

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

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DATE: December 2, 2022

TO: COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

NAME AND TITLE: Adam Davey, Director of Public Safety

SUBJECT: Police Services Review

ATTACHMENT(S): Four (4): (1) Police Service Review Executive Summary
(2) PowerPoint slide deck
(3) 2023 Budget Enhancement Requests
(4) Police Resources in British Columbia, 2020 (Province of BC)

RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT the Committee of the Whole;

1. RECEIVES FOR INFORMATION the report titled “Police Services Review” dated December 2, 2022, from the Director of Public Safety;
2. RECOMMENDS that Council considers the 2023 Police Budget Enhancement Requests attached to the report titled “Police Services Review” dated December 2, 2022, from the Director of Public Safety, as part of Council’s 2023 Budget deliberations; and
3. RECOMMENDS that Council considers initiating a resourced Community Safety & Well Being (CSWB) planning process in accordance with Council’s upcoming 2023-2026 strategic planning process.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee of the Whole (COTW) with a comprehensive review of police services in Prince George. As part of the 2022 budget deliberations, Council directed Administration to conduct a resource review of police services. Curt Griffiths Research and Consulting were hired to conduct this work over the course of 2022. This COTW Meeting and resource review provides an opportunity for an in-depth discussion on policing in Prince George.

DISCUSSION:

The attached Provincial *Police Resources in British Columbia, 2020*, provides data that shows Prince George has among the highest case load, crime rate and criminal offences across the province. In terms of total counts, only Surrey and Vancouver are higher, despite having respective populations multiple times larger than Prince George. For context, the City of Richmond has about 2.5 times the population of Prince George (216,046 compared to 82,268 in PG). Richmond has nearly twice the number of RCMP adjusted

strength members, at 276 (compared to 142 in PG). Yet, Prince George has a crime rate nearly 4 times higher, with a case load 3 times higher, and over 5,500 Criminal Code offences more than Richmond.¹

The below chart contains historical information on CPG RCMP member counts, requests, and costs from 2014 to present. It ought to be noted that the contract establishment strength of 128 in 2014 was the same as 2006 (128). Between 2014 and 2022, the RCMP requested an additional 26 members. The City approved 15 members during that timeframe, 9 positions fewer than requested. It is also important to note that despite requests, complete filling of actual vacancies remains a challenge due to staffing shortages.

Year	Contract Establishment Strength	Budgeted Police Strength	Budgeted cost per member
2014	128	121	\$144,321
2015	135	121	\$154,683
2016	138	121	\$160,457
2017	140	124	\$169,909
2018	142	126	\$174,022
2019	142	128	\$175,933
2020	142	128	\$178,623
2021	142	128	\$182,371
2022	143	128	\$201,365

The attached Police Resource Review includes recommendations to increase the strength of the RCMP Detachment by approximately 30 staff: 19 uniformed RCMP members, and 10 Municipal Employees (MEs), in addition to a number of Data Processors (MEs). Given the City’s budget challenges, Administration and RCMP leadership are building a 5-year staffing plan that flattens the budget enhancement request over a 5-year period, 2023-2027. Each year a budget enhancement request of approximately \$1M (2022 dollars) to hire four (4) additional RCMP members and two (2) MEs shall be brought forward to close the identified resource gap. For 2023 (attached), the first budget enhancement request is recommended for Council’s upcoming 2023 budget deliberation, in accordance with the recommended prioritization contained within the consultant report.

Further, the report recommends initiating a Community Safety & Well-Being (CSWB) framework. This is a major undertaking requiring additional resources above those recommended in the report. Administration recommends that Council consider initiating a CSWB planning process during the upcoming Council strategic planning process. A CSWB is a multi-year plan. Given the City’s budgetary constraints, administration is recommending flattening out enhancements over a 5-year horizon. If appropriately resourced, a planning process could be initiated in 2023 with a framework for Council consideration beginning with budget 2024.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Police services supports Council’s strategic priority of a safe community.

It is important that the police review be considered within the wider context of an evolving protective services environment. Last summer, Fire/Rescue Services conducted a Standard of Cover “Midpoint” Review, stemming from the comprehensive 2015/16 Report. The report contained staffing resourcing

¹ *Police Resources in British Columbia, 2020, page 9.*

recommendations, originally identified in 2015/16 that have not been actioned. Fire/Rescue Services has a comparable multi-year resource enhancement request, that will be brought to Council for 2024 budget deliberations, and like police, will be extended over a 5-year time horizon (budget requests for additional PGFRS staff over 2024-2028). An update on this shall be brought to Council next spring/summer, following the completion of the fire training center feasibility study (earmarked for Q2 2023, pending Council's 2023 budget approval).

Given escalating service costs across the spectrum of local government, service level options may be a future council consideration, that balances core Policing and Fire/Rescue requirements, with “nice to haves.” Despite uncertainties with evolving technical, legal-legislative, and societal expectations, what remains certain is costs to provide the current level of service shall continue to rise. A multi-year gap over the previous several years has continued to expand, and with it comes significant costs to close it. Tradeoffs may be required, with service level impacts.

It is also important to note that the resource (staffing) gap in policing cannot be rapidly closed. Supposing Council approves the 6-staff enhancement request in January/February, it will probably take at minimum 6 months to operationalize.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

During the 2022 City budget deliberation process, Council directed Administration conduct a police services resource review. Curt Griffiths Research & Consulting have completed a comprehensive report conducted over the previous nine or so months, resulting in several recommendations including closing the current staffing gap, and initiating a Community Safety & Well-Being (CSWB) planning process. The COTW format provides Council with an avenue for a comprehensive discussion on police services.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Adam Davey, Director of Public Safety

APPROVED:

Walter Babicz, City Manager

MEETING DATE: December 14, 2022