

From: [veebec11](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Death of Mario Gonzales
Date: Saturday, May 8, 2021 6:58:28 PM

Dear Alameda City Leaders,

I was unable to make the special meeting today, but, as a resident of Alameda, I wanted to write and ask that the city take action to ensure not one more person is profiled by police and murdered. I'm sick to my stomach that Mario Gonzalez was killed so horrifically. He wasn't a danger to anyone. He leaves behind a mother and brother who relied on him and other loving family members.

I support the demands of Mario Gonzalez's family and others in the community in asking leaders to take action to stop police violence in Alameda.

We need more funding for community-based solutions, we need another number for people to call in such situations, and the police need better training on implicit bias and deescalation. We also need more community oversight. The police work for us. They need to be accountable to the community. In particular, these police officers need to be held accountable for their actions. Until everyone is safe, nobody is safe.

Regards,
Vanessa Barrington
1433 Morton Street Apt A
Alameda, CA

From: [Susanne La Faver](#)
To: [Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft](#); [Tony Daysog](#); [Malia Vella](#); [Trish Spencer](#); [Manager Manager](#)
Cc: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Special May 11 meeting
Date: Saturday, May 8, 2021 3:00:02 PM

Special May 3 city council meeting

On Sat, May 8, 2021 at 2:54 PM Susanne La Faver <snlafaver@gmail.com> wrote:

To: Alameda City Council

From: Susanne La Faver

Re: Special meeting May 11

Racism is Killing Us

It's clear we're suffering. Every day the press reports on race-based trauma killing bodies and souls. Now, Resmaa Menakem, author of [My Grandmother's Hands](#), offers ways to heal our collective hearts and bodies.

This New York Times bestseller was introduced to me by University of Southern California's (USC) Black and Japanese Reparation book club. My understanding of racism is expanding thanks to this virtual events series sponsored by USC's Shinso Ito Center for Japanese Religions and Culture.

As a white woman with a background in public affairs and administration, I naively thought racism could be eliminated by new legislation and laws. I believed since white people created and perpetuate racism, we were responsible to fix it. Blacks and people of color needed to focus on healing from generational trauma inflicted by whites. But there's so much more work to be done by all of us, whites, Blacks and police.

According to [My Grandmother's Hands](#), European colonists were deeply traumatized during the Middle Ages. They brought this pain to the new world where they inflicted violence on native peoples and enslaved Africans. Now all of us are living with unhealed trauma in our bodies and passing it onto our children through DNA.

Whites must now take responsibility to heal themselves through body and breath practices, outlined in the book. "White Americans must create new (white) culture without murdering, enslaving, or debasing others," writes Resmaa Menakem. "Healing from trauma involves recognizing, accepting and moving through pain."

Race is a myth, but over the generations, it has gained power to violate Black hearts and psyche through everyday stressors, micro-aggressions and lack of regard. Menakem offers Blacks ways to heal and build resilience.

"It's not the job of Black people to soothe white people whose fears are activated by the color of your skin," said Menakem. White fragility is a lie and should be called out and countered with the truth. Self-resilience requires the same attention and care for whites as for Blacks and police.

Police suffer from real trauma and vicarious trauma, resulting in specific police culture and gun violence. Actions over the last 20 years have evolved from "protect, serve and keep the peace, to control, arrest and shoot."

Mindful self-care and "settledness" are just two practices to heal police hearts and bodies. This not only saves police lives, but also prevents needless harming or killing of someone

else.

For more information about the USC Black and Japanese American Reparations book club and suggested readings, see

<https://dornsife.usc.edu/events/site/192/35414678399396//>.

Susanne La Faver

455 Centre Court

Alameda, CA. 94502

707-295-6050

From: [Laura Thomas](#)
To: [Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft](#); [Tony Daysog](#); [Trish Spencer](#); [John Knox White](#); [Malia Vella](#)
Cc: [Eric Levitt](#); [Lara Weisiger](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Alameda policing priorities/Mario Gonzalez
Date: Saturday, May 8, 2021 2:45:51 PM

Dear City Council and City of Alameda,

The recent death of Mario Gonzalez at the hands of Alameda police officers demonstrates a major failure of the department's, and the city's, policies toward unarmed, and harmless people who may be exhibiting some behavior deemed anti-social or threatening.

Across the U.S. a decades-long disinvestment in social services has transferred the burden of responding to human beings in distress onto the police and thereby criminalizing large sectors of our society. We can no longer tolerate this situation in Alameda. We must -- it is no longer an option to consider at our leisure -- pull the responsibility for these calls from uniformed officers and give it to trained and well-supported mental health and behavioral health workers.

It is the humane thing to do and will bring about a major shift in the overall wellness of the entire community.

In July the City Council rejected calls to shift 42 percent of our police budget to social services. We, the Alameda Justice Alliance, once again make that request and hope you will reconsider. Reallocating the police budget will allow us to fund the unarmed department of first responders that our city desperately needs. We will not be unique in this endeavor; from Richmond, Virginia to Oakland California, many cities are implementing these programs to great success. We need to provide our citizens the best possible care and in doing that we must rethink public safety.

We must make steps to redirect APD's budget for 2022 and can fund this program for 2021 with ARPA relief funds. Given that the Oakland budget for their civilian crisis response team, MACRO, was 1.5 million yearly, we can anticipate a similar cost. This is a small price to pay for safety.

How many people are we willing to let die before we decide to implement change? Let Mario Gonzales be our catalyst for change and let's make our city a safer place for all Alamedans.

Thank you

Laura Thomas

Alameda Justice Alliance

From: [brett webb](#)
To: [Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft](#); [Malia Vella](#); [Tony Daysog](#); [Trish Spencer](#); [John Knox White](#); [City Clerk](#); [Manager Manager](#)
Cc: [Amanda Cooper](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please Take Immediate Action regarding APD Responses
Date: Saturday, May 8, 2021 1:33:09 PM

Mario Gonzalez should be alive today. He should be able to give his mother Edith a Mother's Day card this weekend, offer his brother Jerry advice, and see his son Mario Jr. grow up. Instead he is dead, because of a series of failures by our community. Certainly the Alamedan's who called police to a scene that even they acknowledged was not dangerous, as well as the police who unnecessarily restrained a man in such a way that caused his death. But all of us who failed to act again and again as similar situations occurred here and in our surrounding communities.

When Mali Watkins was violently arrested for dancing in front of his own home, people spoke at City Council, urging decisive action to make sure something worse didn't happen. And yet here we are. Our community failed to act and now we have failed to protect Mario Gonzalez. I hope we all feel some personal responsibility for this situation. As Alameda voters and residents, we all could and should have done more.

Knowing that and looking ahead, I want to offer support for accelerated adoption of all of the recommendations put forth by the five commissions on policing. I want to urge you to meet all the demands put forth by the Gonzalez family, including reviewing the records of the officers involved and all APD personal, firing the officers involved and a complete, thorough and unbiased investigation of not just this incident, but the entire force's training and supervision practices and policies that led to it.

It is imperative that we immediately limit the amount of interaction the Alameda police department have with members of our community. They have showed us time and time again, that they are not capable of handling interactions, particularly with men of color, in a safe way. They make non-violent situations violent. Therefore they must not be on the scene for non-violent calls. Oakland's MH First has shown willingness to work with Alameda. We should welcome that offer.

Finally, as a white Alameda homeowner, I want to see our local leaders take a stand and speak up about the amount of othering and self policing we do in our community. People like us, with relative comfort and privilege, who call the police on others do share some responsibility for what happened to Mario. I hope that our city leaders can lead us through a restorative justice process and challenge us to be a more welcoming community where we do less "neighborhood watch" and more "watching out for our neighbors." We could start by participating in the alternative to the police focused National Night Out, the [Night Out for Safety and Liberation](#), an annual event which typically takes place on the first Tuesday of August "where we redefine and re-imagine what public safety means for our communities."

Thank you for your service to our community.

DEMANDS

1.
First, and foremost we support the demands of the family of Mario Gonzalez.:
 1.
Fire those involved in the death of Mario Gonzalez;
 2.
Release the disciplinary records of **all** the officers involved;
 3.
Conduct an independent autopsy and investigation;
 4.
Establish Community Alternatives to Police
2.
Shift **responsibility** and **funding** for responding to non-criminal matters—especially mental health, intoxication and homelessness calls—away from APD to a community based organization.
 1.
Immediately hire the White Bird Clinic to consult on the creation of an alternative response team similar to their own CAHOOTS program.
 2.
If the quickest way to achieve this goal is by expansion of the community paramedic program, we ask that the program be temporary and expire as soon as the city has a community based organization ready to assume the responsibility **or** four months from today, whichever occurs first.
3.
Immediately implement community oversight of ADP;
 1.
Begin the process with a thorough community led review of APD policies and practices.
 2.
At the **next** opportunity, put a measure on the ballot to create a charter-strength community police oversight board (*Appointments to these boards should **not***

be at the sole discretion of the Mayor)

Signed,
Brett Webb & Amanda Cooper

From: [Amanda Cooper](#)
To: [Manager Manager](#); [City Clerk](#); [Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft](#); [Tony Daysog](#); [Malia Vella](#); [John Knox White](#); [Trish Spencer](#)
Cc: [Tigress Osborn](#); [Sondra Solovay](#); [Brandie Sendziak](#); [Dawn Haney](#); [Max Airborne](#); [Elaine Lee](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: May 8 Special City Council Meeting: A Letter from Bay Area and National Fat and Disability Activists
Date: Saturday, May 8, 2021 12:43:24 PM

Dear Alameda City Council, Mayor, and Manager,

The death of Mario Gonzalez at the hands of Alameda police is a senseless tragedy that robbed a family of a son, a brother and a father. Mario has been taken from family and friends who loved and counted on him, including his disabled younger brother for whom he was a primary caregiver. With echoes of similar tragedies, including the murders of George Floyd, Eric Garner, [Kayla Moore](#), and too many others, his story is both familiar and unique.

