



LETHBRIDGE POLICE COMMISSION

OPEN LETHBRIDGE POLICE COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, February 22, 2017
City of Lethbridge Council Chambers
4:00 p.m.

In Attendance

Lee Cutforth, Chair

Peter Deys, Vice-Chair

Councillor Liz Iwaskiw

Victoria Chester

Simon Griffiths

Robert Van Spronsen

Marion Wiebe

Jenn Ward (Recording Secretary)

Chief Robert Davis

Inspector Bill Anderson

Inspector Tom Ascroft

Inspector Jason Dobirstein

Kristen Harding

Brenda Kenward

Regrets

Councillor Joe Mauro

D. Jean Valgardson

- 1) Swearing In of New Member Robert Van Spronsen
 - City Clerk Aleta Neufeld swore in new Lethbridge Police Commission member Robert Van Spronsen.
- 2) Meeting Called to Order
 - The meeting was called to order by Chair Cutforth at 4:03 p.m.
- 3) Approval of Agenda
 - Withdraw: 6.a. Truth and Reconciliation Commission – Chief Davis
 - **Motion by Victoria Chester, Seconded by Marion Wiebe that the agenda be approved as amended....Carried**
- 4) Presentation – Chief's Certificate of Commendation
 - Chief Davis presented Constable Denton Michelson with a Chief's Certificate of Commendation for his actions in helping a woman in mental distress.
- 5) Approval of Minutes of January 25, 2017 Open Meeting
 - **Motion by Peter Deys, Seconded by Councillor Liz Iwaskiw that the minutes be approved as circulated....Carried**

- 6) Business Arising
 - There was no business arising.

- 7) Standing Items
 - a) ALERT Update – Inspector Anderson
 - February 2017 report for Lethbridge Region ALERT was circulated previously to members, the following was added since distribution:
 - On February 20, Lethbridge Region ALERT with the assistance of the Lethbridge Police Service stopped a motor vehicle where drugs were found. Search warrant was executed on a north side home where more drugs were found. \$50,000 was seized along with \$25,000 of proceeds of crime. Three Lethbridge residents have been charged.

 - b) Building Expansion Update – Inspector Ascroft
 - Criminal Investigation Division moves are currently underway.
 - Completion in March with a few weather-dependent items remaining such as a cut out at front of station for tow trucks and the addition of another bay door.
 - Cst. Kara Hagen and Ms. Kristen Harding have agreed to begin planning events.
 - Questions from Commission:
 - Clarification regarding the cut out for tow trucks. Similar to pull out for a bus stop, an addition to what was initially planned but City Manager found funds to cover cost. Collision Reporting Centre will move to LPS next week.

 - c) Calls for Service – Inspector Ascroft
 - Calls for Service for January distributed in agenda package and Inspector Ascroft provided highlights from the report:
 - Calls for service down 43, year to date down considerably over last year.
 - Thefts and Mischiefs up, mostly from pellet gun mischiefs and thefts from vehicles. Collisions are significantly up, attribute to the weather, same for tickets. Photo Radar Enforcement down due to the weather as well.
 - STEP Initiative – Intersection safety – Data not yet available.
 - Questions from Commission:
 - Are thefts from motor vehicles due to items left out in plain sight? Inspector Ascroft said vehicle doors are being left unlocked.
 - Any specific reason for the increase in thefts? Inspector Ascroft said they are crimes of opportunity and there are more people with drug addictions.

 - d) Financial Report – Brenda Kenward
 - As of December 31, 2017, had a surplus of \$8,739.
 - Questions/comments from Commission:
 - Brenda Kenward was commended for her ability to manage the budget with a great degree of accuracy.
 - Clarification regarding purchasing technology from reserves. Brenda Kenward explained there are ebbs and flows through different years from different expenses. We pay back a specific amount annually, but upon going

through the files, Brenda determined that we need to pay back more than we have to the line of credit.

