



BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS for the HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

MINUTES November 22, 2023

PRESENT: Commissioner Becky Kent, Chair
Commissioner Harry Critchley, Vice Chair
Commissioner Lisa Blackburn
Commissioner Yemi Akindoju
Commissioner Gavin Giles

REGRETS: Commissioner Lindell Smith
Commissioner Anthony Thomas

STAFF: Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer
John Traves, K.C., CD, Executive Director of Legal & Legislative
Services/Municipal Solicitor/Chief Governance Officer
Andrew Gough, Solicitor
Andrea Lovasi-Wood, Legislative Assistant
Catie Campbell, Legislative Assistant

The following does not represent a verbatim record of the proceedings of this meeting.

The agenda, reports, supporting documents, and information items circulated are online at halifax.ca.

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m., and recessed at 6:00 p.m. The Board reconvened at 6:24 p.m. and adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. and acknowledged that the meeting took place in the traditional and ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq people, and that we are all treaty people.

2. COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS – NONE

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – NONE

4. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

Additions: None

Deletions: None

MOVED by Commissioner Blackburn, seconded by Commissioner Giles

THAT the agenda be approved as presented.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

5. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES – NONE

6. CALL FOR DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS – NONE

7. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE

8. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

8.1 Correspondence

Correspondence was received and circulated for item 10.1.2.

For a detailed list of correspondence received refer to the specific agenda item.

8.2 Petitions – None

8.3 Presentation – None

9. INFORMATION ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD – NONE

10. REPORTS

10.1 STAFF

10.1.1 Update on Halifax Regional Municipality Public Safety Strategy – Presentation

The following was before the Board:

- Staff presentation dated November 22, 2023, revised November 22, 2023
- Staff handout dated November 22, 2023

Amy Siciliano, Public Safety Advisor gave a presentation and responded to questions of clarification from the Board regarding Federal grants, funding streams, timeline and barriers for project implementation, staffing, community relationship building, communication strategies, youth engagement and challenges with the Stabilization Centre.

Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer spoke to the Public Safety Strategy and the Community Safety Office response to the Upper Tantallon Wildfires.

MOVED by Commissioner Critchley, seconded by Commissioner Blackburn

THAT the Board of Police Commissioners for the Halifax Regional Municipality recommend to Regional Council that the Public Safety Strategy be funded to the originally requested amount.

Commissioner Critchley proposed adding "2024/25 fiscal year" and substituting "originally requested amount" to "amount identified in the three year plan". As provided for in section 53 (2) of Administrative Order One, *Respecting the Procedures of the Council*, the amendment was accepted as friendly.

The motion now read:

THAT the Board of Police Commissioner for the Halifax Regional Municipality recommend to Halifax Regional Council that in the 2024/25 fiscal year that the Public Safety Strategy be funded to the amount originally identified in the three-year plan.

O'Toole and Siciliano responded to questions of clarification from the Board regarding investment in 2023-2026 Public Safety Strategy.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

10.1.2 Halifax Regional Police 2024/25 Operating Budget Framework

The following was before the Board:

- Staff presentation dated November 22, 2023
- Correspondence from Gretchen Pohlkamp, Ruth Flemming, Bruce Smith, Maria Lasheras, Jim Hoskins, Jamie Livingston, Margaret Cochrane, Laurel Rath, Collins Ellison, Cherie Gaudet, Melvin Gaudet, Dougald Kennedy, Justeen Hartigan, Ross Lenihan, Todd Samson, Tim Rissesco, Anna Taylor, Marcus and Christine Garnet, Roger Miller, Jesse Mitchell, Jordan Roberts, Elizabeth Babych, Joanne Bealy, Libby Douglas

Acting Chief Don MacLean, Halifax Regional Police (HRP) gave a presentation and responded to questions of clarification from the Board.

Natasha Himes, Wellness Within spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase and cited the Subcommittee to Define Defunding Police report to the Board. Himes voiced concerns regarding police response to mental health calls, HRP's culture and violence towards marginalized communities. Himes spoke against body-worn cameras and encouraged the Board to consider the Subcommittee's recommendations.

Bea MacGregor, CEO, Alderney Landing spoke in favour of HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase and noted past collaboration with HRP. MacGregor noted the economic impact of Alderney Landing, increased staffing to address violence and voiced concerns with unhoused people in the area.

Victoria Levack, Permanent Accessible Dignified Safe Housing for All (P.A.D.S) spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase and voiced concerns regarding the accessibility of the public consultation. Levack encouraged Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) to invest in more community-based programs to address housing and the community's social and mental health needs. Levack voiced concerns regarding police responding to mental health calls and cited recommendations in the Subcommittee to Define Defunding Police and Mass Casualty Commission reports.