There are many reasons, including race, employment status and struggles with mental health, why people like Mario are harmed by our current approaches to community safety. But we are writing this letter to highlight a particular aspect of Mario's life and death that we can speak to from our own lived experiences, as fat people navigating our communities, and legal and carceral systems.

The details of Mario's fatal encounter with police are well documented elsewhere and contain many troubling revelations about how APD treats community members they are supposed to be serving. For the purposes of this letter we are focusing on one aspect of the incident; Mario was held on the ground, face down, with his arms behind him for an extended period. It was in this prone position that he lost consciousness due to asphyxia from restraint and subsequently died. The position he was held in is dangerous for everybody, [but is well known to be particularly dangerous to people of size](#).

It is common in our culture for people and organizations to blame higher weight people for their own health problems, and in this case the Alameda police have taken it even further by blaming Mario for his own asphyxiation. The [APD lawyer claimed he was 300lbs](#), and that his size and strength are the reason the officers behaved as they did. If the common [pattern holds](#), they will later say that he died because he was unhealthy as evidenced by his weight. This is how police use people's size to blame them for both the violence of their arrests and their own death that results from that violence.

Mario Gonzalez's family says that he weighed 250 pounds. That means that he, like two thirds of Americans, fits into categories the medical establishment call "overweight or obese." Because higher weight is more common among Black, Latinx, and certain racial/ethnic groups, the inability to safely interact with higher weight people has a disproportionate impact on specific communities of color. It is clear from this encounter that the Alameda police were not capable of handling this situation safely. They took a nonviolent situation and made it violent, they escalated an interaction with a compliant

person and made it combative, and ultimately they took his life while claiming to be helping him. And they blame his weight.

The Alameda police department can not be trusted with the health of our community in general, and higher weight people in particular. And it is safe to assume that as many as two thirds of our neighbors fit this description. And because there are more higher weight people in communities of color, APD's inability to safely interact with higher weight people is also a racial justice issue. The fact that APD also was unable to safely interact with a higher weight person is also a disability issue as the restraint tactics that killed Mario are also more likely to kill people with certain disabilities that may, or may not, be visible. Who else is at risk by APD's failures to interact safely? We are encouraging city leaders to take action before we get more answers to that question.

It is unacceptable to continue practices that create these harms. The fact that APD recently completed training on restraint underscores the ineffectiveness of training as a solution. Therefore it is essential for the safety of all of us that we find alternatives to policing, reduce funding to this department in particular, and fund other resources for people in need of support or intervention.

Signed:

[NAAFA](#), the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance

- Amanda Cooper, Alameda, CA, Board Member
- Elaine Lee, Daly City, CA, Board Member
Fat Legal Advocacy, Rights, & Education Project
- Sondra Solovay, Oakland, CA
- Brandie Sendziak Oakland, CA
The #NoBodyIsDisposable Coalition
[Fat Rose](#)
- Dawn Haney, Richmond resident
- Max Airborne, Richmond resident
Disability Justice League - Bay Area

From: [K Welch](#)
To: [Marilyn Ezy Ashcraft](#); [Malia Vella](#); [Tony Daysog](#); [Trish Spencer](#); [John Knox White](#); [City Clerk](#)
Cc: [Manager Manager](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Yes on Alameda City Council Agenda Item 2-A: May 8, 2021 Special Meeting
Date: Saturday, May 8, 2021 11:30:39 AM

Dear Mayor and City Councilmembers,

On April 19th, Mario Gonzalez died in the hands of Alameda Police Officers who violently detained him when he experienced a medical emergency. The Alameda Police officers held Mario down with a knee to his back while he was in the prone position, hands behind his back for over 5 minutes. Neither officer attempted to turn Mario on his side or sit him up, which led to Mario's inability to breathe ultimately causing his death.

I urge you to vote Yes on item 2-A on the May 8, 2021 City Council meeting agenda and direct the Alameda City Manager to implement all of the recommendations proposed by the Police Reform and Racial Equity subcommittees, including, but not limited to, the recommendations below:

- 1) Review and revise APD's use of force policy.
- 2) Require more frequent de-escalation training for all Alameda police officers, dispatchers, and staff.
- 3) Create a mental health oriented response model in partnership with specific resource agencies to handle calls from the community.
- 4) Establish a public education campaign leveraging social media, newspaper ads, handouts in Alameda libraries, Alameda City Hall, bus shelter displays, on the Alameda city website, etc. to educate the public about alternatives to calling 911.
- 5) Create a compensated Police Oversight Board with members of the community.
- 6) Require that APD police officers, dispatchers, and staff receive mandatory training on alternative response resources to address mental and behavioral incidents and issues in our community.
- 7) Establish a program similar to CATT (Community Assessment Treatment Team) which provides an assessment, crisis management, transport and referrals, as needed, to individuals presenting behavioral needs.
- 8) Review APD's policy regarding arresting, handcuffing and taking into custody any person to ensure that there are criteria in place that need to be met before any of those actions can be taken.

Responding with deadly force, violence, and even acting in a belittling and demeaning way to members of our community (or neighboring community) is unacceptable. We must put an end to the damage our police are inflicting on community members. The Alameda police officers, dispatchers and other city agencies must learn, instead, to respond to individuals in need with compassion and respect. They must learn to embrace differences instead of responding in a violent aggressive and deadly "one size fits all" approach when there is a need or call for service within our community.

Finally, the community is demanding that justice be served for Mario Gonzalez - father, brother, son, caretaker, friend - who should be here today but isn't because of the actions of the Alameda police officers: James Fisher, Cameron Leahy and Eric McKinley. We demand that those officers be brought to justice, fired and charged with the death of Mario Gonzalez.

Thank you,
Kristin Welch

From: [Jason Buckley](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] May 8th Special Meeting public comment
Date: Saturday, May 8, 2021 11:14:12 AM

The events of April 19th that culminated in the death of Mario Gonzalez at the hands of our police were both unconscionable and perhaps avoidable had council acted more swiftly and definitively after the public outcry over the roughing up of Mali Watkins for exercising in the street while Black. While forming the committee on police reforms was a good thing, steps could have been taken to change the culture of policing in the meantime. The fact that a man was pinned to the ground when he should have been given help illustrates how rotten to the core our entire system is. And on what planet is it OK for a parking enforcement guy to get involved in a police altercation? At the very least, fire that meter maid!

Also, seriously, get rid of that ridiculous tank already, like you promised you would do after the Mali Watkins incident. Our police force is not an army. De-fund, de-militarize, and de-escalate.

Lastly, I have recorded a song and all proceeds go to the family of Mario Gonzalez. It's available for digital download at <https://suburbandearthmarch.bandcamp.com/track/alamurda-police-feat-rasheed-4x>

Alameda needs to get its house in order like yesterday.

Thank you,
Jason Buckley

From: [Sarah Jo Neubauer](#)
To: [City Clerk](#); [Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft](#); [Tony Daysog](#); [Malia Vella](#); [John Knox White](#); [Manager Manager](#); [Trish Spencer](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] May 8th Special Meeting, re: #2-A
Date: Saturday, May 8, 2021 11:05:22 AM

Dear Mayor Ashcraft, and City Council members:

I am writing with regard to item 2-A during May 8th's special meeting.

Mario Gonzalez should be alive today. April 19, 2021 was a tragic day in Alameda. That date will forever be a painful anniversary for Mario Gonzalez' family and friends and for the community of Alameda.

Let us not forget other individuals who have suffered at the hands of Alameda Police Department:

- May 2011: Raymond Zack was suicidal in the water off of Crown Beach. Alameda Police and Alameda Fire departments remained on the beach and refused to enter the water to assist. Raymond Zack drowned and his body had to be brought to shore by civilians.
- July 2017: Jeffery Navarro a man with schizophrenia was severely beaten with a baton by an Alameda police officer.
- Dec 2018: Shelby Gattenby died during a mental health crisis after being restrained face down while an alameda police officer placed their body weight on top of him.

March 16 2021: the city manager appointed Police Reform and Racial Equity subcommittees shared their final recommendations—this was a culmination of 3000 hours, over 6 months.

April 2021 – Mario Gonzalaez is killed by APD.

And NOW here we are again---in another meeting.

In direct response to this recent tragedy, I call on you to honor the demands of Mario's family:

1. release the records of the named officers, names and records of ALL officers or

non-sworn officers involved.

2. begin a complete and unbiased investigation of the police officers and APD's policies, training, and supervision of these officers.

