

Brittany Battle (she/her): Hey, y'all. So we're here for our first episode of the People's Report. We have some folks on this call today who are doing amazing, crucial work in Winston Salem with Hate Out of Winston and Triad Abolition Project.

This is going to be the first of many community dialogues that we host because we think it is really important for folks to have good information about what's going on in the city as far as the budget is concerned, as far as our politicians are concerned, as far as how decisions are made about how our tax dollars are spent.

And so we wanted to jump on this Facebook Live and have this dialogue. This particular episode is going to be in response to what many of y'all are probably familiar with- the letter that was sent by Hate Out of Winston, Drum Majors Alliance and Triad Abolition Project on November 20th, to our elected city officials regarding calls for divesting from the Winston Salem Police Department and reallocating to community services. We sent that letter as a unit of grassroots organizations who were really concerned with the misinformation that's out there about calls for defunding the police and reallocating funds to services. And so it was important for us to make sure that what we were calling for was really clear. And then on November 29th, the Winston Salem Journal wrote an article around our letter and included some responses and reactions from city council members as well as the mayor. And we think it's important to respond to those things. We've written many emails, all of us, all of our organizations, people who are supportive of the work that our organizations are doing have made phone calls, have written emails, we have been on a number of public comment periods and we have not heard anything back from any of our elected officials directly in response to the things that we've been calling for. Um, except for their quotes in the newspaper article and that's not acceptable. And so if they won't respond to us directly, we are going to have this conversation here and eventually it's going to become infeasible for them to continue to ignore us.

So I think we should jump right into the article, y'all, and get talking about what we're actually calling for when we say we need to reallocate these funds away from the police department. What do y'all think about what we wrote in that letter and the ways that the council has not responded to us, but responded to us through this newspaper article?

Miranda Jones: Hey everybody. We are so honored to be here. You know, I just want the public to know that we are fighting with you and for you and we hope that you all will stand in solidarity with us on this move. We are learning and growing and unpacking all of this information, just like you all are.

You know when I read the article, I was a little bit aghast and I had a lot of questions about some of the quotes from the mayor, as well as some of the members of city council.

And it has been startling to me that when we've gone and spoken, time and time again that we have not gotten a response. Based upon the looks that we get when we're on the zoom, the non-verbals that almost look as if they're just, you know, ready for us to go away.

And so I've also learned that they can actually speak back. I think we will upload the section of the public comment period, which is a part of their policy, so that you all can see that they can speak back to us, and they can extend time if they would like to. So it was very interesting, that it seemed that they were taking it to what we might call the court of public opinion. So I'm definitely glad to be here to respond because I know that we are one with you all, and we are fighting for what's right.

Brittany Battle (she/her): So one of the things that the mayor said, and that article opened with it, was that he represents 250,000 citizens in Winston Salem and from his viewpoint that the vast majority say they want really good police protection. Y'all- what do we make of this statement?

Miranda Jones: So, I first kind of took issue with the number. He said 250,000 citizens. I don't know if that includes residents, because I haven't had a chance to actually speak with the mayor. And of that number, I want to know the demographics. So was that marginally white citizens? How much of that is African American citizens? How much of that is Latinx citizens? I want to know how much of that number reflects people who are disproportionately affected by police brutality, police encounters, even things such as poverty. I want to know why he kind of felt the need to use that number, almost as if to say we have the people and you all just have to go away because my 250,000 are in agreement. So I did take issue with that, I don't know how y'all felt, but I definitely kind of wondered about that.

Camille (she/her): For me, I've gone to the last five city council meetings this year and I haven't seen them speak to us. I know we've sent them emails. I haven't seen anyone get so much as a response back from July. So who are the 250,000 citizens that he is representing, that he has to take care of, because there's at least 100 between TAP and Hate Out of Winston and Drum Majors Alliance, just in friends and allies, that you're not speaking to.

