



LETHBRIDGE POLICE COMMISSION

OPEN LETHBRIDGE POLICE COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, April 27, 2016
City of Lethbridge Council Chambers
4:00 p.m.

In Attendance

Lee Cutforth, Chair	Acting Chief Colin Catonio
Peter Deys, Vice-Chair	Inspector Jason Dobirstein
Councillor Joe Mauro	Acting Inspector Dwayne Smith
Councillor Bridget Mearns	Kristen Harding
Victoria Chester (arrived at 4:05 p.m.)	Brenda Kenward
Simon Griffiths	
D. Jean Valgardson	
Marion Wiebe	
Carmen Hellowell (Recording Secretary)	

Regrets

Chief Robert Davis
Inspector Bill Anderson
Inspector Tom Ascroft
Shilpa Stocker

- 1) Meeting Called to Order
 - The meeting was called to order by Chair Cutforth at 4:00 p.m.
- 2) Approval of Agenda
 - **Motion by Marion Wiebe, Seconded by Councillor Mearns that the agenda be approved as circulated....Carried**
- 3) Enquiries by the Public
 - Darlene Aucoin
 - Explained problems with police response in relation to nuisance calls and issues with the bylaw. Has shared her concerns in the past with individuals of the City Clerk's Office, Lethbridge Police Service and now Commission. Would like issues addressed and does not want to have to file a formal complaint. Had recent conversations with Acting Inspector Dwayne Smith as he was referred by Darcie James following discussions with her.

- Provided an outline to Acting Inspector Smith of what she would like to occur to improve the current situation, which includes:
 - Chronic nuisance action plan, review data collections, better use of current data system, improve response allocation, redefine enforcement model, create a nuisance bylaw to better suit the community at large.
 - Has offered to work with the Lethbridge Police Service on these matters.
 - Councillor Mauro asked why Commission did not receive copies of the emails that were sent to the Commission. Chair Cutforth advised there was one email directed to Commission that Chair Cutforth responded to, which was in conjunction with the referral from City Clerk's Office to Regulatory Services. There was nothing to report back in terms of Commission's action.
 - Ms. Aucoin advised she understands it will take time to see changes. At this point, she wanted Commission to be aware of this situation.
 - Acting Chief Catonio explained the duties of the Quality of Life Officer could assist in this situation as there is a focus on a particular location or individual. It would be positive to reduce the calls for service. Regarding data, there are data bases full of information, there are benefits to cross reference information and the Service aims to be a data driven organization.
 - Acting Inspector Smith will continue discussions with Ms. Aucoin.
- Mike Vercillo
 - Shared concerns about public intoxication and gang activity in the downtown core. Problems in the downtown have occurred since he was a child but has noticed an increase. Witnessed property damage, personal safety issues and has had to physically remove people. A lot of money has been spent replacing property. Something severe will happen if something does not change. Provided background today as there are new members on Commission.
 - Has been told in the past this is a social issue. Met with members of Council, London Road Neighbourhood Association, Inspector Ascroft and Public Complaints Director Peter Deys and has been told police arrest where offences are committed and is supported by evidence. A recent incident occurred involving tenant Able Dental who saw evidence of gang activity. His complaint is against policy, not the police in general. Downtown is a problem, police know about it. Has had recent conversations with Chief Davis and supports his insight and leadership, hopeful Chief will assist with problem. Mr. Vercillo has noticed a recent positive change, more activity from the police. Believes public should be welcome to this forum when issues deal with policy. Asked if this could be placed on the agenda for future meetings to continually revisit due to the chronic problem.
 - Chair Cutforth explained when Mr. McKay was past chair he conveyed to Mr. Vercillo that public is welcome to attend Commission Meetings. Mr. Vercillo was thanked for this information and was assured that Commission is giving this thought.

- 4) Approval of Minutes of March 30, 2016 Open Meeting
 - **Motion by Peter Deys, Seconded by Victoria Chester that the minutes be approved as circulated....Carried**

- 5) Business Arising
 - a) Letter from Minister Ganley re: Equitable Police Funding in Alberta – Chair Cutforth
 - Letter of reply from Minister Ganley provided in agenda package for information.

 - b) Letter from Minister Sabir re: Safe Sobering Site – Chair Cutforth
 - Letter of reply from Minister Sabir provided in agenda package for information.

- 6) Standing Items
 - a) ALERT Update – Acting Chief Catonio
 - Presented April monthly report for Lethbridge Region ALERT.
 - In early April arrested individual carrying cocaine, currency and cell phones.
 - Resulting from a search warrant, police located one adult and five youths and found cocaine, marihuana, codeine pills, counterfeit currency and a handgun.
 - Municipal Enforcement Team has been purchasing cocaine, meth and fentanyl at street level from four different targets. Have been working with the Downtown Policing Unit on local gang issues. Support was given to Taber Police Service involving a drug target.
 - ICE has been working in our region and has laid charges against two people related to child pornography. Attended a public presentation and answered questions to approximately 80 parents.

 - b) Building Expansion Update – Inspector Dobirstein
 - Will soon be approved for occupancy of basement, Forensic and Administration areas of new addition.
 - Once the move into the new space is completed, demolition of existing locker rooms, as well as current executive area will proceed.
 - Siding installation continues on the exterior of the addition.
 - Framing and electrical/mechanical work is underway in the southwest corner of the building.
 - Expecting paving of the north lot to occur in May.
 - Councillor Mauro asked if the front counter hours have always been from 7am – 7pm. Inspector Dobirstein advised as long as he remembers but a Commissionaire works 24 hours a day so an individual could contact a Commissionaire by way of phone near the front doors if required. But after hours Individuals can call the general inquiries number.
 - Chair Cutforth asked the timeframe for full completion. Inspector Dobirstein advised the plan for full completion is by early 2017.