3. fire the officers involved in Mario's death

Alameda Community demands of you to make the following changes:

APD should no longer be the first response to a person in a non-violent crisis.

Calls not violent or criminal in nature should be rerouted at the dispatch level to other community resources.

We need unarmed Mental Health First Responders. A hybrid system of community-led and city-employed mental health professional response to better serve our community.

A police-free, MACRO-like program similar to what has been adopted by Oakland working in tandem with a civilian-led group like Anti-Police Terror Project's MH First.

Today – can be another historic day in Alameda.

Today, you, our elected officials can take a step forward for change. And direct the city manager to immediately take action.

Today May 8, 2021: you have the power to change the course of history in Alameda. Do it for Jeffrey, Shelby, Raymond, and Mario.

Signed,

Sarah Jo Neubauer

Alameda citizen

From: [Kim Ondreck Carim](#)
To: [Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft](#); [Malia Vella](#); [Tony Daysog](#); [Trish Spencer](#); [John Knox White](#); [City Clerk](#)
Cc: [Manager Manager](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Yes on Item 2-A
Date: Saturday, May 8, 2021 10:44:56 AM

Dear Mayor and City Councilmembers,

My immediate family counts a law enforcement officer as a loved one. My mother, in pride and in an act of privilege, has a thin blue line sticker on her car's back windshield to communicate to other law enforcement officers that we have one in our family. This is widely known to potentially save her from law enforcement action. That this type of system of extra protection for those in the policing family and not for all exists in our country and in our city of Alameda is discriminatory and wrong. Even as it is an example of a way in which the policing system needs to be dismantled in the name of equity, it is a very, very tiny matter compared to the use of violence by police in Alameda to subdue unarmed civilians in distress.

The policing system in our community needs to be replaced with systems that center non-violent non-law enforcement response in situations like Mario Gonzalez's and that do not discriminate between white and non-white citizens.

Mario Gonzalez should be alive. I am writing to you today to strongly urge you to vote yes on Item 2-A on the agenda for the special city council meeting on Saturday, May 8, 2021. Please direct the City Manager to implement all of the recommendations proposed by the Police Reform and Racial Equity subcommittees, including, but not limited to:

- Require a non-police response to certain 911 calls
- Develop a compendium of mental health resources
- Revise the department's use of force policy
- Establish protocols for requesting non-police response, backup, and/or interventions
- Create a mental health-oriented response model
- Initiate a public Education Campaign to Provide Easily Accessible Alternatives to Calling 911
- Work with the city council to create a financially compensated civilian police oversight board
- Fire the officers that murdered Mario Gonzalez
- Consider ways to renegotiate police contracts that ensure the city of Alameda does not pay pensions or civil judgement for violent officers

Most critically, each of these actions needs a timeline commitment that is urgent and that will result in consequences if the timelines are not met. I don't know, as a voter, how you will do that - but this is why you have the seats on the dais that you have. To solve problems and to make change for this city.

The Alameda Police Department has not made our community safer since the summer, when mass protests in our city forced the development of the public safety subcommittees. The city council and the city manager have been confounded by the Alameda Police Department's unwillingness and inability to police and reform itself. You all are our elected representatives. You need to exercise

your power. These changes are overdue.

I count a law enforcement professional as a member of my family. I am aware of the challenges that police face in doing their work. The thing is: the current system asks them and trains them to do work in a way that is contrary to creating equity and goodness in our community. You can take the first steps to correct that by voting yes on Item 2-A today.

Thank you,

Kim Ondreck Carim
Alameda, CA

From: [Krystal LoPilato](#)
To: [Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft](#); [Malia Vella](#); [Tony Daysog](#); [Trish Spencer](#); [John Knox White](#); [City Clerk](#)
Cc: [Manager Manager](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 5.8.21 Special Meeting - Urging Yes on Item 2-A
Date: Saturday, May 8, 2021 10:19:46 AM

Dear Mayor and Councilmembers,

Our community is heartbroken by the death of Mario Gonzalez. The actions outlined in Item 2-A were necessary and appropriate before his death, and they should be moved forward as a priority of the utmost urgency.

I was pleased to see the Council accept the recommendations of the excellent Police Reform and Racial Equity Steering Committee and have also been tracking and advocating for the state bill, [AB 988](#), which would create an infrastructure for alternative dispatch for mental health services if passed. Unfortunately, it's more clear than ever that *our* city cannot afford to wait to see what happens in Sacramento and cannot wait to build out full plans on each Steering Committee recommendation before taking action on what can be addressed right now. At the very least, Alameda should not go a day longer without taking action on the steps outlined in this agenda item.

Some aspects of this list can be accomplished within days - e.g. preparation of a compendium of resources and training on the same - and some may take weeks or months (though hopefully only a few months). I would urge you to create a 2-track or 3-track timeline so that the City can move forward on each item as expeditiously as possible.

Thank you for bringing this item before a special meeting and I hope the Council will vote YES on 2-A.

Best,
Krystal LoPilato

From: [Transform Alameda](#)
To: [Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft](#); [Malia Vella](#); [John Knox White](#); [Tony Daysog](#); [Trish Spencer](#)
Cc: [City Clerk](#); [Manager Manager](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Petition to demand action following Mario Gonzalez's death - delivery for 5/7 Special Council Meeting
Date: Saturday, May 8, 2021 9:59:42 AM
Attachments: [We sent you safe versions of your files.msg](#)
[Transform Alameda petition to Alameda city council 5-7-21.pdf](#)

Mimecast Attachment Protection has deemed this file to be safe, but always exercise caution when opening files.

Dear Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft and Council,

We, Transform Alameda, are writing to present a petition with over 11,000 signatures, which centers the demands of Mario Gonzalez's family and addresses the need for immediate action in Alameda following Mario's death at the hands of APD on April 19, 2021.

Following Mario's killing by APD, Transform Alameda connected with Mario's family and collaborated with other organizations supporting them. We support and name the Gonzalez family's demands with our petition to you.

Our one petition was hosted on two platforms for maximum visibility and reach. All signatures are attached. After starting the Action Network petition, a former Alameda resident who works with Care2 asked how their site could help support our efforts, and suggested we share the petition on the Care2 platform. Between these two platforms, we have over 11,000 signatures. Some of the signatories are not Alameda residents, but we hope you can agree that anyone who lives, works, or visits our city should be safe from harm done by Alameda Police Department. Many of our off-island neighbors contribute to making Alameda what it is; our businesses need off-island support to thrive. An international traveler, an Alamedan's visiting family, or a local resident of a neighboring city has every bit a right to safety as a 4th generation Alamedan homeowner who pays property taxes. Until you take action to ensure all people's protection from police violence, we are simply an island *city* NOT an island *community*.

While our petition directly supports all of the Gonzalez family demands, we have complemented their demand for civilian-led alternatives to crisis response in our demand for unarmed, professional mental healthcare responders to any nonviolent call for service. While we envision this program being similar to the pilot program adopted by Oakland two months ago (MACRO), we know we can learn from their process and improve upon it where necessary. Following the leadership of Black, Brown and Indigenous organizers in Oakland, like the Anti-Police Terror Project (AFTP), we support operating a city-led program in tandem with a community-based first responder program like Mental Health First. Having both state-run and non-state options would best meet the needs of our community.

MHFirst can be implemented immediately with no budget needs from our city. It's your job now to act on the city-led program. Lastly, we believe our demand to immediately limit police contact with community members is imperative in order to keep people safe in Alameda. Ensuring that 911 dispatchers reroute calls to non-police community resources where applicable could save lives like Mario Gonzalez's. Mario Gonzalez should be alive today.

These petition demands are our first priority and an immediate harm reduction measure to be acted on today. These are not, however, the only changes to policing in our city that we would like to see. As the two-year budgeting process begins to unfold over the next month we will be calling for reducing the APD budget and making critical investments in community needs. We will demand that our city's budget reflects the priorities of the community and continually reduces contact with the police. **Most importantly we will be here to remind you that you cannot delay action any longer.**

Signed,

--



[Web](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#)

From: [Ann Rhodes](#)
To: [Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft](#); [Malia Vella](#); [Tony Daysog](#); [Trish Spencer](#); [John Knox White](#); [City Clerk](#)
Cc: [Manager Manager](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Yes on Item 2-A
Date: Saturday, May 8, 2021 9:52:39 AM

Dear Mayor and City Councilmembers,

I am heartbroken about Mario Gonzalez's death and very ashamed that this happened in our community. Mario Gonzalez should be alive. I am writing to you today to strongly urge you to vote yes on Item 2-A on the agenda for the special city council meeting on Saturday, May 8, 2021. Please direct the City Manager to implement all of the recommendations proposed by the Police Reform and Racial Equity subcommittees, including, but not limited to:

- Require a non-police response to certain 911 calls
- Develop a compendium of mental health resources
- Revise the department's use of force policy
- Establish protocols for requesting non-police response, backup, and/or interventions
- Create a mental health-oriented response model
- Initiate a public Education Campaign to Provide Easily Accessible Alternatives to Calling 911, and
- Work with the city council to create a financially compensated civilian police oversight board.
- Fire the officers that murdered Mario Gonzalez
- Consider ways to renegotiate police contracts that ensure the city of Alameda does not pay pensions or civil judgement for violent officers.

