

BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS  
MINUTES

February 11, 2013

- PRESENT: Commissioner Earl Gosse, Chair  
Commissioner Micki Ruth, Vice Chair  
Commissioner Michael Moreash  
Commissioner Phillip Read  
Commissioner Linda Mosher  
Commissioner Tim Outhit  
Commissioner Barry Dalrymple
- REGRETS: Deputy Chief Bill Moore, Halifax Regional Police
- STAFF: Chief Jean-Michel Blais  
Deputy Chief Chris McNeil, Halifax Regional Police  
Inspector Dennis Daley, RCMP  
Sergeant R. Scott Macdonald  
Mr. Greg Keefe, Director of Finance and Information,  
Communications & Technology/CFO  
Mr. Matt Godwin, Legislative Assistant

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 12:29 p.m. in the Meisner Room, Police Headquarters.

**2. Presentation to Superintendent Don Spicer (Retired).**

Mr. Don Spicer was presented by the Chair, Commissioner Gosse, with the Diamond Jubilee Medal. Chief Blais offered his thanks and gratitude to Superintendent Spicer.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 14, 2013**

The minutes of January 14, 2013 were before the Board.

**MOVED by Commissioner Ruth, seconded by Commissioner Read that the minutes of January 14, 2013 be approved as presented. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**4. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS**

**MOVED by Commissioner Moreash, seconded by Commissioner Read that the agenda be accepted as presented. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**5. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES – NONE**

**6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE**

**7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS**

**7.1 Email Regarding Officer Use of bicycles – Councillor Mosher**

Commissioner Mosher distributed correspondence forwarded to her from Councillor Watts.

**7.2 Phillip Larkin, Solicitor, on behalf of the Halifax Regional Police Association**

The letter was forwarded by mail to all Board of Police Commissioners and referenced the legal requirement that discussions on the budget be held in public.

The Chair indicated that the discussion will be held in public in accordance with the Police Act.

Commissioner Dalrymple commented that he found the note offensive and threatening.

In addition to the above, representatives from the Halifax Regional Police Association distributed three questions to each Commissioner pertaining to the budget discussions.

Commissioner Read indicated they cannot answer these questions until the budget is tabled.

## **8. HRP Budget**

The Proposed Halifax Regional Police 2013/14 Operating Budget Situation (Summary) was before the Board.

Chief Blais offered introductory remarks, indicating he is pleased to see members' interest in the process.

This is a compensation driven budget consistent with other jurisdictions in Canada. The 2011/12 budget witnessed an increase to 92.2 per cent compensation for sworn and civilian employees. This figure has risen to 95.51 for 2012/13. There has been significant, compounded growth in compensation budgetary spending in recent years.

The 2012/13 budget has a net target of \$69,913,700.00, with the possibility of a slight surplus or deficit. Staff have spent a great deal of time looking at various scenarios and there are service enhancements included in this proposed budget as well as efficiencies. With respect to wages, members of the HRP PA will see an increase of 3.7287 per cent. The Chief elaborated on other pressures outlined in the budget.

The federal government is also making cuts and four individuals seconded to the RCMP will be returning to the HRP.

With respect to service enhancements, the Chief indicated an emphasis on Information Technology (IT) and the witness protection program. In most jurisdictions, the provincial government funds most elements of these programs, but in Nova Scotia, HRM funds this. He also notes that Overtime and Court Time have been historically underfunded.

The Chief then gave an overview of efficiencies, highlighting LT fleet rentals which will no longer be done on a long-term basis, changes to senior management, leaving positions vacant and the possibility of converting sworn positions to civilian positions. In addition, the Board of Police budget will now be administered by the CAO.

The Chief emphasizes that this budget does not affect front-line policing and no one will lose their job. His predecessor, Chief Frank Beazley, iterated that this kind of compensation growth is risky. Staff have investigated every opportunity to find efficiencies without effecting the front-line, but they have striven to achieve this.

Commissioner Ruth asked the Chief to elaborate on the conversion from sworn positions.

The Chief advised that the total, annual compensation for a first-class constable is over \$103,000. He notes there are between thirteen and seven positions which could feasibly be civilianized, such as the public information office, but this presents challenges.

Commissioner Dalrymple noted his displeasure with information leaks which took place recently regarding this matter. He is glad to see no frontline positions are being lost. He would like to see more background on manager-office relationship, court overtime and upcoming fleet and capital cost projections over the next couple of years.

The Chief is unaware of the origin of the leak. With respect to the budget process, the Chief asked his staff to provide four possible scenarios and that this scenario is most in line with his objectives. There is an issue with long-term business capacity, but that his staff are pursuing a longer-term plan to address infrastructure requirements, including the headquarters. HRP does not have a strategic plan yet, but staff have volunteered to look at the long-term vision, led by Deputy Chief Bill Moore.

