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Halifax Regional Council
January 11, 2005

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: *Julia Hencastle*
for Gregory North, Chair, Board of Police Commissioners

DATE: December 15, 2004

SUBJECT: Patrol Officer Security

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

The item was referred to the Board of Police Commissioners from the November 16, 2004 Regional Council Meeting.

BACKGROUND

An information report was provided to the Board at the December 13, 2004 meeting. Following discussion, the Board recommended the report be forwarded to Regional Council for information.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

ALTERNATIVES

None suggested at this time.

ATTACHMENTS

Information Report dated December 8, 2004 from Frank A. Beazley, Chief of Police

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by: Julia Horncastle, Legislative Assistant , Governance and Strategic Initiatives Telephone: 490-4211



Halifax Regional Police
1975 Gottingen Street
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Frank A. Beazley
Chief of Police

Address all correspondence to
The Office of the Chief of Police

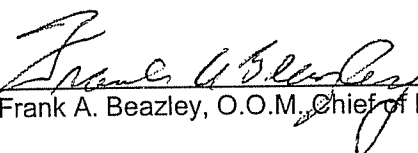
Website
www.police.halifax.ns.ca

*Leading and Partnering
in our Community
to Serve and Protect*

Halifax Regional Board of Police Commissioners
December 13, 2004

TO: Chairman and Members of the
Halifax Regional Board of Police Commissioners

SUBMITTED BY:


Frank A. Beazley, O.O.M., Chief of Police

DATE: December 8, 2004

SUBJECT: Patrol Officer Security

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Item 9.6.1 of the Regional Council meeting of Tuesday, November 16, 2004 was raised by Councillor Sloane and referred to the Board of Police Commissioners for response.

BACKGROUND

Councillor Sloane indicated that concerned residents have raised the issue regarding single police officer patrol in vehicles to her attention. Due to the increasing violence and robberies of cigarettes and even alcohol highjackings, residents are concerned that officers are not "buddied-up", and she concurs that is a safety issue for all officers - male and female.

DISCUSSION

There has been considerable debate in police circles over the years in relation to the utility of one person versus two person police patrol deployment. This debate has traditionally involved a concern for officer safety and police visibility. While officer safety is always a paramount concern of police management, recent citizen surveys and town hall meetings have illustrated an increasing concern in relation to police visibility in the community. Police visibility is a central driver influencing the community's sense of overall security. Exclusive deployment of two officer patrol units has the effect of reducing police visibility in the neighbourhood. In an environment where the effective management of assets is a central theme of HRM, a balance must be struck satisfying the police need for officer safety and the communities need to feel safe and secure in their neighbourhood.

A number of strategies have been deployed to strike a balance between the sometimes conflicting concerns. At any given time within the patrol area policed by HRP, 40% of the patrol units are two-person units. This deployment pattern allows for sufficient two-person units to respond to calls that present acknowledged officer safety concerns. The remaining patrol units can then be allocated to provide a greater visible police presence than would be achieved if all of the patrol units were doubled up. Officer safety is addressed where officers are required to work foot patrol in the Uptown area by maintaining consistent two person foot patrols.

As a standard practice, when a two-person unit is unavailable to attend an acknowledged risk call, two one-person units are dispatched. This practice effectively achieves the aforementioned "buddy system" as well as addressing the officer safety concerns of officers detailed to work alone. As a matter of note, the majority of police calls for service are of the more routine nature, which do not immediately pose a workplace safety concern.

In order to further reduce the risk to all HRM police officers, significant resources are dedicated to the initial cadet and annual officer safety training. Strong emphasis is placed in the areas of threat identification, safe patrol practices and subject control techniques. During the initial phase of employment, new officers are assigned to a experienced patrol member for a minimum six month period. During this time, the new employee is evaluated in relation to workplace performance and safety issues. Continual reference is made to the maintenance of a safe work environment. Tactics are developed and reinforced which mitigate against unsafe work practices.

Recent technological acquisitions have been made which have further promoted the safety of all patrol officers. Hardware installed in all patrol vehicles along with a new radio communication system allow for improved real time tracking of officers in the field. These technological improvements will be further enhanced with the roll-out of a new Computer Aided Dispatch System in early 2005.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS - N/A

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES/BUSINESS PLAN

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ALTERNATIVES - N/A

ATTACHMENTS - None

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Report Prepared by: Michael K. Burns, Superintendent