



Item No. 7.4  
Board of Police Commissioners  
August 2, 2023

**HALIFAX**

# Halifax Regional Police Staffing Update

Board of Police Commissioners  
July 12, 2023

# Contents:

1. Recruitment a policing wide issue
2. Stats, context & steps taken in recent years
3. Recent budget requests & outcomes
4. Longer term actions



# Key themes :

- Member shortages a profession wide issue
- Agencies facing rapid attrition, retirement and resignations
- Large number of job openings mean there are greater opportunities for movement for police officers
- Large retirement projections in years ahead
- Burnout and overtime demands of profession, were exacerbated by COVID-19 pandemic
- Negative sentiment towards profession
- Agencies looking at various measures



# A profession wide crisis ... and not just in Canada

□ *“...agencies are losing officers faster than they can hire new ones, so total sworn staffing has continued to decline. Resignations are still increasing; responding agencies reported nearly 50 percent more resignations in 2022 than in 2019. While retirements came down a bit in 2022, agencies still reported nearly 20 percent more in 2022 than in 2019. As a result, total sworn staffing has dropped nearly 5 percent over the past three years.”*

**New PERF survey shows police agencies are losing officers faster than they can hire new ones**

**- Police Executive Forum Research (2023)**

[Staffing2023  
\(policeforum.org\)](https://www.policeforum.org/Staffing2023)



# (Contd.)

*“Several factors need to be considered in reviewing RCMP labour shortages: growing demand; impacts of COVID-19; recruitment challenges; impacts on core policing responsibilities and identifying root causes underpinning these challenges.”*

**Study on Labour Shortages, working conditions and the care economy - National Police Federation (2022)**

[https://npf-fpn.com/app/uploads/secure\\_pdfs/2022/04/NPF-Submission-on-Labour-Shortages-Working-Conditions-and-the-Care-Economy-FINAL.pdf](https://npf-fpn.com/app/uploads/secure_pdfs/2022/04/NPF-Submission-on-Labour-Shortages-Working-Conditions-and-the-Care-Economy-FINAL.pdf)



# In the words of another police leader:

*We're in intensive recruitment mode," Dagher said at the meeting. "We think that this year we will be able to recruit 300 new officers. The challenge that we have is that we always lose about 200 to 220 people who retire. Then we have between 60 and 70 people who resign every year, so that means we're doing all this to add 10 people."*

**Montreal police force gaining only 10 officers a year as recruitment issues persist - Montreal Gazette – Magder, J (2023, June 20)**

<https://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/montreal-police-force-gaining-only-10-officers-a-year-as-recruitment-issues-persist/wcm/631da90e-448e-45dc-8870-d122d8efd6ce/amp/>



## (Contd.)

**Cape Breton police officer shortage leaves most shifts shorthanded: union.** CTV News - Moore, K & MacIsaac, A (2023, June 19)  
[https://beta.ctvnews.ca/local/atlantic/2023/6/19/1\\_6447575.amp.html](https://beta.ctvnews.ca/local/atlantic/2023/6/19/1_6447575.amp.html)

**B.C. police forces struggle with recruitment and retention**  
CBC News - Regan, A & Uguen-Csenge, E (2023, May 9)  
<https://www.cbc.ca/amp/1.6836566>

**Here's why police are struggling to recruit new officers — and why some still want to wear a badge: There were just over 1,000 applicants to the Hamilton Police Service in 2022, down from 1,900 in 2020** CBC News - Hristova, Bobby (2023, March 28)  
<https://www.cbc.ca/amp/1.6782361>



# (Contd.)

**On police recruitment — 'Why would anyone want to be a cop right now?'** Ottawa Citizen - Egan, K (2022, August 14)

<https://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/egan-on-police-recruitment-why-would-anyone-want-to-be-a-cop-right-now>

**Officer deaths make recruitment difficult: police chiefs association** - Canadian Press – Alhmidi, M (2023, May 11)

<https://www.chch.com/officer-deaths-make-recruitment-difficult-police-chiefs-association/>

