric and action, between performative allyship and meaningful change. This includes taking actions that, thanks especially to Black organizers in our city, have already clearly been outlined for the city's administration and Troy City Council:

- Issue a clear timeline with benchmarks and meaningful leadership by impacted community members addressing Governor Cuomo's executive order on police reform and state funding - and do it ahead of the upcoming city budget process
- Hold a Public Safety Committee meeting to discuss police reform
- Commit to the public release of police disciplinary records as other New York cities including Rochester, Utica, and New York City have done following from the repeal of 50-A by our state legislature and Governor



- Introduce legislation or administrative policies to address police brutality, over-policing, and redirect meaningful portions the Troy PD's budget, which has increased even as other city services and budget lines have struggled, to provide residents with better quality of life
- Ensure justice for Edson Thevenin, for Dahmeek McDonald, for their families, and for the communities impacted by their lives.

As someone who has taught college students, I am reminded that true learning and true growth can only be achieved through praxis - the process by which a theory, lesson, or skill, is enacted, embodied, or realized. The same can be said of justice. We have not realized or approached the realization of a praxis of justice as a city, but we certainly need to. Our City Council and administration have a vital role to play in that realization - you have not played that role to date, but I hope you will.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

- Laura

Comments for the public forum section

City Council Meeting

Troy, NY

July 9, 2020

My name is Ashley Ferro-Murray, and I am a resident of Troy's Eastside neighborhood residing at Maple Avenue. Mayor Madden wrote in his June 4, 2020 letter to the community, "Troy should be proud to add its voice to that outcry -- that Black Lives do matter." I ask mayor Madden to recognize and learn from the parts of Troy that have been doing this work and doing it well for a long time. I look to the incredible work of Justice for Dahmeek and Troy for Black Lives, organizations including Soul Fire Farm that serve our community so well, Black artists working in Troy with limited local support structures, and the 11,000 people that gathered in our city to rally despite fear mongering perpetuated by the city. These are the people and communities that I am proud to call my neighbors and that I will work to support. It is high time for Mayor Madden and Troy's City Council to wield their power to support these neighbors and this movement. This is how the Mayor and the City Council should add their voices to the outcry, and I have not seen it happen yet.

The mayor announced the nomination of the Police Objective Review Board, but that body needs immediate subpoena power and to be given the resources to have actual impact. I urge the Mayor to release a timeline addressing Governor Cuomo's Executive Order No. 203 on police reform and state funding—and to do so swiftly and with a focus on prioritizing the safety of Troy's Black community above all else. I expect that as a part of reform efforts, the Mayor will finally release police disciplinary records to the public. I also ask that the Mayor and the City Council specifically and publically address the clear and actionable demands put forth by Justice for Dahmeek.

Mayor Madden, the blatant racism that I see in our neighborhood alone is systemic and unconscionable. I do not understand how you can stand idly by and not use your voice and the incredible power that you have in our community to unequivocally support the Black Lives Matter movement with quantifiable steps toward anti-racism in Troy. I expect that you will do so, that you and the city council will publicly explain how you will do so, and that you will start with radical police reform.

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My name is John Johanson, and I live at Mill Street in south Troy.

As a Troy citizen and property owner, I urge the City to take deep and immediate action to address issues of systemic racism and policing in our City.

I understand that there are hurdles: we didn't create these issues, and there is inertia in our systems that makes change difficult. Yet we all need to do our part, and you need to do yours to the fullest extent as our elected officials. It is a moral imperative. Change is critical, not just for the black lives in question, but for our city as a whole: we cannot have a thriving city and downtown if that means leaving others behind and continuing to pay the price for economic, social, and legal systems which hold them down.

Recently over 10,000 protesters took to the streets. Throughout the country, changes, while still deeply inadequate, are starting to be made.

Nearby upstate cities like Utica and Rochester are releasing police disciplinary records to the public, and working toward other changes. Yet I've heard of nothing concrete from Troy. To my understanding, the City has not taken action re executive order no. 203 on police reform and state funding, the City has not setup public meetings to discuss needed police reform, and while there is a Police Objective Review Board, it remains powerless.

This isn't good enough. We are not yet seeing the leadership we need and expect. We need to do better. It is a moral imperative.

Thank you for your time.

John Johanson

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My name is Michelle Temple. I live on 3rd street in Troy NY. I have worked with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community for over 15 years and continue to be an advocate for the unheard and unseen.

The sound of my voice you are hearing now is both a physiological and psychological phenomenon. The air I inhale is processed through the involuntary mechanics of my lungs, my throat, the shape of my mouth to the mechanics of your ear. You hear these words. The act of listening is subjective, a function of your brain's capacity to interpret, give thought to, and consider the sound it receives. Tone, while used to describe the color of one's skin, can also be used to describe the emotion detected in one's voice. The ability to empathize lies in the ability to listen.

Please take THIS moment to listen to the tone of Edson Thevinin's mother, transcribed from an audio excerpt played in an interview conducted by Elizabeth Press with Thevin's son, Zamir. Zamir was standing next to his grandmother as she spoke these words at the Troy Black Lives Matter rally in Troy on June 7th:

“After he was murdered we were forced to wait for the authorities to release his body for burial. For 6 days we were held emotional hostage as we waited for answers from the Troy police department. No one returned our calls, nor provided information. Instead, after 6 days, we were told that the officer involved received immunity for his unlawful blatant act of murder on my son, Edson Thevinin. We waited then, and we continue to wait, and for the last 4 years we are still waiting. It’s hard..... [chokes up] [silence] [audience begins to applaud and offer words of support] waiting for answers. Waiting for the truth. Waiting for a system to change. Waiting for someone to hear our voice. Waiting for those who SWORE to protect and serve, to understand. I want them [read: YOU] to understand that Black. Lives. Matter. On that night when Edson was pulled over, the content of his character was not seen. The only thing that was seen was the color of his skin.”

