

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS MINUTES SPECIAL MEETING - AUGUST 27, 2002

PRESENT: Comm. S. David Bryson, Chairman
Comm. Bob Harvey
Comm. Steve Adams
Comm. Eartha Monard
Comm. Greg North
Comm. Bruce Hetherington

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. George McLellan, Chief Administrative Officer
Deputy Chief Bob Barss, HRP
Deputy Chief Frank Beazley, HRP
Supt. Tony Burbridge, HRP
Supt. Stan Ferguson, RCMP
Inspector Vern Fraser, RCMP
Dave Muirhead, Director, RCMP, Ottawa
Ms. Joanne Marriott, Police and Victim Service, Dept. of Justice
Mr. Weldon Myers, Finance, Department of Justice
Mr. Alex Steves, Director, Police and Victim Services, Dept. of Justice
Mr. Bob Purcell, NS Department of Justice
Ms. Betty MacDonald, Manager, Financial Planning Services
Ms. Lynne Le Boutillier, Assistant Municipal Clerk

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The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 10:05 a.m., Council Chambers, City Hall.

1.0 **PRESENTATION OF THE POLICE SERVICES STUDY - FINAL REPORT - PERIVALE + TAYLOR**

- C Final Report of the Police Services Study conducted by Perivale + Taylor dated August 2002 entitled "Partners in Policing - The Halifax Regional Police Service, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Community, 'Taking Care of Business' Together".
- C Back grounder to the Police Study
- C Summary of the Final Report of the Study
- C List of Recommendations

A special meeting of the Board of Police Commissioners was held to hear a presentation on the final report of the Police Services Study conducted by Perivale + Taylor.

In his opening remarks, the Chair welcomed David Muirhead, RCMP, Ottawa and various representatives of the Provincial Department of Justice in attendance. He requested that Mr. Keith Taylor of the consulting firm Perivale + Taylor briefly explain the report, focusing on aspects related to the Board. The Commissioners were encouraged to pose questions to Mr. Taylor during the course of his presentation.

In his presentation, Mr. Taylor referred to the following:

- C The study team involved in the three month study consisted of individuals with police, academic and private industry experience.
- C In order for the resultant report to be comprehensive and understandable to the general public, it is quite lengthy.
- C The majority of the report deals with the two police agencies and identification of duplications and gaps in their services and improving the relationship between the HRP and RCMP.
- C Reference was made to the community based policing orientation of both, which is a more involved process than working reactively.
- C The Province is a major stakeholder.
- C The complex and pivotal role the Board of Police Commissioners plays, particularly related to oversight.
- C The uniqueness of HRM in Canada being policed by two agencies, HRP and RCMP.
- C Given the different perspective and history of both agencies, the role the Board plays in mediating and coordination.
- C The study focuses on the role of the Board in planning and reporting.

- C The role of the MOU, Bylaws and the Police Act in defining the powers and authority of the Board. The Board currently has different powers with regard to the HRP versus RCMP. Recommendations were formulated against this backdrop.

The Chair, reflecting on his observations based on his three year experience with the Board, felt it had functioned basically as a forum, where police officers report on a regular basis for the sake of transparency and in lieu of going to Council. He felt to this extent the Board worked reasonably well. The Board did not do any monitoring or planning and does not develop budgets. As for the mediating role, the Board had not performed this function very much. The Board acted in a sensitizing fashion.

Mr. Taylor felt that acting as a forum is a somewhat passive function. Referring to the Board's role in budgeting, Mr. Taylor felt the Board should not simply receive information and pass on, but be initiating planning processes. The Board is the voice of the community and thus needs to plan an appropriate response to community needs and report.

During the ensuing discussion of how the Board should assume a more assertive role, Mr. Taylor acknowledged that more time would have to be devoted by the Board members and more training will be required. To assist in the process, it is recommended that a resource person be hired by the Board. The importance of the Board being seen as independent was stressed by Mr. Taylor.

