

# STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

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DATE: January 6, 2022

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: Adam Davey, Director of Public Safety

SUBJECT: RCMP Contract proposed budget reduction of \$1M

ATTACHMENT(S): None

## RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Council RECEIVES FOR INFORMATION the report dated January 6, 2022, from the Director of Public Safety, titled, "RCMP Contract proposed budget reduction of \$1M".

## PURPOSE:

At the Regular Meeting on December 20, 2021, Council directed Administration to return a report for budget 2022 deliberations regarding information on the effects of a \$1M reduction in the Police Services Budget. In summary, a \$1M reduction roughly equates to five (5) RCMP officers. Based upon existing police core service and public safety requirements, a \$1M reduction would result in the disbandment of the Downtown Safety Unit (DSU). The DSU developed following previous service enhancement(s) in the past few years, and is comprised of five RCMP members.

Currently, the City's contract with the Province for Policing is for a contracted strength of 142 members and the detachment budgets for approximately 10% less, due to anticipated vacancies. If the Officer-In-Charge (OIC) was able to staff more members than budgeted, the City would be responsible for the additional members, up to the 142 contracted strength.

The cost per member for 2022 is estimated at \$200K and represents both wages and operational policing costs as calculated by E Division, the RCMP's Provincial headquarters.

## Previous budget enhancements:

In 2016 Council passed a budget enhancement request, which increased the number of members by 7 over a 3-year period:

- 3 officers in 2016,
- 2 officers in 2017, and
- the remaining 2 officers in 2018

These augmentations brought the total contract to 142 members. This enhancement was to create funded positions to maintain enough staffing to deal with the calls to service in an effective and efficient manner, replacing the redirected resources to Car60, Downtown Safety Unit, Urban First Nations, and Domestic Violence.

In 2020, a \$273,249 budget enhancement request for overtime for downtown patrols was approved as presented in *A Safer, Cleaner, and More Inclusive Community* initiative; this increase was also included in the 2021 budget. The enhancement was part of a program to produce a cleaner downtown and was intended to address criminal activity and provide a more positive perception of public safety by increasing the amount of dedicated patrols in the downtown area.

In 2021 an enhancement for an additional 2 members to fill a training gap and reduce the costs of training offsite was also made, but was subsequently not approved.

#### STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Social Health & Well-Being Goals: (2) *Provide a community where people feel safe and included.*

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

Should Council reduce the Policing budget by approx. \$1M, this would equate to approximately 5 RCMP members and would have service level impacts. The City of Prince George has seen consistently strong population growth over the last five years and that population growth trend shows no sign of slowing. The increase in population is one of the primary driving factors that has led to a significant increase in calls for service for police. Calls for service increased approximately 22% over that five-year period. If the Policing budget is reduced, reductions in service will have to come from complimentary policing programs, such as the Downtown Safety Unit and Car 60, as it will not be an option to reduce frontline policing positions due to the continued increasing pressures for response to calls for service.

#### RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Adam Davey, Director of Public Safety

#### Report Written by:

Devon Cooper, Manager of Police Support Services

#### APPROVED:

Walter Babicz, City Manager

Meeting date: January 24, 2022