Most critically, each of these actions needs a timeline commitment that is urgent and that will result in consequences if the timelines are not met.

The Alameda Police Department has not made our community safer since the summer, when mass protests in our city forced the development of the public safety subcommittees. The city council and the city manager have been confounded by the Alameda Police Department's unwillingness and inability to police and reform itself. You all are our elected representatives. You need to exercise your power. These changes are overdue.

Thank you,
Ann Rhodes
3225 Bayo Vista Ave
Alameda, CA 94501

Lara Weisiger

From: Michael Sullivan <sully60-6060@yahoo.com>
Sent: Saturday, May 8, 2021 9:15 AM
To: Tony Daysog; Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft; John Knox White; Malia Vella; Trish Spencer
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comment on Item 2-A for Special Council Meeting

•

Dear Mayor Ashcraft and City Councilmembers,

The event involving Mario Gonzalez should never have happened. We must change the initial response made by police officers during non-threatening encounters with the public.

We have a lot of work that we must do starting today which begins with implementing the racial justice recommendations by the reform subcommittees.

Please vote yes on Item 2-A and ensure that there are deadlines for delivery.

Thank you for leading these efforts.

Michael Sullivan

From: [Rachel Lee](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] For May 8th Special Meeting - Yes on Item 2-A
Date: Saturday, May 8, 2021 9:01:45 AM

Dear Mayor and City Councilmembers,

The bodycam footage from the tragic killing of Mario Gonzalez clearly shows that a new response is needed. The only person who may have needed help that day was killed. The people who called 911 were not in danger. The person in danger was on the wrong side of the weapon that is the police. No one was protected. I live in the neighborhood where this happened. Do I feel safer? I do not.

I strongly urge you to vote yes on Item 2-A on the agenda for the special city council meeting on Saturday, May 8, 2021. Please direct the City Manager to implement all of the recommendations proposed by the Police Reform and Racial Equity subcommittees.

Some may view the killing of Mario Gonzalez as a tragic isolated incident. But if you look across the country, you see that unarmed Black and Brown people are being killed by police with regularity. This is something that every community in our nation needs to address. It is systemic and Alameda is a part of that system. Don't just say their names. Do their names justice by acting today.

Thank you,
Rachel Lee

From: [Ezra Denney](#)
To: [Lara Weisiger](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment for May 8 Special Council Meeting
Date: Friday, May 7, 2021 10:21:51 PM

Dear Mayor and Council Members,

A year ago, a Black man was thrown to the ground and held by police for dancing in the Street. We heard various members of council call for change, and we waited expectantly. No change was forthcoming. We didn't even end up selling the dang tank.

Now, a year later, a Brown man is dead. Thrown to the ground and held by police for being in a public space. Mario Gonzalez is dead, and his death should weigh heavily on all of us. I urge you to implement every single part of Item 2-A. And I urge you to reflect on how more proactive leadership might have had these processes in place already, and avoided the needless and senseless death of Mario Gonzalez.

The Alameda Police Department has a demonstrated history, going back literally decades, of not addressing systemic issues, and ignoring council directives. That must end. If we do not have a City Manager who is willing to forcefully manage this unruly lot, we need to change our City Manager. APD has lost any benefit of the doubt long ago. It's time for stringent management and oversight of these bad actors, and a massive restructuring of our response to people in need.

APD demonstrates the truth in the old saying "When you are a hammer, everything looks like a nail."

Implement all the recommendations in Item 2-A. We are counting on you to lead, and if the minority has to be dragged kicking and screaming, so be it. It's already past time for change.

Ezra Denney

From: Ramon Rodriguez
To: City Clerk
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment Regarding 5/8 Special Council Meeting Over Policing, Mental Health Crisis Response, Non-Emergency calls Alternatives, and Changes In Use of Force Policies for Alameda Police Department
Date: Friday, May 7, 2021 9:49:03 PM

Good afternoon Madam Mayor and City Councilmembers and City Staff,

I could not make it to the Zoom meeting due to work schedules but I am writing an email public comment in regards to the agenda for the special city council meeting. The tragic death of Mario Gonzalez is a grim reminder of the continuation of police brutality and oppression against the vulnerable, the marginalized, and the underprivileged (mainly Black Indigenous and People of Color, the Working-Class, the Homeless, and low-income Folx). Mario Gonzalez died in the same way as George Floyd, Elijah McClain, and Angelo Quinto when he had three Alameda police officers on top of him and placing on a chokehold for five minutes. Why did Officers James Fisher, Cameron Leahy, and Eric McKinley placed a chokehold on Mario for over five minutes when they are trying to place into custody? I have watched the video and Mario was not even showing a bit of resistance. This is an embarrassment and a shame for the City of Alameda because people all over the country are fed up with police violence. I got names that you should say and remember as a reminder of police oppression: Oscar Grant, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Michael Brown, Mario Romero Philando Castille, Sandra Bland, Francisco Moran, Kim Jackson, Garrett Schmidt, Dennis Tuttle, Rhogena Nicholas, Miles Hall, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Reymar Gagarin, Karen Garner, Elijah McClain, Sean Monterossa, Shayne Sutterland, Trevor Seever, Angelo Quinto, Daunte Wright, Adam Toledo, Ma'Khia Bryant, and now Mario Gonzalez. This is not an isolated incident, police brutality and oppression has been in the DNA of American society and a byproduct of dominance, violence, racism, patriarchy, and white supremacy. The motto "to protect and serve" is a farce, the real motto thanks to the movie *Transformers* is "to punish and enslave" because that's what police culture do against members of the community without accountability, being above the law, protected by the state and police unions, and gaslighting the public. As I have done in the last council meeting as well as attending city council meetings from around the Bay Area, Orange County, Central Valley, and all the way to Loveland, Colorado and Montréal, Canada --- my message is clear: allocate police funding to boost budgets for public services, establishing a mental health crisis intervention program for the city without police response in mental health crisis situations, the establishment of a Civilian Review Board that is 100% people-powered, with real subpoena power, and without any political influence from the city nor the police, alternatives to non-emergency calls and ending the discriminatory practice from white people calling the police against People of Color (as it happened to Mario Gonzalez), and issue strict regulations and updating Alameda Police Department policies and procedures in regards to use-of-force and arrest in order to comply with AB 392, state and federal civil rights laws, as well as the Constitutions of the United States and the State of California. Dear Honorable Members of the Alameda City Council, I urge you all to implement these policies set forth on the special city council meeting agenda to start making real changes and reforms to hold the police accountable as well as making members of the community safer by diverting money from the police budget into vital services to improve the quality of life, outcomes, reducing poverty, and reducing crime rates without the need of more policing. Any delay or inaction will result in more incidents like Mario Gonzalez and increasing the distrust and reluctance to the police by the members of the community. I also call for the termination/prosecution/conviction of Officers Fisher, Leahy,

and McKinley for the fatal excessive force against Mario Gonzalez. For the sake of the community (especially People of Color), the Bay Area, the State, the Nation, and the World; please do the right thing by implementing the items set on the agenda as soon as possible so that there would be no incidents or fatal encounters because the People of Alameda deserves better and they deserve the right to live in peace, equality, dignity, and respect without fear of police oppression. Thank you and hope this email would be heard to everyone in the public.

Ramon Rodriguez of Turlock California



Virus-free. www.avast.com

May 7, 2021

via email

Honorable Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft and
Members of the City Council of Alameda
c/o Lara Weisiger, City Clerk
2263 Santa Clara Avenue
Alameda, CA 94501
clerk@alamedaca.gov

Re: May 8, 2021 Special City Council Meeting, Agenda Item 2A

Dear Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft and Council Members:

It is past time for the City to radically alter the relationship between the Alameda Police Department (“APD”) and the residents and visitors of Alameda, which APD is supposed to serve. Noncompliance with an order, lawful or not, is not and cannot be a capital offense, yet under the current paradigm APD has no incentive to prioritize the safety of the community over officer control and comfort.

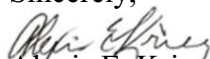
Please direct the City Manager to implement the recommendations proposed by the Police Reform and Racial Equity subcommittees, and all seven items proposed on the City Council’s agenda. These actions are a vital first step away from our current system of policing. The Council must establish clear, definitive, and expedient deadlines for the City Manger and staff to implement each of these items.

Alameda will be safer when police officers are not a default response. As a general matter, officers are trained to prioritize their own safety above all, and to expect and demand compliance. These traits are not compatible with the needs of people in crisis, nor are they especially useful in most other settings where police officers interact with the public. If officers view community members are potential threats – as officers are trained to do – then the community is not safe when officers are involved. Add in the unconscious biases that even well-meaning officers may have, and the risk to public safety increases. For this reason, the Council should direct the City Manger to implement a policy so that officers are not dispatched in situations where mental health professionals are the appropriate response.