**RCMP reports trouble recruiting for police forces on Vancouver Island and across Canada** - CHEK News (2022, August 23)

<https://www.cheknews.ca/trouble-recruiting-for-police-forces-on-vancouver-island-and-across-canada-1080612/?amp>





**By the numbers:**

**Situation, Context &  
HRP response**



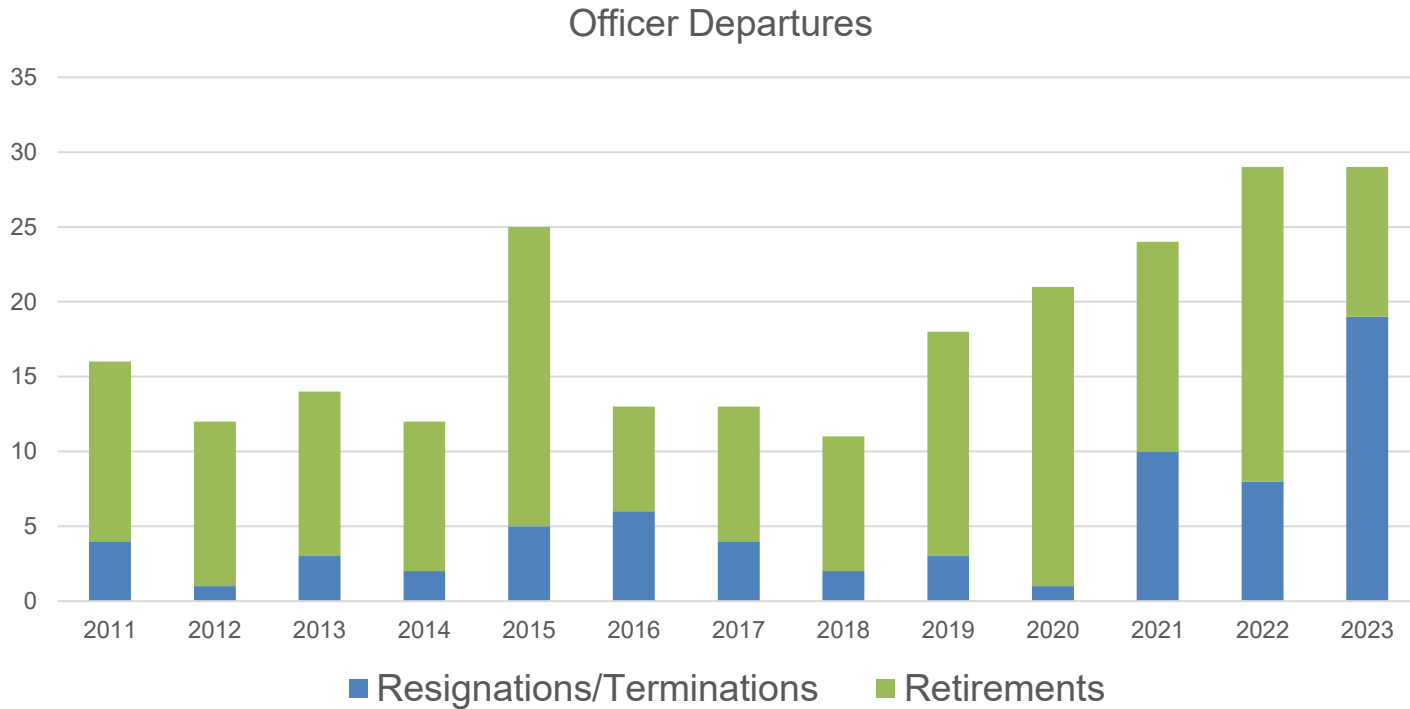
# Sworn members eligible to retire

Year	# eligible to retire
2023	74
2024	16
2025	20
2026	25
2027	19
2028	24
2029	30
<b>Total eligible</b>	<b>208</b>



