



**SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING WITH POLICE COMMISSION**

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experience of the RCMP takeover of Municipal Policing. Constable McWhinney of the Planning Section will make a thirty-minute PowerPoint presentation, and some handout material will be provided as well. A question and answer session will be held at the end of the presentation.

Inspector McCloskey noted that the RCMP is here to learn as much from the Town as the Town expects to learn from the RCMP. It is the RCMP's practice to be open and transparent in this process of determining what the community and Council requires. With the possibility of a Working Committee, the time line for such a process should be such that community involvement is clearly there, well before any decisions come to Council for a vote. There are a number of steps and options that are available, and the RCMP may not be right for you in the end. This exercise is to find out what's best for the citizens of Berwick. There are several options available and we feel very confident that we can meet your demands. As RCMP, we are concerned with our relationship with other Municipal Police Forces. We are here at the invitation of Council, and are not here to step on any toes. Certainly, we clearly will not interfere with any contractual obligations already in place.

Chief DeWolfe noted for the information of those present that the PANS Agreement is now signed between PANS and the Town of Berwick.

Constable McWhinney proceeded with his PowerPoint presentation to Council and Police Commission. At the end of the presentation, Inspector McCloskey reviewed the two-page document entitled "Should a Municipal Unit wish to explore an RCMP policing option," and reiterated the preference for an open and transparent process, so that the community is informed about the issue. Chief DeWolfe noted that the Berwick Register published an article regarding this, as well as being brought up at the Berwick and District Board of Trade meetings twice, and the Public Police Commission Meeting being held next week. Through all of these venues, the community is being informed of the process and asked to provide input.

Question and Answer:

- **.Deputy Mayor Munday:** For the Town's events, such as Gala Days and the Santa Claus Celebrations, the Berwick Police Department provides traffic control, and a presence through Town during the events. Is this something that would be included with the RCMP being in Town?
- **Superintendent Stait:** The Apple Blossom Festival is included as part of community work, but not rock concerts or similar events. For that, probably could work out a bill for the promoter. Municipal Units shouldn't lose their regular police coverage because of a special event.
- **.Councillor Trinacty:** What does the basic service entail for the RCMP?

- Inspector McCloskey: A Working Committee would have to determine that, if Council agrees to look at it. In consultation with the community, you need to determine what it is you have to have included in your service (i.e. foot patrols, radar, etc.).
- .Staff Sargent Welsh: That's why a Working Committee determines it.
- .Councillor Trinacty: What if we don't cover everything at the outset, can we add it later?
- .???: It can be brought up through the Advisory Board in order to make it more flexible, depending on the actual needs of the community.
- .Inspector McCloskey: The Detachment Commander is the member responsible for Berwick, and would have to report to Council and also meet with the Advisory Board. (i.e. steps taken to address specific problems/issues).
- .Constable McWhinney: Radar access for Highway Units is also part of what you can expect.
- .Staff Sargent Welsh: Area Commander, Gary Stait, is Regional; bring issues to him if you are not satisfied.
- .Commissioner Keith: What about community programs/schools and Crime prevention programs?
- .Constable McWhinney: In larger areas, there are members whose sole job is high schools and feeder schools, dealing with issues such as family violence, drug awareness.
- .Staff Sargent Ennis: In New Minas, there is a school policing officer/liaison officer: the real answer to drugs is educating kids in school.
- .Staff Sargent Welsh: The Town needs to build into the proposal what is important, like liaison with school children.
- .Inspector McCloskey: For the Town of Berwick, look at a Community Constable who develops a number of proactive programs, and have an office at the school for a set number of hours each week. This can accomplish a fair amount: sports programs, etc.
- .Commissioner Keith: What part will you play in Restorative Justice?

- .Staff Sargent Ennis: The RCMP received a lot of direction from Ottawa. In New Minas, Corporal Gibson is being used for the Valley area. Being recognized for the community/victims: we see it as a fantastic program.
- .Constable McWhinney: The program is now entrenched across Nova Scotia, based on ideals and philosophy from Ottawa, tailored to Nova Scotia.
- .Inspector McCloskey: Full-time, Constable McNeil: we're being recognized in Nova Scotia as being way ahead of the rest of the country.
- .Chief DeWolfe: I sit on the Board with Corporal Gibson; would the Town of Berwick be able to participate on that Board?
- .Inspector McCloskey: Yes, without question.
- .Chief DeWolfe: Would Community Constable call on Gary Smith?
- .Staff Sargent Ennis: 26 officers in the Municipality of the County of Kings; ?? in the Federal Government; ?? in the Town of Berwick. Have to be careful to only use resources as they are set up. We cannot promise the Municipality's resources to the Town of Berwick, for instance, but you can call on provincially paid officers to assist.
- .Staff Sargent Ennis: The reciprocal arrangement would be similar to what the Town does now when it calls on the RCMP for assistance.
- .Constable McWhinney: Backup is provided: you've signed into a bigger program
- .Staff Sargent Ennis: There are many services available.
- .Councillor Clarke: As for the minimum standard, what do you see as the minimum for the Town of Berwick?
- .Constable McWhinney: I can't comment on the Town of Berwick, but for example: other small towns have four, five and three officers, depending on the criminal cases, propensity for violence, case burdens, standards for safety, etc. Geography/response time is also a factor.
- .Staff Sargent Welsh: From our perspective, it is whether the Town of Berwick wants a stand-alone unit, or a blended unit from New Minas with a satellite station.
- .Constable McWhinney: One full-time employee equates to 40 hours.

