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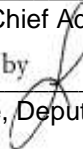
Item No. 6
Committee of the Whole
March 25, 2015

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

Original signed by 

SUBMITTED BY:

Richard Butts, Chief Administrative Officer

Original Signed by 

Mike Labrecque, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: March 10, 2015

SUBJECT: Staff Report on the Public Safety Office

(N.B.: To avoid confusion in this report, the term Public Safety Coordinator will be used to differentiate the eventual civilian incumbent from the present HRP Public Safety Officer who is a sworn police officer. Please note that the final appellation of this new position has yet to be finalized as the recruitment process is still ongoing.)

ORIGIN

At the January 28, 2015, meeting of the Committee of the Whole during which the Chief of Police presented the 2015/16 budget and business plan, the following supplementary motion was passed in relation to said budget and business plan:

That Committee of the Whole request a staff report examining the implications of augmenting the proposal in the 2015-16 Halifax Regional Police Operating Budget to include the addition of a Sworn Officer as a police liaison for the HRM Public Safety Office and/or to enhance the "boots on the street" program.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITIES

Sub-sections 2(c)(iii), 34(1) & 68(1) of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*:

Purpose of Act

2 *The purpose of this Act is to*

- (a) *give broad authority to the Council, including broad authority to pass by-laws, and respect its right to govern the Municipality in whatever ways the Council considers appropriate within the jurisdiction given to it;*
- (b) *enhance the ability of the Council to respond to present and future issues in the Municipality; and*

- (c) recognize that the functions of the Municipality are to:
 - (i) provide good government,
 - (ii) provide services, facilities and other things that, in the opinion of the Council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the Municipality, and
 - (iii) develop and maintain safe and viable communities.

Council and Chief Administrative Officer relationship

34(1) *The Chief Administrative Officer is the head of the administrative branch of the government of the Municipality and is responsible to the Council for the proper administration of the affairs of the Municipality in accordance with the by-laws of the Municipality and the policies adopted by the Council.*

Police services

68(1) *The Council may provide police services in the Municipality by a combination of methods authorized pursuant to the Police Act and the board of police commissioners of the Municipality has jurisdiction over the provision of the police services, notwithstanding that they are provided by a combination of methods.*

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Committee of the Whole direct staff that no new police officer position be created within the new Public Safety Office to act as a police liaison. Considering that both HRP and Halifax District RCMP each have their own dedicated police officers responsible for various community policing initiatives and programs, these individuals will act as the official police liaisons for their respective agencies to the HRM Public Safety Office while remaining in their substantive positions within their respective police services. This will result in the loss of \$100,000 in funding from the Government of Nova Scotia's Additional Officer (Boots on the Street) Program.

BACKGROUND

At the May 13, 2014 meeting of Regional Council, Dr. Don Clairmont's report on the Mayor and Council Review of Task Force on Violence and Public Safety was presented and accepted. One of the key recommendations of the report was the establishment of a civilian Public Safety Coordinator position outside of Halifax Regional Police (HRP). Following Dr. Clairmont's presentation to Council that date, the following motion was passed:

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Fisher, seconded by Councillor Mason that Halifax Regional Council, as a part of the Healthy Communities Core Priorities Area direct the CAO to implement the relocation of the Public Safety Office function from the Halifax Regional Police to the HRM administration, as described in the Mayor and Council Review of Task Force on Violence and Public Safety.

It is HRM Legal Service's opinion that authority exists for the Chief Administrative Officer to establish the Public Safety Office (PSO), as described in Dr. Clairmont's report, within the Office of Government Relations and External Affairs (GREA) and that the functions and key attributes proposed for the Public Safety Office as indicated in Dr. Clairmont's report reflect a policy and strategic role, rather than the provision of police services as was the case when the Public Safety Office was first established in HRP. Consequently, the provisions of section 68(1) of the *Charter* are not engaged.

As recognized by Council during a May 13, 2014 discussion, the rationale for the placement of a civilian in the Public Safety Coordinator's position is to broaden the scope and the functionality of the Office to be

more in line with current practices almost everywhere else in Canada, whereby non-police agency civilians are in charge of the various Public Safety Offices where they exist. This will in turn allow for greater collaboration with non-law enforcement entities, and ensure the alignment of the Public Safety Office with other business units in HRM to better direct more resources and expertise in enhancing public safety, in accordance with the proposed functions of the PSO as detailed in Volume II of the Dr. Clairmont report at page 35 of Professor Waters' Supplemental Report.

