

BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES

May 13, 2013

PRESENT:

Commissioner Micki Ruth, Chair
Commissioner Phillip Read, Vice Chair
Commissioner Michael Moreash
Commissioner Fred Honsberger
Commissioner Linda Mosher
Commissioner Barry Dalrymple
Commissioner Tim Outhit

STAFF:

Chief Jean-Michel Blais
Chief Superintendent Roland Wells, OIC, RCMP
Inspector Dennis Daley, RCMP
Sergeant R. Scott Macdonald
Ms. Marian Tyson, Acting-Director, Legal Services
Mr. Matt Godwin, Legislative Assistant

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	CALL TO ORDER.....	3
2.	Swearing In – Mr. Fred Honsberger	3
3.	APPROVAL OF MINUTES – April 8, 2013	3
4.	APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS.....	3
5.	BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES – NONE.....	3
6.	CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE.....	3
6.1	Social Media – Theresa Ruth and Lauren Leal from HRP Public Relations	3
7.	CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS	4
8.	REPORTS	4
8.1	Staff	4
8.1.1	RCMP Reports	4
8.1.2	HRP Reports.....	5
8.1.3	Public Safety Update - Sergeant R. Scott MacDonald	5
8.1.4	Court Time – Marion Tyson, Acting Director, Legal Services	7
8.2	Commissioners	8
8.2.1	Updates.....	8
8.2.2	CAPB Conference.....	8
9.	ADDED ITEMS – NONE	9
10.	IN CAMERA – NONE	9
11.	NEXT MEETING DATE – June 10, 2013	9
12.	ADJOURNMENT	9

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 12:35 p.m. in the Meisner Room, Police Headquarters.

2. Swearing In – Mr. Fred Honsberger

Ms. Marian Tyson, Acting Director, Legal Services swore in Mr. Fred Honsberger as a Commissioner of the Board. Introductions amongst the meeting's attendees followed.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – April 8, 2013

The minutes of April 8, 2013 were before the Board.

MOVED by Commissioner Moreash, seconded by Commissioner Read that the minutes of April 8, 2013 be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

Additions:

- Chief Blais: Commendations
- Canadian Association of Police Boards (CAPB) Communications
- Commissioner Mosher: Correspondence.

MOVED by Commissioner Dalrymple, seconded by Commissioner Read that the agenda be accepted as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

5. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES – NONE

6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE

6.1 Social Media – Theresa Ruth and Lauren Leal from HRP Public Relations

Ms. Teresa Rath and Ms. Lauren Leal, from Halifax Regional Police (HRP) Public Relations, presented to the Board of Police Commissioners via a powerpoint presentation.

Ms. Rath gave background on the public relations division at HRP and described the impetus in 2009 for the HRP to become an active participant in social media, which launched with the 'Pixels for Pistols' firearm amnesty campaign.

Commissioner Outhit entered the meeting at 12:48 p.m.

Ms. Leal noted that social media is now part of officer training and it has become an important component in recent high-profile cases. She gave examples of the HRP's presence in social media, including through Twitter, Facebook and Youtube.

A Traffic Officer gave his experience on his use of social media, noting that it has been largely positive and serves to generate discussion among the public.

Councillor Mosher asked if staff are communicating issues proactively through social media to educate the public, with Ms. Leal responding staff are doing this and would welcome input from Commissioners.

7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

Commissioner Mosher referenced a confidential piece of correspondence received from a resident and asked that it be given to the City Solicitor via the Legislative Assistant.

A discussion ensued on this point, with Commissioner Mosher indicating that the piece can come back to the Board, but only after it has been reviewed by Legal Services and the personal information redacted.

8. REPORTS

8.1 Staff

8.1.1 RCMP Reports

The April RCMP Reports were before the Board.

Chief Superintendent Roland Wells provided the monthly dashboard report to the Board, noting with emphasis the upswing in property crime during the summer months and that his resources will be targeted to addressing this trend.