# Officers leaving HRP

## 2011-2023YTD\*

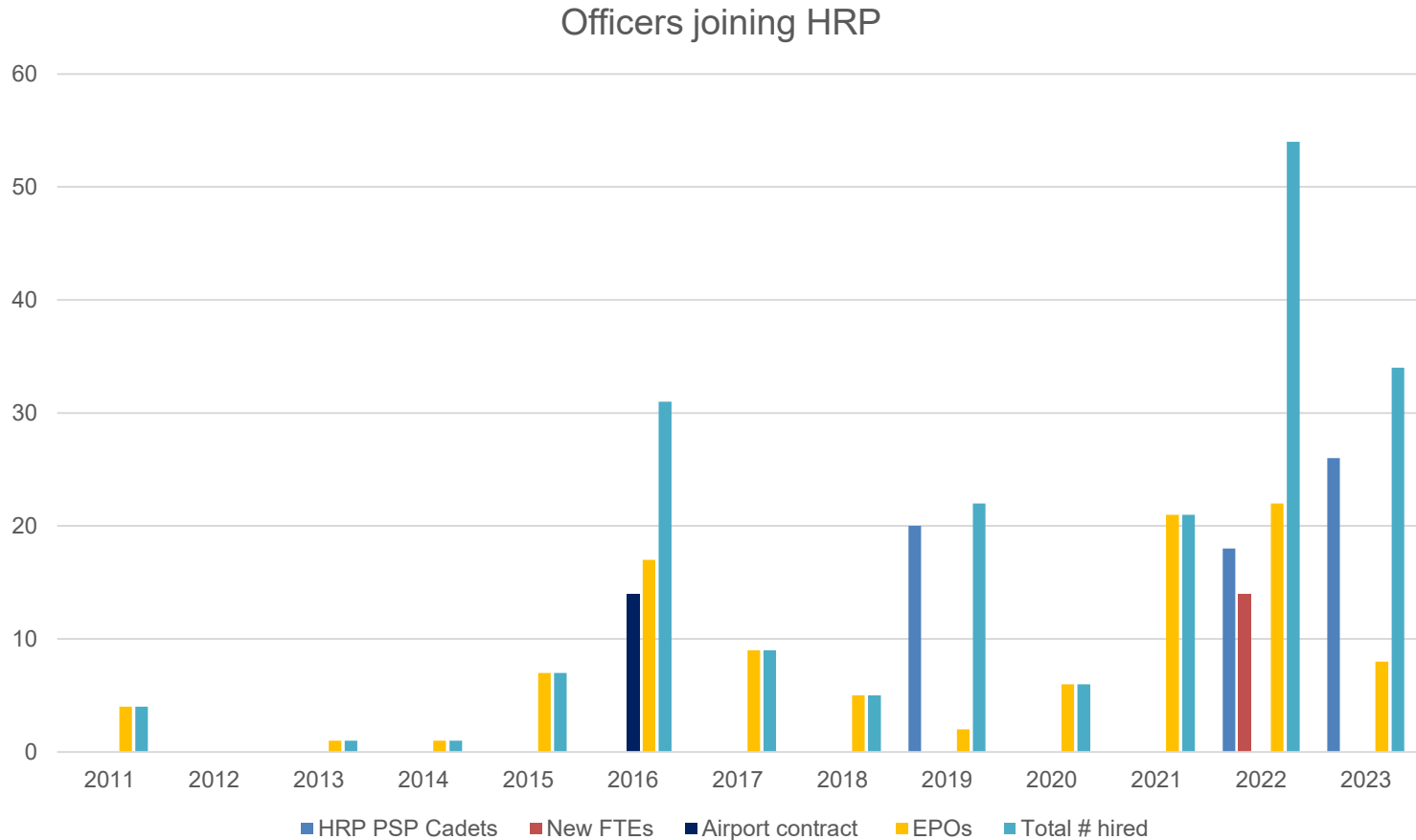


\*2023 YTD June 30, 2023



# Officers joining HRP

## 2011-2023YTD\*



\*2023 YTD July 6, 2023



# Departures & Hirings 2019-2023 YTD\*

Year	Departures	Gains
2019	18	22
2020	20	6
2021	24	21
2022	28	54
2023	29	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>137</b>

