

Item No. 11.1

Request for Consideration		
Agenda Item (Submitted to Municipal Clerk's Office by Noon at least 5 working days prior to the meeting)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Added Item (Submitted to Municipal Clerk's Office by Noon at least one day prior to meeting)	<input type="checkbox"/> Request from the Floor <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Motion
Council or Committee: Halifax Board of Police Commissioners:		
Date of Meeting: March 21, 2022		
Subject: Special presentation from Sunny Mariner, Canadian lead on Violence Against Women (VAW) Advocate Case Review		
Motion for Committee to Consider:		
<p>That the Halifax Board of Police Commissioners (the "Board") invite Sunny Mariner, an internationally recognized expert on Violence Against Women Advocate Case Review ("VACR"), to provide a thirty-minute presentation to the Board either at a special meeting of the Board or during the Board's regularly scheduled June meeting.</p>		
1. What is being requested		
<p>Sunny Mariner, the Canadian lead on Violence Against Women (VAW) Advocate Case Review, reached out to me in early March 2021 requesting to provide a 30 minute presentation to the Halifax Board of Police Commissioners on Violence Against Women Advocate Case Reviews (VACR) being advanced across Canada through the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police-endorsed Canadian Framework for Collaborative Police Response on Sexual Violence (see attached backgrounder). Ms. Mariner indicated that this information is of interest to the BOPC as the federally funded "Improving Institutional Accountability Project" is currently engaging with municipal police services in Nova Scotia to implement this emerging best practice in sexual assault investigations.</p>		
<p>Where members of the public can normally only present to the Board for 10 minutes, I am bringing this motion to permit Ms. Mariner, who is an internationally recognized expert in the field, to present to the Board for a longer period of time.</p>		
2. Information about the VACR Model		
<p>The Violence Against Women Advocate Case Review (first operationalized in Philadelphia in 2001 and colloquially known as the "Philly Model") was developed by the Improving Institutional Accountability Project (IIAP) and seeks to increase equitable access to the justice system for survivors of sexual violence through objectively measurable improvement in policing violence against women.</p>		
<p>VACR is an external file review process which seeks to address case attrition and provide oversight in sexual assault cases through the knowledge of subject matter experts sourced directly from the community. VACR adds a best practice link to the policing investigative chain:</p>		
<p>Report → Investigation → Clearance → REVIEW</p>		

VACR promotes collaboration, knowledge sharing, learning and systemic change through the added link in the investigative chain which provides an ongoing a safeguard process to catch police reported sexual assault cases before they slip through the cracks instead of analyzing what went wrong: after a complaint is filed; after survivors go to the media; after a scandal; or after a perpetrator or serial offender assaults again.

Saskatchewan's first VACR implementation in Regina has successfully completed four review cycles (October 2019, February 2020, June 2020, October 2020), and the pilot project ended December 31, 2020, with all reporting delivered January 31, 2021. External third-party evaluation has reported the Regina Pilot to be successful.

VACR has been endorsed by the Canadian Association Chiefs of Police in 2020, and has been included as a best practice in their Canadian Framework for Collaborative Police Response on Sexual Violence for all municipal police services to adopt and implement. The Saskatchewan Association Chiefs of Police (in 2020), as well as Regina Police Service (in 2021) have endorsed VACR and the Canadian Framework for Collaborative Police Response on Sexual Violence in light of this review process.

3. Information about Sunny Mariner

As the leader of the federally-funded "Improving Institutional Accountability Project" (IIAP), Sunny Marriner has spear-headed the introduction of advocate-led case reviews in uncharged sexual assault investigations in Canada. Since 2011 Sunny has led pan-Canadian teams of autonomous sexual violence expert advocates in developing a uniquely Canadian case review methodology, VAW Advocate Case Review (VACR). Her work became most widely known through its inclusion in the noted Globe and Mail "Unfounded" series (2017) and today she works with all levels of advocates and policing in Canada to implement evidence-based, methodologically sound oversight practices, and best practices in sexual assault investigations. In 2019 Sunny collaborated with privacy experts and police leaders to release national policing guidance in the Canadian Framework for Collaborative Police Response on Sexual Violence, and she is currently coordinating sexual violence investigation case review implementations in over thirty cities across five provinces.