The demands from black lives cannot be snuffed out by racists police who murder humans based on the tone of their skin. The pain of Thevinin’s mother was felt in the tone of her voice by 11,000 people that day. The ghost of Thevinin’s voice, who’s name has been omitted and blacked out from the records of black lives silenced by racist police’s acts of lynching, will continue to reverberate through his mother’s pleas. Much like our president hiding in the basement of the White House from Black Lives Matter protests, our Mayor’s silence and tone deaf addresses to the citizens of Troy perpetuates violence while megaphones outside his office amplify black voices from the street below demanding:

Cops stop killing us and our children.

A newly formed civilian review board. The review board must have subpoena power and representation of no less than 60% of people most impacted by violence and police violence.

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To Mayor Madden and members of Troy City Council:

As constituents of your city, we are writing to state first and foremost that Black Lives Matter. We support the Troy movement for Black lives, we support de-militarizing our police and we support the call for Troy to become a sanctuary city. We appreciate your official statement in support of Black lives, and the work that you have started in order to carry out Governor Cuomo’s executive order to examine how our militarized police departments are influenced by and carry out racial injustice based on this country’s racist history. We have seen the effects in our own city of Troy with the needless deaths of Edward Thevenin and Dahmeek McDonald, and we are still waiting for justice for their families and loved ones.

We appreciate that you have nominated members of a civilian review board in accordance with the Governor’s executive order. However, without subpoena power and a timeline outlining actionable items calling for reform and accountability we will not see real progress or change. This is an urgent matter, and lives depend on your actions. Too many lives have already been lost, too many families are grieving. We cannot wait and allow any other family in our community to lose a loved one, to see any future snuffed out because our city cannot confront our racist past. Mayor Madden, as an elected official you have real power to create change and

influence. You have spoken up in support for the Black Lives Matter movement. Now we urge you to use your influence to create policy for changes to policing and to hold our police departments accountable. Other cities in New York have already agreed to release police disciplinary records to the public. Troy needs to do the same and we need to listen to and heed the demands of Black organizers and activists. 11,000 people showed up in support of Black lives on June 7th. Your city has spoken. If you wish to remain our representative, we need evidence that your support of Black lives and commitment to undoing racism is based in policy change and not just a publicity stunt.

Thank you,

Emily Brown  
Ryan Rose  
2<sup>nd</sup> Street

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Dear City Council Members / County Legislators ,  
I am a resident of Troy, currently living at 2nd Street and working in North Central Troy. What is your investment in this community? I am writing to encourage you to immediately freeze additional funding for the Troy Police Department and reallocate \$10 million from the TPD Budget to community services and projects led by and centering Black communities most impacted by violent policing. The excessive TPD Budget should be redistributed to safer streets for pedestrians and bikers, health services downtown (including COVID testing) for residents who do not have a car, community-based mediation and counseling services, affordable housing for all, healthy food access for all, afterschool and summer programming for all youth in the City, and the continued development and maintenance of parks and green spaces for residents to exercise and connect with the Earth.

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This is important because these programs and projects build healthy communities and invest in future generations who deserve to grow up in a safe space with leaders who invest in them and not in institutions that continue to abuse their power, break the law, and hurt people.

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I am writing in solidarity and support with the demands of Troy 4 Black Lives. The City Council has done nothing to address these demands, nor the historic rally last month of 11,000 people. The City Council continues to be complicit in the murder and harm of Black people in Troy. We remember the lynching of Edson Thevenin and the attempted murder of Dahmeek McDonald by Troy police, as well as the subsequent coverups by Mayor Madden, district attorneys, and other Troy officials.

**Defund Troy Police now! Invest in Black Communities!**

Sincerely,  
Marissa Peck

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My name is Nathan Meltz, and I live at Sausse Avenue in Troy.

A month ago Troy saw one of its biggest demonstrations in its history with over ten thousand people marching its streets to state unequivocally that Black Lives Matter; to oppose police brutality; and to call for justice for the Black lives lost or permanently harmed at the hands of Troy police, including Edson Thevenin and Dahmeek McDonald.

Despite the clear demand for urgent action, I am disappointed to see so little from Mayor Madden and the Troy City Council:

- Mayor Madden has yet to issue a timeline addressing Gov. Cuomo's executive order on police reform and state funding.
- No Public Safety meeting has been called to discuss police reform
- Despite the repeal of 50-a and the commitments of New York City, Rochester and Utica to publicly release police disciplinary records, Troy has not followed suit.
- No reforms have been proposed to address police brutality or over-policing, nor to reduce the Troy PD's massive budget.
- All the while, there is still no justice for Edson Thevenin, and no justice for Dahmeek McDonald, their families, and the communities who care about their lives.

Together this paints a picture of an administration and City Council that seems wholly incapable of rising to the moment and addressing the demands of the movement for Black lives in Troy. I urge all of you to take action tonight to chart a new course for Troy, one that values Black lives and as a city that we can be proud to call home. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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Dear City Council Members / County Legislators ,

I am a resident of Troy on 4th St. I went to school at RPI and chose to stay here and live and work in this community because I fell in love with it. I am writing to encourage you to immediately freeze additional funding for the Troy Police Department and reallocate \$10 million from the TPD Budget to community services and projects led by and centering Black communities most impacted by violent policing. The excessive TPD Budget should be redistributed to programs such education, public transit, and assistance for Troy's homeless population. This is important because it will shift the focus away from punishing members of our community to providing them with the support they need to live their lives and support those around them.

I am writing in solidarity and support with the demands of Troy 4 Black Lives. The City Council has done nothing to address these demands, nor the historic rally last month of 11,000 people. The City Council continues to be complicit in the murder and harm of Black people in Troy. We remember the lynching of Edson Thevenin and the attempted murder of Dahmeek McDonald by Troy police, as well as the subsequent coverups by Mayor Madden, district attorneys, and other Troy officials.

