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Item No. 10.2.1
Halifax Regional Council
February 9, 2010
February 16, 2010

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank A. Beazley".

Frank A. Beazley, Chief of Police, Halifax Regional Police

DATE: January 13, 2010

SUBJECT: Halifax Regional Police and Halifax District RCMP Citizens on Patrol

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

This report originates from a motion request by Councillor Hum (11.1), passed at the Regional Council meeting on November 24, 2009, requesting a staff report regarding the Citizens on Patrol program.

BACKGROUND

This report provides information regarding the Citizens on Patrol and Burnside Watch programs operated by Halifax Regional Police and Halifax District RCMP. The status of these volunteer programs, costs incurred, support received, volunteer participation and value added will be discussed.

DISCUSSION

HRP

Halifax Regional Police currently have three Citizens on Patrol (COP) groups, as well as the Burnside Watch Patrol, operating in the urban core of Halifax Regional Municipality. A COP group exists for each of HRP's three divisions, which are the former communities of Halifax, Dartmouth and Bedford. COP volunteers patrol throughout their respective areas, including schools, parks and shopping districts. The Burnside Watch originated in the Burnside Business Park. It now includes Dartmouth Crossing. The primary focus of the Burnside Watch is the business community.

HRP's volunteer patrol programs started with the Burnside Watch Patrol over fifteen years ago. Citizens on Patrol groups have been operating in the former communities of Bedford and Dartmouth for six years now. A Halifax group was added in 2008.

HRP COP volunteers and Burnside Watch Patrol volunteers do not conduct walking patrols. Members act as "Eyes and ears" only. All patrols are conducted from the safety of the volunteer's vehicles. They have found lost children, assisted with a person passed out in the snow, reported drunk drivers, identified crimes in progress, and helped locate suspects. Some volunteers have been subpoenaed to testify in court in relation to activities witnessed during their patrols.

Patrol volunteers must be at least 19 years of age and hold a valid Nova Scotia Driver's Licence. COP patrol vehicles must be registered and insured for Nova Scotia. Volunteers must pass HRP security clearances and are asked to make a minimum one-year commitment.

HRP volunteers receive initial and ongoing training. They carry cell phones, police radios and emergency kits when they are out on patrol. They take notes and create shift reports which are reviewed by their police coordinator.

For the 2009 calendar year, HRP's volunteer patrol groups have contributed over 5100 hours of service as of November 30th. They are currently comprised of 47 active members in the following groups:

Group	Members
Burnside Watch	13
Central Citizens on Patrol (Halifax)	6
East Citizens on Patrol (Dartmouth)	13
West Citizens on Patrol (Bedford)	15

Citizens on Patrol volunteers carry out their patrols in pairs. Volunteers have the option of taking part in cross-divisional patrols, which increases the likelihood of finding a patrol partner on any given evening. The COP volunteers use their own vehicles and insurance. Thanks to the generous sponsorship of Imperial Oil, volunteers' fuel costs are partially reimbursed through the distribution of gas cards.

The Dartmouth and Bedford groups have formed associations under the Registry of Joint Stock Companies. The Citizens on Patrol (COPS) East Association has received funding from local councillors in the past, which supports the purchase of equipment, signage and training opportunities.

Burnside Watch Patrol is well-known and respected in the Burnside area. It was one of the first citizen-based patrols within HRM. Initially, the group was provided with access to an unmarked HRP vehicle for patrol purposes. This arrangement remains in place today for evening and weekend patrols based on vehicle availability. The group is supported by the Burnside Business Watch Society, which receives donations from local businesses to assist these volunteers.

RCMP

The Halifax District Citizens on Patrol program was established in some detachments before amalgamation (and the subsequent integration of the police departments). The COP program is supported by Halifax District RCMP Community Policing Officers. Presently, there are 13 independently run Halifax District RCMP COP groups with 185 members in the following communities:

Tantallon Detachment

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Beechville, Lakeside, Timberlea | 13 members |
| 2. Hubbards | 9 members |
| 3. Prospect Road | 20 members |
| 4. Tantallon/Hammonds Plains | 18 members |

Lower Sackville Detachment

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------|
| 5. Lower Sackville | 7 members |
| 6. Fall River/Beaverbank | 22 members |

Cole Harbour Detachment

- | | |
|---|------------|
| 7. Cole Harbour/Eastern Passage/Lake Echo | 21 members |
|---|------------|

Musquodoboit Detachment

- | | |
|--------------------|------------|
| 8. Porters Lake | 8 members |
| 9. Meaghers Grant | 8 members |
| 10. Lake Charlotte | 15 members |

North Central Office

11. Dean 17 members

Sheet Harbour Office

12. Mooseland 10 members

13. Sheet Harbour (Tangier) 17 members

The Halifax District RCMP COP program performs the same duties as the HRP program and is managed in a similar fashion. Volunteers are provided with training (i.e. use of police radios and equipment), are security cleared, must be 19 years of age and possess a valid drivers licence. Patrols are conducted in pairs and any suspicious activity is reported to general duty members. In the past year, COP members have been responsible for helping regular members identify suspects responsible for committing such crimes as impaired driving, mischief, theft, hit and run, break and enter, illegal hunting and possession of drugs.

COP volunteers are responsible for their own fund raising and must manage their own accounts.

Halifax District RCMP COP volunteers are honoured during an annual awards/appreciation ceremony for all community volunteers within the district. Many of the COP volunteers are involved with other RCMP community-based programs including:

- Community Offices
- Neighborhood Watch
- Auxiliary Policing
- Seniors Safety
- Victims Assistance

VALUE OF SERVICE

HRP

Based on salary information from Salary.com, the average wage for patrolling security guards in Halifax is \$31,227 or approximately \$15.00 per hour. Using the 5130 hours of service provided by Citizens on Patrol and Burnside Watch volunteers year-to-date, the service they provide is valued at nearly \$77,000.

RCMP

The individual RCMP COP groups vary in activity and many are responsible for recording their own volunteer hours and mileage. In contrast, groups such as the Cole Harbour District COP's performed 60 hrs of patrols and logged 1,500 kms while the Prospect Rd COP's performed 1,844 hrs of patrols and logged 17,658 kms. At the time of this report, a total calculation of hours and mileage was not available. A conservative estimate based upon each volunteer contributing only 20 hours annually would result in a service valued at \$55,500.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

HRP

Each Citizens on Patrol and Burnside Watch volunteer receives a small thank-you gift, valued at approximately \$5, at Christmas and is invited to attend a Volunteer Appreciation Dinner during Volunteer Week at a cost of approximately \$25 per person. Annually, 6 - 7 of these volunteers are sponsored to attend the HRM Volunteer Conference at a cost of \$30 each. Each group is provided with 2 cell phones for calling in suspicious activity at an annual cost of \$520.

Summary

Thank you gifts	\$ 225
Volunteer Dinner	\$1125
Volunteer Conference	\$ 210
Cell Phones	<u>\$4160</u>
Total	<u>\$5720</u>

These costs are accommodated within the operating budget for HRP.

At very little cost, HRP's volunteer patrols are a valuable asset to their communities. Their dedicated service aligns with HRP's mission statement, "Leading and Partnering in our Community to Serve and Protect."

RCMP

There are no police budget implications associated with running the Halifax District RCMP COP Program, except for hosting the Halifax District RCMP Volunteer Appreciation Social. RCMP volunteers are also invited to HRP volunteer events.

Halifax District RCMP certainly value the 'Citizens on Patrol' programs and appreciate the 185 citizens who volunteer their time and effort to keep communities safe. Mayor Peter Kelly and HRM Councillors are assured these programs will continue in 2010.

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.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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