- e) Monthly Compliments – Chief Davis
 - o February Compliments: 5 Citizen/External, 4 Community Partners, 1 Internal
 - o Some highlights:
 - Compliment via Facebook directed towards Cst. Chris Stock and Cst. Norm Smith in how the officers responded and handled a residential break and enter, and kindness shown to occupant’s small children.
 - The City of Lethbridge has Employee of the Month recognition independent of Police. Chief Davis received a notice from the City that a citizen nominated Cst. Affie, Cst. Borthwick, Cst. Fielding, Cst. Hodgson, and Cst. Scarpelli and they were selected. Extremely flattering for these officers to be part of this recognition program and that the citizen took the time to do nominate them.
 - Cst. Cousineau found two small children inside a vehicle parked outside of a bar on an extremely cold night and due to his actions he received a Divisional Recognition internally from LPS.
 - Chief Davis pointed out that he was wearing a pink shirt in support of anti-bullying and thanked the Police Commission members and officers who did the same in support of Pink Shirt Day.

- f) Community Issues – Inspector Ascroft
 - o Chief Davis explained the addition of Community Issues to Standing Items.
 - o Police Commission meetings are a good forum to share what the Service is doing to address these issues to keep community aware and close the loop.
 - o Insp. Ascroft explained that the Downtown Policing Unit assigns a Constable to each of the following areas:
 - i. Centre Village Mall
 - Has changed their security company and have increased foot patrols.
 - ii. Lethbridge Public Library
 - Had a problem with public order issues, drug users, homeless, etc. There was a similar problem at the Provincial Building, believes they have been displaced to the library.
 - Insp. Ascroft met there last week with Sgt. Klassen and Cst. Darroch.
 - iii. Lethbridge Centre – Food Court / Lobbies
 - Weather moves people inside, will move from one mall to another.
 - Walked through Tuesday and it appears the problem has been mitigated.
 - iv. 5 Street South – Greyhound Area
 - v. Park Place Mall
 - Same as Lethbridge Centre, though they have reduced their security personnel. Is a concern.

- Questions/comments from Commission:
 - Question whether the Service's efforts are separate from those of the Diversion Outreach Team (DOT). Insp. Ascroft explained that the Service ensures the DOT is doing what they can to remedy issues. In a lot of cases, they can be helpful. We ensure the DOT is aware of any issues and that downtown businesses are aware of the DOT.
 - Insp. Ascroft provided a brief overview of the DOT.
 - Chair Cutforth, Chief Davis, and Insp. Ascroft were thanked for the addition of this agenda item.

8) New Business

a) Annual Professional Standards Report – Sergeant Christos

- Sergeant Pete Christos and Sergeant Renee Scotland provided a brief PowerPoint presentation regarding the annual Professional Standards report.
- Sgt. Scotland provided an explanation regarding one of the biased-based profiling complaints pertaining to the LGBTQ community. It allowed the Service to take a look at policy and training to be more understanding of the LGBTQ community.
- Questions from Commission:
 - Is the Service experiencing a situation similar to the Calgary Police Service in regards to female officers being bullied? Sgt. Scotland explained that the first two female officers of the Service joined in 1980 and she appreciates the barriers they have broken down. Our female officers experience unique challenges in a male-dominated environment. If you asked them, they would tell you that they are proud of what they do and that they have a sense of belonging in our organization.
 - Suggestion to add the Public Complaint Director to the report to follow the Solicitor General's recommendation that the role be more public. Would be good to see the number of complaints that come through there.
 - Suggestion to show the number of complaints versus the number of calls. Have presented these statistics in the past and found it helpful.
 - Why are there numerous zeros for External/Public Complaints. Sgt. Christos explained that it depends on the details of the complaint. If the element does not come forward in their case, it is not listed.
 - Question regarding the numbers 94/15 listed for Citizen Contact/Counselling. Sgt. Christos explained that 94 people came forward where their concerns were documented, and 15 of those documented had necessity of counselling. Insp. Ascroft added that allegations are delineated by the Police Service Regulation, so any activity that an officer does has to fit into that.
 - Question regarding how the Service's numbers compare with the rest of Alberta. Sgt. Christos did not have this information available; however, Peter Deys explained that there is a report that shows the comparison and that we did well comparatively.

