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Information Item No. 3
Board of Police Commissioners
September 18, 2017

TO: Chair and Members of Board of Police Commissioners

Original signed

SUBMITTED BY:

John Traves, Q.C., Municipal Solicitor

DATE: September 7, 2017

SUBJECT: **Public Participation at Board Meetings**

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

At the March 20, 2017 meeting of the Board of Police Commissioners

MOVED by Commissioner MacMaster, seconded by Commissioner Jeff Mitchell

THAT the Board of Police Commissioners request a staff report exploring the possibility of including a Public Participation section on the monthly Board of Police Commissioners agendas.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Police Act s. 55(3)(e)

55 (3) Without limiting the generality of subsection (1), a board shall

(e) act as a conduit between the community and the police service providers;

BACKGROUND

Under the Police Act, the Board of Police Commissioners is tasked with acting as a conduit between the community and the police, as well as ensuring that community needs and values are reflected in policing priorities, objectives, goals, programs and strategies. Public consultation is generally seen as an important component of meeting these legislative duties. Public consultation may take many forms, and public participation at Board meetings is one method by which the Board may choose to receive feedback from the public.

DISCUSSION

Staff is not aware of any restriction, legislative or otherwise, that will prevent the Board from adding a Public Participation section on the Board of Police Commissioners agendas. As discussed, this will assist the Board in meeting its obligation to consult with the public and help the police service reflect community values.

Administrative Order One, which governs the procedures of Council and its committees, likewise applies to the Board by virtue of s. 55(2)(b) of the Police Act, that allows Council to set the rules and regulations governing proceedings of the Board. Council has done so in the Police Board By-law by providing in s. 6(1) that “the Board shall conduct its business according to the procedure established by the Council for the conduct of its business subject to such modifications as may be required to fit the needs of the Board.”

Administrative Order One sets out in s. 131 the procedures governing public submissions at a Committee of Council. These rules would govern public submissions at the Board. It provides:

Public Submissions

131. (1) Committees of the Council may hear and consider a submission or representation from any person who wishes to be heard, and each submission will be limited to five (5) minutes.

(2) If more than one person appears representing a group or association in relation to a particular item, the Committee of the Council may require that the persons designate a spokesperson who shall speak on behalf of the group or association so appearing.

In the event that the Board wishes to alter the length of time given for submissions at a particular meeting, the Board may, pursuant to s. 4 of Administrative Order One, suspend this rule by an affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3rds) of the members present and voting.

The Order of Business is set by the Clerk, and, in accordance with s. 130 of Administrative Order One, may be adjusted at his discretion to include a public participation item. At Community Councils and Standing Committees, where public participation is standard, members of the public are heard at the end of the agenda. Members of the public do not need to sign up in advance. The Board may adopt this practice and evaluate in the future if it is successful.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

None.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

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