Commissioner Dalrymple thanked the Chief for his response but not that other business units are providing longer term projections and in the future he would like to see this from HRP.

Deputy Chief McNeil advised staff have three year projections and noted it is very difficult to compare policing per capita.

The Chief indicated his preference to have a ten year plan and would like to bring the Board in during the process of building one. With respect to staffing, the history indicates that there was no hiring done in the 1980s and so there is a glut of senior officers and they will be leaving HRP soon. The recently hired officers are the future of the HRP and it doesn't make sense to let them go.

Commissioner Mosher asked about auxiliary policing and the Chief advised there are best practices in Winnipeg and Toronto where there is a robust policing program. However, reports from the United Kingdom suggest that staffing issues there have cast doubt over the program's effectiveness. In HRM exploration is embryonic.

Commissioner Mosher raised the case of British Columbia with respect to severance pay and the RCMP as a possible concern, but Inspector Daley noted that he does not have the specific rate as the relationship is with HRM and the Department of Justice. They are better placed to provide that information.

With respect to the investigation of officers, Commissioner Mosher asked about cost recovery.

Deputy Chief McNeil advised a full-time officer is seconded to this program, but HRP have not been asked by the province to offer additional support to this program.

Commissioner Mosher questioned staff on the witness protection program. Deputy Chief McNeil advised, when someone in Nova Scotia enters the program, it is up to the municipality to fund the new start in life and this funding may last for up to 24 months. He further noted HRP can discuss funding options with the Province.

Commissioner Mosher noted she had asked about red-light cameras and speed cameras in 2006. Rather than using first-class officers with radar guns, their experience may be better used elsewhere. We should be pursuing these traffic solutions.

Deputy Chief McNeil noted there are large upfront costs to these options, but pursuing a pilot with the Province is an option.

Commissioner Mosher indicated she would rather see officers pursuing more serious crimes and Deputy Chief McNeil advised there is value in the cameras and the HRP has supported them at intersections.

The Chief noted in Winnipeg that it was phased in over several years and it took time to see a cost recovery. A comprehensive communications plan was important.

Commissioner Mosher questioned staff on the cost increase for the RCMP, which will be a significant issue for the municipality. The Chair noted in response that the RCMP piece is going to Council and that this information is not known yet. However, the CFO committed to providing information if available.

The Chair noted, with respect to the witness protection program, that we can't impact this year, but it should be raised again. Deputy Chief McNeil noted this is a matter that can be pursued and it can also be addressed by the Nova Scotia Association of Police Boards.

Commissioner Read referenced the letter introduced under correspondence regarding policing and bicycles.

The Chair noted that the item was an issue last year and that the Board considers public opinion and retained this item in the budget. The Chief noted bicycles remain a part of the Force's equipment.

Inspector Daley indicated the RCMP have a robust summer program for bicycles and they will not be reducing this component.

Commissioner Ruth requested clarification on court time enhancement and Deputy Chief McNeil responded that this commitment is to bring the item back to balance.

The Chief notes, regarding court time, that there is a limit on officers providing testimony in only two cases per evening. While crime has gone down in HRM over the years, case complexity has gone up and this increases the amount of time officers and staff have to spend on this component of policing.

Councillor Dalrymple suggested the time has come for Regional Council to lend its weight to addressing rising costs as a function of Court Time. He argued that police are being inhibited from expending resources elsewhere due to the increasing complexity of the court system. He also suggested the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities could play a role here as well.

The Chair noted this was one of the Board objectives last year and that the previous Mayor was pushing for this. He advises the Board consider this at another meeting as its one of the largest expenses after salaries.

The Chair asked for comments from the Board on the direction for this budget item.

Commissioner Read noted he would like to see the complete budget lines, not just the summary. Staff noted they have the material, but it is not present at the meeting.

Commissioner Read indicated he is not informed enough to provide any further comment and Commissioners Moreash and Dalrymple agreed.

Deputy Chief McNeil suggested a special meeting to address only the budget.

Commissioner Read expressed a desire to review this information before the meeting and staff indicated they would provide this by week's end.

A meeting on February 25, 2013 can be set for an open meeting on the budget.

With respect to the RCMP, the Chair advised that if they have budget information they are welcome to attend, but if not there is no requirement.

Regarding information from Justice, Mr. Keefe, Chief Financial Officer, noted he will bring forward information on the RCMP piece.

Councillor Outhit noted that other business units are bringing forward several budget options, including one which does not lead to a tax increase as directed by Council.