- c) Calls for Service – Acting Inspector Smith
 - Calls for Service for March distributed in agenda package and Acting Inspector Smith provided highlights from the report.
 - Overall calls for service are down 400 over the same time last year. Collisions down, likely due to fair weather.
 - STEP initiative - Occupant restraints – 88 violation tickets
 - Councillor Mauro wondered if the disturbance/nuisance calls which are in the top 5 calls for service at 340 calls is normal to be a top call and asked for clarification of a nuisance call. Acting Chief Catonio advised the same top 5 are typical.

- d) Financial Report – Brenda Kenward
 - Financial report was circulated to Commission Members and reviewed.
 - Reporting period January 1, 2016 to March 31, 2016 reflects an overall surplus of \$7,241 with Revenue accounts generating a surplus of \$17,012, Wage accounts a deficit of \$55,173, Other Operating Expenses a surplus of \$10,846, and interdepartmentals a surplus of \$30,807. Overall the Service is saving about \$2,414 per month compared to budget through the first three months.

- e) Monthly Compliments – Acting Chief Catonio
 - March Compliments: 6 Citizen/External, 5 Community Partners, 1 Internal

- 7) New Business
 - a) Annual Lethbridge College Community Survey – Inspector Dobirstein
 - Annual survey included in agenda package is arranged by LPS and conducted annually by the Lethbridge College Citizen Research Society Research Lab, under the supervision of Dr. Faron Ellis.
 - The 834 person sample size accurately represents the demographic distribution of the adult population of the City of Lethbridge with a margin of error of plus or minus 3.37%.
 - Survey has been conducted for a number of years and each year the results are overwhelmingly positive.
 - Majority of respondents – 72%, indicated LPS is doing a good job. Very few residents – 3.6%, indicated LPS is doing a bad job.
 - Substantial majority of respondents believe LPS officers are polite and respectful, with only 2.4% indicating officers are impolite and disrespectful.
 - Over the past year, 52.5% had some direct in-person contact with an LPS officer.
 - With respect to feeling safe, 58.4% feel very safe and 34.9% feel somewhat safe in their neighbourhood.
 - In the downtown core, 53.5% of respondents indicated they feel somewhat safe while 23.8% feel very safe. Less than one-quarter of respondents reported feeling unsafe.

- In addition to the citizen satisfaction questions, an extra question was asked to gauge community support for the use of Community Peace Officers (CPOs) and how they could support the police service. 70.6% support greater use of CPOs.
- Simon Griffiths wondered if the 53% of people surveyed having contact with a police officer seemed high and how would that compare to other communities. Inspector Dobirstein explained it could have been through community interactions as LPS has an active Downtown Policing Unit, for example.
- Councillor Mauro shared when he reads the survey results and the majority of residents that feels safe is 58.4%, he would rather see it as 90%. Wondered if this really captures the mood or feel of the community. Inspector Dobirstein advised this is one piece of information to work from.
- Councillor Mauro asked from a police perspective if the use of CPOs is a good idea. Acting Chief Catonio advised there are different ways to incorporate CPOs, Medicine Hat includes bylaw enforcement which takes some of the workload off of the police service. The survey question was asked in relation to a strategy of LPS looking to hire CPOs to staff the front counter, cell block and perhaps over time roll out additional duties. Would need to wait until funds are in place as Council did not approve the funds needed during the 2014 budget presentation which could have started rolling out this strategy. There could have been four or five CPOs currently in operation.
- Peter Deys stated the CPO program has been one of the objectives of the Commission as these programs are occurring across the country and he appreciated that the question was in the survey. As a member of the media, he verified that media looks at trends and appreciates they can look back 10 years. He did not see a whole lot of fluctuation in the downtown, for example.

8) Enquiries by the Police Commission

- Jean Valgardson shared that the police service 6 months goals and objectives had been discussed at the last Commission meeting and asked for Acting Chief Catonio to advise the citizens present in the meeting to share what some of these would be relating to their concerns. Acting Chief Catonio explained the document is based on the LPS business plan and there were 5 strategic areas identified. Relating to crime and community – crime response data analysis, correct beat alignment, downtown staffing regarding police officers and how we police the downtown. Have engaged a consultant whose expertise is on data analysis and how to use it to better police your community. Safe sobering site project will help substance addicted individuals.
- Jean Valgardson advised it appears that issues are being heard and looks forward to the follow-up.
- Councillor Mauro asked if the agenda and minutes are provided to the public. Acting Chief Catonio explained that the agenda and minutes are posted on the City of Lethbridge website. Community survey is posted on LPS website.

9) Enquiries by the Public

- Merv Hudemka asked about the monitoring of intersections where pedestrians cross. There have been problem areas and there are monitoring cameras set up on 7 Ave and 13 Street South and wondered about the monitoring project. Acting Inspector Smith advised if monitoring was done, it would be through the City of Lethbridge for signaling the traffic lights. Not aware of any study to monitor pedestrian use but will look into this and report at the next meeting. Mr. Hudemka provided photos of the intersection from a few weeks ago.
- Mike Vercillo shared what seemed to be missing from the LPS 6 Month Goals and Objectives was gang related activity. Acting Chief Catonio advised the strategic goals predate the gang issue and a specific action plan has been created relating to this, and he provided highlights.
- Councillor Mearns asked if the increase in public intoxication has been in relation to the jail no longer taking these individuals and how much of an impact a safe sobering site would have. Acting Chief Catonio shared that the fact that the Correctional Centre no longer accepts individual fresh arrests is not necessarily indicative of what has changed on the street because LPS has its own cell block and members do and can arrest when they have the evidence to do so. The help of a safe sobering site is when people don't need to go to jail but need a safe place to go.

10) Meeting Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 5:13 p.m.