- **.Councillor Clarke:** Is that one person or several?
- **.Constable McWhinney:** That is up to you as a Committee to decide what you wish to have.
- **.Superintendent Stait:** Out of New Minas, I would prefer to have four or five main officers.
- **.Councillor Clarke:** I like a small town atmosphere and having the same officers that we know; it is important.
- **.Inspector McCloskey:** Have to look at what we can offer to you and what you want to pay for. Example: crosswalk guards and bylaws are usually more effectively covered by other means.
- **.Staff Sargent Welsh:** Some bylaws do allow RCMP to act, depending on the enforceability (i.e. yes to criminal code, but not civil code items like premises). Would sit down with the Town Clerk and determine the bylaws of a police nature, and some bylaws may need wording changes.
- **.Councillor Morse:** Residents requirements: we are used to having members of the Berwick Police Department live, shop and work in Town. Is there any chance of the RCMP officers living in Berwick?
- **.Inspector McCloskey:** That is a matter of the Charter of Rights: can a government tell you where to live? To our surprise, we can strongly suggest that an advertised position stipulate a living area (but not upheld in Court). It is a difficult thing; we can "encourage" but not "insist".
- **.Staff Sargent Welsh:** A lot depends on what you decide on, either a blended or a stand-alone station.
- **.Mr. Stewart:** What are the differences?
- **.Staff Sargent Welsh:** A stand-alone station would consist of at least five officers who work out of Berwick, with the shifts starting and ending in Berwick. A blended station would operate out of New Minas with a community office: shifts would start and end in New Minas. It takes 5.6 people to cover a community for 7 days a week, 24 hours a day.
- **.Commissioner Keith:** Do you provide 24-hour coverage?

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- **.Superintendent Stait:** 24-hour coverage has started in the Municipality of the County of Kings in the past couple of months. Ideally, it is easier for us if the Town of Berwick's officers live right in Berwick.
- **.Chief DeWolfe:** Without Constables living locally, there are not too many on hand as backup in an emergency situation. Right now we do have two officers living in Town.
- **.Inspector McCloskey:** Regionalized staffing: British Columbia or Newfoundland would jump at a chance to come live and work in Berwick. That's to our benefit. If we live in a community, we take ownership. It does make a difference, good point.
- **.Commissioner Brydon:** Would there be a minimum number of officers, in order to maintain a sense of community? (The Working Committee to resolve the details).
- **.Mayor Prall:** There is a possibility of an April 1<sup>st</sup> deadline: is that even remotely possible?
- **.Staff Sargent Welsh:** Cannot rush a development process, have to follow it step by step and decide what's needed, put resources to it, a planning draft. Meeting with the Town of Berwick, as long as we're both satisfied, then it has to go to the Minister of Justice for Nova Scotia (encourage Policing Services to participate, it goes faster). Need the Minister to sign it off. Realistically, 50-60 days is pushing it to get it completed. Even senior management in Halifax has to look at it. At this stage, Council should have no surprises. Send a resolution back to the Minister of Justice; then the Minister goes to the Federal Solicitor General and asks for inclusion of the Town of Berwick to the Provincial Contract, and an increase of the determined number of officers to the Provincial Force. Bureaucracy can be two weeks to two months. Also: resources of the Treasury Board enter into it. Probably, June 1<sup>st</sup> date is more realistic process, given an aggressive schedule. We can do some preliminary work, but no official work until "official" solicitor general approvals are in place. Even medical checks, security checks, etc. take some time.
- **.Constable McDow:** When would absorption process start?
- **.Inspector McCloskey:** Once the Solicitor General approves it (with a letter from the Minister of Justice); I have never seen a Solicitor General not approve it.
- **.Staff Sargent Welsh:** To get ready, we could start medical exams, etc. now.

