



## Minutes of the Public Meeting – Overview of Policing Services

**Place:** Oxford Capitol Theatre

**Date:** Wednesday, November 27, 2019

**Time:** 6:30 pm

**Police Services Review Committee Members in Attendance:** Chairperson Deputy Mayor Rick Draper, CAO Rachel Jones, Councilor Dave Clark, Acting Chair Byron MacDonnell – Police Advisory Board, David Hoffman, Policing Services Consultant Donna Jewers – Department of Justice and Linda Cloney (recorder)

Chairperson Draper facilitated the Public Meeting and presented the information on the purpose of the meeting and the process that had been undertaken to date.

Five questions were asked for the public's input.

1. Do you have any concerns with law enforcement in Oxford during daytime hours?

Glen Pettigrew – a resident of Oxford

**Referring to slide 12 in the presentation, Current Service: Policing in Oxford, Mr. Pettigrew asks why is the capita costs comparisons so high for Oxford?**

*Response – Mr. Draper commented that we are in the process of identifying that and we don't have the answers yet. The model that is used through the Department of Justice states the costs per regular member. We are currently going through the process to see if that is the correct number for Oxford.*

**Mr. Pettigrew commented that as a resident of Oxford and a taxpayer he personally would like to see more enforcement in the Town of Oxford. Whether it is day or night. If we can do it cheaper that is great. In his opinion, he wants to see action.**

Rubin Millard – a resident of Oxford

**It is the nighttime service he has a problem with. Mr. Millard told a couple of stories as to why he has a problem with the nighttime service. These stories left him wondering, where are the police? First story – Mr. Millard was going to work one morning, around 4 am, and he heard the alarm going off at the NSLC. He called the police and got through to Truro and he was asked, where is the alarm going off at. Mr. Millard told them it was the NSLC and the RCMP asked where that was located. Mr. Millard told them Oxford on Main Street. The dispatch asked him if would go up and check and see if it is really something or is it just a false alarm. Mr. Millard told them no, that is what we pay the police for. The RCMP told him that they wouldn't want to wake someone up in the middle of the night if its just a false**

alarm. Second story – The same thing happened as the other story except this time it was the bank that had an alarm going off. The RCMP asked him again to go up and check to see if it was a false alarm. This time the dispatch told Mr. Millard that there are no police on duty at nighttime in Oxford. Again, the dispatch said that they didn't want to wake someone if it was a false alarm. Mr. Millard also commented that he had a nice new light on his property. During the night, 5 – 8 young people had smashed this light. Mr. Millard reported this incident and never received a follow up call as to the outcome of the incident he reported. From 9 pm on the calls for Oxford are received in Truro and the RCMP there do not seem to know the layout of Oxford.

Ken Hickman – a resident of Oxford and the Deputy Fire Chief for Oxford  
His concern is the law enforcement in the daytime hours. This is because the RCMP officers are spread too thin. There are many calls that the Fire Department and the RCMP work together. He feels that we should be at least meeting the status quo that we have and possibly increasing the number of officers we have.

Nicole Collicott – not a resident of Oxford, works as a paramedic for Oxford.  
Any time she has needed the police, she has been very fortunate to get them in a reasonable time frame within 15 – 20 minutes. With her job as a paramedic she deals with local policing from many areas. Every time there is a mental health crisis call, the RCMP or the local Police need to arrive first to be sure the scene is safe. Ms. Collicott comments that the wait time for the RCMP is the same as the local Police response time. At nighttime the response time for both the RCMP and the local Police are both decreased. Ms. Collicott would like to see Restorative Justice in Oxford, she has to travel to Springhill for this service.

Alan Rushton – a resident of Oxford  
A month ago, his family experienced an incident around 2:30 am. Mr. Rushton called the RCMP and in about 5 minutes they had three RCMP cars and officers at their residence.

2. Do you have any concerns about law enforcement in Oxford during night-time hours?

*As this was discussed throughout the responses of the public in question one, this question was passed over.*

3. Name your top three (3) policing concerns in our community?

*No one came forward to give their input. Some of these concerns were expressed in the discussions of the first question.*

4. What policing service or program would you like to have in Oxford that you don't experience now?

Ms. Collicott commented that human trafficking is on the rise, even in our local schools. Ms. Collicott sees the police can play a larger advocacy role regarding this matter.

*Referring to slide 10 in the presentation, RCMP Community Programs (\* offered in Oxford)*

**Ms. Collicot asked, with the money that is being paid to the RCMP are we entitled to all the services listed?**

*Response: Ms. Jewers responded yes; we are entitled to all those services.*

**Ms. Collicot asked, does that mean we need more officers?**

*Response: Ms. Jewers answered by saying that all the services are free of charge to the Town of Oxford because we have RCMP services.*

**Ms. Collicot asked, even though we only employ three members, does that mean Oxford should employ more officers to receive all of those extra services?**

*Response: Ms. Jewers answered no we do not need to employ more members; we are entitled to those services.*

**Ms. Collicot commented that it is a lot of services that Oxford could be losing.**

5. What are the things you like best about living in Oxford?

**Ms. Collicot likes the fact that Oxford is a small town and that her kids went to school here. Ms. Collicot's children both have special needs and found that she could reach out to the RCMP members and the administrative staff to ask for suggestions and they got to know her children. There was a great relationship between the RCMP officers and her children.**

General Discussion following the meeting.