Mr. Keefe advised his staff sent out budget expectations for every unit and were asked to provide a flat budget. Councillor Outhit repeated that this option has to be provided before Council.

**MOVED by Commissioner Moreash, seconded by Commissioner Read, that the HRP Budget item be deferred to the February 25, 2013 meeting of the Board of Police Commissioners. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

## **9. REPORTS**

### **9.1 Staff**

### **9.1.1 RCMP Reports**

The January 2013 RCMP Reports were before the Board.

Inspector Daley points to Operation Breech. This is a joint operation that actively checks in on known offenders. There has been an increase in charges related to breeches, but that the majority of known offenders are abiding by their programs. The Inspector further details the Repeat Calls for Service Report with a view to reducing calls per service and to intervene in issues before they escalate.

With respect to pedestrian accidents, there were 35 accidents in RCMP areas and 15 of these were related to parking lot accidents.

**MOVED by Commissioner Ruth, seconded by Commissioner Outhit that the January 2013 RCMP reports be accepted. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

### **9.1.2 HRP Reports**

The January 2013 HRP Reports were before the Board.

The Chief indicated the reports are as submitted.

**MOVED by Councillor Moreash, seconded by Commissioner Read that the January 2013 HRP Reports be accepted. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

### **9.1.3 Public Safety Update - Sergeant R. Scott Macdonald**

The February 2013 Public Safety Update was before the Board.

Sergeant MacDonald would like to go into more detail on the Mayor's Roundtable on Violence and the 64 recommendations at another time and notes there are some initiatives which have been completed and some which are still ongoing.

Councillor Outhit indicated his support for the pedestrian crosswalk initiative and noted his colleagues, including Councillor Craig, are looking forward to this. He asked for confirmation that officers at intersections aren't just there to ticket J-walkers.

Deputy McNeil responded that tickets for J-walking are rare, but more common are tickets for failing to yield. He noted that drivers and pedestrians have a responsibility to ensure a safe environment.

Commissioner Outhit noted that much of what was taught to children of his generation about pedestrian safety seems to have drifted. He further noted that street paints are not reflective enough and should be more like Florida and Europe.



Commissioner Read asked about the prioritization of the Mayor's Roundtable on Violence at Council and the Chief indicated this item is an ongoing priority for Mayor Savage.

#### **9.1.4 Dashboard Reports**

Commissioner Read asked about the timing for the Crime-Mapping website and the Chief indicated the launch date is February 14, 2013. Five types of crimes will be listed.

Commissioner Dalrymple noted that he has viewed the outcome of this initiative and recommends others to do the same as he believes this will be of great interest to residents.

Commissioner Read asked if pedestrian-related statistics could be reported as well and Deputy McNeil noted this is possible. Anything collected can conceivably be reported.

Over time, there may be any number of other additions we want to make for the site and Inspector Daley noted there will be a public feedback mechanism.

A discussion further ensued on this point.

Commissioner Outhit asked who the targeted user for the service will be and staff suggested home-buyers will likely be frequent users.

#### **9.2 Commissioners**

Commissioner Ruth committed to raising the witness protection program at an upcoming meeting of the Nova Scotia Association of Police Boards.

Deputy McNeil raised the money set aside for the Canadian Association of Police Boards is attached to this budget year and it should be apportioned soon. Commissioner Ruth indicated she will raise this as well.

Commissioner Dalrymple notes that Council must approve the budget put forward today and was displeased to see discussions regarding cuts taking place before Council had seen the budget.

A discussion ensued on the process for the adoption of the HRP budget.

Commissioner Outhit noted Council can send a budget back for changes, but its capacity to change details is limited.

Commissioner Mosher was pleased to see the data on pedestrian safety and would like to see the same from the HRP. She would like to see divisional commanders working with Councillors to target problem areas.

Councillor Outhit is still concerned about overtime and what more can be done to hire more permanent employees rather than paying out overtime.

The Chief responded that his staff need the flexibility to action new information, which is often time sensitive, and when this occurs is not predictable. In some years homicides are much higher than others and this increases the need for investigations.

Deputy Chief McNeil asked that items for the budget discussion be sent to him in advance.

The Chair clarifies that the date of the next regular meeting is March 18, 2013.

**MOVED by Commissioner Read, seconded by Commissioner Outhit that meeting move In Camera. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**10. ADDED ITEMS – NONE**

**11. IN CAMERA**

**11.1 Approval of the Minutes.**

This item was discussed In Camera.

**11.2 Personnel**

This item was discussed In Camera.

**12. NEXT MEETING DATE – February 25, 2013**

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:01 p.m.

Matt Godwin  
Legislative Assistant