It is increasingly apparent that reform alone cannot solve the systemic issues with policing in the United States of America or in Alameda. Thus, the seven items proposed on the City Council’s agenda must not be the end of the work the City undertakes on this issue.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,


Alexis E. Krieg

From: [Jeremy Schmitz](#)
To: [Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft](#); [Malia Vella](#); [Tony Daysog](#); [Trish Spencer](#); [John Knox White](#); [City Clerk](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] We all let Mario down and he should be alive
Date: Friday, May 7, 2021 6:46:51 PM

Dear Mayor and Council Members,

Either a few police officers murdered Mario Gonzalez by not following policy and training, or the Chief of Police and the City Manager are derelict in their duty in not responding to years of death of people of color at the hands of police. Even during the heightened discussion about everything that went on during George Floyd's murder and the ensuing trial of his murderer, no changes were made, and Mario Gonzalez's life was stolen from him. It was unnecessary and it is unacceptable.

I personally believe the City Manager and Chief of Police should be fired, or resign. But I realize it's most likely that no one here has the spine to make that happen.

The absolute LEAST you can do is to vote yes on the items enumerated in Item 2-A. The recommendations of the subcommittees formed over the summer should have been implemented immediately. We should've pushed harder as a community. You should've pushed harder as I UE elected representatives. We all have culpability and Mario's death is on our hands. We owe him these measures at a MINIMUM.

I urge you to go further. Please direct the city manager, when he renegotiates the police contract, to ensure that the people of Alameda are not paying civil judgements for the consequences of police violence. Require that any judgements, including civil rights violations, be paid by the police themselves.

Mario Gonzalez should be alive. We owe his family and all members of our community a debt.

Regards,
Jeremy Schmitz
960 High St
Alameda, CA 94510

From: [gaylon parsons](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Yes on Item 2-A, Saturday May 8
Date: Friday, May 7, 2021 5:31:23 PM

Dear mayor and council members,

Mario Gonzalez should be alive. Alameda can be a safer community, where everyone belongs but we have to make change. I urge you all to vote yes on the items enumerated in Item 2-A. These are rooted in the recommendations of the subcommittees formed over the summer. You each, I hope, take personally the fact that had those recommendations been enacted with a sense of urgency we might not all be present on a Saturday in May, in grief and in solidarity with the family of another person dead as a consequence of contact with law enforcement.

And, I urge you all to go further. Direct the city manager, when he renegotiates the police contract, to ensure that the people of Alameda are not paying civil judgements for the consequences of police violence. Require that any judgements, including civil rights violations, be paid by the police themselves.

Mario Gonzalez should be alive. Vote yes on Item 2-A. We are counting on you.

Sincerely,
Gaylon Parsons

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Gaylon Parsons

From: [AC Hunter](#)
To: [City Clerk](#); [Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft](#); [Malia Vella](#); [Tony Daysog](#); [John Knox White](#); [Trish Spencer](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment and address to City Council
Date: Friday, May 7, 2021 2:25:27 PM

To: Alameda City Council,

On May 8, you will hold a special meeting to hopefully make long overdue changes to make our community safer for all. However, it is imperative that you make the needs and demands of the Gonzalez family your first priority,

Demands from Mario's Family:

Some demands have been met, like release of body worn footage. The following are the remaining family demands,

- Release the records of the named officers, names and records of ALL officers or non-sworn officers involved.
- A complete and unbiased investigation of the police officers and APD's policies, training, and supervision of these officers.
- Fire the officers involved in Mario's death
- Civilian-led alternatives to police for crisis response.

Community Demands:

At the special Meeting on May 8th City Council MUST enact the following,

- Immediately limit APD contact with the community. APD should no longer be the first response to a person in a non-violent crisis. Enough is enough. Calls not violent or criminal in nature should be rerouted at the dispatch level to other community resources. A community member in a perceived crisis should be met with compassion and care, not with a badge and a gun.
- Unarmed Mental Health First Responders. We want a hybrid system of community-led and city-employed mental health professional response to better serve our community. For example a police-free, MACRO-like program similar to what has been adopted by Oakland working in tandem with a civilian-led group like Anti-Police Terror Project's MH First.

Mario should still be here, please remember that as you consider enacting these changes to prevent our police from killing another innocent person in our community.

Signed,

~ AC Hunter

From: [Drew Dara-Abrams](#)
To: [Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft](#); [John Knox White](#); [Malia Vella](#); [Trish Spencer](#); [Tony Daysog](#)
Cc: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Item 2-A
Date: Friday, May 7, 2021 2:13:13 PM

Dear Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Councilmembers,

Mario Gonzalez should be alive today.

I've tried to focus my public comments to City Council to transportation and housing, which are topics that directly affect my own family and that I have some amount of knowledge about. But the manner in which Mario Gonzalez was killed reflects poorly on everyone in Alameda with any amount of power and agency. However important other local topics are, if seemingly mundane situations like this leave a person dead in an Alameda park, we can't just continue with "business as usual."

Please move forward immediately with the concrete public-safety reforms listed on Saturday's agenda. The volunteer subcommittees have put in much work to assess and assemble this package. To successfully carry out these reforms requires sustained attention from both elected and professional leaders in this city. Please vote "yes" to do so on Saturday and provide a timeline for follow-through.

Finally, I do want to point out that, unless I am mistaken, reforms can be adopted by a simple majority of the City Council. City Council may not be able to reach a complete consensus on these matters, and public-safety reform may be a topic that continues to make some residents uncomfortable. I won't minimize others' concerns. But discomfort and disagreement can't be blockers to addressing Mario Gonzalez's death, honestly grappling with what works and doesn't work currently in this police department, and building an Alameda where everyone is truly welcome and safe.

Sincerely,
Drew Dara-Abrams
Calhoun St.

From: [Bronwyn Harris](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] May 8 special meeting
Date: Friday, May 7, 2021 12:54:24 PM

Dear Mayor and City Councilmembers,

I am angry and heartbroken about the killing of Mario Gonzalez. We as a community did not do enough to prevent this and we must do better in the future - people's lives depend on it.

Please, please vote yes on Item 2-A on the agenda for the special city council meeting on Saturday, May 8, 2021. Please direct the City Manager to implement all of the recommendations proposed by the Police Reform and Racial Equity subcommittees, including, but not limited to:

1. Require a non-police response to certain 911 calls
2. Develop a compendium of mental health resources
3. Revise the department's use of force policy
4. Establish protocols for requesting non-police response, backup, and/or interventions
5. Create a mental health-oriented response model
6. Initiate a public Education Campaign to Provide Easily Accessible Alternatives to Calling 911, and
7. Work with the city council to create a financially compensated civilian police oversight board.
8. Immediately firing the officers that murdered Mario Gonzalez
9. Consider ways to renegotiate police contracts that ensure the city of Alameda does not pay pensions or civil judgement for violent officers.

Alameda needs to know that these action items will happen, and when.

The fact that this happened DURING the the trial for George Floyd's murderer shows that APD is completely unaware of what reforms are needed and how to "police" themselves.

The entire world was watching that trial and during it, APD killed a man in a similar way. If they were capable of policing themselves, they would have done so now of all times, after the Mali Watkins incident and during the George Floyd trial.

These changes are far, far overdue, and need to be implemented immediately.

Thank you,

Bronwyn Harris

Author:

Literally Unbelievable: Stories from an East Oakland Classroom

Letters From the Inside: Hope in the Journey Beyond Classroom and Cell

www.bronwynharris.com

From: [johnsen cyndy](#)
To: [Tony Daysog](#); [Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft](#); [John Knox White](#); [Malia Vella](#); [Trish Spencer](#)
Cc: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comment on Item 2-A / Special Council Meeting on 5/8
Date: Friday, May 7, 2021 12:40:12 PM

Dear Mayor Ashcraft and City Councilmembers,

Mario Gonzalez should be alive. We must change. There is much to do in the years ahead, but we know what steps we can take today: we must implement the recommendations of the racial justice and police reform subcommittees adopted by council a few months ago. Please vote yes on Item 2-A and ensure that each of these items has a specific and expedited deadline for delivery.

Thank you for your leadership on this incredibly vital issue.

Respectfully,

-Cyndy Johnsen

From: [Erica Carter](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Cc: [Manager Manager](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Yes on item 2-A
Date: Friday, May 7, 2021 11:13:28 AM

Dear Mayor and City Councilmembers,

Mario Gonzalez should be alive, his death was tragic and unnecessary. It was murder. I am writing to you today to strongly urge you to vote yes on Item 2-A on the agenda for the special city council meeting [on Saturday, May 8, 2021](#). Please direct the City Manager to implement all of the recommendations proposed by the Police Reform and Racial Equity subcommittees, including, but not limited to:

- Require a non-police response to certain 911 calls
- Develop a compendium of mental health resources
- Revise the department's use of force policy
- Establish protocols for requesting non-police response, backup, and/or interventions
- Create a mental health-oriented response model
- Initiate a public Education Campaign to
- Provide Easily Accessible Alternatives to
- Calling 911, and
- Work with the city council to create a financially compensated civilian police oversight board.
- Fire the officers that murdered Mario Gonzalez
- Consider ways to renegotiate police contracts that ensure the city of Alameda does not pay pensions or civil judgement for violent officers.

Most critically, each of these actions needs a timeline commitment that is urgent and that will result in consequences if the timelines are not met. As a resident and a voter, I am pleading with you to be the change you speak of. You have the seats on the dais that you have, to solve problems and to make change for our city. Alameda is in desperate need of this change. Our fellow BIPOC community members lives depend on this change. Our fellow community members who struggle with mental health issues depend on this change. We are past due for change in our Police system. We need programs that will show up to help, not a badge and a gun, (who are clearly not trained nor fit for all situations) that will take a life, as they see fit.