2023 YTD June 30, 2023



# HRP Budget Requests & Outcomes

Pre-COVID 2020-21 Budget Requests	
2 Staff Sergeants (SAIT & Professional Standards)	Not approved
6 Sergeants (Professional Standards, PCF)	Not approved
2021-22 Budget Requests	
1 Court Disposition Clerk	<b>Approved</b>
1 Online Training Technician	Not approved
1 Body Worn Video Project Coordinator (12-month term)	<b>Approved</b>



# Budget Requests & Outcomes

2022-23 Budget Requests	
12 Patrol Constables	Approved
8 Traffic Constables & 1 Sergeant	Not approved
2 SAIT Detective Constables	Not approved
2 Hate Crime Detective Constables	1 Approved
1 Member Re-integration Pilot Program Constable	Approved
2023-24 Budget Requests	
1 Recruitment Sergeant	Not approved
1 ERT/K9 Sergeant	Not approved
1 Hate Crime Unit Detective (Sergeant)	Not approved
1 Police Psychologist	*Approved
1 Occupational Therapy Nurse	*Approved

*\* Position assigned to HRM budget*



# Examples of current related efforts:

Management-HRPA Joint Staffing Committee actively working on issues

Sharp focus on recruitment (Back-to-back Cadet program campaigns, EPOs)

Critical Incident Stress Management

Safeguarding Program

Additional health staff

Post critical incident check-ins

Peer Support Program

Member Reintegration Program

Retention and attraction measures underway with HRM

Acting Sergeant Program





# Addressing root causes/ Longer term planning:



# Mental Health Issues exist as a Significant Barrier to Officer Wellness Nationally

*Canadian police officers are disproportionately affected by mental illness with 36.7% of municipal/provincial police reporting current symptoms of mental illness compared to the general population (less than 10%) (CAMH, 2018)*

