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HALiFAX
REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

Appendix D

COUNCIL FOCUS AREA

PUBLIC SAFETY
(Police Resourcing)
Background and Discussion Paper

December 13, 2005

1. INTRODUCTION

On September 15 and 16, 2005, Council, the Chief Administrative Officer, Deputy Chief Administration Officer and Senior Management Team attended a Priority Setting Workshop. At subsequent Committee of the Whole meetings, twelve Focus Areas were identified, one of which was Public Safety. More specifically, the question of whether or not HRM is adequately resourcing its police services to meet public expectations was posed. This report is intended to outline the need for HRM to examine policing strategically to ensure it is positioned to respond to immediate and future public safety needs of our citizens.

Visibility of police has decreased over the years because policing has become a very complex business. Recent Canadian research into policing has revealed there is an increase in demand for police services that exceeds increases in police resources. There were a series of court cases that substantially increased the required number of investigative steps and the amount of paper work generated in handling cases that proceed to court. There was also an associated increase in time for handling specific types of crimes as the legal requirements changed. While the introduction of computer technology has improved access to criminal information and the exchange of criminal intelligence between enforcement agencies, it has significantly increased the administrative time required to input and manipulate information. Overall, there is a decrease in police capacity and an increase in demand for services. By-Law and other enforcement groups have also suffered from this phenomenon.

As the role of police becomes more complex from judicial and legislative changes and the resulting in-house policy changes, it directly affects the ability of the officer on the street to maintain the same level of service. As judicial and legislative decisions increase the time required to investigate and prosecute cases, it detracts from the time that is available for officers to respond to calls for service, conduct preventive patrols, investigate offences and engage in the delivery of pro-active community policing programs. Further, police are frequently asked to participate in changes to the legal system and other new studies such as our CAD/RMS project that require our officers to be taken from first line response to make these projects a reality.

Reporting requirements have become much more extensive to satisfy the needs of judicial decisions. For example:
- 30 years ago, a domestic assault complaint would take from 30 minutes to one hour to investigate; today, serious domestic assault investigations can take up to 12 hours
- 30 years ago, a case of an impaired driver would take one hour of investigative time; today, officers are tied up for 4-5 hours
- Mental Health cases have committed 2-5 officers for periods of up to 10-12 hours on one incident alone. In extreme cases, more than two officers have been involved and these incidents carried on to the next shift period, so you start your new shift 2-5 officers short.

Ultimately, these types of occurrences reduce our visibility on the street.

HRM Policing Services are continually under scrutiny regarding the quality of investigations. As such, and from a risk-management perspective, we have an obligation to exercise due diligence in all areas of service delivery.

Mandatory training is also a critical component of policing in the 21st century. Police officers are required to maintain their certification in Use of Force Continuum, First Aid and Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear Training to name a few. Whether this training is mandated by the Nova Scotia Police Act, RCMP Act or agency specific policy, it is an essential component of preparing officers to carry out their duties that must be evaluated on an annual basis and entails a significant time commitment.

Police management has continually asked patrol officers in their downtime to get out of their cars and interact with the members of their community. A recent Canadian study has shown that an officer on patrol spends more than 4 hours per day carrying out administrative duties and report writing. Officers interviewed stated that the introduction of mobile data terminals has made it possible to do paperwork in their police vehicles and estimated that some 80% of their time on patrol, when not actively responding to calls, is spent doing paperwork over the mobile data terminals.

The world changed after the tragic events of 9/11. Historically, we have been involved in such things as Joint Forces Operations around such issues as Drug Enforcement and Organized Crime, but 9/11 made the world a much smaller place to live in as well much more complex from a National Security perspective. Police now find themselves being drawn into the issue of community safety in a much different way. The events of 9/11 have shown us is that world terrorism is not only a global issue but a community issue as well as all terrorism starts in a local community. As a result, the national and international demands from a policing perspective are even more complex.

As the complexity of the role of policing is changing, calls for service within HRM have also increased. This situation is compounded by the fact that from 1996 to 2004, the population in HRM has steadily grown and this cycle is projected to continue. On a national level, population growth in Canada more than doubled between 1962 and 2003, while the number of police resources increased by only 1.7 times.

Policing within HRM has not kept pace. Starting in 1996, there was a steady down-sizing of HRP from 438 to a low of 393 in 1999. From 1999 to 2002, there was no growth. And in 2002, Council approved an increase of 10 positions. This remained stable until this year when 16 new officers were authorized for traffic safety in the urban/suburban core of HRM and to expand the Quick Response Unit outside of HRP. Between 1996 and 2001, Halifax Detachment resources increased from 146.5 to 162.5. The establishment has remained stable at 162.5 since that time.

2. COUNCIL/COMMUNITY CONCERNS

During the priority-setting workshop, Council listed its expectations regarding public safety:
- Safe Communities and Streets
- Lower Crime Rates
- Improved Response Times
- Increased Visibility
- Increased Public Confidence
- Consistent Delivery of Proactive Programs
- Lower Incidence of Youth Crime
- Effective Deployment of Existing Resources
- Adequately Resourced Police Services
- Residents feel Safer
- Improved Citizen Participation and Involvement

Throughout the Fall of this year, HRP and RCMP held a series of Town Hall meetings to gauge citizens' concerns. An analysis of those meetings, as well public meetings held over the past five years, highlighted the followings themes:
- Increased demand for service and police visibility
- Youth Crime/Violence
- Traffic Safety
- Street-Level Crime/Disorder Issues
- Noise (Youth, Traffic and Construction
- Law Reform (YCJA, MVA, Off-highway Vehicles Act, Sentencing, Noise By-law)

Overall, the message we repeatedly heard from citizens is that while they are pleased with the quality of policing they receive, they are not content with the quantity.

3. CURRENT INITIATIVES

In 2003, Halifax Regional Police and Halifax Detachment of the RCMP ventured into a new model of police service delivery known as Integrated Policing. As a result, efficiencies were found in service delivery, enabling police to enter into new investigative ventures that were impossible before.

In late 2004/05, police again reviewed the service delivery model and changed its Patrol Strategy to the Community Response Model of Policing. This strategy involves sector based poling as part of a new community response approach to community problem-solving. It also entails forming strong working relationships with By-Law, Community Development, Community Response Team, Traffic Authority, Fire Service, Recreation, CANB to name a few.

Also in 2004/05, Council approved 32 new police positions to create a region-wide traffic service and enhanced patrol response to combat crime issues throughout HRM.

To combat increasing crime, police have conducted Special Operations targeting such things as youth crime, robberies, motor vehicle theft and other disorder type crimes that attack the very fabric of our communities.

In an effort to address public safety concerns, Police are currently partnering and consulting with other orders of government to influence changes in law and justice system practices.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Police recommend that:

Council request the Board of Police Commissioners review HRM Policing Services with a view to developing an effective, long-term police resourcing strategy.

Council request the Board of Police Commissioners to assess the impact of any changes to the service delivery model of policing resulting from upcoming negotiations of the Provincial Policing Contract.

Council initiate dialogue with the three orders of government to determine roles and responsibilities for national, provincial and municipal policing.

Council increase resources and fund police to an effective level to meet public expectations and address the complex environment of the police service delivery model.

COUNCIL STRATEGIC TOPIC: PUBLIC SAFETY

ISSUE	OPTIONS	IMPLICATIONS
Police Visibility Increased Demands for/on Police Increased Complexity of Policing	Council request the Board of Police Commissioners review HRM Policing Services with a view to developing an effective, long-term police resourcing strategy.	Provides basis for good decision making on future police deployment and requests for future operational and capital needs.
	Council request the Board of Police Commissioners to assess the impact of any changes to the service delivery model of policing resulting from upcoming negotiations of the Provincial Policing Contract.	Potential significant increase in policing operating budget.
	Council initiate dialogue with the three orders of government to determine roles and responsibilities for national, provincial and municipal policing.	Dialogue would provide a policy framework for policing which would clearly define roles and responsibilities for federal, provincial and municipal policing within Canada. This has the potential to eliminate duplication of service.
	Council increase resources and fund police to an effective level to meet public expectations and address the complex environment of the police service delivery model	Increased community satisfaction. Reduced crime rate. Increased police operating and capital budget.