Brittany Battle (she/her): Right and so why is he responding to these folks, who are apparently, supposedly saying that they want really good police protection, but not responding to us with our calls for safety, right, because I think an important thing to keep in mind is that we all want to be safe, right, no one wants to be put in danger. The 15 year old girl who had a knee in her back by Winston Salem Police Department wanted to be safe as well. Right. The folks who are facing dangerous police encounters with Winston Salem police want to be safe as well. And so there's a disconnect between wanting to be safe and thinking that safety only comes from police departments, which it does not, right. I think if you ask any of those 250,000 people that you're claiming want really good police protection- would they rather be able to call the police after they were impacted by a violent encounter or would they want to not experience that violent encounter at all in the first place? I think most of them would go with the second option, right, to not experience that violent encounter. And so the things that we're calling for are in service of preventing those types of encounters right? We know that when people's basic needs are not met, they're put into very difficult situations, they have to make very impossible choices, right? If people cannot feed their kids, if people don't know where they're going to lay their head at night, right, if people cannot access health care for terminal illnesses. Those things put people in impossible, impossible situations and I don't know any among us who would not say we would do whatever we needed to do to feed those that we love, to house those that we love, to make sure that those that we love have the medical care that they need. And so painting this picture as in some way that we're against safety or we just want chaos and anarchy, I mean, it's a fear mongering tactic that is frequently, frequently used, and it's a fear mongering tactic that's particularly weaponized against Black and Brown people who have been historically, continuously and persistently labeled as criminal, as violent, as animal, as not being

Brittany Battle (she/her): able to control ourselves. And so to have this conversation that people need police protection to be safe, you know that rhetoric is tired. Right? I'm going to ask the city council and the mayor to do better. Ali, did you want to say something?

Aly Jones (she/her): Well, just what does "really good police protection" look like? Because to me, really good police protection is not a knee in the back of a 15 year old girl. It is not having a gun pulled on you for a speeding violation or a red tail light or having cops show up with their guns drawn on a mentally ill person. So yeah, I'm sure we all want "really good police protection" and there's nothing that we're asking for that is contrary to that. So to be treated as though we are asking for some sort of anarchic situation shows just how much we have not been listened to for the last four or five months that we've been talking about this at every single city council meeting.

Miranda Jones: Also Britt, I was going to add- of some of those groups that you mentioned, we talked about people living in high poverty, people who are facing eviction (shout out to Housing Justice Now), folks in crisis- I wonder if the mayor's actually talking to those individuals because we have to realize there's a bit of a class divide here. When you're talking to the journal, everybody may not have access to the journal, everybody might not have access to the internet. So the people disproportionately affected may not even have a seat at the table to be heard, you know, talking to the Black middle class, certain Black representatives, does not mean that you're hearing from the people who have to deal with police in their neighborhood all the time; who are fearful, you know, of police. And let's not forget sometimes we are not exempt from having encounters with the police, as we've been talking about across all levels, especially when you are housed in Black skin- so I feel like that's kind of another thing that we have to look at. And, you know, just kind of coming up with quick initiatives does not solve the problems either.

Brittany Battle (she/her): Right, and so talking about this idea of good police protection, right- in June when the city hosted the town trust talks, right- and our chief, Catrina Thompson, got up there and said: "We are expected to be everything- teachers, babysitters, healthcare workers, mental health providers. Oh, and by the way, handling crime as well. I'd be happy to reallocate our funding into those programs or into those people or organizations that can provide those things." The fact that this comment, from Catrina Thompson, gets missing in any of these conversations is beyond me. The chief of this police department that we're talking about says, "I'm happy", these are quotes from the town trust talk and we'll drop the link (to the trust talk) into the chat. But she says she agrees those funds need to be reallocated because her officers- her department, is not capable of doing all of the things that they're being asked to do.

Chief Thompson said that. That wasn't me. That wasn't anyone else on this call. Right- this is coming from her mouth, the person that you have put in authority and control over the police department. So, if she is admitting that our officers- this department- is not able to do all of these jobs- what is the problem? Why are we even having this conversation right now? I'm very confused. What do y'all think?

Miranda Jones: And also, I think Selene had a lot of information on this, hopefully she'll chime in with us: we have other cities that are trying to figure out ways to train folks or to make sure that they have people that are trained in mental health or, you know, education or counseling or what have you. So I think Greensboro, Selene- you want to chime in and kind of talk about Greensboro and kind of what they've been doing? I think with the SWAT team and the mental health services. So, they're just like what, 30 minutes away? So if they can do it, why aren't we moving in that direction?