Sunny's work is grounded in 24 years of frontline support and advocacy work in independent sexual assault centres, including the Sexual Assault Support Centre of Ottawa, and as the former Executive Director of the Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre. IIAP's national work now occurs through a partnership with the Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women. Sunny was an Executive member and past VicePresident of the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres, a member of the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General Sexual Assault Centre Provincial Advisory Committee, and has led independent sexual assault centres across Canada in education, law reform, policy analysis and advocacy for gender-equality and survivors of sexual violence. Sunny's core work has centred the experiences of marginalized and criminalized girls and women, including through numerous publications and academic collaborations.

4. Rationale

Receiving a presentation from Ms. Mariner is consistent with a number of the Board's duties, including:

- The function of the Board under 55(1)(b) to provide "the administrative direction, organization and policy required to maintain an adequate, effective and efficient police department"
- The Board's duty under 55(3)(c) to "ensure that community needs and values are reflected in policing priorities, objectives, goals, programs and strategies"
- The Board's duty under 55(3)(d) to "ensure that police services are delivered in a manner consistent with community values, needs and expectations," and
- The Board's duty under 55(3)(e) to "act as a conduit between the community and the police service providers."
- The Board's duty under 55(3)(i) to "ensure the department is managed by the chief officer according to best practices and operates effectively and efficiently"

Outcome Sought: Noted above

<i>Commissioner Harry Critchley</i>	Submitted March 16, 2022
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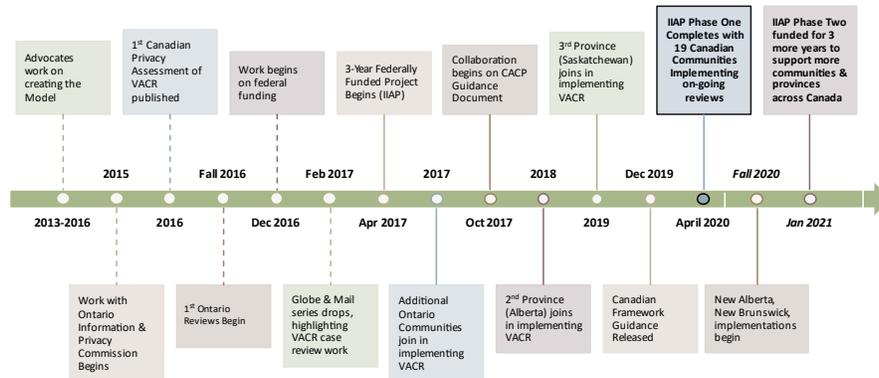


THE IMPROVING INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY PROJECT

The federally-funded “[Improving Institutional Accountability Project](#)” (IIAP) is a multi-phase national project designed to support and assist communities in implementing independent, arms-length reviews of sexual assault investigations that did not proceed to charges. Violence Against Women Advocate Case Review (VACR) is a uniquely Canadian iteration built from the core elements of what’s known as “The Philadelphia Model”, a US-based practice of sexual assault case reviews led by independent frontline women’s advocates.