The Alameda Police Department has not made our community safer since the summer, when mass protests in our city forced the development of the public safety subcommittees. The city council and the city manager have been confounded by the Alameda Police Department's unwillingness and inability to police and reform itself. You are our elected representatives. You need to exercise your power. Again, these changes are overdue.

Thank you,
Erica Carter
A concerned resident of Alameda

From: Judi
To: Sarah Henry; City Clerk; Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft; Tony Daysog; Malia Vella; John Knox White; Trish Spencer; Manager Manager
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Alameda City Council MUST Act to Meet Community Demands
Date: Friday, May 7, 2021 8:26:20 AM

We all saw the video of APD officers throwing Mario Gonzalez to the ground. We heard the one cop say, should we turn him on his side? while the other cop said no, because he liked the position Mario was in, and didn't want to move him.

We all saw the video of Mario Gonzalez trying to answer the cop's questions, but seemed to be a little confused. He was quiet and he was calm.

WHY DID THE APD THROW MARIO GONZALEZ TO THE GROUND, KEEP HIM ON HIS STOMACH, AND ULTIMATELY, KILL HIM?

And, why did they lie about it? He didn't die in the hospital, he died under their knee.

The APD has a long history of racism. If you need a lesson, visit the Twitter feed of @Rasheed_Shabazz. In 1991, an audit of cop car terminals found officers sending racist messages to each other. In 1998 police murdered an unhoused man. Last year Mali Watkins was arrested and brutalized for dancing in the street.

When will this change?

Alameda City Council must meet these demands from Mario's Family:

- Release the records of the named officers, names and records of ALL officers or non-sworn officers involved.
- A complete and unbiased investigation of the police officers and APD's policies, training, and supervision of these officers.
- Fire the officers involved in Mario's death
- Civilian-led alternatives to police for crisis response.

Community Demands:

At the special Meeting on May 8th City Council must enact the following,

- Immediately limit APD contact with the community. APD should no longer be the first response to a person in a non-violent crisis. Enough is enough. Calls not violent or criminal in nature should be rerouted at the dispatch level to other community resources. A community member in a perceived crisis should be met with compassion and care, not with a badge and a gun.
- Unarmed Mental Health First Responders. We want a hybrid system of community-

led and city-employed mental health professional response to better serve our community. For example a police-free, MACRO-like program similar to what has been adopted by Oakland working in tandem with a civilian-led group like Anti-Police Terror Project's MH First.

I am an Alameda citizen. My name is Judi Baker. Thank you for listening.

Dear Mayor, Vice Mayor and City Councilmembers,

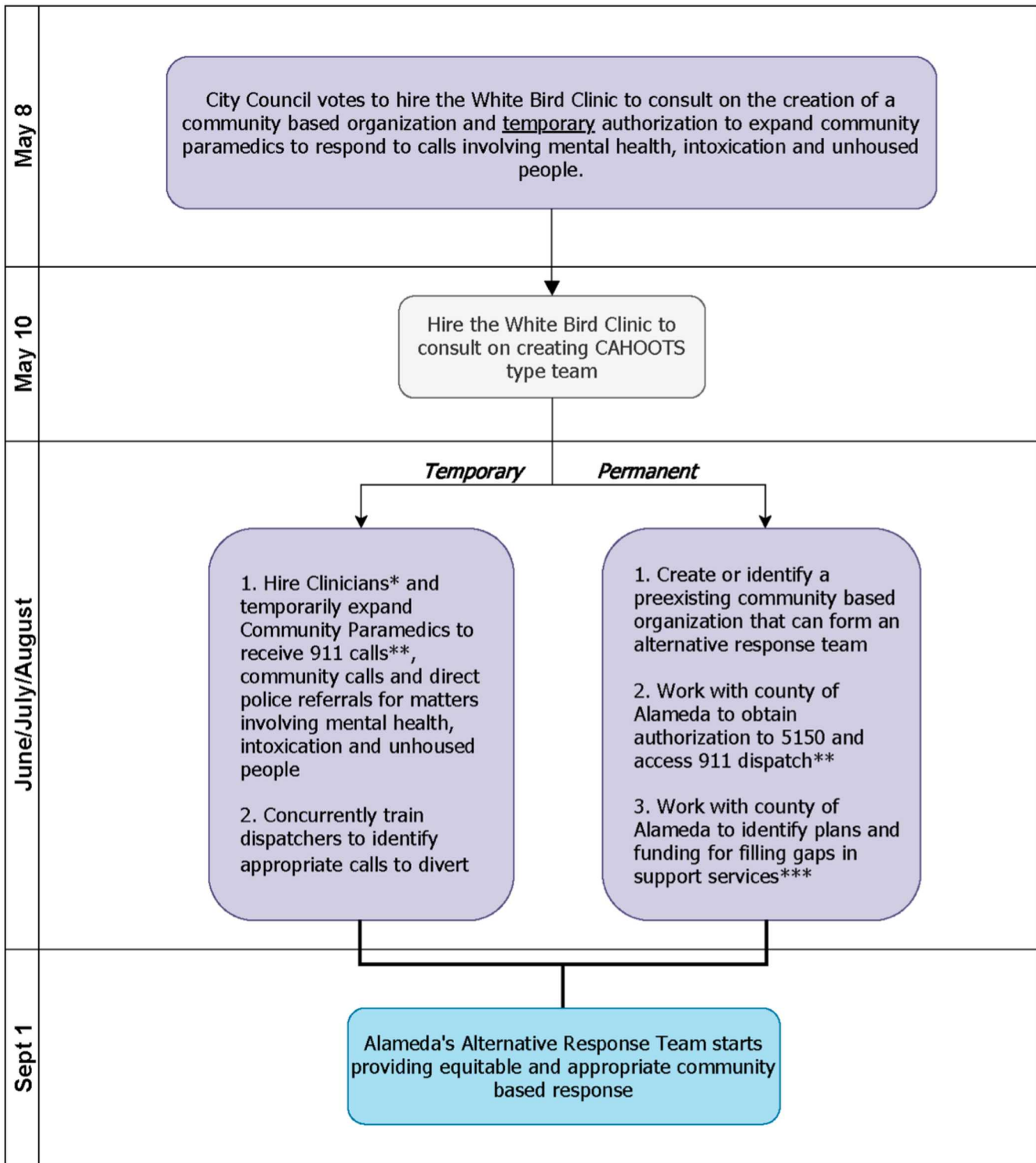
I want to thank you for holding a special meeting dedicated to reimagining the best ways to serve our community. The tragic death of Mario Gonzalez has highlighted the need to act with urgency to appropriately serve the needs of the community. Here are some concrete steps you can take at the May 8th, 2021 city council meeting towards serving members of the community whose needs are not being met by the current system.

First, please meet the demands of the family of Mario Gonzalez. Mario Gonzalez will never see justice but we need to show 4 year old Mario Jr. accountability for his father's death. Please do not compound the trauma the Gonzalez family is experiencing by failing to take action.

Second, immediately implement community oversight of the Alameda Police Department (APD). Start a comprehensive police practices and policies review that is community directed. Draft a charter amendment for the next general election (June 2022) to create an independent community police oversight body. This body should review both civilian complaints and APD policies and practices. Cooperation with this body should be mandated in the employment contracts for all city employees. The public should receive regular reports and recommendations from the community police oversight body. In order to achieve the desired goal, the community police oversight body must be adequately resourced. Members of the body should not be solely appointed by the Mayor.

Third, shift responsibility for responding to non-criminal matters—especially mental health, intoxication and homelessness calls—away from APD to a community based organization. The following flowchart demonstrates how to make meaningful changes quickly while aggressively working towards the most effective and equitable outcomes.

2021 Proposed Pathway City of Alameda Alternative Response Team



*Clinicians would transition to permanent Alternative Response Team once it is established via parallel pathway

**Access to 911 is the ultimate goal but even without access there's value in providing police and the community an alternative model

***The city will need to continue to work with Alameda County to ensure adequate access to community based mental health services are available

The proposed pathway creates a temporary solution for quickly shifting responsibility for social service calls while Alameda rapidly builds an equitable community based Alternative Response Team. The community paramedics and/or the Alternative Response Team can handle community and police referrals through a direct phone number. Meaning these teams can start handling calls even if the county is slow to grant to access calls directly from 911 dispatch. Before the community paramedics can be expanded into this new role they will need to hire trained mental health professionals. Clinicians hired during this expansion would transition to the Alternative Response Team once it becomes operational.

You will notice that under this plan city council votes at the special May 8th, 2021 meeting to hire the White Bird Clinic as consultants. The White Bird Clinic is the home of the successful CAHOOTS program and they offer CAHOOTS consulting. The Police Reform and Racial Equity Steering Committee recommended creating a CAHOOTS type program for Alameda. The end goal is to have a community based organization responding to these calls but there is a growing consensus that the quickest way to shift these responsibilities is to expand the community paramedic program. If expanding the community paramedic program (including hiring professional mental health workers) is in fact the quickest way to divert these responsibilities, then it should only be authorized for 60 days with an option to extend an additional 30 days with council approval while the community based organization becomes operational.