Selene Johnson (she/her): I definitely agree Miranda and you know, Chief Thompson has a history of being involved in the local Mental Health Association and things like that. So I know, and consistent with her comments about how police officers can't be everything, I know she has a genuine interest in protecting people with mental illness- but it also seems she recognizes that the police department can't do that alone. And you know, one of the comments in the article was from our City Council Representative, Jeff MackIntosh, that more spending on mental health is needed, but that that's not a city function. And so, you know, it is interesting that our next door neighbor city, Greensboro, actually contracted with an independent company to assist their police department in responding to calls that had mental health related issues. So they trained their 911 operators to recognize when a call actually has a mental health component- and they have counselors available to respond to those calls. Actually this month, December 2020, they are no longer going to be contracting for that service, but have made it a part of their department. So, if that city can do it, I don't know why we can't do it. And that is a part of their city budget. So our city can do the same thing. You know, in the US.- individuals with severe mental illness generate no less than 1 in 10 calls for police services. And an estimated 1 in 3 individuals that are transported with like a psychiatric condition to the emergency department are transported by police. So, you know, we all know and love people, or we ourselves may have mental health issues; it may be friends, family, neighbors, ourselves- and I just, I don't know who among us wouldn't prefer to have somebody who's trained in mental health crisis to respond to these kinds of calls than just a police officer alone.

Miranda Jones: And I just want to add because I teach special education- which does not mean that the person has a mental illness- but you all please understand that a lot of these things go hand in hand. So a lot of people that, sometimes have to deal with an array of disabilities, end up in our judicial system, they end up incarcerated, they end up having negative encounters with police. And so as an educator- one of my goals is to make sure that these folks don't have to even have the encounters, because I cannot tell you how many students I've taught over the years, that have had these encounters and they come back with this kind of real fear of the police. And so why can't our city council create partnerships? I know the Mayor pro tem was always talking about creating these partnerships. Right. So why can't they create the partnerships? Why can't they create the contracts? We know they create contracts with a whole lot of other things, right? So why can't they do this? What is the holdup? I know they've been talking about there's been a budget shortfall, you know, there's not going to be enough money- we're not going to be able to give out the funds that we have before. Well, I guess you can't, if you're giving it all to the police. So that's why you don't have enough money, right?

Miranda Jones: And so then my question, you know, also becomes: is it that you want to make sure that you have funding for the police to keep these impoverished people, you know, people who are disenfranchised, out of the affluent neighborhoods? Right. So instead of figuring out how to hoard all the money and buy cars- why don't you figure out how to make sure that these folks do not feel like they have to get involved with law enforcement or commit crime or what have you. So I think, really, there has to be a paradigm shift on the part of our elected officials.

Brittany Battle (she/her): I mean, overall creativity and imagination is crucial, right? So just to say, "this is how it's always been done so we can't do anything different"- is not cutting it, right? We're currently in the midst of one of the longest sustained uprisings for racial justice that this nation has seen. Right. Doing what has been done for centuries is not going to cut it anymore. That's not an excuse. We have to do better to make sure that people are taken care of, right? That the least among us are taken care of in the ways that we would want our own family members to be taken care of. We know across the country, and Selene and Miranda pointed this out, but across this nation, some of the biggest institutions for folks who have mental health issues, are prisons- the jail system in New York City, Rikers Island, Cook County Jail, LA County Jail- those are the biggest mental institutions that this country has. It's not acceptable for someone with an illness to be incarcerated. It's just not. And Camille- I don't know if you want to talk about some of the impacts that we've spoken about before, about like the psychology of being inside of prison walls- it's not right.

Camille (she/her): When I, and I try not to do too much, but when I start to feel my feelings really hard and I think about the prisoners that are locked away and all the different ways that they are shaped: being in solitary, being locked away from their loved ones, not being able to do so much as hold their loved ones hand, not being able to go places by themselves. They have no sense of autonomy. They have no sense of family anymore. All of their basic rights are stripped away as soon as they go into prison. And I don't know where we expect for people to actually make the shift. The thing that got them in prison- how are they ever supposed to actually rehabilitate themselves? How are they ever supposed to heal? How are they ever supposed to get resources? If the system keeps indoctrinating them in this way. We cannot get our people back if they take them from us and that's why they do it, in my opinion.

