

Board of Police Commissioners
MINUTES

December 10, 2012

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

STAFF: Chief Jean-Michel Blais
Deputy Chief Chris McNeil, Halifax Regional Police
Deputy Chief Bill Moore, Halifax Regional Police
Inspector Dennis Daley, RCMP
Sergeant R. Scott Macdonald
Donna Davis, Chief Information Officer
Chris MacDonald, ICT Delivery, Enterprise Applications
Superintendent Frank Foran, OIC
Mr. Richard Butts, CAO
Mr. Matt Godwin, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 12:32 p.m. in the Meisner Room, Police Headquarters.

2. Swearing in and Welcoming of New Members

Deputy Chief Chris McNeil swore in the Councillors Dalrymple, Mosher and Outhit.

The new Commissioners introduced themselves to the Board.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – November 19, 2012

The minutes of November 19, 2012 were before the Board.

MOVED by Commissioner Moreash, seconded by Commissioner Ruth that the minutes of November 19, 2012 be approved as presented. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

Additions:

9.3 Public Notification – Commissioner Ruth

The Chair requested item 9.2 HRM Crime Mapping Website Development be moved up in the agenda.

MOVED by Commissioner Moreash, 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 – November 19, 2012

6.1 HRP Budget

This item was initially brought forward by former Commissioner Sue Uteck.

Chief Blais presented the Board with two documents: Halifax Regional Police – Operating Budget Update and 2012/13 Operating Budget Submission.

Chief Blais spoke to these documents. He noted the second document indicates a net deficit of roughly \$56,000.00 with additional costs, but noted there are also some potential offsets. The document is presented for the study of the Board.

This document will also be presented at upcoming meetings in 2013.

Commissioner Read indicated that the format is a significant improvement.

The Chief indicated he is open to suggestions for improvements.

The Chair asked as to the process if the HRP misses its budget target.

The CAO advised that he is aware of the budgetary situation.

The Chief noted this process will begin again in the next fiscal year.

7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

7.1 Correspondence

7.1.1 Executive Seminar on National Police Compensation and its Challenges

An invitation to the Executive Seminar on National Police Compensation and its Challenges was before the Board.

The Chief advised that he will be attending this conference and, given that it has a long waiting list, will likely be the only participant from HRM. He committed to taking good notes at the seminar and will distribute these to the Board. He also noted that this conference coincides with another conference on sustainability and policing on January 16th and 17th. He also committed to providing an update on this conference.

The Chair inquired as to whether or not another member of the Board might be able to attend the conference on policing and sustainability, given that the National Association of Police Boards is a partner. He requested more information on the conference so that the Board may make a decision about participation.

The Chief committed to providing more information about the conference through his office.

The Chair indicated there is likely money in the budget for this expenditure.

8. REPORTS

8.1 Staff

8.1.1 RCMP Reports

The November 2012 RCMP reports were before the Board.

Commissioner Dalrymple queried on maternity leave.

Superintendent Foran indicated this is the number of officers for the month of November.

8.1.2 HRP Reports

The November 2012 HRP reports were before the Board.

The Chief indicated that his staff are always seeking input from the Board on the presentation of information.

Commissioner Mosher requested information on officers being paid but are not performing duties in HRM.

The CAO indicated there are staff who we pay, but are working outside HRM.

Councillor Outhit further asked if there are staffing shortages as a result of secondments and the Chief indicated that the dashboard document will answer some of these questions.

Commissioner Dalrymple noted he is impressed with the level of training and asked if staff are receiving the necessary level of training.

Chief Blais pointed to the continued use of the Canadian Police Knowledge Network online portal which has been a great asset with respect to training, but also noted the limits of online training.

Deputy Chief McNeil indicated more capacity would always be beneficial, but a number of training exercises are conducted with the RCMP and regional training does take place when capacity permits.

Deputy Chief Moore added to this by indicating trainers are often brought in for block training to manage expenses.

8.1.3 Public Safety Update

The December 2012 Spotlight on Public Safety was before the Board.