Defund Troy Police now! Invest in Black Communities!

Sincerely,  
Zachary Hayes

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Dear City Council Members / County Legislators,

My name is Karyn Dyer and I live at Jay Street in Troy.

What is your investment in this community? I am writing to encourage you to immediately freeze additional funding for the Troy Police Department and reallocate \$10 million from the TPD Budget to community services and projects led by and centering Black communities most impacted by violent policing. The excessive TPD Budget should be redistributed to organizations such as The Boys and Girls Club, the YWCA, The Sanctuary for Independent Media, Power Breakfast Club, and the Troy City School District.

This is important because Black people are dying, getting attacked by the police, and being oppressed and disrespected by local figures and businesses.

I am writing in solidarity and support with the demands of Troy 4 Black Lives. The City Council has done nothing to address these demands, nor the historic rally last month of 11,000 people. The City Council continues to be complicit in the murder and harm of Black people in Troy.

We remember the lynching of Edson Thevenin and the attempted murder of Dahmeek McDonald by Troy police, as well as the subsequent coverups by Mayor Madden, district attorneys, and other Troy officials.

**Defund Troy Police now! Invest in Black Communities!**

Sincerely,

Karyn Dyer

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Dear City Council Members,

I am writing to ask what the City of Troy intends to do about policing reform. Mayor Madden has stated that he is in support of the Black Lives Matter protests happening locally and globally. I would like to see some substantive action taken to show that this support of Black lives is genuine.

In particular, I hope that the City of Troy will take the necessary steps to ensure that the Police Objective Review Board is functional and powerful. We need to have police accountability, and this Board needs to have subpoena power in order to be a credible source of oversight for the Troy Police Department. Additionally, the Review Board's disciplinary recommendations must hold weight with the Police Department, and its findings must not be ignored.

I would also like to see the City explore the creation of more diversion programs to keep youth and other vulnerable populations from entering the criminal justice system. We know that exposing people to the criminal justice system often traps them in a "revolving door" of jail and prison admissions. It is imperative that we reduce the over-policing of Black and brown communities.

This is an ongoing issue that needs to be addressed and taken seriously by the City of Troy. I do not live in the City, but across the river in Waterford, and often spend my time and money dining

and shopping in Troy. I would like to see the City be a safe place for people of all colors to live in and visit.

Thank you.

Alison King  
Waterford NY

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Hello,

My name is Kathryn McTeigue, I lived and worked in Troy for four years while I was a student at Russell Sage College. I still frequent the city for work and to socialize with friends who live there before the pandemic.

I'm writing to implore the council to listen and heed the demands of Troy's Black and POC constituents who have been crying out for substantial changes to be made to address systemic racism and police brutality. Edson Thevenin and Dahmeek McDonald are only two cases where harm has been perpetuated by our city's police force and where the community continues to seek overdue justice.

I refer you to the 13 Demands that have been listed by the All of Us community organization for actions to take next. The 13 Demands reflect the dire needs of your community, from the voices of the community who you serve. They know what they need from you and they have made their demands clear. To continue to ignore them is white supremacy in action.

It will not go unnoticed when members of this council who remain silent and inactive in the face of tremendous pain and suffering are slated for re-election. We are all watching.

Regards,  
Kathryn McTeigue

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Dear City Council Members,

My name is Elon, I am a resident of Troy, I live at River St (12180) and I am a student at HVCC. I am writing in solidarity and support with the demands of Troy 4 Black Lives. The City Council has done nothing to address these demands, nor the historic rally last month of 11,000 people. The City Council continues to be complicit in the murder and harm of Black people in Troy. I am writing to encourage you to immediately freeze additional funding for the Troy Police Department and reallocate \$10 million from the TPD Budget to community services and projects led by and centering Black communities most impacted by violent policing.

We remember the lynching of Edson Thevenin and the attempted murder of Dahmeek McDonald by Troy police, as well as the subsequent coverups by Mayor Madden, district attorneys, and other Troy officials.

**Defund Troy Police now! Invest in Black Communities!**

Sincerely,  
Elon Michaud

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Dear City Council Members,

I am Stephannie Stoye, homeowner & resident of 5th Ave in Troy. I am writing to encourage you to defund the Troy Police Department and reallocate funds to community services and projects led by and centering on Black communities most impacted by violent policing. This is important because the police are asked to do too much: from maintaining order & keeping the peace, to dealing with mental health crises & medical issues. It is not possible for them to be qualified & capable of addressing all of these tasks at once and therefore funds should be directed to other services.

I support the demands put forth by Troy 4 Black Lives which were outlined at the historic rally last month of 11,000 people. These include giving the newly formed PORB subpoena power, and the creation of diversion programs away from criminal justice involvement to community-based treatment options for the youth & mentally ill. The City Council has done nothing to address these demands.

I sadly remember the lynching of Edson Thevenin & the subsequent coverups. While many of those involved in that terrible miscarriage of justice are no longer involved in the city of Troy, from the officer involved, the former police chief & former district attorney, the conditions which allowed it to occur still exist. The City Council continues to be complicit in the murder and harm of Black people in Troy. I ask that you release all reports & documents to the public regarding this incident to show transparency and to help our city move forward from here. Thank you.

Sincerely, Stephannie Stoye

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Dear City Council Members/County Legislators,

My name is Jacob Shipley and I am a resident of Troy at 2nd St.

When we read in the history books about Nazi Occupied Germany, Slavery in the South, and the Jim Crow era, what do you think? Are you horrified by the actions of the powerful and wish desperately that the brutality and deaths had never happened? Me, too. These are awful moments in history and I am positive that part of your reasoning for engaging in politics was to make sure these things don't happen again. To benefit the community so that everyone is safe and taken care of.