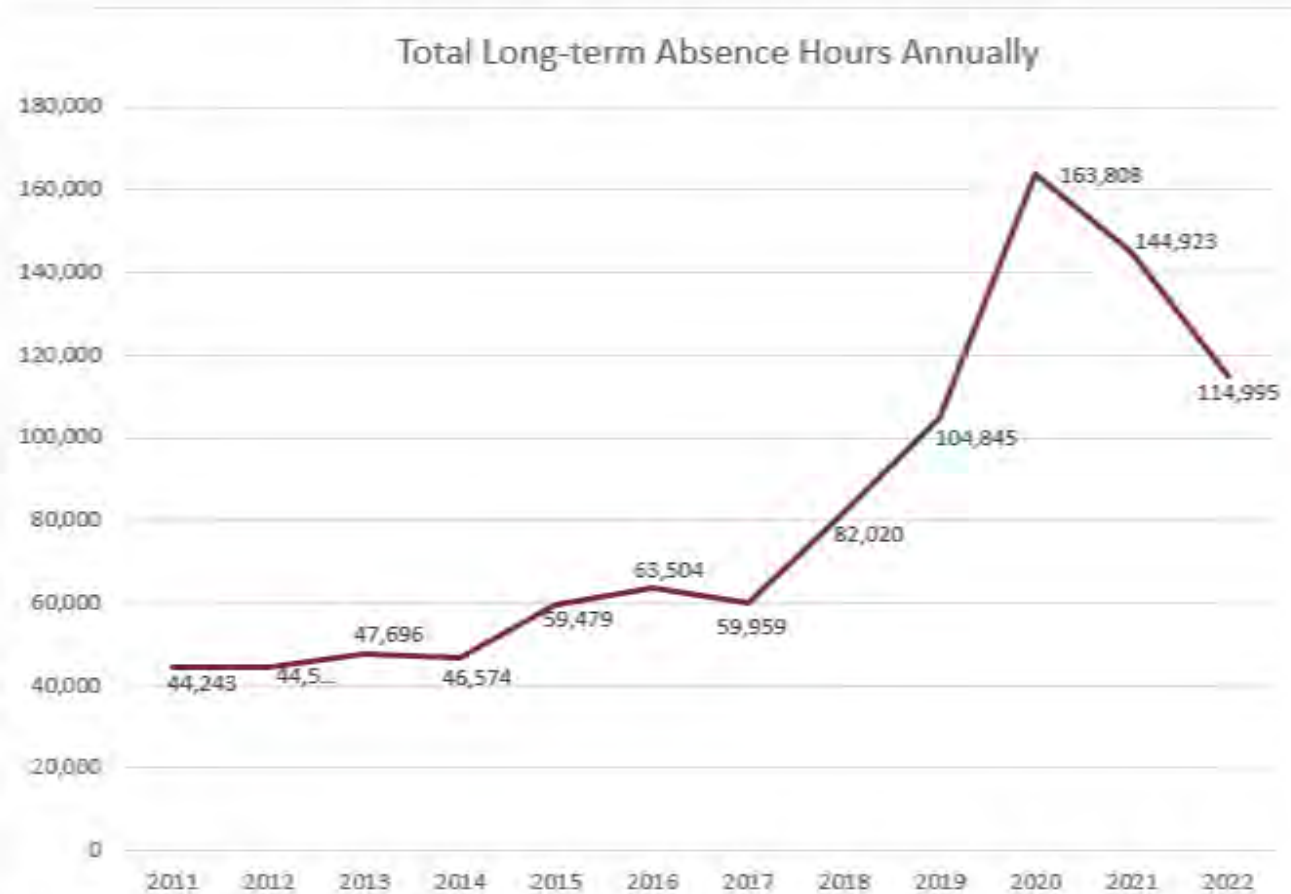
- \*According to Ontario Auditor General's recently released report, more than 1,000 front-line constable positions were vacant within Ontario Provincial Police (about a quarter of all such positions in OPP).
- Similar challenges exist within many Canadian police services

\*SOURCE: [Global News, 2021](#)



