



City of Surrey

Public Safety Committee

Minutes

Executive Boardroom
City Hall
14245 - 56 Avenue
Surrey, B.C.
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9, 2003
Time: 9:03 a.m.

Present:

Chair: Councillor D. Watts
Councillor B. Steele
Councillor G. Tymoschuk
Councillor M. Hunt
Mayor McCallum
Supt. B. Harford, B.C. Ambulance Services

Staff Present:

City Manager
A/Commr. G. Forbes, RCMP
Inspector R. Reeves, RCMP
City Solicitor
Fire Chief Garis
J. Sherstone, Manager, By-law & Licensing Services
S. Palmer, Legislative Services

The Chair noted that the agenda order would be varied.

G. OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

Mayor McCallum indicated frustration regarding the announcement by the media that the RCMP have set up a regional police force stretching from Boston Bar to Pemberton which would see the merging of 16 detachments into a single police department to be known as the RCMP Lower Mainland Police Services and to be headed by Assistant Commissioner Gary Forbes.

He noted that he has attended monthly consultative meetings with Lower Mainland Mayors, the RCMP, and the Solicitor General where discussions were held regarding regionalization of four areas only: integrated homicide unit, identification unit, canine services, and emergency services. He continued that there was less than 50% support for the merging of those four service units, however the City of Surrey did express support for that initiative.

Mayor McCallum recalled asking the RCMP and the Solicitor General, at that meeting, whether there were plans for further regionalization beyond those four areas to which the response was in the negative. He added that there had been no further discussions on the matter.

The Mayor went on to say that he was made aware of the decision to merge those detachments through the press, without prior consultation or discussion. He indicated that "E" Division had forwarded a letter outlining the decision to regionalize but neither the City of Surrey nor other municipalities in the area had received such correspondence. He commented that the RCMP should know very clearly that Council had indicated its support for the regionalization of the integrated homicide unit, identification services, canine services, and emergency services **only** and did not support overall regionalization of the RCMP.

A/Commr. Forbes appreciated and welcomed the Mayor's comments noting that the word "regionalized" is a very sensitive word to local governments. He continued that the RCMP did discuss the delivery of those communications to the Mayors' forum. He continued that this proposal is an enhancement of what the Mayors' consultative forum agreed to which was the integration of specialty services and the high end capital expenditure removal of redundant structures. He noted that the message was clear from the Mayors' Forum that the RCMP's costs were unsustainable and required exploring other ways to provide service delivery in an effective manner. A/Commr. Forbes indicated RCMP services would be more effective by working together.

A/Commr. Forbes indicated that consensus was reached a year ago to regionalize from Pemberton to Hope assigning responsibility for overall operation of policing within the area and noted this move is an enhancement of that initiative. He continued that by working in concert with colleagues there would be constant success and fewer cases such as the Heather Thomas case or 54 deaths in the Surrey area. He stated he would be willing to debate that this would present a smarter, more affordable, more effective way of delivery.

Discussion turned to the fact that a letter from "E" Division had not been forwarded to the city regarding the matter and the City Manager noted that the Chairperson of the working group is in the process of forwarding the letter.

A/Commr. Forbes assured the members that Surrey would continue to have a senior officer responsible for operations. He noted that this initiative was to effect cutting redundant positions, having more people responsible for front-line policing to achieve safe homes and communities. He further added that the proposed form of unified command structure would provide for less people in the bureaucracy and more people delivering on the front end.

Clarification was then provided that R. Bennett is the Operations Officer in Surrey and that G. Forbes is the Community Operations Officer.

The Operations Officer would be responsible for:

- Looking at the administrative structures in place for Area 3 and any duplicities, which could be removed to improve service delivery.
- Investigate the connectivity and movement of criminals and criminal activity along the Fraser River.
- Working effectively in real time not reactive time.
- Would take on responsibility for multi-jurisdictional area of Surrey, Langley, and White Rock.

The question was raised how this expansion of role would affect Surrey knowing the challenges the community faces. A/Commr. Forbes gave an example and added that the RCMP wants correlation from a unified command to deliver effective services and resolve the types of issues faced in our communities.

