

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

January 28, 2022

Call for New Approach to Public Safety Options for New Police Taxes or Levies Miss the Mark

WINNIPEG, Manitoba – Shaun Loney, who will be running in the upcoming Mayoral election, called upon the City of Winnipeg to adopt a new strategy to reduce the Winnipeg Police Service (WPS) workload rather than introducing new dedicated taxes or levies.

“There is an urgent need for fresh thinking by the civic administration and City Council,” said Loney. “We need a more effective and affordable approach to improve public safety that doesn’t rely on increasing the burden on taxpayers.”

This week the City of Winnipeg concluded its public consultations seeking advice on which of five options citizens would prefer to increase revenues to the WPS. Winnipeg already spends more on policing on a per capita basis than most other Canadian cities.

“Policing is the crime fighting tool we are most familiar with, but there are others,” said Loney. “In a number of cases alternative approaches will be more effective.”

“We can avoid new dedicated taxes and levies by implementing an aggressive strategy to reduce police workload. This would not only save money, but also reduce actual crime by freeing up the police to focus on their core mandate”, said Loney.

Loney, who is a successful social entrepreneur and author, said that his career has revolved around activities that cut police workload.

“I’ve been fortunate to work with community leaders to establish several social enterprises including BUILD and Purpose Construction, that go out of their way to hire people who have previously been in regular contact with the WPS,” said Loney.

“I’ve seen hundreds of people turn their lives around when given the right conditions. Not only are they now living happy and healthier lives, they are breaking intergenerational cycles of poverty and crime by becoming role models.”

Loney explained that the most practical way forward is to empower the WPS to make comparisons between what the nonprofit sector can offer in terms of impact on public safety and the cost of police responding to the same people over and over again. The WPS should have an enhanced ability to engage nonprofit partners when it makes financial sense to do so.

– more –

“When freed up to make this comparison, it will be evident that the WPS has a solid business case to buy workload reduction from nonprofits,” said Loney. “Introducing the ability to procure public safety outcomes from nonprofits will allow the police to add a new crime fighting tool that they currently don’t have.”

“I’m a social entrepreneur,” said Loney. “We see different ways of doing things.”

“A job won’t work for everyone,” said Loney. “But the WPS can buy workload reduction related to other groups too such as many of the people living on the streets with mental health and addiction issues.”

Loney noted that one-third of people who are homeless struggle with mental health and addiction issues, and the WPS transferred 2,100 people last year to Winnipeg hospitals who were in a mental health crisis due to a lack of support.

Loney explained that the Winnipeggers who are involved repeatedly with the WPS are also in frequent contact with agencies paid for by provincial taxpayers. This procurement idea is also applicable at the provincial level, and would end years of bickering between the City and the Province by allowing the Government of Manitoba to avoid anticipated costs as well.

– 30 –

About Shaun Loney

Shaun is an award-winning social entrepreneur and author of ‘The Beautiful Bailout: How a Social Innovation Scale-Up Will Solve Government’s Priciest Problems’.

shaunloney@mymts.net