Sergeant MacDonald indicated that he is new to the position and the Board and welcomes feedback on format and frequency.

Sergeant MacDonald noted he is responsible for community engagement and gave details on Halifax Connects, which benefits the homeless, and noted staff attended Jessie's Day, which speaks to suicide and raises money for Kids-Help-Phone.

He addressed some themes in the report including homelessness; the online publication of police reports; traffic issues and sustainability initiatives.

Sergeant MacDonald highlighted nominations for HRM volunteer recognition and Operation Christmas Endeavour to prevent driving under the influence over the holidays. He thanked communications staff for helping to bring awareness to this issue.

Sergeant MacDonald further highlighted the growing use of social media and will continue to expand his use of these platforms.

MOVED by Commissioner Read, seconded by Commissioner Moreash that the December 2012 Public Safety Update be received. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Councillor Outhit spoke to the Citywatch program, which provides excellent cooperation with schools.

Sergeant MacDonald noted this responsibility is not under his purview.

Members requested further information on traffic issues, particularly the relationship between law enforcement and Transportation and Public Works.

Deputy Chief Moore indicated that traffic reports are under the purview of Superintendent Falkingham. His staff are mostly involved on the enforcement side, but when something of concern is observed they do report it and would like to be more proactive in this regard.

Inspector Daley noted that the RCMP are connected with staff at Transportation and Public Works and do identify hotspots for accidents. They have a goal of reducing injuries by 5 per cent.

Commissioner Mosher noted working with divisional commanders is very helpful. She pointed out that many problems are related to perception and making evidence-based changes is critical. She further noted the importance of having data on accidents and its important HRP provide this data. Accidents are not always speeding issues.

The Chief concurred and he is orienting his staff to emphasize intelligence-led policing and to avoid decisions based on only anecdotes.

Councillor Dalrymple noted issues related to crosswalks are an ongoing issue and a resolution needs to be developed. He would like data on crosswalks and pedestrian accidents.

Councillor Outhit confirmed issues related to crosswalks are an ongoing issue for all Councillors.

The Chair questioned how the Board can get information on this issue and Councillor Dalrymple would like a meeting to go over this data.

Councillor Mosher indicated this is a top-of-mind issue and that certain streets are particularly troubling with respect to crosswalk accidents. She asked about reporting on this data.

Superintendent Foran and Deputy Chief Moore noted they do have yearly traffic calendars and there is a focus on crosswalk safety.

Councillor Mosher noted drivers are not being educated and as a result they are not stopping.

Councillor Outhit requested feedback on the province's recently imposed legislation on speeding in school zones.

The Chief acknowledged that there are issues with respect to evidence and enforcement. He noted he connects with the Minister and Deputy Minister on this issue as it falls under provincial jurisdiction.

On the appointment of Sergeant MacDonald the Chair asked about his relationship with the media and Sergeant MacDonald noted he has released a statement regarding his appointment.

8.1.4 Dashboard Reports

The December HRP Dashboard reports were before the Board.

He requests feedback from members on format and frequency.

The second report tabled, on human resources, he expects to be distributed every four months.

Commissioner Outhit approves of the format, but asks if monthly would be enough.

Superintendent Foran noted he is considering the same approach and can report with a monthly document.

The Chief noted the data indicators will not change from one report to another.

Commissioner Read noted that the level of expertise is not deep enough for reports that are too granular and would like to see trends and improvements be captured. He further noted that these reports have come a long way and monthly may be sufficient. Commissioner Ruth also noted she is interested in trends and with receiving the report monthly. She would like to see gender issues captured, particularly with respect to turnover, so systemic issues can be observed.

The Chief committed to provide the report every two weeks and would take feedback on its frequency.

8.2 Commissioners

The Chair gave background on this section.

The Chair noted that the RCMP has contacted the Board with respect to the selection committee for the Officer in Charge (OIC) position, which has been filled temporarily by Superintendent Foran. Along with the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Commissioner Ruth represents the Board on this committee.

Commissioner Dalrymple noted his approval of the RCMP reaching out beyond its members to advise on the appointment of the OIC.