The work of developing a Canadian, advocate-led case review model was first undertaken by independent VAW frontline advocates in response to high rates of case attrition in sexual assault reports at the police level. By 2016 the first VACR reviews began being implemented by municipal police services, but it was the release of the Globe and Mail’s Unfounded series in 2017 that brought VACR to national attention. What began as a four-city project has grown into a pan-Canadian best practice led by IIAP’s project leader & model co-founder, [Sunny Marriner](#). Over 25 years Sunny has worked with advocates and all levels of policing in Canada to implement evidence-based, methodologically sound oversight practices, and promising practices in sexual assault investigations. To date IIAP has assembled, trained, coached, and reviewed cases with over 28 teams across five provinces, and our **2021-2024 project workplan calls for continued expansion over the next three years.**

VACR HISTORY AT-A-GLANCE



USING ADVOCATE EXPERTISE TO SUPPORT SURVIVORS

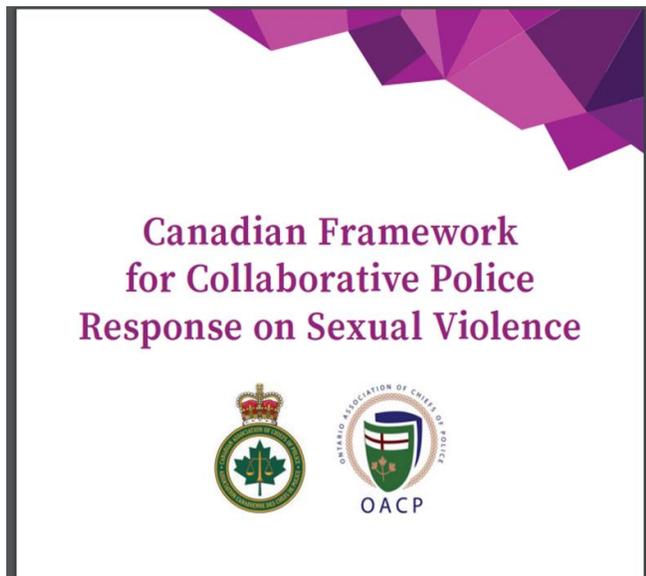
VACR as a model, combined with the coordination, training, support and oversight provided by the IIAP, is designed specifically to identify and address root causes in case attrition in sexual assault reports on a unique police service-to-police service level. The model itself is an operational mechanism intended to create a new link in the investigative chain of sexual assault investigations.



Report Investigation Clearance Review

VACR uses local expertise most commonly held by independent VAW/sexual assault centre advocates to form teams who meet quarterly to review all sexual assault reports that did not proceed to charges. The use of local sexual assault centre advocates is structurally essential to the model. The composition of a VACR review team is designed to ensure reviewers are directly informed by survivor-reported experience of reporting to the local police service, and led by an intersectional, gender-based analysis of both Violence Against Women (VAW) and its intersections with other forms of systemic oppression.

CANADIAN POLICE SERVICES ESTABLISHING INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS



As part of encouraging Canadian police services to support the value of independent case reviews from 2017-2019 Sunny & IIAP worked collaboratively with police services and the Ontario Information and Privacy Commission on the development of a Sexual Assault Investigations best practices framework that would feature the use of the VACR model. The resulting guidance document, [A Canadian Framework for Collaborative Police Response in Sexual Violence](#), was released December 6th, 2019. This document, and the VACR model it outlines, has been endorsed by the [Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police](#), the [Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police](#), the [Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario](#) and the [Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada](#).

Sites Using VACR as of February 2022

1. Kingston, ON
2. **Stratford, ON**
3. **Ottawa, ON**
4. Brantford, ON
5. Timmins, ON
6. London, ON
7. Peterborough, ON
8. Barrie, ON
9. Peel, ON
10. Sudbury, ON
11. North Bay, ON
12. Durham, ON
13. Niagara, ON
14. **Calgary, AB**
15. Edmonton, AB
16. Camrose, AB
17. Regina, SK
18. Kennebecasis Valley, NB
19. Waterloo, ON (*adapted*)
20. Hamilton, ON (*adapted*)
21. Halton, ON (*adapted*)
22. Kentville, NS (*development*)
23. Lethbridge, AB (*development*)
24. Saint John, NB (*development*)
25. Saskatoon, SK (*development*)
26. Moose Jaw, SK (*development*)
27. Charlottetown, PEI (*development*)