Well, we are living in another moment for the history books. With the Global Pandemic and a resurgence of Civil Rights Era activism, now is the time to take your place. Now is the time to decide where you would have stood when the Nazi's knocked on your door asking for information on your neighbor. Now is the time to decide whether you would have engaged in enslaving other humans for profit because of the color of their skin. Now is the time to decide whether you would have stood with MLK as he walked across the bridge at Selma, knowing full well that there were fire hoses, dogs, and guns waiting for him at every protest.

This isn't rhetorical. Nazi's and White supremacists are gaining power (the head of our local PBA chapter was caught sharing racist comments on Social Media quite recently), the prison



industrial system of mass incarceration is dramatically similar to Jim Crow laws and Slavery laws before it, and we have hours of video content from the last two months documenting police brutality against peaceful protestors. When we look back at this moment in fifty years, where will see yourself standing? Because history judges us all in these moments.

I implore you to take a stand in support of our community that needs money in social programs to help reduce crime, not more policing. Support our minority and lower income communities in your budget rather than a Police force that has demonstrated they are willing to lie to the public for their own self image. Please do not bow to pressure from an aggressive, destructive, and overly powerful Police Union. Listen to your community. Please. We need your help because we cannot do it alone.

Thank you  
Jacob Shipley  
he/him

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Dear Councilmembers,

My name is Raurri Jennings and I am a resident of 4<sup>th</sup> Street in Troy, NY. One month ago our city hosted a rally with over 11,000 attendees all of whom raised their voice in opposition to our country's long history of police brutality and systemic racism. Their message was clear: Black Lives Matter and justice for Black lives taken or permanently harmed at the hands of the Troy Police should be a top priority of our city's government. The rally was followed up by a press conference organized and conducted by Troy for Black Lives (formerly Justice for Dahmeek). Our elected officials needed only to look out the window of their office on that day and listen to their city's residents to know that they demand action to correct the wrongs of the past and chart a path forward that is equitable and just for all.

The silence and inaction of the City Council and Mayor Madden in response to what is clearly the will of this city's residents is unacceptable. I am writing to you today to strongly urge you as Council Members to do the following:

- Form a civilian review board of the Troy Police with subpoena power that is made up of no less than 60% of residents most impacted by violence and police violence, namely black, indigenous and people of color.
- Release the disciplinary records of Troy Police officers like other cities in New York State have in light of the repeal of 50-a and make a commitment to holding police accountable for their actions.
- Call a meeting of the Public Safety Committee to discuss police reform.
- Develop a plan in accordance with Executive Order no. 203 from Governor Cuomo to reinvent and reform the police, which includes reallocating funds from the Troy Police Department budget to community-based programs and services for residents most affected by police violence and open that plan up to public comment.

Thank you for your time and consideration. It is my hope that this letter along with the many other letters you are receiving from your constituents makes it clear that police reform and

investing in education, infrastructure, and social programs for those most affected by police violence and systemic racism should be a top priority for the City of Troy's government.

Sincerely,  
Raurri Jennings

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Thank you for the opportunity to "speak". I am writing to ask Mayor Madden and City Council members: "Why are you silent?" Your silence speaks volumes and we all have theories on why you are so quiet. So why not clear the rumors and please tell us what happened with Edson's murder, and what motivates your silence and inaction to make real structural changes in Troy, NY's police force?

I am a white woman with white children living in Troy's diverse Hillside neighborhood. I live my life simply and teach my children to be compassionate, kind, and honest. My 8-year-old understands that the color of her skin provides her safety that black and brown people just do not have here in their hometown of Troy. If you take the time to listen to Edson's son talk about his intensified fear after his father was murdered by a police officer, it is heart wrenching.

To me it is simple. Please lead the city in the ways I strive to raise my children. Edson no longer has the opportunity to raise his son in these ways.

Retrain your police, create a real police review board, restructure your system to include community led strategies, and tell us the truth about the coverup. Lead with love so we all can be free - including YOU.

Thank you for your time,  
Victoria Kereszi

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Dear Troy City Council Members,

My name is Abby Kinchy and I live at Sausse Avenue in Troy (District 3). I am writing to provide a short statement for this evening's City Council meeting.

I have lived in Troy since 2007, and it saddens me that this is not the first time that I have found it necessary to speak to the City Council about problems with the Troy Police Department. Unfortunately, the TPD has repeatedly brought shame upon our city by committing acts of violence against Black people.

We now have a chance to change the reputation of our city -- from a place where the police are brutal, racist, and out-of-control, to a place where all residents are treated with dignity. A month ago, I marched with thousands of other Trojans to call for a fundamental transformation in the role of police in society. Across the country, there have been thousands of demonstrations -- millions of marchers -- making the same demands. It fills me with hope to see cities like Minneapolis taking on the challenge to build meaningful alternatives to the police force. Can a

small city like Troy also reimagine how we ensure safety and security? We owe it to every Black person in Troy to try.

I support the demands that have been made by our local organizations, Justice for Dahmeek and Troy for Black Lives. They enumerate concrete actions that this City Council should take. A crucial starting point is to form a Civilian Review Board that fully represents the communities that are most impacted by police violence: Black people and other people of color, particularly those who are young, disabled, LGBT, or formerly incarcerated. This Civilian Review Board must have subpoena power and true authority to oversee the Troy Police Department.

I am well aware that the TPD and the police union will fight this idea, and, you, along with the Mayor, will feel pressured to keep the police happy by maintaining the status quo. I implore you to do what is right, even if it is uncomfortable. You cannot keep looking the other way when the police do harm to the people of the city you represent.

