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To: lovely@mayorlovelywarren.com; Warren, Lovely A.; Wilson, Shani (PAB-Non-Employee); Police Accountability Board

Dear leaders, as you all know for months now I have been along with my colleagues at the Pastors Roundtable and SPARC members been advocating for a new policing blueprint. I have stated very clearly the dangers of the current 1819 policing blueprint and its implications for black and brown folks. Yet, despite the fact that in our community it killed Daniel Prude, maced and handcuffed a 9 year old child, tackled and pepper sprayed a black mother and her child and now it has killed my cousin Tyshon Jones. We have seen no changes in this community that will keep us safe!

What all these people had in common was that these white supremacy patterns in policing, and white framework systems that your inaction keeps holding up, continues to put us in jeopardy. By refusing to act responsibly to change these systems and this policing blueprint you are complicit in the harm they cause. One after another you keep watching black folks in this community lose their battle to racial injustice and your response is to keep sending us thoughts and prayers. You can do so much more, but you haven't. A mental health crisis in white communities mean treatment, yet in black communities it is a death sentence, or traumatic event. Perhaps, you are ok with that, but I am not.

I have watched my cousin Tyshon depicted as dangerous and threatening with the narrative of police needing to protect themselves from him, while refusing to acknowledge his mental illness and need for a different approach yet again.

When your white officers who showed up to the call, the one who shot Tyshon knew at the onset that he was not acting himself. This should have signaled that this was a mental health call. Yet, the strategy he employed was white racial power model demanding Tyshon put aside his mental illness and do what he told him to do, as if somehow his tone, gun drawn, and strong demand was going to magically fix his mental health crisis or stop the voices in his head.

To add to his cultural incompetence, he begins making up a fake disrespectful name of "boss" to communicate with him, which I can assure you didn't help him establish any

initial connection and only demonstrated his inability to be in charge of this encounter. I worked for 8 years as a psych nurse and the first rule of thumb is to establish a relationship and connection, not to introduce the use of authoritarian force with someone in a mental health crisis. The fact that he had a knife and was hearing from Jesus about killing and was cutting himself initially was all the more reason for your officer to get back in his car, call black officers to the scene to take over, clergy on patrol to connect with his religious ideations, wait for a taser, pepper spray gun and a mental health crisis team to have an array of resources available to ensure this young man got to treatment instead of being sent to the morgue. Backing up with a gun and shouting orders was the only strategy he knew. As he became more afraid and anxious, the risk to this young man's life increased. A knife is never a match for a round of 5 bullets from a gun. As close as he was, leg shots would have even sufficed, but the killology training is what was employed.

While you may want to frame this event as an impossible situation for the police. I would submit that this was instead an impossible situation for a young black man who like the others before him was again failed by our system of mental health and the RPD. Let me rehumanize Tyshon by introducing him to you.

Tyshon before his mental illness began in his twenties, was an exceptionally intelligent young man. He was an amazing, gentle, God fearing, spiritual, humble young man. Tyshon kept to himself and was very respectful. He didn't party, smoke, or drink. He was a bit of a home body and a simple kid. When he was in school he was an honor roll student who loved football, which he played at Wilson when he attended. From the time he was 10 years old he played Pop Warner football.

He was self-driven who would often enroll himself in advanced scholarship programs without his parents knowing until he was already accepted and attending.

When he was in good mental health, he always wanted to advance himself and his parents never had to push him to go to school or learn. It was in him to advance his life forward. The excessive force used and the pain he suffered with three bullets to the chest and two in the abdomen, he didn't deserve. His parents several times engaged the system of mental health to assist him as recently as the summer and they were thwarted, being told that he had to be a danger to himself or others before he could be helped. Now we know where that got him.

These white frameworks for how our mental health system functions that leave black folks and families on their own and unsafe on the streets of Rochester is why we have been calling for defunding policing and other institutional budgets with the goal of refunding the community through a community chest so, that black and brown communities can attend to people like Tyshon that our systems fail to serve. A mental health system that will only treat you if you commit a criminal act or harm yourself is flawed. A white frame worked mental health system that refuses to take black mental illness seriously, expecting them to manage themselves regardless of safety and risk to self is flawed.

Imagine this 29 year old as your child and nothing you do to get him help works. Imagine being the mother and father who feel dead inside being forced to die with their son who they raised so well and fought so hard for.