**Ms Collicot asked if there could be a plebiscite for the residents of Oxford.**

*Response: Mr. Draper commented that it would be something to be considered.*

Janin Wolfe – a resident of Oxford and a business owner

**One of the things that the RCMP does for us in the Town is vetting packages in order to volunteer at the school. If we don't have that process, we may lose volunteers at the school.**

Sylvia McNutt – a resident of Oxford

*Referring to slide 12 in the presentation, Current Service: Policing in Oxford*

**Regarding the costs per person, does Stewiacke, Mahone Bay and Cumberland have the transient population that Oxford has?**

*Response: Mr. Draper commented that the Police Service Review Board does not know the answer to that question.*

**Ms. McNutt asked how did we come up with those numbers?**

*Response: Mr. Draper commented that the board did a comparison of Oxford with towns of equal size. The Policing Review Board researched the numbers of policing costs in other communities. This is not definitive in any way.*

*Response: David Hoffman commented that what we were trying to do was understand what other towns were incurring in policing costs and recognizing that it is a big part of the budget in the Town of Oxford. The Committee wanted to look at it to see whether or not it is reasonable. The Committee, in reviewing this, was of the opinion that compared to other towns it does look to be disproportionate. There are other things that we need to understand, for example the people in our town and the people coming through.*

**Ms. Wolfe commented that she is curious if those numbers are all RCMP or a mix of RCMP and local Policing.**

*Response: Mr. Hoffman commented that in each of those communities that was presented on slide 12 they are RCMP.*

**Ms. Wolfe commented that it is confusing, if it is all RCMP why isn't it the same?**

*Response: Mr. Hoffman commented that we are allocated three members. That is what is currently required for the policing needs for the Town of Oxford. This number seems to be high and that is why the Police Services Review Committee is reviewing this. The Committee's first goal is to receive good policing services and second is the most cost effectiveness for the Town of Oxford.*

**Mr. Millard commented that some of those costs may be incurred because of the location of the Town of Oxford from the Trans Canada.**

*Response: Mr. Hoffman commented that the Police Services Review Committee has been told that the activities of the different officers are tracked. The policing on the Trans Canada is not done by the Cumberland District RCMP.*

**Ms. Collicott commented that sometimes the highway RCMP will be the first one to come to the scene until the local RCMP are able to attend.**

*Response: Mr. Draper commented that the Police Services Review Committee has learned that the Town of Oxford does not have three members, but what we do have is the time of three members. That can be made up of several different members. The Cumberland District RCMP uses a district regional deployment model.*

**Mr. Hickman referred to slide number 12 of the presentation – Current Service: Policing in Oxford. The communities that are listed on that slide may be comparable by population size, but those communities may require less hours of their members than what Oxford requires. He commented that the Committee asked the question what level of policing the community expects? Mr. Hickman feels a higher level of service is required and if we want that we need to expect to pay more.**

Connie Pettigrew – a resident and a business owner of Oxford

**Ms. Pettigrew feels that the RCMP is not present enough. She believes there is a lack of communication between the Town Council and the RCMP. Ms. Pettigrew has gone to the RCMP regarding a concern and they referred her to the Town Office. She spoke to the Town Office in Oxford and they directed her back to the RCMP. There is a communication breakdown.**

*Response: Mr. Draper commented that we are currently working on a better communication between Council and the RCMP involving the Police Advisory Board.*

**Mr. Pettigrew commented that regarding whatever policing decision the Town Council decides he would like to see the best value of policing services for the Town of Oxford. Mr. Pettigrew also expressed that he likes the idea of a plebiscite.**

Kurt Fischer – a resident of Oxford

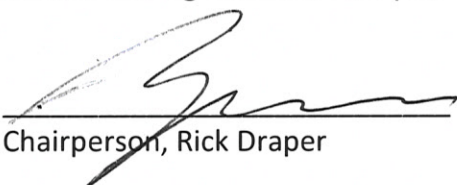
**Have the Police Services Review Committee received a proposal from the Town of Amherst?**

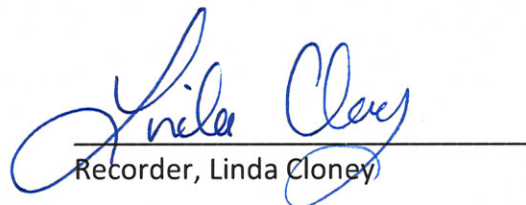
*Response: Mr. Draper replied that we did not receive a proposal from the Town of Amherst.*

**Did the Police Services Review Committee ask for a proposal from the Town of Amherst?**

*Response: Mr. Draper replied that we did not ask any policing service provider for a proposal. That may happen in January of 2020. The Police Services Review Board is still developing the requirements for policing services for the Town of Oxford.*

Public Meeting ended at 7:10 pm.

  
Chairperson, Rick Draper

  
Recorder, Linda Cloney