Brittany Battle (she/her): And we know the vast majority of people who are incarcerated come home- we don't have people who spend their whole lives, for the most part, in institutions of incarceration- people come out and re-entry is a huge issue, right? We know one of our city council people has talked about the SOAR program, right- and what that's able to do. Aly, do you want to speak about the impact that SOAR could have in comparison to what it's actually had in Winston Salem?

Aly Jones (she/her): Yeah, SOAR is something I was really excited about- I'm new to Winston, I'll put that out there. I'm here, I arrived in June and I came from Oakland, California, so I'm interested in progression- I'm interested in seeing the way things can shift and change and

getting away from these old, stale systems like Britt mentioned, and so SOAR was very exciting to me. It stands for Successful Outcomes After Release.

Aly Jones (she/her): And it's a program here in the city, where people who were formerly incarcerated are able to get hired temporarily with the city for kind of job skill training, kind of just re-entry skill training, and kind of being able to access health care, and get their basic human needs met: food, housing, all those kinds of things that help prevent somebody from getting trapped back up in the system again. And last year, I spoke to the coordinators (who I'll leave out of this meeting for now) and they had the opportunity to have served a hundred and twenty eight people- a hundred and twenty eight Winston citizens last year qualified for this program. Eight Got Served. A hundred and twenty eight people qualified- and I can show you the number on my hands who got served. That right there is what's criminal. If you want to talk about protecting the people, about good protection, that right there is good protection; taking care of your people so that they don't end up committing a crime- so they don't need to commit a crime. They have a place to stay, they can feed their family, they can get the medical care they need- those are benefited positions that they are given, that they can then turn into more sustainable work. And I think they said they don't need a whole lot more money and they only need one more staff person, but they still can't get it. And now this \$1 million has been given out to community organizations to fight over, rather than seeing the need that it has to be spread all around.

Miranda Jones: And I want to add two points here. Somebody said, we got a comment that the police have mental health issues and so they need some assistance with their own mental health issues. And I would argue that that's why they have \$78 million. So within \$78 million- I don't know why the police department, or the city, can't figure out how to help- what they call "good police". So I definitely wanted to make sure I respond to that, but also the other program, YouthBuild, that we've been talking about over and over and over- I have particular interest in that program, simply because I work with lots of young Black and Brown men, primarily Black men though, who are at very high risk for dropping out- and no matter how much I explained, cajole, rationalize- I cannot compete with a young man who has the need to drop out to take care of a family or whatever some of the things are. And so I began to look at YouthBuild- I went online researching like you all can please, take me up on it- and I contacted them and the follow up was very, very weak. Very, very weak. And so I began to ask myself: how do I as an educator, how do I help this young man who usually is in a gang- okay- usually involved in some kind of illegal activity- how do I help him? What else do I offer? So imagine my dismay when I go to the city and I say, "oh you have this program that'll help young men and young women get a GED, and they'll, you know, get a viable career in construction- this is great." And then nothing. Like that's unacceptable to me.

Aly Jones (she/her): And you know, it's interesting because Councilperson Taylor- in this article says he's happy that we're talking about SOAR, he's happy that we're talking about YouthBuild, and that's awesome- I'm glad we're happy to be talking about it. I'd be happier if the funds were being put towards these programs. YouthBuild has a place on the city's website that goes nowhere- it's a blank placeholder page, you can't get a hold of anyone to find out what connection there was. And it's a privately run program. And it just needs initial city seed funds-

it doesn't even require, again, another huge investment from the city. So it's something that baffles me as to why we can't get it started.

Aly Jones (she/her): Because there are kids that as much as we wish they didn't have to, those other programs are in need, as well, to take care of their families. I taught high risk students in Oakland, California and we had a Job Corps program out there for them- and it did exactly what YouthBuild does; it gives again, just like SOAR, but preventative- before you end up incarcerated- job skills training, interview training, helps you get your GED, helps you get set on the right path so you never end up down that wrong path and end up needing a program like SOAR. And there's really just, there's no excuse as to why it doesn't exist and the papers in they're calling it "a program for children of incarcerated individuals" and that's absolutely false. I don't know where West got that idea, or if Councilman Taylor has that idea, -I mean it's easily Googleable- look up you "YouthBuild.org"- learn all about this program. It's a fantastic program nationwide. Again, they're in other cities in North Carolina, there's no reason they can't be here in Winston.