Discussion regarding the movement of officers between municipalities was raised and it was stated that this practice currently takes place informally and the move to regionalization just formalizes those types of common sense approaches. A/Commr.

Forbes indicated that the RCMP would still provide community services such as the school liaison officer program.

The statement was made that at the Staff Working Group level, discussions have taken place related to the integration of high cost specialty police services, such as homicide, canine, ERT, IDENT, etc. The Community Policing such as attending to 911 calls, street level presence, foot patrol, bike squad, school liaison, traffic, etc., will continue to be delivered through the detachment of individual municipalities. No discussion or conclusions have taken place at the Working Group level related to integration of individual municipal detachments.

The Mayor noted that the community has a lot of respect for the Surrey RCMP and added that there is open communication with neighbouring municipal police forces on joint issues and questioned the move to regionalize, which may result in taking away from the community. He continued that Surrey RCMP has decentralized into community offices to bring policing closer to the citizens of Surrey, which has proved successful.

Councillor Tymoschuk noted his disappointment that there was no opportunity for prior discussion and expressed concerns that one detachment serving communities from Pemberton to Boston Bar takes away some of the ability for communication, accountability and responsibility within the city of Surrey.

It was
Moved by Councillor Tymoschuk
Seconded by Councillor Steele
That the Public Safety Committee makes the
recommendation that Council consider the possibility of implementing a municipal police force.

Carried

A/Commr. Forbes explained that the regionalization plan expands the Surrey model throughout the area. He added that his responsibility still lies in providing policing services to Surrey and that he continues to meet with independent municipal forces through the B.C. Association of Chiefs of Police where it has been unanimously agreed that working with the RCMP in an integrated fashion is a positive move. He noted the move for regionalization is just an enhancement of the structures already in place and would not take away at all. He added that it was unfortunate that the communication process was not handled better.

Mayor McCallum stated that he has been a representative on the Big City Mayors Caucus for six years and noted that the top twenty cities in Canada do not have RCMP forces. He added that he had stated that the RCMP are the best police force in Canada.

The statement was made that the move to regionalization may move control away from the communities and citizens and that it may be time to review municipal policing.

Councillor Hunt noted that during his tenure on Council there has been a command control culture within the RCMP and that much progress had been made through a consulting process and decentralization through the move to community policing stations.

He added that this regionalization plan has taken the Surrey model and stamped it across the southwest of the province.

Councillor Watts stated that as long as she has been Chairperson of the Public Safety Committee, there had been no issues with the RCMP members on the front line and the delivery of service has been above and beyond expectations.

The original agenda order resumed.

A. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

1. Open Public Safety Committee – March 12, 2003

It was Moved by Councillor Hunt
Seconded by Councillor Steele
That the minutes of the Open Public Safety
Committee meeting held March 12, 2003 be adopted.
Carried

B. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL

1. Recovery Houses – Conditional Sentences and Probation Orders

The statement was made that there is great concern over the province's decision not to participate in the regulation of recovery houses and the problem lies with no regulatory body overseeing those houses putting too much power in the hands of operators running these facilities. The statement was made that a delegation would speak more on the matter in the closed portion of the meeting.

2. Proceeds of Crime – How does Surrey benefit from this and how is the money spent

Discussion ensued regarding proceeds of crime going to federal funding sources and not coming back in any proportion to the municipalities to assist in the cost of policing. It was noted that municipalities have the task of executing the warrants, court and overtime costs but the proceeds are split between the federal government and a portion to the province begging the question of how does Surrey benefit and how are those proceeds of crime spent?

A/Commr. Forbes stated there has been discussion around the legislation, which dictates the proceeds going to federal government revenues. He noted that the UBCM have been working with the government to put legislation in place to allow those funds to filter down. He stated that even though the money is seized, it does go to the defense of the individual(s) who perpetrated the crime. He added it would be interesting to know the court costs involved and how much money remains.

Councillor Watts stated that the proceeds should go back into law enforcement to offset the costs of seizing the property.