Furthermore, a fire department is not the appropriate place to base a response team for mental health episodes. The societal stigma of mental illness means many people will be reluctant to call an ambulance and fire truck to the location of their own or their loved one's mental health crisis. Alameda Fire Department protocol requires a truck to go out with the ambulance on all calls. The cost of an ambulance ride is a huge and unnecessary barrier to service. People experiencing a mental health episode do not require the specialized medical equipment of an ambulance, they need a ride to the hospital or a community based clinic. The alternative response team will never be the primary focus of a fire department so things will get missed. For example, San Francisco's City Street Crisis Response Team (SCRT) is based out of their Fire Department and has been operational since November 2020 yet their teams do not have authorization to place people on 72 hour psychiatric holds known as 5150. Therefore, the SCRT must still call police to be place a psychiatric hold. Finally, many impacted community members do not trust the government due to historic and ongoing abuse and violations.

There is also a long history of mistreatment that has created fear and distrust in governmental agencies and representatives. People with mental illnesses were locked in institutions where they were used as test subjects for medical experimentations and buried in unmarked graves. Deinstitutionalization in the 1960-80's saw the vast majority of these institutions closed based upon the understanding that most folks could be best helped in community based settings. The promise of deinstitutionalization was to make community based mental health services readily available to people with mental illnesses rather than indefinite detention and segregation from society in institutions.

At the same time you have a rise of the "Tough on Crime" "War on Drugs" approach to policing which created a huge influx of funding for policing. Suddenly there were no longer funds to provide adequate community based mental health services and people were discharged with

little to no community based mental health services. The broken promises of deinstitutionalization have resulted in America, the country with the highest rate of incarceration, making the prison industry the largest provider of mental health services in our country. A few weeks ago, a United States Department of Justice investigation found that Alameda County and Alameda County Sheriff's Department are systematically violating the fundamental Constitutional Rights of people with mental illnesses by improperly detaining them at John George psychiatric hospital and Santa Rita Jail rather than providing people adequate access to community based mental health services.

The city of Alameda can no longer afford to stand by and hope for improvement at the county level as its community members' fundamental rights are violated. Our nation was facing a mental health crisis prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

-National Institute of Mental Health in 2019 only **44.8%** of individuals with mental illness had received **any** type of mental health services (including medication) in the prior year.

-In 2019 the CDC reports **two and half times** the number of **suicides** compared to **homicides** (47,511 suicides, 19,141 homicides).

-Alameda Unified School District 2017-2018 school year : 14% of 9th graders and 21% of students at the continuation high school had seriously considered attempting suicide.

As society begins to understand the effects that the COVID pandemic has had on people's mental health the findings point towards a worsening crisis.

-CDC report found that since April 2020 the **proportion of children's mental health Emergency Department visits increased 24%** for kids age 5-11 years and **31%** for kids age 12-17 years.

-Recently published findings indicate that **1 out of 3 people who survive COVID-19** experience **neurological issues** that most commonly present as mental health issues.

Continuing to underserve the mental health needs of our community and imprisoning those who require but can not access services is no longer feasible.

Tim Black of CAHOOTS spoke about how his organization is mindful of the distrust of the government during the Mayor's Town Hall when he told the Mayor that the button down shirt he was wearing is jokingly considered the, "Class A uniform" because they are usually in the field in jeans and t-shirts. Mr. Black stated, "part of the value in their services is that we don't look like officers or firefighters. We look like someone you might want to talk to when you are having a bad day." If the mental health crisis response team is based out of the fire department, some of the most vulnerable people will not utilize the services simply due to the uniform. When you combine the additional barriers to service of the expense of an ambulance ride, the stigma of mental illness being exponentially amplified by the arrival of an ambulance and fire truck and mental health being a secondary focus of the fire department it is clear that to provide the most appropriate, effective and efficient alternative response team for Alameda it needs to be operated by a community based organization.

Let's start ensuring oversight of our current system of policing while building a community based, more equitable public safety system for all.

Sincerely,

Beth Kenny

May 6, 2021

Dear Alameda City Leadership,

We are speaking out as Alameda women and other gender minorities, most of whom are parents, as we are horrified by the killing of Mario Gonzalez in Alameda on April 19, and condemn the recent actions by the Alameda Police Department.

We want to echo the demands of Mario Gonzalez's family and others in the community for Alameda city leadership **to take action and accountability** to stop police violence in Alameda, including:

- Fire the police officers and staff involved in the killing of Mario Gonzalez, specifically the four at the scene, along with any additional staff found to have engaged in misconduct around this incident. This incident demonstrates they are not only unfit to serve and protect in our community, but are a threat to it.
- Release the records of complaints against the officers involved in Mario's death. Given the abysmal initial communication when this incident first occurred, the family and our city are owed transparency.
- Fund programs to dispatch mental health and social service experts for non-violent calls from the community instead of the police. Prioritize these programs over policing and fund them by reallocating the police budget. Mario would still be alive if mental health professionals and/or social workers had been dispatched for these calls rather than the police.
- Use the police budget toward any legal fees incurred by the city around this incident and lawsuit settlements with the family. We do not want funding reduced for other critical services to our community to pay for police violence. Setting this precedent will also create accountability and help deter police from similar misconduct in the future.
- Create a community oversight committee of our police, using the [proposal from the Oversight subcommittee](#) on Racial Equity and Police Reform.

Our hearts are most especially with Mario Gonzalez's family: his mother, as she had to watch her 26-year old son lose his life at the hands of our police; his son, who will now have to grow up without his father; and his brother, who lost his caretaker and confidant.

This is the third incident of police violence and misconduct in Alameda that has resulted in public outrage and outcry, adding to the killing of Shelby Gattenby in 2018 and the violent, baseless arrest of Mali Watkins last year. Mario's death could have been prevented if the city had taken action last summer to reform APD instead of waiting for the community process to create meaningful change.

You have been promising action to our city for the past year. Do not let another mother lose her child senselessly to Alameda police. **Take action now.**

Regards,

Meredith Hoskin

Ashley Mullins

K.C. Taylor

Bristol Denlinger

Kathryn Beehler

Alyssa Wiegand

Devyn Taylor

Emily Kuhlmann

Puja Dasari

Jessica Chan

Meagan Moore Jensen

Andrea Dunlap

Emily Watters

Jamie Vasta

Celina Kamler

Debbie Sorkin

Alison Luke

Allison Reichle

Julie Pruitt

Kari Fox Sontag

Danielle Beshong

Yarmela Pavlovic

Vicki Traverso

Evaly Long

Laura Nielsen

Rachael Koffman

Sadiya Kazi

Ashley Lorden

Kelly Peterson

Susan Yorke

Rebecca Knebel-Bhatt

Lai Saelee

Erin Joan Snyder

Jasmine Granas

Jocelyn Tsai Douglas

Caryn Hoadley

Regan Chagal

Julie Bullock

Jessica Dyer

Kat Clifford Geluz

Andrée Brazeau

Jenna Diestler Rentz

Alexis Hamill

From: [Ben Calica](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Cc: eikeme@alamedasun.com; [Amos White](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Avoiding Last mistake and Setting the scope of Gonzalez investigation. For the public comments on Saturday's Council meeting
Date: Tuesday, May 4, 2021 12:29:48 PM

please include this in the public comments and share it with the council members.

Open letter to the Alameda City Council,

We need to avoid the mistake made in the scoping last year, and ensure this investigation be explicitly tasked with not just looking at the officers involved, but everything that contributed, including systemic issues in the department.

It's almost one year ago that the video of the arrest of Moli Watkins showed us something very wrong at APD. I was sickened by the incident, but much more disturbed by actions afterwards that raised major red flags that APD had the kinds of systemic problems that we hoped only lived elsewhere. So when I recently found the City Manager had limited the scope of the Watkins investigation to include only the arresting officers, and nothing about anything involving the officers around, the management or any other factors in the department that had led to it happening, I was shocked. Moli Watkins arrest could have easily ended up the way this did. And if there were contributing factors from the culture/actions of the department, then we all bear some responsibility for not having worked to find that out.

The possibility of issues with false reporting, management or union/extra protection, or even the closing of ranks that prevents officers who see issues from stepping in or stepping forward, then we

need to know that, so we can, as a city, figure out how to change that. Here is what happened that showed real indications of systemic problems

1. **False/minimizing reporting.** A minimizing/misleading (frankly false) report made with the knowledge of the more senior officers and management after the incident (including a completely misleading statement sent from the chief to one of the councilmen who was trying to get the answers on what had happened.) When a public video shows how off the reporting was, we need to see if that is the exception or frequent.
2. **Protecting the Honor of the department vs. the Appearance.** There was never a public statement from the department saying “no, this does not represent our values as a department” . Either that was a message to the other officers that the department had their back, regardless of what they did, or it was handcuffed because of protections from the police unions/PBOR.
3. **The Wall of Silence.** Even after the word from the chief came down that it was ok for the rest of the officers to publicly comment on their feelings, not a single officer in the entire department publicly said they thought it wasn't ok for a citizen to be treated that way. Which either means that everyone in the department thought that kind of thing was ok, which is terrifying, or more likely, that the culture makes it never ok for one officer to say anything about the bad/wrong behavior of another. This culture is utterly toxic. (Can you imagine a teacher being isolated and bullied if they came forward to report another teacher was abusing a kid?)