b) Focused Initiatives – Chief Davis

- Chief Davis asked Commission to recall that during the budget presentation in January a member of council asked what the Service is doing to be more efficient. Chief had listed several initiatives, one being the Service was working on a call diversion pilot project with PSCC, which has since been renamed the Alternative Response Management System.
- Sgt. Kyle Meyers and Cst. Nick Cousineau provided a presentation regarding this project:
 - Project undertaken by Patrol Team B with Staff Sergeant Jamie Fisher as lead. Sgt. Jay McMillan diverted calls from the PSCC to Sgt. Meyers and Cst. Cousineau at LPS where they would triage how they would be handled.
 - Brought forward a PSCC evaluation project in the fall of 2016 regarding ways to improve frontline policing to the citizens of Lethbridge.
 - LPS had experienced a reduction in team strength due to various factors, but call volumes had not decreased. Recognized the need to address calls more efficiently.
 - Patrols is the largest division and where the majority of the work occurs. Needed to look at what could be done at the front line.
 - Also demands regarding court process (court time).
 - Problem is not unique to Lethbridge. Other municipalities are also looking at ways that they can be more efficient.
 - Constables Kurtz and Cousineau were appointed as diversion officers during the project. They were assigned calls that met certain criteria.
 - A way to provide a police response without police attendance.
 - During the trial period, diverted 32% of calls during the day and 21% during nightshifts.
 - Members were able to be more proactive in their policing, morale increased, and beat ownership increased.
 - Through the use of electronic statements and Dropbox for video evidence submissions, have reduced time spent from hours to minutes.
 - Officers were able to conduct more street checks and had more time to do proactive policing.
 - Positive community response regarding telephone reporting method.
 - Seeing an increased police presence.
 - Next steps are to formalize business rules, train our members and the PSCC, educate the public, and roll out the program to all Patrol teams.
 - ARMS can help injured members support the front line without being on the street, would not lose man power.
- Questions/comments from Commission:
 - How was the increase in public satisfaction measured? Cst. Cousineau explained that, based on feedback received by diversion officers, the public was pleased regarding the fast turnaround on calls. They would have never called about things in the past, but are receiving a better response now. Have nothing measurable.

- Will there be an officer at the PSCC for every shift? What will the program look like from a physical perspective? Sgt. Meyers explained that there would be a member working out of the police station taking calls, following up with people, and tracking down video from the previous day. There would be enough work during the day to keep that officer going. During night shift, after three hours, the officer could get caught up and work the rest of the shift out of their vehicle. If they receive a call that meets the criteria, they could make their phone calls from their car.
- Will there be a rotation? Sgt. Meyers said the program would be treated as another beat within the city, but the rotation cycle period would be much shorter than the eight-month cycle for regular beats. All members will move through it, and it does come with training. Is being tested now, not at the definitive end.
- Chief Davis explained that, before the project, the Service would receive feedback from frustrated citizens who would also reach out to the Mayor and City Council regarding their frustrations, and we would always have a large amount of calls in pending. Once ARMS was implemented, those calls virtually disappeared because they received the communication they wanted from us. Speaks to the abilities of our members within the Police Service. By employing our people to run with something like this, speaks to the quality of officers we have.
- Chair Cutforth thanked Sgt. Meyers and Cst. Cousineau for their presentation.

9) Enquiries by the Police Commission

- Compliment regarding the Community Issues standing item and the presentation on the Service's efficiencies. The Commission appreciated hearing about both.
- Question regarding different lights being used in police vehicle light bars. Insp. Ascroft explained that the light bars have both the flashing red and blue lights as well as yellow directional lights that are used to direct traffic at vehicle collisions.

10) Enquiries by the Public

- Merv Hudemka
 - Concerned about a thick piece of rebar sticking out of the street west of the TELUS building downtown. The rebar has a traffic cone over top of it, but is still concerned about the safety of pedestrians. Councillor Iwaskiw will have the City Manager look into it.
 - Wondered if there has been a rash of thefts from garages recently. He has had to go into many of his neighbors' garages recently to close unattended overhead doors. Insp. Ascroft replied not to his knowledge and it is common to find overhead doors open as some homeowners leave them open to air out their garage.

11) Meeting Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 5:28 p.m.