Rae Paul, District 3 spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase and noted the need for investment in housing, social and community services including community-based

programs. Paul highlighted the lack of affordability in the city and voiced concerns regarding the nature of the police services' relationship with marginalized communities.

Nancy Hunter, District 11 spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase and voiced concerns regarding police response to mental health calls, HRP's culture and underfunded community services. Hunter cited the Subcommittee to Define Defunding Police report and noted the Board's governance role. Hunter highlighted HRP's relationship with marginalized communities and repeated the request for more investment in housing, social and community services.

As provided for in section 80(1) of Administrative Order One, *Respecting the Procedures of the Council*, Commissioner Giles declared a Point of Order related to the concerns that the speaker's comments were not about HRP's budget. The Chair granted the Point of Order and asked the speaker to limit their comments to HRP's proposed budget increase and to not refer to residents' specific incidents with HRP.

Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer spoke to HRM's budgeting process and the distinction between HRP's proposed budget increase and HRM's budget which included Community Safety programs.

Ellis Pickersgill, District 5 spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase. Pickersgill repeated concerns regarding police responding to mental health calls, the lack of affordability in the city and need to invest in housing and community services. Pickersgill noted concern with lack of investment in the Mobile Youth Outreach team.

Jim Hoskins, Spryfield spoke in favour of HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase given HRP's need for additional resources and the challenges with police recruitment. Hoskins supported additional training for police officers responding to mental health calls and noted support for community response officers.

Elizabeth Babych, District 5 spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase and encouraged further collaboration with the Province to address housing and the need for deeper investment in community services. Babych repeated reference to the Subcommittee to Define Defunding Police and Mass Casualty Commission reports.

Mab Speelman, District 8 spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase. Speelman repeated concerns about police responding to mental health calls and the police services' relationship with marginalized communities. Speelman repeated request for increased community services investment and stated their support of the recommendations in the Subcommittee to Define Defunding Police report.

Caitlin O'Neil, District 8 spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase and voiced concerns regarding police resource utilization and HRP's culture. O'Neil repeated concerns about police responding to mental health calls and cited the Subcommittee to Define Defunding Police report recommendations on street checks.

Paniz Khosroshahy, District 8 spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase and noted concerns with crime rate statistics. Khosroshahy repeated concerns about HRP's culture and repeated the request for more investment in community and social services.

Fern Kaufman, District 8 spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase and noted concerns with police response to hate crimes.

More Vail, District 9 spoke in opposition to the HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase and cited support of Subcommittee to Define Defunding Police recommendations, HRM Public Safety Strategy and the Mass Casualty Commission report. Vail stated the importance of evidence-based decision making and repeated concerns about the police services' relationship with marginalized communities and the need for increased social services investment.

Erin Riehl, District 7 spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase and noted concerns with crime rate statistics and HRP's culture. Riehl repeated request for increased social services investment.

Kit Stein, Halifax spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase and repeated concerns with the police response to mental health calls. Stein encouraged investment in alternative social and community support programs to respond to mental health calls.

Campbell McClintock, District 8 spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase. McClintock repeated concerns with HRP's response to mental health and highlighted other jurisdictions responses to mental health calls. McClintock noted the relationship between police and the unhoused community.

Joanna Bull, Ecology Action Centre spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase. Bull spoke to emergency preparedness. Bull repeated concerns regarding the police services' relationship with marginalized community and the need for investment in social and community services. Bull cited the advocacy-based recommendations in the Subcommittee to Define Defunding report.

Ky Greyson, Halifax spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase and repeated concerns with police response to mental health calls. Greyson provided a jurisdictional scan of mental health calls responses and raised concerns with the police response to protecting the unhoused.

Ash Hinchey, District 8 spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase. Hinchey repeated concerns about the accessibility of the public consultation, the police services' response to mental health calls and the police services' relationship with marginalized communities. Hinchey encouraged investment in Street Navigators and other social and community services.

Carmel Farahbakhsh, District 7 spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase. Farahbakhsh noted concerns with crime rate statistics, the training for police officers and work being done to address the housing crisis. Farahbakhsh repeated concerns regarding the police services' relationship with marginalized communities and the need for increased investment in community and social services.

Emerson Roach, Halifax spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase. Roach repeated concerns with police response to mental health calls, the treatment of unhoused people and the cost of living. Roach encouraged further collaboration with the Province on addressing mental health incentives.

Katherine Carey, District 8 spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase and repeated concerns with police response to mental health calls and the police services' relationship with marginalized communities. Carey also spoke to police training and the police complaint process.

