

Communications and Community Outreach Policy

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Date of Last Revision	March 4, 2024	Approved by	BOPC
Effective Date of Last Revision	March 5, 2024	Approved by	BOPC

1 - Title

Communications and Community Outreach Policy

2 - Purpose

This policy outlines the commitment to engage with the community as defined by the *Police Act*.

3 - Scope

The Halifax Board of Police Commissioners is established as an independent authority pursuant to the *Police Act*. The Board has dual roles: provide civilian governance to the Halifax Regional Police (HRP) on behalf of Halifax Regional Council (Council) (s. 55) and function as a Police Advisory Board regarding the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) in its role as a contractual policing service with the Halifax Regional Municipality. (s 68(1)).

4 - Definitions

In the context of this document:

Police Act means the *Police Act* (NS) 2007 as amended

Board means the Halifax Board of Police Commissioners

Chair means Chair of the Board of Police Commissioners

Chief of Police means the Chief of Halifax Regional Police

Chief Superintendent means the Chief Superintendent of the RCMP, Halifax District

Chiefs means the Chief of Police of HRP and the Chief Superintendent of the RCMP

Council means Halifax Regional Council

HRM means the Halifax Regional Municipality

HRP means the Halifax Regional Police

Legislative Assistant means representative of the Municipal Clerk's Office

Member(s) means a member of the Halifax Board of Police Commissioners

RCMP means the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Halifax District

5 - Distribution

Policies may be distributed to all Board of Police Commissioners, CAO, Municipal Clerk, HRM Councillors, the Chiefs and their respective departments, Nova Scotia Association of Police Governance and posted on HRM website with link to HRP website. This list may be expanded as required.

6 – Community Engagement

Consultation and Community Outreach

1. The Board's mandate includes the initiation of policies that reflect community need and enhance the effectiveness of the police service. The Board operates within a highly public environment and recognizes that the actions of the police services have a significant public impact. Accordingly, the Board shall:
 - a. Provide opportunities for the community to give input on areas of interest or concern to them, via such mechanisms as Board meetings in the community, invitations to community members and stakeholders to speak at Board meetings and meetings and workshops with stakeholders.
 - b. Provide opportunities at Regular Meetings of the Board for a person or persons to appear as a delegation and present to the Board.
 - c. Provide an Annual report to Council.
 - d. Ensure an accountability, metrics framework is developed through community engagement, polling, and other means to report and measure crime and victimization, police activities and deployment, police resources and trust and confidence aligning with national performance measures.
 - e. Review crime statistical information and crime trends.
 - f. Ensure timely reporting of any other developments that have a significant and material effect on the police services.
 - g. Build relationships with board members of other police services at the provincial and national levels and, where possible, have at least one representative at meetings of the Nova Scotia Association of Police Governance, the Canadian Association of Police Governance, and special consultations with Government.
2. The Board shall, as a part of its annual work plan, create an annual engagement plan that outlines a schedule of public meetings and locations as well as a communications plan for the engagements.
3. The Board may choose to have additional public engagements should circumstances warrant.

Internal communications

1. The Chiefs shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that the Board is fully informed about all major issues that have significant financial, operational, or public interest implications that may be of concern to the community, as soon as is practicable.
2. The Chiefs shall direct that all official media releases be provided to the Board at the time they are released to the media.
3. As a general principle, Board members shall have timely access to information under the control of the police services and shall direct all requests for such information and advice related thereto to the offices of the Chiefs, or as otherwise determined in consultation with the Chiefs.
4. The Chiefs shall attend regularly scheduled meetings of the Board and, as otherwise requested by the Board. Police staff attendance at In Camera Board meetings shall be coordinated with the Chiefs and be at the request of the Board. Information from engagement, surveys, statistical analysis and other means shall be utilized to develop and revise the Board's work plan, create and revise policy and provide direction to the Chiefs if warranted.

Communicating with Halifax Regional Council

1. The Board shall approve any formal reports and information tabled with Council or any of its Committees which have significant financial, operational, or public interest implications. This shall not apply to the quarterly financial reviews presented to the Audit and Finance standing committee of the municipality. Board members may attend such presentations and if they so choose they will be briefed accordingly by the Chiefs.
2. Formal communication between the Board and the Council, or Board and administration of the Halifax Regional Municipality, is conducted through the Chair unless otherwise specified by the Board.
3. The Chair shall cause the budget and annual report of the Board to be presented to Council or designated standing committee annually.
4. The Board shall pursue a positive and productive working relationship with Council and promote opportunities for dialogue between the Board and Council.
5. The Chief of Police of HRP has the obligation and authority to meet with and participate in operational discussion with the CAO and HRM staff, as outlined in Bylaw P-100 and Board Policy on Roles and Responsibilities section 16.

7 - Policy Review

This policy should be reviewed every four years and when the *Act* is amended.

8 - Contact

Office of the Municipal Clerk

9 - References

None