

Halifax Board of Police Commissioners

Orientation for New Members

Halifax Board of Police Commissioners

- Background
- All authority is derived from the *Police Act* which gives oversight authority over HRP and advisory authority over RCMP
- HRM has a unique collaborative policing model with both HRP (municipal force) and RCMP (contracted) providing service within areas of the municipality
- Board is made up of 7 members: 3 citizens appointed by HRM, 3 HRM Councillors, and 1 appointed by the Province of Nova Scotia
- Length of terms vary depending on appointing body
- Board's primary role is governance and oversight to reflect the needs and values of the community

A year in the Life of a Board Member

- Monthly meetings
- Annual work plan retreat (full day)
- New recruit swearing in ceremonies
- Promotion of Officers swearing in ceremonies
- Fallen Officers Memorial in October
- Ride-along opportunities
- Nova Scotia Police Governance/Police Chiefs Conference, September
- Canadian Association of Police Governance Conference, August
- Other community events as scheduled (ie walk in community parades with HRP and RCMP, seasonal receptions etc.)

Police Act

- All authority for the Board is found in the *Police Act*
- BOPC members are encouraged to read the *Police Act* and ask questions to clarify their role
- *Police Act* outline roles and responsibilities of the BOPC

Oversight vs Operations

How to tell the difference

Situation:

Increased crime in an area of the community

Do this: ask questions to determine why police resources are being used as they are – this is oversight!

Don't do this: tell the Chief where to put officers – this is operations!

Key Responsibilities

- Swear an oath to protect confidential nature of all information
- Read material in advance of meetings
- Along with the Chair, evaluate the performance of the Chief
- Approve annual budget combining HRP and RCMP expenditures before submission to HRM Council in April
- Receive, respond and manage complaints against the Chief
- Identify community priorities
- Approve HRP strategic plan
- Act as a conduit between the community and the police services
- Recommend policies to enhance public safety
- Learn about trends in community safety
- Request presentations to understand the way policing works

Board Values

- Independence
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Diversity
- Fiscal responsibility
- Community respect
- Confidentiality

Support for the Board

Board of Police Commissioners Policy and Procedures Manual, approved April 2018

- Outlines specific policies relating to the Board
- Roles and responsibilities of Chair, Vice Chair and members,
- Procedure for meetings,
- How motions are brought forward,
- How community members can make presentations,
- How the Board engages with community
- Procedure for election of the Chair and Vice Chair at the first meeting of the year in January.

Support, continued

- Administrative support for the Board is under the Municipal Clerk's office in the role of a Legislative Assistant who fulfills the following:
- Participates in monthly agenda setting meetings
- Maintains meeting minutes and correspondence
- Arranges meeting locations
- Provides support to the Chair
- Responds to public interest in making presentations
- Ensures the website is updated

Board Meetings

- Meetings held monthly with special meetings as necessary (ie budget review)
- Process for meeting structure follows HRM Council meetings (Administrative Order One) which guides the order of the agenda and the way motions are presented
- Agenda includes recurring items as determined by the Chair and members
- All Board meetings are open to the public (includes media) unless the Board votes to meet in camera to discuss a private confidential item
- In addition to Board members, the Chief of HRP, Chief Superintendent of RCMP, HRM Chief Administrative Officer, Legal Advisor, additional sworn and civilian staff attend the meetings
- Presentations on initiatives from either HRP or RCMP are identified at agenda meetings to inform the Board
- Quarterly budget reports are presented
- The Public Safety Strategy for HRM is closely aligned with policing services and reports are often presented to update the Board
- Presentations from community members can be made (Legislative Assistant can outline guidelines)

Strategic Plan

- The Board collaborates on development of the Strategic Plan
- Approves Strategic for HRP
- RCMP planning aligns closely although decisions are made at a national level for budget and priority planning purposes
- Current HRP priorities are:
- Current RCMP priorities are:

Annual Planning Workshop

- Day long meeting with Board, HRP and RCMP participants to plan the Board's focus for the upcoming year
- Issues may include:
 - Current priorities
 - Strengths and challenges
 - Previous year plan and outstanding items
 - Diversity and inclusion outreach
 - Community engagement
 - Risk management
 - Best practices
 - Finances

Questions for orientation

- Why am I asked to swear and sign an oath when I join the Board?
- Who speaks for the Board if there is an issue media are interested in?
- Can I share information I receive at Board meetings?
- What is the role of the Legislative Assistant?
- Who attends BOPC meetings?
- What is the role of the Municipal Clerk?
- How are agendas developed?
- What is the role of the Legal representative at BOPC meetings?

Questions continued

- Is there a dress code for Board members?
- Why and when does the Board vote to meet in camera?
- What events might I be asked to attend as a Board member?
- What is the Board doing to reach out to the public?
- Does the BOPC have its own budget and who controls it?
- Why does no one know anything about the BOPC?
- Is this the only Board in NS? In other provinces?

Questions continued

- What is the Nova Scotia Association of Police Governance?
- What is the Nova Scotia Association of Police Chiefs?
- When is the annual Conference of the two organizations?
- What is the Canadian Association of Police Governance?
- What is the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police?
- Is Halifax a member?
- Is there an annual conference?
- What would I learn if I attend the conference?

Questions continued

- How are the Chair and Vice Chair elected?
- Can the Chair/Vice Chair be community members or does an HRM Councillor take the role?
- Can community members make a complaint against an officer?
- What is a street check?
- What is SIRT?
- How are expenses repaid?
- Are there parking passes for Board members?
- Why are Board members asked to confirm attendance for meetings?