Thank you for your time.  
Abby Kinchy

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Dear City Council Members / County Legislators ,

I am a resident of Troy near the intersection of S Lake Avenue and Hoosick street. My husband and I moved to Troy four years ago and we intend on staying here. While we love where we live and we love our neighborhood, we have been very concerned about policing in Troy generally and the police presence in our area and other areas that are primarily communities of color. We are particularly concerned about the well-being and safety of our Black neighbors (we ourselves are white). We care deeply about their lives and feel they deserve the same respect and benefit of the doubt that white people do. Unfortunately, we have been aware for some time that this is usually not the case for many Black people, including those in the Troy community.

For this reason, I am writing to encourage you to immediately freeze additional funding for the Troy Police Department. I request that \$10 million from the TPD Budget be reallocated to community services and projects led by and centering the Black communities most impacted by violent policing. The excessive TPD Budget should be redistributed to investing in trauma-informed social workers who have knowledge of cultural competency, domestic violence, LGBTQ+ issues, and mental health concerns. This is important because we will personally NEVER call the police for any issues in our community because we absolutely do not trust TPD to handle or de-escalate situations appropriately and with another person's basic humanity in mind. We need other options.

Further, I am writing in solidarity and support with the demands of Troy 4 Black Lives. The City Council has done nothing to address these demands, nor the historic rally last month of 11,000 people. The City Council continues to be complicit in the murder and harm of Black people in Troy.

We remember the lynching of Edson Thevenin and the attempted murder of Dahmeek McDonald by Troy police, as well as the subsequent coverups by Mayor Madden, district attorneys, and other Troy officials.

Additionally, I would like to know how Mayor Madden intends to be accountable for his recent letter where he states "Troy should be proud to add its voice to the outcry- that Black lives do matter." What is the city actually doing to demonstrate this? I have seen nothing substantial. Defund Troy Police now! Invest in Black Communities. They have been ignored for far too long and we will not stand for it.

Sincerely,  
Kimberly Brown,  
South Lake Avenue, Troy, NY 12180

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Dear City Council Members

I am a resident of Troy at 2nd street. As a neighbor, a resident and member of the community and a union member I am writing to encourage you to immediately freeze additional funding for the Troy Police Department and reallocate \$10 million from the TPD Budget to community services and projects led by and centering Black communities most impacted by violent policing. The excessive TPD Budget should and can be redistributed to any number of programs and services that does public good, like housing and education, not harm, like policing.

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This is important because I live everyday as someone who's privileges makes me under policed for my benefit. For me, and my life, the police might as well be completely defunded as they do not prey on me like they do to my neighbors.

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I am writing in solidarity and support with the demands of Troy 4 Black Lives. The City Council has done nothing to address these demands, nor the historic rally last month of 11,000 people. The City Council continues to be complicit in the murder and harm of Black people in Troy. We remember the murder of Edson Thevenin and the attempted murder of Dahmeek McDonald by Troy police.

We need to defund the Troy PD, end any cooperation with ICE, support our immigrant communities, make Troy a sanctuary city, have a civilian review board with real power, including subpoena power, and investigate the murder and cover up of Edson Thevenin. Defund Troy Police now! Invest in Black Communities!

Sincerely,  
Mickey Dobbin

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Hello,

My name is Olivia Hoover-Mahoney and I am a resident of the city of Troy, NY at Glen Avenue. I live there with my husband, Ian Mahoney-Hoover. We have been residents of Troy for about two years and are homeowners.

I am writing in hopes of drawing the city council's attention to the extremely distressing issues regarding the Troy police department. The budget for this department, last I checked, is \$20 million, and the department itself is highly militarized.

This kind of out of control spending on police in Troy harms our city. These funds could be, and should be spent on vulnerable communities, not on policing. We are a city that has serious problems with drug use and poverty, and all of this stems from lack of recourses for the actual residents of this city. The root causes of this pain and suffering can be addressed by diverting the absurdly high budget of the police department to the actual communities they are supposed to be serving.

Our schools, our community gardens, our roads, drug treatment and recovery centers, and social services, all would benefit from the funds currently used by Troy PD. A reallocation of \$10 million from the police department would be an untold blessing to the people of Troy. As a proud resident of this city, I ask that you consider this.

Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,

Olivia Hoover-Mahoney

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Hello Jim,

I have been a proud Trojan for the last 7 years and reside on 2nd avenue in the heart of historic Lansingburgh.

Recent national events surrounding police brutality against people of color have raised the volume on a centuries old conversation and I feel that now is a moment of reckoning where justice for ALL must prevail and real work must be done to put an end to systemic racism in our city and society.

I urge you and your fellow council members to hear the demands of Troy 4 Black Lives (formerly justice for dahmeek) and take bold action to start the process of repairing a broken and biased system. All of their demands are important but i especially would like to see a civilian review board of police actions, with subpoena power and representation of at least 60% of people most affected by police violence in our community.

I have heard many times, in Lansingburgh, and other parts of Troy that people believe the answer to safer communities is to simply have more police. That is a recipe for disaster. I encourage you to consider the diversity of community building strategies that will contribute to a brighter future for our city, and put funding towards those, and defund the police department.

I await council discussions regarding Governor Cuomo's order #203 on police reform and reinvention ( i would suggest less firearm training and more meditation, floatation therapy, yoga, and associated healing arts that have proven beneficial for stressful work environments) and mayor m Maddens timeline regarding this order.

Im sure that the Troy Police Department is part of a fraternal brotherhood with deep ties to regional government and that probably makes anyone in government afraid to speak out against police corruption and misbehavior. If TPD plays by the rules then they will have nothing to hide and the civilian review board will have an easy job. Dont be afraid, the people are behind you. We want a better future for people of all races colors and creeds, just like the 14th amendment prescribes.

I hope you will do the right thing. I will continue to work in my neighborhood for justice and equality, to share this burden we all carry in being members of a unified community.

Thank you,  
Christian

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Dear City Council Members / County Legislators,

I am a resident of Troy, living in the News on Broadway. I am a recent graduate of RPI and I loved this city so much that I decided to stay here after graduation. I am currently working at Little Peck's on Broadway and love our community, to me it is home.