Miranda Jones: And also one of the, I won't say excuses, but one of the rationales that I was given was that, you know, the budget cycle is kind of ended, we are done with that, but I found something interesting and I know you all will find this interesting as well because we collaborated on this a little bit. So I found out when I looked up this thing about fire station 13, I found out that last summer (July 2019) and y'all can google- we will probably put the link to the article in the chat- that the city unanimously approved Chief Mayo, who has been an alleged racist and committed or allowed horrible acts of racism to happen in the local fire department. They unanimously approved fire station 13, which is not in the heart of Black Winston Salem, it is going to be off Burke Mill Road. So my question is, was that while the city was working on the budget? Right? Did Chief Mayo have to wait until a certain time to put in that request? So, this issue of timing and kind of putting the onus on activists and organizers to kind of come at this time, but don't come back, you know, that's real bizarre to me.

Brittany Battle (she/her): I mean the whole idea that- so Jeff MackIntosh is quoted in the journal article saying, "How do you dialogue with not spending money on anything? I hope they will learn and engage where the money is spent and if they have viable alternatives." What? I mean no one is saying don't spend money on anything. We're saying don't spend \$78 million on a police department when your very own police chief says they are not capable of doing all of the tasks assigned to them! And we are wanting money to be spent, we're wanting money to be spent on community care and resources so that people are not in situations to commit these offenses in the first place. So, the fact that he clearly did not read our letter, but is just putting this quote out there to make it seem like we are uninformed, and we need to learn something new- we are very informed about the budget, probably more informed than some of the city council members themselves with the ways that we have scrutinized the budget. So we're very well aware of how money is being spent and we don't agree with it. And also, as Miranda just pointed out, to ask activists and organizers to come up with viable alternatives- you need to make sure you have experts in the room, right. These are not programs that should be implemented based on anecdotal stories from people just because they live in so called communities, right? And so that's something we hear from Councilman

Taylor all the time; that we don't live in these communities, so we can't have any idea about what's necessary to protect these places.

Brittany Battle (she/her): That's absurd, right? It's absolutely absurd that someone has to live in a particular location to know anything about what resources that location needs. There is social science literature upon literature upon research upon research that demonstrates how to address the root causes of crime. And so making sure funding goes to those root causes, is what we're asking for and it's not right- it's kind of grimy to continue to paint this picture that we don't know what we're talking about, right- that we have no viable alternatives, that we just want the police to not have money -and that's not the case. What do y'all think about this, this idea that "unless we lived in those neighborhoods" as Councilmen Taylor says- the quote being: "if they lived in our neighborhoods, they would want to know that they can pick up the phone and police officer would come out there."

Miranda Jones: I think, you know, for a politician its savvy, you know, it's kind of sharp, but like I told y'all the other day, you know, some folks might say they grew up with the dope boys, but I grew up in the dope house, right, so my house on 317 Burton Street- if anyone wants to check my credentials, you can look on my Facebook, talk to my cousins, talk to my people. I grew up in what is now called Asterpark- at that time, it was called Kimberly park Boston projects, shout out to my Bostonians as a lot of them like to say. I very rarely rep that but it's important in the context of what you mentioned Sister Brittany. I have lived there. I have family who continues to live there. My father lives in the Northeast ward and he taught me- he said daughter, please try not to call the police on our people. Right, he said, because I don't like what I see. And this is somebody who spent, you know, almost 70 years of his life embedded, grounded, rooted in East Winston, so like I said that was sharp, but it won't hold water for me- a lot of people that I interact with- live in the heart of Black Winston Salem, whether it be activists, sometimes even educators, just regular people- so no that doesn't hold water and because of my experience and because of the things that I saw, I am committed to this work of prevention, you know, I saw people that really had no other outlet, no other way to remedy some of the things that they were dealing with because you know, our city wasn't looking at the causal factors. And we understand this thing about systemic racism, and we understand this thing about white supremacy, and of course, I think there's a group that is attacking the mayor pro tem dds because she said the officer was racist, I don't know if that was white fragility or not. But, you know, while I hear Councilmember Taylor, I just think we have to think bigger than that, wider, deeper because that's just not enough. Not for me.