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- **.Commissioner Keith:** Is there any place for someone who doesn't pass the Medical?
- **.Staff Sargent Welsh:** At completion of medical standards, the RCMP would advise Council as soon as possible and then give Council an opportunity to withdraw. Technically, you've been officially notified an officer doesn't meet the Medical; it also raises the liability issue to Council. Two individuals were rejected in New Brunswick: one was detected with cancer and the other had one transplanted kidney.
- **.Councillor Banks:** Would hope to see that our officers know what will be expected for the medical standards test.
- **.Staff Sargent Welsh:** X-rays, blood work, similar to a check up with your family doctor, but more thorough. There is no 'pears' test.
- **.Inspector McCloskey:** The fellow who died of cancer, if he had been treated and received a clean bill of health, he would've been brought on.
- **.Chief DeWolfe:** Are you saying that there is no requirement to pass the Pears test? (No, it's for cadets.)
- **.Staff Sargent Welsh:** Those rules changed: protocols in December 1997 brought about this change (as set by the Commissioner: standards revised in December 1996. Last formal absorption was in the 1940's, up until Moncton experience. This led to updated standards and protocol.)
- **.Inspector McCloskey:** In Nova Scotia, annually, we do encourage officers to take the Pears test, whether you walk it or run it.
- **.Chief DeWolfe:** In looking at timeline/costs/budgets - June 1<sup>st</sup> from April 1<sup>st</sup> concerned about losing one or two full-time term positions; this does raise a concern. We couldn't pickup someone for three months. Is there any means, in an emergency, to work out an arrangement for additional personnel if we're in a real crunch?
- **.Inspector McCloskey:** Section 2.4 of the Provincial Police Agreement, is to provide assistance or expertise, temporarily, to other units in the Province (subject to ministerial approval). I think there is room there, beyond what may be available from New Minas or Kingston detachments.
- **.Staff Sargent Welsh:** I would suggest such a request is made to a Minister, with a regular request for service. Need to determine, up front, the cost and liability issues.

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- .Inspector McCloskey: For example, the Swissair incident - we had to call on vast resources and it is difficult to cost out everything. To start with, we go to the Minister with what our expectations are, and inquire how it can be managed. There is a lot of back and forth exchange between Municipal and RCMP policing, example: Operation Hope.
  
- .Staff Sargent Welsh: We are under Provincial Contract, so it would need to be
- brought to the Minister.
- ,
- Mr. Stewart: What facilities would be required in Berwick for a blended unit.
  
- ..Inspector McCloskey: Depends upon the expectations of the community, there are advantages to having certain equipment (i.e. breathalyzer). Unlikely to have a cost effective "hard interview" room, but maybe a "soft" interview room.
  
- .**Deputy** Mayor Munday: What are the building criteria?
  
- .Constable McWhinney: Strict cost criteria doesn't come into play: it depends on a Satellite or Community Service Centre.
  
- .Inspector McCloskey: It would have to be well studied, especially the reception area.
  
- .Mr. Stewart: Do you expect the Town of Berwick to provide that?
  
- .**Deputy** Mayor Munday: We provide that now; I'm sure you are familiar with the Berwick Police Department station.
  
- .Mr. Stewart: What about a dedicated office, is that paid for by the Town of Berwick or the RCMP?
  
- .Staff Sargent Welsh: A dedicated office is part of the program cost; keeping in mind that we have to keep infrastructure costs down.
  
- .Mr. Stewart: What about a regional office in the Town of Berwick?
  
- .Constable McWhinney: You're talking about a stand-alone detachment that affects far more than Berwick? Do we really need that?
  
- .Inspector McCloskey: For example: we look at two detachments in Kings County, such as New Minas and Kingston. We try to combine administrative functions, etc. and create a large centre with

satellites (not main offices with

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- detachments all over). The community office should be very accessible, that RCMP members drop in and public can participate in. (Public doesn't want a voice-mail phone service - wants "in person" service).
- **.Deputy Mayor Munday:** Question on timing?
- **.Staff Sargent Welsh:** With a letter from Council to the Minister of Justice,
- looking at 120 days to implementation, provided that there are no hiccups.
- **Commissioner Keith:** If there is a call at 2 a.m., how long will it take to respond?
- **. Superintendent Stait:** To Halls Harbour from New Minas it could be 25 minutes. For the Town of Berwick, from ends of Town, it could be 4-5 minutes because there isn't much distance to travel. It is different in the County where it can take 35 minutes to cross the County in extreme cases. Very few cases actually took that long.
- **.Inspector McCloskey:** Residency Policing throughout Nova Scotia: example, Pubnico. Triage: calls went out three ways - depending on severity of call as to who responds. Berwick is more urban than that. Depends on the nature of the call whether they call for an officer to come in from New Minas; or pay them overtime for a callout.
- **.Commissioner Keith:** What about all of the roads in Kings County. If you're in from British Columbia, how do you find Halls Harbour, or Bennetts Bay?
- **.Superintendent Stait:** By radio assistance, maps, etc. Still a fairly small area compared to Vancouver, for example.

Hearing of no further questions or discussion, Mayor Prall extended thanks to everyone for a very informative session and for attending this evening's meeting. Once a decision is made, if we choose to proceed we anticipate a very quick timeline for completion.

Mayor Prall adjourned the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

- Judith Mitchell
- Town Clerk/Treasurer
  
- John P. Prall
- Chairman