I am writing to encourage you to immediately freeze additional funding for the Troy Police Department and reallocate \$10 million from the TPD Budget to community services and projects led by and centering Black communities most impacted by violent policing.

The excessive TPD Budget should be redistributed to the centers in our community doing the hard work of educating and supporting children and adults to become the best that they can be! Joseph's house, capital roots, Unity House, Boys and Girls Club to name a few are working to empower those who have been dealt a rougher hand in life- to help them achieve all that they can. A community is only as strong as it treats those in need. We need to recognize that police presence leads to violence and crime while community initiatives lead to stronger and better communities.

I am writing in solidarity and support with the demands of Troy 4 Black Lives.

The City Council has done nothing to address these demands, nor the historic rally last month of 11,000 people. I went to that rally and the love could be felt all around you. The Black community in Troy needs there voices to be heard. A divestment from police is only the beginning of reparations that they deserve to rebuild their fair share of this community. The City Council continues to be complicit in the murder and harm of Black people in Troy.

We remember the lynching of Edson Thevenin and the attempted murder of Dahmeek McDonald by Troy police, as well as the subsequent coverups by Mayor Madden, district attorneys, and other Troy officials.

**Defund Troy Police now! Invest in Black Communities!**

Sincerely,  
Nancy Bush  
RPI Chemistry 2019  
Current Resident

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Hi Ms. Steele,

I'm one of your constituents. I live at 15th St. I'm writing on behalf of my partner and I as voters and as parents of an almost 1 year old.

Ms. Steele, I can't imagine living my life without my daughter. I also can't imagine what it would be like for her to live her life without one of her parents. And yet, so many folks of color live with the fear of losing their children, parents, siblings and friends to police violence. Police violence must stop!

I'm writing to ask that you support police accountability. Support the group Troy for Black Lives in their call for a civilian review board with subpoena power and representation of no less than 60% of people most impacted by police violence - folks of color. Support their demands that Troy create programs that divert folks at risk of entering the criminal justice system towards community-based treatment alternatives.

My wife, my community, and I are all counting on you to show your support for black lives.

Thank you for your time!  
- Scott Stafiej

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Good Evening,

My name is Linden Horvath and I live at 2nd Street in Troy, NY. I am writing to express my extreme discontent with the lack of accountability from Troy's City Council, Mayor, and police department in regards to addressing the consistent, at times deadly, and well-documented history of the Troy PD's use of excessive force with our neighbors.

Recently the Mayor's office made a statement in regards to Black Lives Matter. While a statement can be lovely, without action behind it to ensure that Black lives in our community are valued and ensured safety, these words are hollow.

In specific, some of what I would like to see our Council and Mayor address are the following:

1. Issue a timeline to address Executive Order #203 regarding police reform and state funding.
2. Create a truly powerful--and representative of impacted communities--Police Objective Review Board. Ensure the Board has autonomy and subpoena power.
3. Release all information regarding the cover up of Edson Thevnin's murder by the Troy PD. Hold those involved in covering up this information--that the community has every right to--accountable.
4. Hold a public safety meeting to address police violence in Troy and police reform.
5. Address the outsized Troy PD budget. It is incredibly disappointing to see our schools and public infrastructure consistently defunded while our police continue to have a greater share of the City's budget.
6. Adopt a resolution to turn Troy into a Sanctuary City.

Respectfully, history will judge what we do in a moment where our City saw 11,000 march to assert that Black Lives Matter. I strongly urge the Administration and Council to develop

accountable and concrete measures to address the harm done to multiple lives, families and communities in Troy. We are watching.

Sincerely,  
Linden Horvath

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Dear City Council Members / County Legislators ,

I am a resident of Troy and current student at RPI.

I am writing to encourage you to immediately freeze additional funding for the Troy Police Department and reallocate \$10 million from the TPD Budget to community services and projects led by and centering Black communities most impacted by violent policing.

The excessive TPD Budget should be redistributed to supporting the proactive growth of our community as opposed to reacting to a system that fails us BIPOC from the start.

I am only a student where I am today because of special programming held and funded by the city where I grew up. My little faith in the justice system through an undocumented family and experiences of racial profiling led me down a path opposite to the one I have now. I can only fathom what it is our Black Community goes through everyday and the justice system that is of a disservice to them, preventing the growth of their community.

I am writing in solidarity and support with the demands of Troy 4 Black Lives. The City Council has done nothing to address these demands, nor the historic rally last month of 11,000 people. The City Council continues to be complicit in the murder and harm of Black people in Troy. We remember the lynching of Edson Thevenin and the attempted murder of Dahmeek McDonald by Troy police, as well as the subsequent coverups by Mayor Madden, district attorneys, and other Troy officials.

Defund Troy Police now! Invest in Black Communities!

Sincerely,  
Marvin Rios

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Dear City Council Members and County Legislators,

I am a resident of Troy on 4th Street in Little Italy. I have been a resident for over three years and I am writing because from my time in this city it has become painfully obvious that the Troy Police Department has too much power that they choose to wield irresponsibly and dangerously. I strongly encourage you to immediately freeze additional funding for the Troy Police Department. In addition, I implore you to reallocate \$10 million from the TPD Budget to community services and projects led by and centering Black communities most impacted by violent policing.

The excessive TPD Budget should be redistributed first and foremost to education, which is always where the majority of the budget should go, but now more so than ever considering learning remotely should be accessible while the novel coronavirus makes it dangerous for students to physically attend school. Reallocated funds from the TBD should also be distributed amongst public housing projects, addiction counseling, and health services.

Our community would be hugely impacted for the better if these areas received additional funding. Think of all the people who would be benefitted from services such as these that they've



been requesting forever, but have only ever received additional policing. We must all pledge to invest in peoples' futures as opposed to increasing policing budgets, which disproportionately impact the Black community.