Commissioner Ruth asked about the enforcement of lower speed-limits in school zones and if the reduction in speed is required without the presence of a child, with Chief Superintendent Wells responding that it is assumed children are present during school hours.

Superintendent Daley noted there is a grey period during after-hour activities, with the Chief indicating that HRP and RCMP have raised the nebulosity of this legislation with the Province.

Chief Superintendent Wells drew the Board's attention to the reduction in false alarms.

Commissioner Moreash asked if there is a distinction in the data between automated calls and those generated by persons, with Superintendent Daley responding that this

item refers to self-generated false alarms. He further noted that calls from the public account for 30-35,000 calls, of which 6% are false alarms.

Commissioner Outhit asked if staff redirect more resources to deal with spikes in property crime, such as more park patrols and the reallocation of Community Response Officers (CRO).

Chief Superintendent Wells responded that officers identify hotspots and coordinate a number of expanded responses, which might include allocation of CROs, bike patrols, citizen patrols and Neighbourhood Watch.

MOVED by Commissioner Dalrymple, seconded by Commissioner Read that the April RCMP reports be received by the Board. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

8.1.2 HRP Reports

The April 2013 HRP Reports were before the Board.

The Chief circulated a dashboard focusing on human resources, with an emphasis on female and cultural community trends within the HRP.

Commissioner Ruth noted that visible minorities are not here, with the Chief responding that there is no legislative requirement in Canada for employers to acquire this type of information, but the HRP has completed a survey requesting the voluntary provision of this information and are waiting on the results.

Commissioner Dalrymple congratulated the HRP and the RCMP on the steady decline in crime across the board.

MOVED by Commissioner Moreash, seconded by Commissioner Read that the April HRP reports be received by the Board. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

8.1.3 Public Safety Update - Sergeant R. Scott MacDonald

The May Public Safety Update was before the Board.

Sergeant MacDonald began by thanking the Board and staff for their assistance during sexual assault awareness month and circulated original copies of the posters being distributed to various locations.

Sergeant MacDonald reported on the success of the prescription drug drop-off day, which collected more than 80 litres of pills. He thanked the four pharmacists and a pharmacy student for their help in this endeavour.

MOVED by Commissioner Moreash, seconded by Commissioner Read that the May Public Safety Update be received by the Board. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Sergeant MacDonald provided a briefing on the external review currently underway of the Halifax Regional School Board as related to the Rehtaeh Parsons case. Part of the review will involve examining supports available from the police for victims of bullying, cyber-bullying and sexual violence and the extent of police coordination with the HRSB. The HRP, RCMP and HRSB have had established documents for a number of years which detail their sharing of information and their cooperative response to incidents. These School Response Protocol and Sharing of Information MOU documents will likely be shared with the review panel in the coming weeks.

Sergeant MacDonald provided detail on the Youth Advocate Program, which the Board will assume responsibility for following an April 23, 2013 Regional Council decision. The program was a federally funded private project providing intensive support for youth between ages 9 and 14. This funding came to an end and has since been operating for two years under the Community and Recreation Services HRM business unit.

Ms. Tyson noted that Legal Services considered the funding mechanism for this program and deemed that it is not appropriate to have it funded by an HRM business unit, as it is a crime prevention program and should be a police initiative.

Councillor Dalrymple noted that the project comes with a budget, with Sergeant MacDonald indicating that the budget provides for roughly \$526,000.00 and eight full-time equivalents.

Commissioner Read asked who will be responsible for managing the program, with Ms. Tyson responding that its administration would be through the HRP and RCMP, but it would be overseen by the Board.

Commissioner Moreash asked for further clarification of the Board's role in the oversight of the program, with Ms. Tyson responding that the Board's oversight role for this program will not differ from its existing role in overseeing other operations of the HRP and RCMP.

The Chief clarified that this program will operate like all others. In this case the money will come from the HRP's budget and will be then transferred to Community and Recreation Services, which administers the program. The program functions well as it is and there is no need to change this. The Chief offered to report monthly on the program.

