

Stewart, April

From: Harry Critchley [REDACTED]
Sent: January-14-20 11:19 AM
To: Office, Clerks
Cc: Smith, Lindell
Subject: [External Email] Request to Present at Police Board of Commissioners Meeting Jan 20, 2020

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Good morning,

I am writing to request the opportunity to give a presentation at the upcoming Board of Police Commissioners meeting on January 20th, 2020.

I am concerned that the Chief of Police for HRP has requested a budgetary increase, in part so as to hire four new sergeants to supervise the prisoner care facility at headquarters on Gottingen Street. Rather than invest this money in additional staffing, I think it could be spent more wisely by investing in evidence-based programs and services that would reduce the number of placements in the "drunk tank" annually. Instead of addressing public intoxication with a response from the police, it would be better for everyone involved (i.e., first responders, intoxicated persons, and Haligonians more generally) to treat it as an issue in need of a civilian response.

To this effect, the subject of my presentation will be a description of "sobering centres," which are emergency overnight shelter programs that provide a safe place for those under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol to sober up. Sobering centres have been proven to work effectively in a number of jurisdictions across the country and they are widely supported by a number of Canadian police forces. Evidence suggests sobering centres are cost efficient and reduce contact with emergency health services and police. They can be important facilitators for vulnerable persons to connect to treatment and long-term housing, and are also an effective vehicle for improving individual and community health and well-being. My presentation will provide an overview of sobering centres around Canada, summarize major findings regarding their use, efficacy, and associated cost savings, and argue for their feasibility of implementation in Halifax.

My desired outcome is that the Board of Police Commissioners put forward a motion requesting that a feasibility study be conducted regarding the possible implementation of a sobering centre in Halifax as an alternative to providing increased funding for police staffing in the prisoner care facility at HRP headquarters.

Best,

Harry Critchley
 Vice-Chair, East Coast Prison Justice Society
 Chair, Advocacy Committee, Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia

