



COBOURG POLICE SERVICE

BOARD REPORT

Report to:	Cobourg Police Services Board (CPSB)	
Submitted by:	Chief Paul VandeGraaf	Meeting Type: Open Session <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Closed Session <input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting Date:	July 16, 2024	
Report Type:	Information Only Report <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Required Report <input type="checkbox"/>	
Previous Related Reports:		
Subject/Title:	Encampment – Staffing Costs	

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RECOMMENDED MOTION:

THAT the Board receive the following report for informational purposes.

BACKGROUND

Since the summer of 2023, the Town of Cobourg has managed the impact of established encampments in three distinct locations. These are West Beach, County property on William Street and currently the large encampment located at the former Brookside Youth Detention Facility. This does not include the many different smaller and more mobile locations that seem to come and go. Regardless of who the actual property owner is, there is a measurable impact on police services. This has been previously reported to the Board in a variety of manners, most substantially in November 2023.

Cobourg Police Service (CPS) members most often are the first point of emergency contact and a critical avenue for support for those experiencing homelessness and/or addiction. CPS prioritizes community safety and well-being concerns by collaborating with partner agencies who operate in social service fields, such as mental health, community outreach, and other emergency services. Presently, CPS contributes significant police resources towards a shared response and the demands for services have increased in recent months.

Where those previous reports focused on the type and nature of the calls for service, they did not attempt to assign a dollar cost to the efforts of the police. Recognizing that any attempt to put any exact dollar figure to this is impossible, this report will provide a very conservative cost estimate.

There are essential facts to recognize when reviewing this report. First, there are calls in other areas of the community that may be related to the encampment that would not come up in our search. Second and key is this analysis measured the time on the call at or directly next to an encampment. This does not universally track the amount of time that is spent in the administrative resolutions of the matter. In other words, how much time did it take the officer to process the required records management functions? Based on the call type, these police interactions could include follow up interviews, community canvassing, follow ups to gather and analyze CCTV footage, victim assistance and a host of others. Beyond the immediate police officer time, there is significant time spent by our staff including our crime analyst, court administration staff and other essential support roles. Those costs are not factored in this report.

What this report tracked was the actual time on the call in a few four different sub-categories.

- Community Originated. These are the calls made by someone in the community to attend the encampment for some reason.
- Patrol. These are calls designed to increase presence in the actual encampment to assist other agencies or independent patrol.
- Community Services. These are calls where we assist other agencies (until recently), HAPR and/or MHeart, etc.
- Officer Generated. This is the officer is initiating some police action.

The calls are then separated into the actual year that was impacted. Again, it is important to note that the time span is actually not that long. The first encampment on west beach came to be in August 2023. It only lasted for a few weeks, and then moved to the County property. It was there for about a couple of weeks before establishing at Brookside on September 07th, 2023. The number of calls are expected to increase substantively effective June 2024 as now police are being asked to attend the encampment to support County Social Services, EMS and Cobourg Fire save and except any emergency call for service. What this means that anytime they must enter the encampment, police are being asked to accompany staff to ensure safety of persons.

Within this data analysis there was one outlier that was removed from the statistics. This is the attempt murder investigation at the west beach encampment in August 2023. Adding the huge amount of time spent bringing this matter before the courts would be unfair reporting. This is a major case and had 100s of hours expended in the investigation and case preparation.

To be clear, the reporting of this matter is to highlight the impact this had had on overall police services to the entire community. Each of these calls were valid and required some form of police intervention. This was done in most instances with budgeted staff dollars. There are separate reports filed with the Board that outline extra costs associated to our dynamic patrol initiatives. When this amount of time is spent on a very small segment of the community, there are other areas that become underrepresented. This never means that our emergency response to any priority call for service has been compromised. Our front-line team continue to provide exceptional services in time of highest need everywhere in the Town of Cobourg. Our staff continue to provide exceptional service in criminal investigations from the staff in the investigative unit. Finally, our community engagement and crime prevention continue along through our tiered police response. But recognizing the demand, we are missing an opportunity to creatively address other proactive opportunities including enhanced road safety initiatives, school resource officers or other proactive initiatives across the community.

Report

In 2023, commencing in August, here is the breakdown of hours:

- Community Originated - 504 hours
- Patrol – 569 hours
- Community Services – 50 hours
- Officer Generated – 57 hours

The total for 2023 is 1186 hours. Applying an average first-class Constable pay of \$51.36 per hour the cost is \$60,912.96 before benefits and pensions.

From January until June 2024, the following is the breakdown:

- Community Originated - 559 hours
- Patrol – 807 hours
- Community Services – 97 hours
- Officer Generated – 107 hours

The total for 2024 is 1570 hours. Applying an average first-class Constable pay of \$51.88 per hour the cost is \$81,451.60 before benefits and pensions.

Again, this is time spent on calls and does not include those other considerations previously identified. Although not a perfect assumption, we can safely assume that the average additional time required to fully complete a call for service would double that time. In the case of someone being arrested and held for a show cause hearing, there could be several hours of follow-up required to prepare the necessary court documents. Other calls are complete when the officer leaves the event. Not trying to put a figure on that for this purpose, but rather reiterating the point that the figures are a starting point.

When we speak about available officer deployment, the matter must be examined differently. Staffing is a finite number recognizing the collective bargaining conditions of employment. When we examine the average officer on platoon, they work a 12-hour compressed work schedule. If we take the average number for annual leave allotment of 4 weeks, add the other provisions of statutory days, “float” time for working the

compressed schedule and training days for mandatory training, an officer on platoon is available 1618 hours of the 2080 hour work year. Recognizing we are only at the mid point of the year, the time spent at the encampment is already almost equal to one full time equivalent officer and rising.

The growing encampment, the increase in associated police related expectations, the pull of resources from other strategic initiatives impacts our overall service efficacy. The funding issue is only one view of this issue. Our strategic plan was developed in conjunction with our community. The goals established in that document are all designed to deliver community safety for Cobourg in a variety of ways. As stated, the resources, sworn and civilian, are finite. Addressing the issues identified in our dynamic patrol are met through a combination of regular time and overtime. Expending the equivalent resources of one full time officer on encampment related calls for service does have an impact on our commitment to deliver on the goals of our Strategic Plan.

The CPS will continue to collaborate with community agencies to ensure they are providing the required resources for those experiencing homelessness, addictions and mental health challenges. Our members continue to proactively address the root issues of crime. Our members react accordingly in times of emergency ensuring the safety and security of all citizens. The future will continue to see this wholesome response to community safety throughout Cobourg.