



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

VIA EMAIL

November 5, 2021

Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2
Email: justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca

Honourable Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Finance and Deputy Prime Minister
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Honourable Dominic Leblanc, P.C., Q.C., M.P.
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Honourable Marco E.L. Mendicino, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Public Safety
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Honourable Mona Fortier, P.C., M.P.
President of the Treasury Board
Email: mona.fortier@parl.gc.ca

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau and Ministers:

RE: Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) retroactive pay an unfair cost to municipalities

Together our municipalities are reaching out to ask the federal government to re-evaluate the cost-sharing balance for the retroactive pay and ongoing increase within the new RCMP collective agreement.

Over the years our cities have invested significantly in the RCMP by hiring more officers and support staff, and our Councils have prioritized community safety in decision making. We value the important work members do to keep our citizens and communities safe and support their right to collective bargaining including being paid competitively in relation to other police forces in Canada.

In response to the recent collective agreement negotiated exclusively between the federal government and the National Police Federation (NPF), municipalities across Canada are now unfairly and suddenly facing hundreds of millions collectively in additional retroactive pay contract-policing costs.

While the federal government has been at the negotiation table confidentially with the NPF and has had the time to anticipate these costs, albeit for the federal 10 per cent portion as per contract-policing agreements, it is we the municipalities who are expected to absorb nearly all the costs – retroactively and ongoing. We are disappointed to have not been included nor consulted by either the federal government or NPF prior to an agreement being made to discuss the retroactive pay structure, amount, and payment timing.

The much higher than anticipated financial implications come at a time when municipalities are grappling with economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with significant impacts on all our public safety resources due to homelessness and the opioid epidemic.

We pride ourselves on being fiscally responsible municipalities and accountable to our citizens. Kindly the RCMP had advised us to set funding aside in general terms. We had responsibly anticipated wage increases over the years based on this RCMP guidance and set aside reserves, however the amount we were advised was significantly lower than what we are now facing and needing to pay. In addition, we must now also integrate ongoing annual costs from wage increases and of future collective agreements into our municipal budgets.

Without support from other orders of governments, the collective agreement's requirement puts intense pressure on our city finances. Yet we cannot run a deficit budget. Councils will need to consider the possibility of raising taxes, delaying important city infrastructure and service projects until financially feasible or to consider service level reductions. Councils will deliberate municipal 2022 budgets very soon with many priorities aligning to federal and provincial mandates to best serve communities: inclusion, diversity, mental health and addictions, housing need, green infrastructure and climate change initiatives, Indigenous reconciliation, diverse and reliable transportation, and economic resiliency in a post-pandemic Canada. The additional policing costs, if not mitigated by another order of government, will impact the amount that Councils have available to advance these other priority initiatives.

In an era where we are seeing a decrease in public confidence of policing, this will be both a financial and public response burden we are sure to face – for a decision we did not have input in making.

Both the federal and provincial governments stand to benefit from the significant retroactive pay and ongoing wage increases: from a personal finance perspective, members will be paying higher income taxes, particularly in 2022 because of the one-time retroactive payment. Yet, the federal government is placing the cost burden of the retroactive pay almost solely on the shoulders of municipalities.

We ask that the federal government consider an equal cost-sharing approach to offset the financial implications of the sudden implementation of the 23.78 per cent raise and retroactive pay of the RCMP's first collective agreement. We ask the federal government to pay a minimum of 50 per cent of the retroactive pay associated costs.

British Columbia is home to 6,800 RCMP officers serving 150 municipalities. The largest detachments in Canada are within our province, co-signed on this letter. British Columbia municipalities are facing the largest financial impact of this decision, but we know across Canada municipalities are having a difficult time accepting the high financial cost suddenly placed on us.

We are aware that some municipalities in B.C. are in a unique position, compared to the rest of Canada, having received unofficial notice from the RCMP to set some funding aside in anticipation of a collective agreement. As such, we support the Federation of Canadian Municipalities in their advocacy for full cost recovery for other Canadian municipalities who may not have been extended the same courtesy.

Given the significant and immediate financial impact, **we request the opportunity for an in-person meeting in Ottawa with you to allow for open dialogue about the retroactive pay implications to our municipalities and a mutually agreeable cost-sharing model** between federal and municipal governments.

To arrange a meeting or if you or your staff have any questions, please contact Kelowna's City Manager/CAO, Doug Gilchrist at dgilchrist@kelowna.ca or 1-250-469-8901.

Sincerely,



Colin Basran
MAYOR, City of Kelowna

Co-signed with



Mike Hurley,
MAYOR, City of Burnaby



Ken Popove,
MAYOR, City of Chilliwack



Richard Stewart,
MAYOR, City of Coquitlam



Ken Christian,
MAYOR, City of Kamloops



Leonard Krog,
MAYOR, City of Nanaimo



John Vassilaki,
MAYOR, City of Penticton



Lyn Hall,
MAYOR, City of Prince George



Malcolm Brodie,
MAYOR, City of Richmond



Doug McCallum,
MAYOR, City of Surrey



Victor Cumming,
MAYOR, City of Vernon



Gord Milsom,
MAYOR, City of West Kelowna



CC: Commissioner Brenda Lucki, Royal Canadian Mounted Police
Ms. Frances McRae, Chief Administrative Officer, Royal Canadian Mounted Police
Deputy Commissioner Dwayne McDonald, Royal Canadian Mounted Police (B.C.)
Brian Sauvé, President, National Police Federation
Joanne Vanderheyden, President, Federation of Canadian Municipalities
Gary MacIsaac, Executive Director, Union of B.C. Municipalities



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