What we need to do this time is almost unforgivably easy. The council needs to specifically request that the scope of this new investigation be responsible for uncovering all the contributing factors, including culture/systemic issues that potentially contributed/protected these kinds of incidents.

Ben Calica

Owner, D20 Games and caring member of the Alameda Community.

P.S. This isn't an anti police thing, just the opposite. Any officer that is trying to do what is right will be helped by having the blocks of the blue wall knocked out of the way, and the shift in management that says that confronting and trying to remove those who don't represent protect and serve is not a betrayal of fellow officers, but a protection of the honor of what being a peace officer should be.

<https://bencalica.medium.com/open-letter-to-the-alameda-city-council-1fbc2d25999d>

Ben Calica, Owner
D20 Games LLC
A place to play face to face
www.d20alameda.com
510-522-2109 (Store)
1530 Park Street
Alameda, CA 94501

From: [Mary-Jo Knight](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Concern about police de-escalation
Date: Saturday, May 1, 2021 11:21:56 PM

It seems to me that based on the recent Gonzalez video, that the Alameda police and other police around the country are unequipped to manage situations without a need to handcuff people which too often results in death. It feels like a modern version of lynching, which I find hard to believe. However the evidence keeps showing up this way.

It is critical for the well-being of our society to find a tool to control or let someone walk away if the infraction is minor...selling 2 cigarettes, having a bad attitude, rolling stoplights, etc.

If there is danger, cruel as this sounds, use a billy club on an ankle, leg or knee to disable someone, if a health Counsellor cannot be used. At least the person in question wou't end up dead because the police cannot handcuff them.

We need to stop the killing for stupid things that most people would not even get a fine for doing!

No one is guilty until proven so in a court of law. But dead is totally unacceptable to most decent citizens.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary-Jo Knight
917-613-0660

From: [Jackie Zipkin](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments for May 8 Special Council Meeting
Date: Friday, April 30, 2021 9:19:02 PM

Dear City Clerk, Madame Mayor, and Honorable City Councilmembers,

I am a five-year resident of Alameda, an active community member, and a mom of two young children. Last year, like many other white people, I did a lot of learning. Through reading and listening, I came to understand the racism inherent in the systems of this country, and I began dedicating myself to working to change those systems. In particular, I believe that the structure we have set up for policing sets everyone up to fail, most acutely people of color and the poor. Police are responding to calls that are not about true public safety, and those on the receiving end of those calls are automatically treated as criminals.

I began really engaging on this issue locally after the incident involving Mr. Watkins last year. I watched the video of that incident and was angry and saddened. I was proud of how the City Council initially responded, setting up the Task Force, and voting to sell the assault vehicle. Since that time, I've seen a slide back into business as usual that is alarming. The vehicle retained, feet shuffling on the Task Force's recommendations. Ultimately this inaction resulted in blood on the City's hands in the tragic death of Mr. Gonzalez.

We cannot wait any longer. I am calling on the City Council to expedite implementation of the Task Force's thoughtful recommendations, including establishment of a Policy Accountability Board, and shifting responsibility for mental health calls from police to civilian responders. I believe that this latter approach would have saved Mr. Gonzalez, a man in crisis who just needed his family or some medical intervention, not to be pinned by police.

The City has the power to make changes TODAY and to broaden and deepen those changes over time through the budget and other administrative processes. Please have the courage to act.

Sincerely,
Jackie Zipkin

From: [Brandon Svec](#)
To: [Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft](#); [Malia Vella](#); [Tony Daysog](#); [John Knox White](#); [Trish Spencer](#); [Manager Manager](#); [City Clerk](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Mario Gonzalez
Date: Thursday, April 29, 2021 3:10:36 PM

Mayor, City Manager and Council Members,

On May 8, you will hold a special meeting to hopefully make long overdue changes to make our community safer for all. However, it is imperative that you make the needs and demands of the Gonzalez family your first priority,

Demands from Mario's Family:

Some demands have been met, like release of body worn footage. The following are the remaining family demands,

-Release the records of the named officers, names and records of ALL officers or non-sworn officers involved.

-A complete and unbiased investigation of the police officers and APD's policies, training, and supervision of these officers.

-Fire the officers involved in Mario's death

-Civilian-led alternatives to police for crisis response.

Community Demands:

At the special Meeting on May 8th City Council must enact the following,

-Immediately limit APD contact with the community. APD should no longer be the first response to a person in a non-violent crisis. Enough is enough. Calls not violent or criminal in nature should be rerouted at the dispatch level to other community resources. A community member in a perceived crisis should be met with compassion and care, not with a badge and a gun.

-Unarmed Mental Health First Responders. We want a hybrid system of community-led and city-employed mental health professional response to better serve our community. For example a police-free, MACRO-like program similar to what has been adopted by Oakland working in tandem with a civilian-led group like Anti-Police Terror Project's MH First.

Mario should still be here, please remember that as you consider enacting these changes to prevent our police from

killing another innocent person in our community and try to imagine yourself or a loved one that could have been in a similar situation and how you would have liked to see it handled.

Mario needed help sitting down and to be offered a snack and some water. Someone more creative and empathetic than any of the officers (and parking tech) that showed up should have taken some time to contact someone to pick him up or drive him home or to a clinic or hospital.

Brandon J Svec
Alameda resident

From: [Andy Murdock](#)
To: [City Clerk](#); [Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft](#); [John Knox White](#); [Malia Vella](#); [Trish Spencer](#); [Tony Daysog](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: May 8th Special Meeting
Date: Thursday, April 29, 2021 2:09:13 PM

Dear Alameda City Council members,

Thank you for holding this special meeting on this serious matter.

There will be a lot of high emotions on the killing of Mario Gonzalez, and rightly so. Anger, sadness, disgust — I'm feeling them all myself. I'm not sure what justice really looks like for the Gonzalez family and I will not speak for them, but at the very least we can focus on a clear goal that I think everyone can agree on: We need to do everything in our power to prevent another tragedy like this from occurring.

The status quo works for no one. Nobody comes out the winner here.

There are simple actions we can take quickly. The Steering Committee on Police Reform and Racial Equity provided clear and common sense guidance on this just recently, and I hope that we can adopt their recommendations immediately. Protecting life should be the highest priority. Not only do the police need additional training in de-escalation and handling mental health crises, we need to provide alternative services that are better equipped and educate the public on how best to respond to incidents. For me this isn't about the talking point of "defunding the police" that gets so easily misconstrued, this is about being goal oriented and creating a safe and just city for everyone. This shouldn't be controversial; the police should want this as well.

I'm heartbroken that this happened again, right here in our city. This tragedy was totally unnecessary and preventable. Let's please put all of our energies into preventing another incident like this from ever happening again.

Thank you for your efforts on this important matter,

Andy Murdock

From: [Sharon Golden](#)
To: [Malia Vella](#); [City Clerk](#); [Trish Spencer](#); [John Knox White](#); [Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft](#); [Tony Daysog](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Mental Health 911 Response Team
Date: Thursday, April 29, 2021 11:11:20 AM

Hi all,

I first sent this email 6 weeks ago, and if action had been taken to work towards this goal Mario Gonzalez would still be with us.

It is imperative that our city council take a stand and make a public comment on this matter outwardly stating that there was an excessive use of force and that the officers need to be held accountable.

PLEASE INCORPORATE THE USE OF MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL RESPONDERS IMMEDIATELY. By allocating funds to an organization that already has these types of professionals, such as Alameda Family Services, we can be sure that this does not happen again.

Thank you,
Sharon Golden

On Mon, Mar 15, 2021, 5:12 PM Sharon Golden <sharon.golden3@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Mayor Ashcraft and Members of City Council,

I am writing to urge you, among other things in relation to the police task force, to please add a mental health support team to our 911 response teams.

While some other cities have made great strides to acknowledge that mental health professionals are a better response in many scenarios, they have made the misstep in not adding mental health professionals as responders in the regular 911 dispatch. Instead, they assigned a different phone number if citizens need a mental health response, which, who can remember any phone number in an emergency?

[Please support adding mental health responders into the core of potential 911 response teams.](#)

Thank you so much for your time,

Sharon Golden
510.289.8496

From: [Rich Sherratt](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Special council meeting
Date: Wednesday, April 28, 2021 1:06:54 PM

Dear Mayor and Members of the City Council,

I and many others question the need for an emergency meeting on Saturday to discuss our Police Department. You may not remember, we have a country based on truth ,reality and justice system. This meeting appears to jump the proper investigation being conducted by professionals to explore facts, not emotions. A member of one of your unbiased committees on Police reform declared Police murdered a person. That person did so without even seeing the video and that person should immediately be removed from any panel.

It is a terrible tragedy that someone lost their life but don't throw our hard working Police Officers under the bus because of what is going on in other parts of our country. I watched the video two times and was impressed with how calm and polite our officers were. Always saying please and giving the young man options to prevent a confrontation. They were doing their job and in a respectful manner without any cooperation from the young man.

Let the process proceed and let the facts prevail. You are not the Judge or Jury.

Respectfully,

Dr. Richard Sherratt
Former Vice Mayor