**Buffalo council members: why haven’t police purchased Tasers after we approved money for them?**

[**LOCAL NEWS**](https://www.wivb.com/news/local-news/)

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BUFFALO, N.Y. (WIVB) – The officer involved shooting in Buffalo last weekend has many people wondering whether less potentially lethal force could have been used, particularly those who have taken to the city’s streets in protest over the past few days. The ensuing discussion has caught some members of the Buffalo Common Council by surprise.

Willie Henley, 60, was shot by Buffalo police officer Karl Schultz after allegedly attacking Officer Alyssa Peron with a bat. It began as a mental health call, and ended with Schultz firing two shots, with one of them hitting Henley, police said. Henley was last listed as stable. He was later charged with assault and criminal possession of a weapon.

Those who want to know why police resorted to shooting Henley may be surprised to learn that Buffalo police don’t carry Tasers. Council members were equally surprised to learn that fact, after they approved money to purchase that equipment in 2019. In the 2019-20 budget, the council approved $417,000 for “Police Furniture & Equipment – Tasers”.

However, to date, the Buffalo Police Department only has two Tasers. They are both used by the SWAT team, Captain Jeff Rinaldo said.

“Not acceptable,” said Common Council President Darius Pridgen in an interview with News 4. “At the end of the day, we voted, we agreed. This has been something that this common council has been asking for for years.”

Council members said at their meeting Tuesday they were had questions about why the Tasers were never purchased. No police officials were in attendance to answer. However, one of them told News 4 they were part of $1.6 million in department budget cuts this year, as COVID-19 wreaked havoc on the city’s budget.

Mayor Byron Brown eluded to that when he was asked about Tasers on Monday.

“It was not in the police department budget,” Brown said. “There has been a lot of talk about the department budget. It is important to note that the budget was cut for the police department by $1.6 million this year.”

But Pridgen said he wasn’t aware Tasers were part of the cuts.

“This is not anything we can be quiet about,” he said. “If the Tasers are not on the streets because of budget concerns, this common council should have been made aware and we were not.”

At their meeting, the council unanimously approved a resolution calling for the immediate purchase of Tasers. Pridgen said if the Taser’s can’t be purchased, he wants to be told the reason.

Budget

Perfect Attendance Incentive

2018-2019- $20,057

2019-2020- $838,239

2021-2022- $786,522