I am writing in solidarity and support with the demands of Troy 4 Black Lives. The City Council has done nothing to address these reasonable demands, nor the historic rally last month of 11,000 people. The City Council continues to be complicit in the murder and harm of Black people in Troy.

We remember the lynching of Edson Thevenin and the attempted murder of Dahmeek McDonald by Troy police, as well as the subsequent coverups by Mayor Madden, district attorneys, and other Troy officials.

Defund Troy Police now! Invest in Black Communities!

Sincerely,

Alicia Bernson

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My name is Chris Bassett. I live on 4th Street in South Troy and have lived, gone to school, and worked in Troy for the entire 40 years of my life. I am urging you to immediately freeze additional funding for the Troy Police Department and reallocate AT LEAST \$10 million from the obscenely bloated TPD Budget to community services and projects led by and centering Black communities most impacted by violent policing.

Additionally, the City Council and Mayor Madden have done nothing to address the demands of Troy 4 Black Lives, nor the historic rally last month of 11,000 people. The City Council continues to be complicit in the murder and harm of Black people in Troy, including but certainly not limited to the killing of Edson Thevenin and subsequent cover-up.

Black Lives Matter is not just a catchy slogan; you have to actually mean it and commit to ACTING on it. I see your inaction. WE see your inaction. Fix it.

Defund Troy Police now! Invest in Black Communities!

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Dear Mayor Madden and Council Members,

I'd like to express my support of Troy For Black Lives, who so skillfully and safely organized the June 7 Rally for Black Lives in Troy, attended by over eleven thousand people. This was truly a great and historic day for Troy. I am so grateful to the organizers whose brilliant focus made the event a success, and grateful to the residents who worked in safety teams and as medics to keep the peaceful protesters safe and well. I'd like to thank the community leaders and youth who, in the week prior to the rally, painted beautiful murals and affirmations of life on the plywood nailed up over much of downtown. Downtown businesses had, to my understanding, been encouraged by city officials to board up storefronts, out of the officials' distrust of community protest.

While speaking of the stellar and meaningful achievements of the Troy community around the June 7 rally, I'd also like to uphold the words and demands issued by Troy For Black Lives that will help move our city into a more just future.. Troy For Black Lives is calling for a measurable commitment to police accountability and justice that protects the citizens, visitors, and neighbors of Troy. The demands are as follows:

- We demand that cops stop killing us and our children.
- We demand a newly formed civilian review board, with subpoena power and representation of no less than 60% of people most impacted by violence and police violence. This includes Black / Indigenous/ People of Color, LGBTQIA people, young people, people with disabilities, and formerly incarcerated people.
- We demand the exploration and creation of diversion programs away from criminal justice involvement to community based treatment alternatives, especially for youth and the mentally ill. We demand the end of unnecessary incarceration for matters of substance use or sex work, which disproportionately effect exploited and impoverished communities.
- We demand the disentanglement of county government with ICE.
- We demand that Troy be designated as a sanctuary city.

Finally, I'd like to join many in Troy and across the state to ask for an investigation by City Council and a civilian review board into the facts of the fatal police shooting of Edson Thevenin.

Troy is a thriving community with brilliant community leaders, and I ask that you support us and our demands as we continue working toward a more just city.

Thank you.  
 Kevin Lovelady  
 2nd St Troy NY

Dear City Council Members / County Legislators ,

I am a resident of Troy near the intersection of S Lake Avenue and Hoosick street. My wife and I moved to Troy four years ago. While we love where we live and we love our neighborhood, we have been very concerned about policing in Troy. We are particularly concerned about the safety of our Black neighbors (we ourselves are white). We care about their well-being and feel they deserve the same respect and benefit of the doubt that white people do. Unfortunately, we have been aware for some time that this is usually not the case for many Black people, including those in the Troy community.

For this reason, I am writing to encourage you to immediately freeze additional funding for the Troy Police Department. I request that \$10 million from the TPD Budget be reallocated to community services and projects led by and centering the Black communities most impacted by violent policing. The excessive TPD Budget should be redistributed to serving Black communities and youth in the ways Black community members see fit. This is important because their needs and voices have gone unheard for far too long. We've seen the impact of racism in predominately Black areas: poor infrastructure and upkeep, excessive force and carelessness towards the community.

Further, I am writing in solidarity and support with the demands of Troy 4 Black Lives. The City Council has done nothing to address these demands, nor the historic rally last month of 11,000 people. The City Council continues to be complicit in the murder and harm of Black people in Troy.

We remember the lynching of Edson Thevenin and the attempted murder of Dahmeek McDonald by Troy police, as well as the subsequent coverups by Mayor Madden, district attorneys, and other Troy officials.

Additionally, I would like to know how Mayor Madden intends to be accountable for his recent letter where he states "Troy should be proud to add its voice to the outcry- that Black lives do matter." What is the city actually doing to demonstrate this? We have seen nothing substantial. Defund Troy Police now! Invest in Black Communities.

Sincerely,

Ross Kunze

South Lake Avenue, Troy, NY 12180

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Dear esteemed members of the Troy City Council,

My name is Ian Mahoney-Hoover. I reside at Glen Avenue in Troy. I own a home in this city and am a registered voter in Rensselaer County.

I am writing to you today to comment on a critical issue that we face in our fair city: the issue of police accountability.

While I would like to applaud Mayor Madden for his written statement on June 4 in support of Black Lives Matter protests across the country, I am curious as to whether city leadership is working to answer the demands for justice and accountability that were made by 11,000 people in Troy last month. Solidarity is important, but it is toothless without serious movement for change.

I encourage you to reallocate money from the Troy police budget towards programs and services that would benefit the communities in our city impacted by violent policing. The communities of North Central and Lansingburgh particularly come to mind, where roads and public spaces are poorly maintained, and there is a near complete lack of public resources available to lower-income communities, yet police presence is extremely heavy. A world without police violence is possible if local communities have the resources to manage poverty, mental illness, and addiction.