DISCUSSION

As seen in other jurisdictions, the Public Safety Office function does not require a police officer; in many cases, this will actually facilitate relationship building in areas where a police officer would be unable to do so. Where direct police involvement is required, a police liaison from HRP or RCMP would be engaged. The fact that almost all Canadian jurisdictions and the majority of American jurisdictions have civilian incumbents further demonstrates that civilians are more than capable of leading credible public safety conversations and initiatives. A recent local example is the CeaseFire program where police were required to remain at a significant distance from both the implementation and operations of this important initiative due to perceptions about police influence over this program which is a true community-led initiative.

Regarding the financing of the Public Safety Officer position, HRP currently receives financing from the Government of Nova Scotia's Additional Officer Program (commonly referred to as the Boots on the Street Program) for 39 positions. As each position is allotted \$100,000 regardless of the rank or service of the individual police officer incumbents, the sum of \$3,900,000 is given to HRP, provided that the positions remain in place completing the same functions and according to the established pre-conditions as initially agreed upon by the Province and HRP. One of these allotted positions is the Public Safety Officer who presently acts as HRM's overall public safety facilitator as well as police liaison for both HRP and Halifax District Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

The creation of the proposed Public Safety Coordinator position under GREA will result in the elimination of several functions from the present Public Safety Officer position, most notably the overall coordination of community involvement and non-policing municipal programming in crime reduction and community wellness strategies. The new functions of the Public Safety Coordinator would involve those activities that would not require policing expertise, knowledge or authorities (as found in provincial and federal statutes such as the *Criminal Code*). Once the Public Safety Coordinator begins work, the Public Safety Officer title for the position in HRP will cease to exist and will be replaced by something along the lines of the Public Safety & Community Wellness Program Officer reflecting the incumbent's substantive duties which, alone, would not be covered by the Additional Officer Program as a result of the creation of the new position.

As this HRP position will continue to be responsible for many community policing initiatives, the Public Safety Officer will be responsible, either personally or through delegation, for ensuring HRP's liaison with the Public Safety Coordinator and will serve as the latter's first point of contact for any coordinated police actions or initiatives from HRP. Conversely, Halifax District RCMP will also have a liaison in the person of a non-commissioned officer in charge of community policing or other like position, working out of the Cole Harbour Office. Consequently, the new Public Safety Coordinator will have two police liaisons, one for each police service in HRM.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As detailed above, with the change in the position from being a sworn police officer placed in HRP to a civilian placed in GREA, the primary pre-condition for the continuation of financing will no longer be respected: a sworn police officer working on direct police activities in the home police service. Consequently, the provincial funding for this position will be discontinued resulting in the financing of the remaining 38 positions. The loss of this financing (\$100,000) for the single position will be absorbed internally through HRP's existing budget. Of note, it has been confirmed with the Province that the

creation of a liaison officer position outside of police alongside the Public Safety Coordinator will not result in the re-establishment of funding for the position for the reasons indicated above.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As Dr. Clairmont conducted extensive research in the community at large, no further community engagement has been identified.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no identified environmental implications.

ALTERNATIVES

Notwithstanding the above, should Council decide to establish a new police position as liaison within the Public Safety Office to work alongside the Coordinator, the costs would be commensurate to that of an additional sworn officer position. If this alternative were chosen, it is recommended that this position be filled by an HRP sworn officer having significant experience in community policing, preferably at the rank of sergeant. As indicated above, the establishment of a police position inside of the Public Safety Office working out of GREA would not result in the resumption of funding as per the Additional Officer Program. Consequently, regardless of the choice made by Council, HRP will lose funding for one such position (\$100,000).

For comparison purposes, the supplemental annual cost for a new position filled by a first-class constable would be \$113,300 (salary, benefits and equipment) whereas for a sergeant, the cost would be \$133,000 (salary, benefits and equipment). These costs would be in addition to the \$136,500 (salary, benefits and programming support) already allocated to the Public Safety Office for a P2 level Public Safety Coordinator position.

Therefore, if Council were to choose this alternative by creating a new sergeant's position, the total cost would be \$133,000 for the position, plus \$100,000 for the loss of funding under the Additional Officer Program for a total of \$233,000. For this reason, this alternative is not being recommended.

Furthermore, should the need arise regarding additional staff for the Public Safety Office, the future Coordinator will be in the best position to evaluate the type of supplementary help required, be it sworn officer, civilian, part-time, full-time or contractual.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.php> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

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