Finley Spangenberg, District 8 spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase and repeated concerns with police response to mental health calls. Spangenberg repeated concerns about police training and support of mental health crisis response recommendations in the Subcommittee to Define Defunding report.

Natalie Richter, Kijipuktuk spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase and high cost of living in the Municipality. Richter repeated concerns regarding crime rate statistics, police response to mental health calls, HRP's culture and encouraged investment in community and social services.

Ben Hammer spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase and to HRM's operating budget. Hammer encouraged using HRP operational costs to fund community and social services. Hammer noted concerns with the police services' ability to recruit and retain employees.

Su Gurler, District 8 spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase and noted concerns with Halifax Regional Police's effectiveness and officer training. Gurler repeated the request for more investment in social and community services.

Enney Lapp, District 8 spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase, lack of affordability in the Municipality. Lapp repeated the request for more investment in community and social services.

Jesse Mitchell, District 5 spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase. Mitchell voiced concerns with the increase in police service calls and noted the need for positive relationships with the unhoused community. Mitchell repeated the request for more investment in community and social services.

Carmel Farahbakhsh on behalf of K. MacDonald, District 7 spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase. MacDonald repeated concerns with police responding to mental health calls, police training and repeated the request for more investment in social and community services.

Collins Ellison, District 7 sought clarification on budget allocations to address homelessness and cited statistics related to demographics for unhoused and incarcerated people. Ellison encouraged collaboration with the Province on housing initiatives and encouraged investment in community and social services.

O'Toole noted budget allocations for homelessness fall under the Community Safety Office not HRP.

Libby Douglas, Chair, Proactive Safety Committee and Secretary, Alderney Landing spoke in favour of HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase and noted the need for additional community policing in Alderney Landing due to the area's increased crime rate. Douglas noted the work of the Proactive Safety Committee including a community survey.

Finch van Baal, District 8 spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase and repeated concerns about the police services' relationship between marginalized communities. Van Baal highlighted different approaches to addressing mental health calls and repeated the request for more investment in social and community services.

Willa Oaks, District 9 spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase and to the HRP's ineffectiveness. Oaks repeated concerns regarding crime statistics and the police response to mental health calls given the healthcare system's challenges. Oaks cited the Subcommittee to Define Defunding and the Mass Casualty Commission reports.

Frank Heimpl, District 8 spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase. Heimpl repeated concerns with police response to mental health calls and emphasized the importance of the relationship between police services and marginalized people. Heimpl encouraged investment in public safety as well as community and social services.

Aaron Shaw, District 7 spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase and repeated concerns regarding police services' relationship with marginalized people. Shaw voiced concerns with police recruitment, retention and training. Shaw repeated the request for more investment in housing, community and social services.

Adrien Peace-Williams, District 35 spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase and encouraged investment in community and social services.

Leah Gooyers, District 3 spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase and encouraged inclusion of diverse voices during the budgeting process.

Eloise Brunet-Valade, District 7 spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase and cited police response statistics. Brunet-Valade repeated concerns with police response to mental health calls. Brunet-Valade encouraged investment in non-profits focused on social and community services.

Ames Mather, District 3 spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase. Mather repeated concerns with police response to mental health calls and unhoused people. Mather encouraged investment in community and social services as means to move towards de-centering police.

Selena D., Spryfield spoke in opposition to HRP's 2024/25 proposed operating budget increase and sought clarification on money from the police budget being allocated to housing and homelessness. Selena repeated concerns with police response to mental health calls and highlighted the history of policing. Selena repeated the request for more investment in social and community services.

Lori Laderoute, Downtown Dartmouth spoke about challenges working in Alderney Landing and benefits of community response police officers as they promoted an increase sense of safety.

MOVED by Commissioner Blackburn, seconded by Commissioner Akindoju

THAT the Board of Police Commissioners for the Halifax Regional Municipality direct the Chiefs of both Halifax Regional Police and the Halifax District Royal Canadian Mounted Police to work with the Chief Administrative Officer to explore options with the Province of Nova Scotia with respect to alternatives to the legislative use of police officers in mental health crisis situations.

O'Toole and John Traves, K.C., CD, Executive Director of Legal & Legislative Services/Municipal Solicitor/Chief Governance Officer responded to questions of clarification from the Board.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

10.2 COMMISSIONER UPDATES – NONE

11. ADDED ITEMS – NONE

12. ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION – NONE

13. IN CAMERA (IN PRIVATE) – NONE

14. NOTICES OF MOTION – NONE

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – November 29, 2023

16 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Catie Campbell
Legislative Assistant