Inspector Reeves stated that there only one resource in the Drug Section looking after the proceeds of crime. He noted that over \$2.5 million had been seized and legal restraints placed on those properties, which have not gone through the system yet. He added that approximately 90% of the money goes back to federal coffers.

He added that Surrey may not receive money but does receive benefits in the way of training. He stated that it would be helpful to have a direct agreement with the province to get those funds back into the City, but that is between the municipality and the province. He added that there is money seized and through direct correlation with the Department of Justice a minimum of 10% off the cost of restraining issues surrounding the seizure would go back to the province.

The statement was made that when a grow operation is shut down the house can be seized but it is more difficult, if it is a rental property, to prove the actual owner was involved.

Mayor McCallum added that the UBCM and municipalities have tried to get the figures on proceeds of crime from the province. He added that Surrey should receive the proceeds to offset the costs involved in shutting down these grow operations.

The statement was made that the city should approach the province or federal government to provide accountability by revealing how much is in the fund and where it is spent.

Inspector Reeves noted that Inspector Thorne would be meeting with RCMP to provide direction based upon his knowledge of the issues around proceeds of crime. The City Solicitor suggested applying under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act for that information.

The Manager, By-law & Licensing Services, stated that he met with RCMP dealing with the billing back of emergency service costs under the "Surrey Community Improvement and Controlled Substance Manufacture By-law, 2001, No. 14422". He added that the costs are rolled into property taxes should the property owner not pay and that Surrey has first right to recoup their losses. The statement was made that since the adoption of the By-law, \$200,000 has been billed by the City.

Mayor McCallum left the meeting at 10:07 a.m.

3. Amber Alert – Status of Implementation if and when such an event takes place.

Councillor Watts requested the status of the Amber Alert initiative, which originated in the United States after a young girl was abducted. The program was outlined.

A/Commr. Forbes left the meeting at 10:10 a.m.

Inspector Reeves stated that a preliminary meeting with the Vancouver Police and RCMP would take place along with Inspector D. Kaluza of Community Policing to discuss the process of putting protocol together within the RCMP for Surrey providing a fan-out alert system with other municipalities when there has been an abduction of a child. He added this provides community support adding eyes and ears to assist police when such an event takes place. He added that he did not know if this initiative would be province-wide and that there were no timelines laid out at this point. He added he would report back to the next meeting.

Inspector Reeves noted that there is an alert program through Realty Watch in place currently.

C. ITEMS REFERRED BY SURREY RCMP

There were no items for consideration at this time.

D. ITEMS REFERRED BY CITY SOLICITOR

There were no items for consideration at this time.

E. ITEMS REFERRED BY FIRE SERVICES

There were no items for consideration at this time.

F. ITEMS REFERRED BY B.C. AMBULANCE SERVICES

There were not items for consideration at this time.

G. OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS**1. Regionalization of RCMP**

Discussed earlier in the meeting.

2. City of Calgary's By-law on Street Prostitution

Councillor Watts stated that the City of Calgary forwarded a copy of their by-law prohibiting the use of public streets for the purpose of prostitution. She noted Calgary has implemented fines associated with this by-law and related her concerns regarding prostitution on school grounds in Surrey, particularly elementary schools. She noted it is difficult for the City and the RCMP to deal with the issues around prostitution given that it is not illegal for prostitutes to stand or walk around school grounds. She added that of particular concern were elementary schools and Queen Elizabeth Senior Secondary School.

She noted some prostitutes are performing tricks on school grounds as well and that she would like staff to review the by-law with a view to implementing it in Surrey.

It was Moved by Councillor Hunt
Seconded by Councillor Tymoschuk
That the City of Calgary's By-law on Street
Prostitution be forwarded to the City Solicitor for review and report back to the
Public Safety Committee.

Carried

3. Methadone Dispensaries By-law

The City Manager stated that he has spoken with the Deputy Minister – Health Planning about suggestions raised during the stakeholders meeting held April 4, to discuss methadone dispensaries. He noted that there are more consultation meetings being planned with the College of Pharmacists and that the strongest concern of Council and the City had to do with the concentration of methadone dispensing clinics in a localized area.