As I sat with his mother, she asked me, Why does someone have to go to this extreme before they get any help? Why do they have to hurt somebody before they get help? There should not be an age limit for parents being able to get help for their children who are in mental health crisis, she said. Why did the system set us up for failure? In tears she said, "the system failed him and it failed us! It is not for everyone. It shouldn't be this hard! We don't have laws to keep our children safe and be able to get the accessible resources."

These disparities that are shouldered upon certain social economic racial groups are deliberate decisions system actors and law makers are making. Having the support of his family just wasn't enough to keep him safe or alive.

So, since you seem to be at a loss for how to help us right now, here is what we are asking of you.

1. From now on, we would like you to ensure that 50% of the officers who show up at mental health related calls (weapons or not) in our community are black. Black officers will have a higher probability of seeing the humanity of people like Tyshon, Daniel Prude, etc. and push past the white anxiety and fear that clouded potential life preserving measures that were clearly absent in the engagement of Tyshon. The current consent decree supports a 75% white workforce, so we should have no problem deciding to send 50% black officers to a scene as a new strategy to protect black life.

2. Not only would we recommend the officers be 50% black, but that black officers be put in charge of the scene to decide what the plan of action should be on the ground. Your white officers have proven time and time again that they are not equipt with the level of cultural competence, racial justice training, ability to hold black humanity, or mental health competency in their ability to engage our community members. We deserve to be safe!

3. I am asking you to require that all officers have tasers, pepper spray, pepper balls, rubber bullets, clergy on patrol, pastors on call, and the FIT team at their disposal prior to engaging people like Tyshon and Daniel Prude etc. who are having an active mental health crisis. The officer should not have been waiting for resources given we pay over 90 million dollars to fund them. While some white mental health workers are validating their fear in these situations, many who live in black and brown communities and have mental health training are not afraid of our people and are willing to be called on. Fund that kind of resource!

4. This killing is another opportunity for the City of Rochester, the county and the state to fund a community chest for practitioners of color to service those who are struggling to find appropriate help in white led organizations who continue to fail them. The new policing blueprint submitted to the City of Rochester outlines how critical these resources will be in saving lives and reducing violence.

5. I am again asking for your support to fund a proposed new policing blueprint process to move us away from this 1819 slave patrol model that is active on the streets of Rochester. It sees black and brown bodies as undeserving of the same public safety as whites. We have an opportunity to decriminalize social and mental health problems in this community by embracing this work. Those of you who have the political power to act must do so now before another black or brown person is killed or harmed on our streets from white supremacy models and frameworks in our institutional life together. These systems must be changed because our children cannot wait! Black kids lives are just as important as white kids lives. If you truly believe that then you must act!

This current blueprint dehumanizes, criminalizes extreme vulnerability, creates an incarceration, trauma, & accountability crisis in our community. It reinforces white supremacy patterns in criminal justice that treat black and brown circumstances as punishable events.

6. You can fully fund the PAB. We need them to provide oversight and accountability. It is what the citizens of this community voted for.

In the coming days, you will hear more from me and my family. For now we will focus on burying a 29 year old and celebrating his life. A life that should never have been taken with three bullets to the chest and two to the stomach like a dog.

I am also asking the police accountability board to investigate whether all the officers on the scene were actually devoid of tasers, or pepper spray that could have been used to disarm Tyshon instead of kill him. While the officer in charge was giving orders to other officers to pull away, and the female officer pulled alongside of him to ask him his name, why didn't she use the car to block him? Why did they initially report that open door mission didn't know him? Where did the initial misinformation in the media come from? Why didn't the officer stay in his car as he advised the other officers and follow him after securing the perimeter until they had a real plan? The reason we have dispatchers is to give a heads up to what to expect at the call. Why didn't that heads up translate into a planned strategy of best practice? What role did race play in that omission of planning and thinking?

I am asking you state politicians to end qualified immunity and change these state laws so that black and brown folks have accountability and safety on our own streets when we need help! You have institutionalized police protection. Un-institutionalize it.

Finally, I invite you to have real discussions about why the body count for police in this city is always black or brown when it comes to excessive use of force and death by law enforcement. You should also discuss why it is that when we have white victims and white police as they have had in Greece, there is systemic accountability. Officers are charged, fired, indicted, and jailed. When it is a black or brown victim, we receive heart felt apologies and you can't seem to fire them for any harm done to us in the same legal system.

You have been elected to lead us, so lead! End this nonsense!

Rev. Myra Brown