Resuming his review, Mr. Taylor made further reference to the following:

- C Since the RCMP is a Federal force which also performs local functions, there is a pull on this agency. The consultants would prefer to see more orientation at the local level, i.e. a better understanding of local needs. He noted that some of the RCMP's information was not available at the local level. It was felt that the Board could play a role in helping pull the RCMP around to focus on HRM.

- C Some data not available or its incompatibility prevented a statistical analysis. It was noted that data was also missing on per capita costs for RCMP policing. It had to be obtained from Ottawa. The consultants felt policing agencies should be doing calculations and submitting to the Board. In addition some day to day data, involving, for example, response time was not available. It was felt that having this data available was important in understanding how the agencies worked. Reference was made to the UK having standards which are very comprehensive. It was noted that since this was pointed out, it is felt that the Municipal Police Unit of the RCMP in Ottawa will likely be providing such data to the local level. Supt. Ferguson confirmed that action is being taken to remedy the situation. Mr. Taylor concurred noting the two agencies have been very open and responsive to the ideas resulting from the study and some changes have been made.

- C The Board take a more critical role versus its present passive role.
- C The province needs to develop and provide standards. These may come out of the drafting of the White Paper. At present the two agencies, in some situations, are working with different standards and independently which causes problems. A set of standards would improve this situation and should be applied province wide.

Comm. Monard reflecting on the larger role envisaged for the Board, did not feel competent or capable of fulfilling this role with the training members had. Mr. Taylor contended that while the members are not in a position to ask complex questions re policing, the members had an understanding of the community. The report essentially is endeavouring to give the Board license to ask more questions. In this regard, some slight changes to the Police Act and By-law are being suggested. It is recognized that in order to ask sophisticated questions, training is required.

A general discussion followed on how training might be improved on governance and how policing works. For example, reference was made to the need to update the binder provided to Board members. Active training would also be promoted, over just the provision of reference materials as contained in the binder. Mr. Taylor noted the value in attending CACOLE (Canadian Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement) conferences.

Comm. Monard noted that the N.S. Association of Police Boards provides professional development through three workshop sessions on the role of police commissioners.

Reflecting on his position as regional councillor, Comm. Hetherington noted that council members on the Board likely asked more questions as they get more public input.

Comm. Monard commented that the Board had a very low profile in the community. A discussion followed on the pros and cons of having a low profile. The general public does not know of the Board's existence or what it does. She felt that the proposed resource person could be a contact point between the public and the Board. Public education might be required.

Caution was expressed that high profile Police Commissions are also very political and while the members may wish to raise the Board's profile, they may desire to not raise it too high.

Reflecting on the address of the key note speaker, an RCMP Commissioner, at the recent CAPB Conference in Ottawa, Comm. Harvey recalled he had encouraged Board members to ask difficult questions either to the RCMP or municipal police services. The importance of Boards being accountable and knowledgeable was referred to. However, it was emphasized

by the speaker that this doesn't necessarily require an in-depth knowledge but bringing forth the community's expectations.

Having not had enough time to digest the study, Comm. Monard questioned if the study suggested a review process or monitoring. Mr. Taylor indicated that in the conclusion of the report, it is recommended that the recommendations be included in the strategic planning process of HRM and the agencies. The consultants did not want the recommendations considered on a piecemeal basis and suggested ways to introduce the recommendations and a monitoring process be developed. No time line is provided, however. This would be the responsibility of the HRM and agencies.

Noting that all parties were present, Comm. Hetherington questioned whether any of them saw any problems with the changes being proposed, including the White Paper and Police Act. Deputy Chief Barss noted that some issues surrounding certification will require some work. No major problems were identified.

Referring to recommendations associated with Human Resources, Comm. North questioned, given the RCMP is federally regulated, if there was any opportunity for the Board to take a more proactive role in this regard. Mr. Taylor felt that the Municipal Policing Unit in Ottawa would entertain changes.

The meeting concluded following clarification of what changes the consultants are proposing re the Memorandum of Understanding.

Meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

Lynne LeBoutillier
Assistant Municipal Clerk