Camille (she/her): For me, I don't think it's just grimey. I feel like we have to name it and call it exactly what it is. I do think it's a full fledged fallacy. Councilman James Taylor knows very intimately that there is not just one community that we should be more afraid of when we're Black- we can be shot in a Walmart and a Publix- anywhere in broad daylight and it's a chance that our murder will be bailed out by a celebrity and it's fine. So, to try to isolate the community to him, from wherever he comes from- I don't really know- doesn't hold weight within the community that he's talking about. Furthermore, Councilman Taylor, I'm pretty sure there's an article about this, but Councilman Taylor pleaded guilty to a speeding ticket in Walnut Cove- this article's dated August 29th, 2012 and in the article, it goes on to tell that James Taylor felt

afraid for his life (sorry guys, I have a little one)- felt afraid for his life at a point when they pulled out their guns, as well as went on to talk about how he believed the cops were racist.

Camille (she/her): This is our councilman, so his statement should stand, but now in the article that we're talking about- he is pro police. It doesn't follow for me.

Brittany Battle (she/her): I mean, and there's also this conversation about the way that we approach. Counsel. Jeff MackIntosh says in the article: the comments directed against city police spending at Council meetings come across as "having people scream at you". What do y'all make of that comment?

Miranda Jones: You know, it's our passion, it's our zeal, you know, some of the elders have suggested that we find a different approach, but when we look at what's happening, you know, nationwide, when we look at what's happening in our city- I think they're kind of leaning into the respectability politics piece. Um, I think some of it may be from their generation, but that's just not something that we can do, or that we can accept. And I think I can safely say we'll just get louder- if they just continue to stay silent.

Brittany Battle (she/her): I think, to try to police Black and Brown people's rage, righteous rage, in 2020 after what we witnessed, not just in this nation, but in this city with the murder of John Neville in the Forsyth County Detention Center, to try to police how we react to our lives being in danger, in mortal danger, is not only horrifying, it's white supremacist, it's rooted in white supremacist ideology that Black and Brown people have to present and comport ourselves in a way that is appropriate, considered appropriate, by white audiences and that is not the case. If we want to yell out, scream, cry in rage at having to witness the repeated violence and killing of people that look like us on a regular basis- I don't know how anyone can have a comment on that- I don't know how anyone can have a comment on that. And for that to be in juxtaposition with the praise that has been showered upon Chief Thompson for "apparently keeping all of the protest peaceful this summer" and to not have any words of support for the ways that organizers, Black women organizers, in this city did the work to keep the protests organized in a particular way, because we knew our lives were at stake, right- when they dragged me off of the sidewalk in front of the detention center, I didn't know what could happen next. Right. And so, despite all of that- right- our protests were organized in a particular way- not because we wanted to be better than Minneapolis, or better than any other city- but because we were afraid of our lives being in danger. Right. And so to have those two things in juxtaposition, right, to say that we're screaming at people and that's not a good approach, but also to praise the chief of police for no violence, right, not a brick was thrown, not a punch was, none of those things, right, all summer and to praise her, but not to have those two things in conversation about what the organizers did in this city- I mean, come on, like, come on, it's a mess at this point, it really is. Do y'all have other things that y'all wanna chat about with this article?

Camille (she/her): I really think that peace propaganda is still just really sexy for people. I think it's sexy to forget that being peaceful got nowhere for Martin Luther King, Jr. and he was still murdered and peaceful. Fred Hampton didn't do anything wrong- still murdered. James Baldwin was put on a no fly list. He was an author. We can be peaceful and we can be

murdered. We can be violent, and we can be murdered. We can be sleeping and we can be murdered. Pretending that any which way you do this- we will yield results after four hundred and fifty years of this. **Miranda Jones:** And can I just say one of our comrades chatted, she might not want her name mentioned, it says, "I live in Taylors ward. My neighbors need safe housing, transportation, good schools, good job opportunities, and to not live in fear of police and ICE cooperation."

And so I will say to the comrade who said that- I agree, and I hope the mayor hears that and kind of figures out, you know, how much of that 250,000 does that apply to.