8.2.1 2013 Meeting Schedule

The proposed 2013 Board of Police Commissioners meeting schedule was before the Board. Discussion ensued on this point and the March meeting was changed to accommodate March Break.

The schedule was accepted as amended.

8.2.2 Discussion of Board Budget

The Chair noted this discussion has been ongoing and there has been a desire to have the Board's budget captured independent of the HRP's budget.

Commissioner Read indicated he has spoken with the CAO on this and gave an overview of the Board's typical expenditures. The budget is normally around \$10,000.00, but will increase for a one-time expenditure on the 2014 Canadian Board of Police Commissioners Conference.

The CAO noted this is not a significant item and the change is a mechanical one.

Operationally, the Chief's Office will continue to manage expenditures.

The following motion captures this change:

MOVED by Commissioner Read, seconded by Commissioner Moreash, that the Board of Police Commissioners operations budget be drawn from the Chief Administrative Officer, and transactional processes continue to be managed by the Office of the Chief of Police.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Inspector Daley called attention to the recent injury of an Officer and reported on his condition. He commended the response from the Halifax Regional Police and Emergency Health Services in their response to this incident.

8.2.3 Updates

9. ADDED ITEMS

9.1 Police Commissioner Badges

The Chief noted that Halifax Board Commissioners are the only Commissioners who receive a police badge. He indicated his desire that Board members be given another form of identification, rather than receive a police badge.

He suggested that, upon retirement from the Board of Police Commissioners, Commissioners receive a badge encased in plastic as a token of thanks for their service.

Commissioner Moreash agreed with the Chief's assessment and suggested business cards might be more practical for Commissioners.

In addition, the Chief noted Commissioners should continue to possess identity for access to HRP headquarters.

Commissioner Ruth agreed with these statements and indicated the importance of Commissioners continuing to have some means of identification in this capacity.

Commissioner Dalrymple supports this approach, as badges will be a target for thefts.

The Chief indicated his office would be willing to provide business cards for those Commissioners desiring them.

9.2 HRM Crime Mapping Website Development (See moved item)

A demonstration of the website was provided for the Board.

Deputy Chief Moore introduced staff who have been responsible for this project.

He indicated the project is about ninety per cent finished. The website will be ready for launch in the new year. Information dissemination in this manner will work better in the public environment.

The project stems from a desire to meet open data standards. The website allows the user to highlight particular areas of HRM and view crime data specific to that area.

The level of granularity does not get to the civic address. It also provides crime prevention tips.

The public will be able to access this website through the HRP website.

Commissioner Dalrymple asked about the maintenance of the data and Deputy Chief Moore indicated this data is maintained by the HRP and is received to its records management system every 24 hours.

Commissioner Ruth asked how old the data is.

Deputy Chief Moore indicated the data presented is refreshed every twenty-four hours and extends back seven days, but can go back further. He emphasized that this is a pilot and that they will be looking for extensive feedback early on to better reflect user preferences. The end user will be the public.

Commissioner Dalrymple noted this initiative responds to an ongoing desire from the public to get more information about these issues.

The Chair noted the viewing at the last meeting of the Calgary Police video “Anatomy of an Investigation” and offered to screen it for those interested following the next Board meeting.

The Chair requested that new Commissioners get their pictures taken at the next meeting of the Board for use in their identification tags.

9.3 Public Notification – Commissioner Ruth

Commissioner Ruth requested information on the disclosure of sex-related crimes given current incidents in the media. She would like to know more about the procedures related to this and wants the Board to feel comfortable with this process.

The Chief committed to provide a presentation at the upcoming January meeting on this subject. The presentation will provide information on the protocol and go through a case study.

The presentation was deferred to the next meeting.

Councillor Outhit queried as to whether or not this information might be shared with the rest of Council. The Chief indicated we can share this with Council and will include a briefing note to that end. He is looking forward to the new Commissioners acting as an important conduit between the Board and Council.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE – January 14, 2013

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:17 p.m.

Matt Godwin
Legislative Assistant