I call for full transparency by Mayor Madden and city officials regarding the death of Edson Thevenin and the shooting of Dahmeek McDonald, and for officers who committed acts of transgression in these cases to be held accountable to the fullest extent.

I would like to see Troy's plan to adhere to New York Executive Order 203, regarding police reform. A civilian board with subpoena power, for instance, with representation from communities impacted by police violence, would be an ideal first step in ensuring police accountability.

Our city is an old, proud, and venerable city. It is crucial that city leadership, elected by popular vote, truly represent city residents, and create strong, positive communities. It is one thing to say

Black Lives Matter, it is another to examine and reform in ways that put weight behind those words.

Sincerely,

Ian Mahoney-Hoover

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Dear City Council and Mayor,

My name is Dr. Eric "Guy" Schaffer, and I live at 2nd St in Troy. I have lived in Troy off and on for 9 years, and I intend to continue to call Troy home for a long time. I love this city and I think it is truly special. I was deeply moved by the June 7 March for Black Lives, a beautiful demonstration of the widespread condemnation of racism in the criminal justice system. I believe in my heart that it was the start of a new chapter in Troy's history, one in which the city of Troy makes amends for its history of racial injustice and out-of-control policing.

Let me tell you about some of what I hope for.

I imagine Troy investing its Police Objective Review Board with real power to hold TPD accountable when they use excessive force. The board would be able to subpoena officers and others who are involved in wrongdoing. Our police department could be meaningfully accountable to the people who are most impacted by police violence and the criminal justice system.

I imagine Troy investing in programs that favor community-based care over incarceration. Troy could respond to residents in need not by punishing them further but by helping them to find the support they need. Troy could respond to drug use and sex work without the threat of violence and imprisonment. We could live in a city that helps its residents before it finds ways to control them.

I imagine Troy disentangling itself from Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Troy could be a place where all residents, regardless of immigration status, have a right to live safely in community. We could be a Sanctuary City, and stand up to efforts on the part of county and national governments to terrorize members of our communities.

I imagine Troy investigating our long history of police violence, and delivering justice for everyone who has been killed or injured by the police department. I imagine a process that treats the victims of police violence fairly, that does not try to blame police violence on its victims, and that holds police fully responsible for their actions. This process of justice would of course also need to address the coverup of wrongdoing around the murder of Edson Thevenin, holding accountable everyone involved in hiding evidence. I imagine the "positive peace of justice," as Dr. King puts it, for every victim of police violence in Troy.

I imagine Troy spending more on education, public health, youth development, and other beneficial programs, than it does on policing.

The money that is currently being spent on the police department could instead be invested in Black communities, in ways that are determined by the communities. The punitive parody of "safety" created by policing could be replaced with the positive safety created by community-led programs that meet the real needs of residents.

I imagine Troy responding to protests with open arms and open hearts, rather than boarded up windows, concrete barricades, and military gear.

I imagine a Troy where police do not kill or injure anyone, where the police are meaningfully beholden to residents, where the city invests in communities, and where Black life is valued.

I hope that you will do whatever is in your power to work toward these goals.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Dr. Guy Schaffer

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My name is Molly Dreher I am currently residing in Troy at 3rd street.

I have witnessed the city take many steps towards growth in the 11 years living here. I have noticed that the growth of Troy seems to be centralized in business districts whereas the neighborhoods that are more racially diverse could use the same enthusiasm from the city as the city's center. I think the city of Troy could use a different type of growth. One which elevates the youth, provides more housing opportunities, creates harm reductive drug programs and provides mental health assistance to communities which need these programs the most. The revenue to fund these community based organizations should come from the Police Department which receives an exorbitant amount of funding. The city should not generate revenue by siphoning it directly from communities who may be struggling financially and on the cusp of extreme poverty through petty fines and traffic tickets. Cuomo issued an executive order for local governments to re-examine police departments budgets. Aside from de-funding the Troy police department, the city should re-allocate these funds towards communities which would benefit greatly. If the city makes these budget changes I believe the city will see even more growth to one which supports the people who make Troy.

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Dear City Councilpersons,

I am writing to implore you do everything you can to stop another civilian being shot by or killed by the Troy Police. Please be proactive in protecting Black Lives, especially. Please seek and demand justice for Edson.

Amanda Wild

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Subject: Bending Troy Towards Justice

Dear City Council Members,

My name is Adam Retzlaff, I am a long-time resident of Troy at Broadway. It is with anger and disappointment in our city's leadership, or lack thereof, that I am writing to you today. While both the nation and our city are wrestling with systemic racism, there has been absolutely no attempt from Troy officials to meet the moment despite a well organized and thoughtful list of demands you have received from Troy 4 Black Lives, formerly Justice 4 Dahmeek.

I am writing to encourage you to immediately freeze additional funding for the Troy Police Department and reallocate \$10 million from the TPD budget to community services and projects led by and centering Black communities most impacted by violent policing. The excessive Troy Budget should be redistributed to address the social causes of crime rather than actively criminalizing your own constituents. Drug use and homelessness are two problems that Troy, like much of America, addresses through the police rather than addressing the needs of the people that have left them homeless or addicted in the first place. These are two areas where I would like to see this money reinvested.

Further I support all the demands made by Troy 4 Black Lives: stop killing us and our children, form a civilian review board with subpoena power and represented by at least 60% of those most affected by police violence, fully and impartially investigate every instance of use of deadly force by a police officer, cut all ties and cooperation with ICE, and invest in community-based alternatives to policing.

Lastly, all information pertaining to the murder of Edson Thevinin and the attempted murder of Dahmeek McDonald must be made public, regardless of which members of the current Troy government are implicated in the cover up.

In Solidarity,  
-Adam Retzlaff