Brittany Battle (she/her): Right, exactly. Exactly. Y'all- this has been a really important conversation. I'm so glad we did this. It's so important for us to continue to make sure that our perspectives are really heard, right, because it's one thing for us to have an article printed that has, you know, buzz words attributed to us, right, but for folks to really understand the basis for which we're bringing these perspectives, right, and to make sure that we really are trying to keep our community safe- to improve our communities. We want everyone to be safe, housed, fed, clothed, right, provided with healthcare, with the resources that they need and I'm going to stay in the words that Miranda has blessed us with so frequently; the Winston Salem Police Department does not need \$78 million- the people do. Right. The people do. And so I'll say, stay tuned for the next conversation.

Miranda Jones: Can I talk about one quick thing? Actually this slogan was coined by our comrade KP (shout out the KP). I want to address two things because I think it is pertinent and in fact, I told one of my sister educators that I would. I see some comments from Miss Moore coming to us. Miss Moore, I don't know what you mean by "personal gain". I am an educator, my viewpoints do not represent Winston Salem Forsyth County Schools at all, but all that we do, my colleagues on here are highly educated women, professional women. As far as I know, they work every day. I love what I do. So I'm grateful. I don't know of any other personal gain. We're grassroots organizations. We love the people. I love Black people. I'm committed to Black people and justice. So I just wanted to say that, I don't know who you are. But, you know, just let me just clear it up real quick. She said, "I think the timing of the article was insensitive, given what happened at Hanes Mall the night before." Um, I think the Journal definitely kind of timed both of the articles. But let me say this: First of all children fight. Okay. Children have fought since the beginning of time. Some of us fought as children.

Brittany Battle (she/her): White children too, white children fight also. White children fight. White children smoke weed. White children have drugs, paraphernalia, cocaine. If you look at any literature about who uses and sells drugs, the rates are higher for white teens. Let's not forget that. Sorry to interrupt you Miranda.

Miranda Jones: No, thank you for that. Children fight. When I saw it, it was hard to watch it. It absolutely was. But I think for people who are saying this is the reason why we need the police- the police weren't even involved. And I'm not saying that that's what you're saying Miss Moore, but I need to really address this. The police weren't even involved. These children were fighting adults around the car and I think there's a lot of information that we probably don't have. Okay.

But I don't think that that is a reason to say money should not be reallocated because you want to ask yourself: why were they fighting? Okay, when I looked at the video, the children didn't have bags. So I began to wonder, do they have money? Okay. I think they ran it out on the bus.

Miranda Jones: So you ask yourself, who are these children? Who are these children that they would lean into this kind of violence? Right. Where else could they have been other than Hanes Mall? Right. Which is, I mean, slowly dying in my opinion. So I feel like people are not looking at that, there is a false equivalency to me. So I don't know that I can say it was insensitive. We've seen the media is savvy, you know, I have no illusions about how the media works. Right. And I thank my elders for teaching me that lesson. But we must, we must understand that children are going to- in fact, I think it's incumbent upon adults to figure out how we can save or help or assist our children, as opposed to sending around and recording right. So, in my mind, you know, the conversation is layered, right, because I'll be the first one to say our children are wrong and some of my own people don't like that. But I will also say they're still children. I'm an educator. I've seen children fight all the time, right, and sometimes adults fight too, so I just feel like they knew what they were doing. It was, you know, it was cute but children are gonna fight tomorrow. You know, but nothing is worse than police fighting Black people. Nothing is worse than police putting their knee on folks necks. Nothing is worse than what somebody with a gun can do to you because you are housed in Black skin and you feel like your options are limited. So I just want us to really think about that and I hope I answered your questions and responded to your comments.

Aly Jones (she/her): I also just before we go, I want to shout out that if you've been touched by this conversation this evening, tomorrow at 6pm you can log on to the virtual city council meeting and let your voice be heard, along with our voices and let the city know that there aren't 250,000 people that are in favor of increased police funding. I'm going to throw the link to that in the comments for the chat so you can join us tomorrow evening, starting at six, meeting starts at seven. I hope we can see you there for the public comment period.

Miranda Jones: Thank you all for joining us.

Brittany Battle (she/her): Thanks, y'all. Y'all, stay tuned, we're going to make sure that we keep you updated with things that go on in the city, with county commissioner meetings, with the city council meetings, right, make sure that you know what's happening with the budget at all times. It's really important to stay informed, not just to get your information from the folks who have vested interest in keeping things on status quo. So appreciate y'all. Take care. Have a safe weekend.