# Total Long-term Absence Hours

January 2011 to December 2022



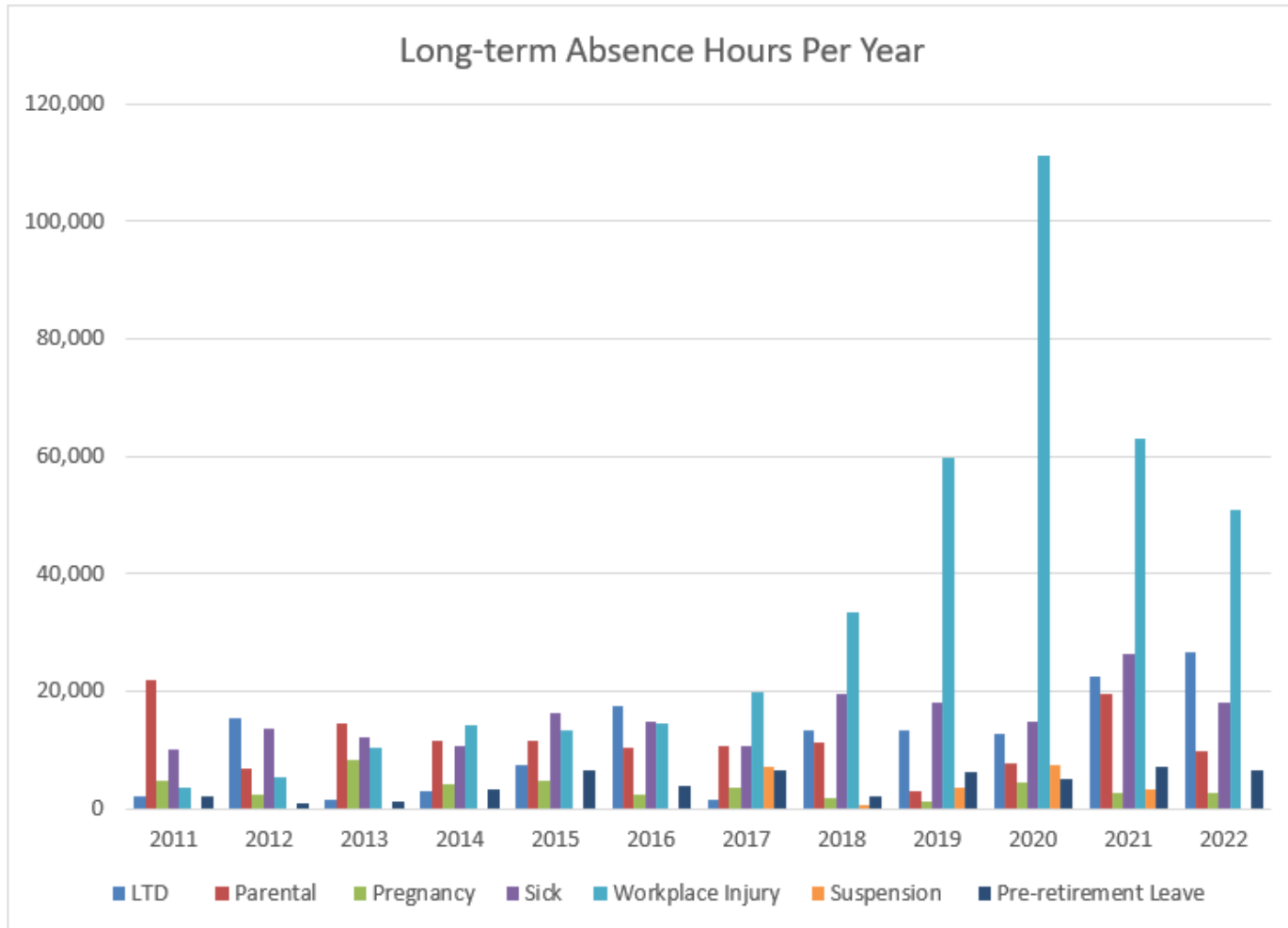
Source: HRM's SAP system, Worker's Compensation Board Claims Data and manually tracked data from Halifax Regional Police Health Specialists.

**\*SOURCE: Understaffing, Long-term Absences and Mental Health Claims at Halifax Regional Police. An Overview of Issues and Recommendations for Improvement (Report by: Melanie Gibson, HRM HR, January 2023)**



# Long-term Absence Hours by Type

## January 2011 to December 2022



Source: HRM's SAP system, Worker's Compensation Board Claims Data and manually tracked data from Halifax Regional Police Health Specialists.



# Implementation of related report

**HRP & HRM are currently actively implementing the following report developed at the BoPC direction. HRPA has been engaged.**

- *Understaffing, Long-term Absences and Mental Health Claims at Halifax Regional Police. An Overview of Issues and Recommendations for Improvement, By Melanie Gibson, HRM HR, January 2023*



# Short to medium term report recommendations

Rec. category	Title	Status
A	<b>Data Collection</b>	In-flight (HRM dashboard)
B	<b>Workforce planning</b>	In-flight (recruitment, retention)
C	<b>Reintegration Program</b>	Implemented
D	<b>Return to Work</b>	In-flight
E	<b>Assess existing data</b>	In-flight (concurrent with A.)
F	<b>Feedback mechanisms</b>	In-flight



# Medium to long term report recommendations

Rec. category	Title	Status
A	<b>Focus on Prevention</b>	Wellness and EFAP programs in place. Budget approval of Psychologist and Occupational Therapy Nurse.
B	<b>Examine Data</b>	Pending
C	<b>Attendance Support</b>	Pending



# QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION

