

**Municipal Clerks Office****Date Distributed:** May 11, 2020Board of Police Commissioners,
CAO, Solicitor**Other:** Chief Superintendent Janis Gray, Inspector Erin Pepper, Chief Dan Kinsella, Craig Horton, Amy Siciliano*103 Thorne Ave
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia
B3B 0A4***Attention: Robyn Dean
Legislative Assistant
deanr@halifax.ca
902.490.6521**HALIFAX REGIONAL
MUNICIPALITY

MAY 11 2020

MUNICIPAL CLERK

Re: Presentation for May 11, 2020 Special HRM Board of Police Commissioners Meeting

Dear Commissioners,

Unlike previous BOPC meetings when budget items were on your agenda, the opportunity for an in-person presentation to the board appears impossible under current circumstances. I respectfully submit the following questions to be included in your preliminary considerations of changes to the previously approved budget for policing services in HRM through the 2020-21 fiscal year and along with many members of the public, will be monitoring your meeting online.

A recommendation report prepared for HRM Council by the HRM CAO suggests you are being asked to consider recommending a revised and reduced police budget target during this meeting.

1 -What Quantity of Police Emergency Reserve Funds Have Been Activated or Made Available to You in Preparing a Revised Budget Recommendation?

For decades, the board oversaw a rarely used Police Emergency / Extraordinary Investigation Reserve Fund (Q322) of a million dollars. Between the pandemic and HRM police assistance in the worst mass murder in Canadian History, there has never been a more appropriate moment for utilization of these funds.

2 -What Quantity of HRM Stabilization and Contingency Reserves Have Been Activated or Made Available for Halifax Regional Police Operations related to the Covid-19 Pandemic?

Jurisdictions around the world facing financial challenges continue to prioritize delivery of emergency and essential services over other activities and endeavors.

3 –Are You Aware of the Temporary Disbandment of Most Specialized Units at HRP and the Redeployment of Staff Agreed to by the Halifax Regional Police Association to Help Ensure That Emergency Response Through the Pandemic Continues?

Hundreds of HRP staff have forgone lucrative benefits and entitlements enshrined to them through the HRP Collective Agreement regarding work assignments and hours of work. The vast majority of officers now operate on front line patrol shift response rotations or revised investigative unit shift rotations. No expenses related to these agreed emergency moves have been incurred and significant reductions to previously budgeted overtime expenditures are being tallied under this agreed model.

4 -Did the Board Authorize Overstaffing of Senior Management Positions?

While we entered the covid emergency missing authorized and budgeted police officers and civilian supports it appears that the senior team is now overstaffed. Beginning in 2015 with the reintroduction of Inspectors, 13 non-union police officers appear in board budget documents as being the authorized non-union police officer strength. With the promotions and additions to the senior management team at HRP on April 7th we are now at 14 officers plus a third Deputy Chief assigned to UN mission, for a total of 15. How did this happen? No board discussion nor related budget approval has ever occurred on this topic. Has the Auditor General reviewed these deviations?

5 -Are the Initially Planned Police Fleet Replacements for 2020-21 Still Required?

Capital funding in excess of \$2.3 million was initially budgeted for police vehicle replacement through the 2020-21 fiscal year. Is all this still required and will any savings here be properly attributed to HRP?

6 –Are the Initially Planned HRP Records Optimization Projects for 2020-21 Still Required?

Capital funding in excess of one million dollars was initially budgeted for police records optimization projects through the 2020-21 fiscal year. Is all this still required and will any savings here be properly attributed to HRP?

7 –Are all Previously Board-endorsed Budget Additions in Place and Accounted for?

On March 28, 2018 an HRP budget for the 2018-2019 budget year as approved by the HRM Board of Police Commissioners was accepted by the HRM Committee of the Whole Budget Committee and subsequently approved by HRM Council. This was an alternative budget and business plan reduced by \$550,000 from an earlier budget endorsed by the BOPC.

The following twelve additional full-time positions at Halifax Regional Police were specifically approved:

- Four Civilian Communications Radio Technicians
- One Sworn Criminal Investigation Cyber Crime Specialist
- One Sworn Diversity Unit Constable
- One Civilian Criminal Investigation Cyber Crime Specialist
- Two Crime Analysts to be seconded operationally to the RCMP
- Two System Administrators
- One Quartermaster Supply Assistant II

To date, it appears that some of these positions have not been filled. How many of these have not been filled and for how long? Why were they not filled?

8 – What Additional Areas Will the Board Examine Before Recommending Staffing Reductions?

Former BOPC Chairs have publicly declared that front-line officer reductions are a last resort when they have considered budget recommendations. Our members would have grave concerns with choosing to recommend policing reductions in the midst of a pandemic. With several weeks more experience in partial quarantine of their population than Canada, France has documented a significant increase in domestic violence.

We have now had multiple members diagnosed with covid-19 and many more subjected to mandatory periods of quarantine and testing. It is a significant challenge to keep members safe at work while delivering appropriate policing service and protection to our communities.

Finally, while the covid-19 virus itself is invisible, it does not permit a lack of transparency in police governance. In 2013, prior to your service as Police Commissioners, serious concerns were raised that city staff may have violated the Police Act during a budgeting exercise. As noted by the Board Chair at the time: "...the CAO cannot dictate what the budget will be."

Former Mayor and Police Commissioner Gloria McCluskey was also quoted on the issue: "I spoke with the (chief financial officer) and he said, 'We just suggested,' and I said, 'You can't even suggest.'"

As noted in the recently published FCM Protecting Vital Municipal Services publication: “Canadians are depending on their local leaders to keep essential services running—to keep people safe and secure through this pandemic.”

On behalf of my board and our entire membership, I trust you to use your sound judgement and your legally enshrined independence in the days and months ahead.

Sincerely,

Sgt. Dean Stienburg

President Halifax Regional Police Association.