He added that suggestions had been raised which he wished to share with the committee members. The following suggestions were then outlined:

- That if an agreement could be brought to bear, pharmacies dispensing methadone would have to be open not less than 7 days a week.
- That a limit be placed on the number of methadone prescriptions that any given pharmacy can fill in a 24 hour period (20 or 30 prescriptions).
- That the College of Pharmacists publish quarterly reports of the daily number of prescriptions filled at all pharmacies.

The City Manager noted that the publication of daily numbers of methadone prescriptions filled at each pharmacy would achieve the goals of providing the information required to monitor methadone dispensing pharmacies.

It was stated that pharmacists earn \$15.00 each time they dispense methadone and the fact that it must, for the most part, be dispensed daily provides significant revenues. He added that by introducing a criteria of 7 days a week, those pharmacists seeking a greater revenue base would not continue operating 3 hours a day, 5 days week but would go to a full-time, full-service pharmacy to become more economically attractive

It was then noted that should these suggestions be accepted, the purpose of that simple but finite provision could then be paralleled within the City's business licence by-law with a cap on the daily number of prescriptions dispensed and the publication of statistics would allow for the decision to follow up and would not compromise patient confidentiality.

The statement was made that the issue of the amount of dispensaries in one area has been effectively dealt with by amending the Zoning By-law prohibiting any more methadone dispensaries in the city except on city-owned land. It was then added that the idea was to move dispensaries into full-service pharmacies such as the larger grocery or drugstore chains where there is less incentive to basically run a methadone mill. It was noted that the Ministry of Health, College of Pharmacist and By-law & Licensing Services would meet on Thursday to discuss these suggestions. The statement was made that the city does not disagree with the methadone treatment program but the method of delivery, which can harm the community. It was added that only properly trained pharmacists be authorized to dispense methadone and that the goal of the business license by-law is not to give authority or direction to pharmacists but deals with the pharmacies.

Councillor Watts concurred that there is no interest in individuals' names and that she was told that under the current guidelines, pharmacists had to apply to the College of Pharmacists to increase their number of clients.

Councillor Watts asked how these suggestions would address equal distribution throughout the city and the response was that if there are going to be 900 methadone prescriptions to be renewed and pharmacies can only dispense 25 doses per day, you would need approximately 40 pharmacies. Therefore, the impetus of it being a lucrative business for methadone dispensing only is decreased substantially.

The question was raised regarding the issue of carries and the response was that the publication of statistics would allow the city to go in and view the records to determine whether a doctor has authorized carries or not.

The statement was made that a full-service pharmacy serving other patients and customers would provide a reason to maintain a higher standard of dispensing. The Manager, By-law & Licensing Services noted that he receives quarterly

reports from the Liquor Distribution Branch on amounts of alcohol sold on a wholesale basis which gives an indication of any irregularities.

The following comments were then made with respect to the purposes behind the suggestions:

- That if a pharmacy dispenses methadone it has to be open 7 days a week and clients should be encouraged to take their methadone and not have carries.
- That the problem is taken out of the hands of the pharmacists that ultimately are being blamed at this point in time, not dealing with the issues of doctors.
- That a doctor may write 30 day carries in unusual circumstances but the patient must still fill that prescription each day.

H. NEXT MEETING

The next open Public Safety Committee meeting has been scheduled to take place Wednesday, May 14, 2003 at 9:00 a.m. in the Executive Boardroom.

I. MOTION TO HOLD CLOSED PUBLIC SAFETY MEETING

It was Moved by Councillor Hunt
Seconded by Councillor Steele
That a Public Safety Committee meeting be held in a closed session in accordance with Section 242.2(1) (f), (h), and (i) of the *Local Government Act*.

Carried

J. ADJOURNMENT

It was Moved by Councillor Hunt
Seconded by Councillor Steele
That the meeting do now adjourn.
Carried

The meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

Chairperson