Commissioner Moreash asked what the funding accountability arrangements will look like and specifically if there will be funds expended externally, with the Chief responding that the arrangement will be the same as any other program in HRM and there will be no external expenditures

Commissioner Honsberger referenced a recent provincial program and asked what had become of it, with Sergeant MacDonald responding that the program was a pilot that was discontinued.

Councillor Outhit asked if there is any indication as to how program recipients will view the program, with the Chief responding that he has considered this and has not received any indication of reluctance from participants or families given this change.

Commissioner Outhit asked if there has been any information on the success of the 'Distractions Kill' campaign, with Sergeant MacDonald responding that he can get back to the Board on this.

MOVED by Commissioner Dalrymple, seconded by Commissioner Mosher that the Board of Police Commissioners accept the Regional Council recommendation, dated April 23, 2013 that it assume responsibility for the Youth Advocate Review Program.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Commissioner Ruth asked if the Board could get a report from staff in six months' time on feedback from clients and employers regarding the program. The Board can revisit the matter at its November, 2013 meeting.

Commissioner Read suggested the program manager be invited to speak to the Board regarding the program.

8.1.4 Court Time – Marion Tyson, Acting Director, Legal Services

Ms. Tyson was asked to lend her experience and expertise to comment on approaches to make the court system more efficient in lieu of the significant expenditures shouldered by law enforcement with respect to the time spent by officers at court.

Ms. Tyson advised that the Board and Regional Council approach reform carefully before approaching the Province with requests for reforms. It would take a significant amount of resources for HRM to build a municipal court system and research would have to be undertaken before cost-effectiveness can be determined. There is no guarantee that doing this would make the system more efficient for officers, as Judges and Justices of the Peace are independent. Ultimately, the system works interdependently and finding efficiencies requires the coming together of all parties. The Justice Forum, which has representatives from the Bar Society, senior police, the Chief Prosecutor, among others, has committees working to improve system efficiencies. These committees can hear concerns and issues.

Commissioner Mosher thanked Ms. Tyson for the presentation.

Commissioners Mosher and Outhit exited the meeting at 2:16 p.m.

Commissioner Dalrymple indicated the amount of time wasted at Court by officers is unacceptable, and further noted that the Board has been more concerned with finding efficiencies than generating revenues.

Ms. Tyson noted that former Mayor Peter Kelly raised this issue with the Minister of Justice and there was discussion on whether a municipal court would save law enforcement time and money. The Justice Forum is also looking at the use of evidence certificates.

Commissioner Moreash asked if a report has ever been produced regarding the municipal court system and efficiency, as this would be useful background. He also asked what the degree of independence is with respect to the Justices of the Peace.

Ms. Tyson indicated that Justices of the Peace are not independent in the same fashion as judges, but that this is being disputed.

Commissioner Ruth asked that this be added to the upcoming agenda, with the Chief indicating that he would look into the existence of reports on court time.

8.2 Commissioners

8.2.1 Updates

8.2.2 CAPB Conference

The Chair noted that the Canadian Association of Police Boards conference will be this August in Saskatoon. She expressed an interest in attending and would report back to the Board on the meeting. The focus this year is on mental health.

The Chair further noted that it is HRM's responsibility to host the final conference breakfast with a view to encouraging participants to attend the 2014 conference in Halifax. She has been in contact with Tourism Nova Scotia regarding promotional material.

On another matter, the Chief encouraged members to look through this month's Blueline magazine, as a Halifax is highlighted in a number of entries.

The Chief also requested his commendations item be deferred.

The Chair asked that the CAPB communications item be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

Ms. Tyson added that HRM has assigned a lawyer to work on efficiency items with the Province and she offered to request he/she attend a Board meeting to speak to the issue.

9. **ADDED ITEMS – NONE**
10. **IN CAMERA – NONE**
11. **NEXT MEETING DATE – June 10, 2013**
12. **ADJOURNMENT**

MOVED by Commissioner Read, seconded by Commissioner Honsberger that the meeting be adjourned.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:33 p.m.

Matt Godwin
Legislative Assistant