



Item No. 2

Board of Police Commissioners for the Halifax Regional Municipality November 20, 2024

TO: Chair Kent and Commissioners of the Board of Police Commissioners for the Halifax Regional Municipality

FROM: Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: October 25, 2024

SUBJECT: First Annual HRP Update on the Development of Targeted Recruitment Strategies for Underrepresented Groups

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

December 13, 2023 Board of Police Commissioners for the Halifax Regional Municipality (Item No. 10.2.2):

MOVED by Commissioner Giles, seconded by Commissioner Smith

THAT the Board of Police Commissioners for the Halifax Regional Municipality approve the action items and timeframes in the Board of Police Commissioners' 2024-2025 Workplan, as outlined in Attachment 1 of the staff report dated November 29, 2023.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

BACKGROUND

On December 13, 2023, the Board of Police Commissioners (BoPC) for the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) passed motion 10.2.2 in relation to the Board of Police Commissioners 2024-2025 Work Plan. Included in this plan is the strategic priority "Oversee the development of a people-focused policing strategy," which includes the action item of an annual report from Halifax Regional Police (HRP) on the development of targeted recruitment strategies for underrepresented groups. This report is the first annual update related to this request and will focus on HRP's strategy when recruiting new police officers (cadets).

DISCUSSION

HRP is committed to being reflective of the diverse communities we serve and emphasizes in all job postings the welcoming of applications from African Nova Scotians and Other Racially Visible Persons, Women in occupations or positions where they are underrepresented in the workforce, Indigenous/Aboriginal People, Persons with Disabilities and 2SLGBTQ+ Persons.

From January 15, 2024, to February 28, 2024, HRP initiated a recruitment campaign for its 2025 Police Science Program (PSP). Despite a window of only six weeks, HRP received 697 applications by the closing date. 24 recruits were selected to take part in the upcoming PSP class. The class includes representation from several diverse groups who self-identified.¹

To optimize the reach of the recruitment campaign for the 2025 PSP class, a combination of virtual and in-person promotion and outreach were used. HRP issued a media release to announce its 2025 cadet class on January 15, 2024. The media release was also posted to our website and shared through our social media platforms. There is a webpage dedicated to recruitment on HRP's website which includes the steps involved in the application process and frequently asked questions. HRP has specific Instagram and X (formally Twitter) accounts dedicated to recruitment efforts - both are @JoinHRP. Communication and outreach were done via these channels and re-shared on HRP's corporate account - @HfxRegPolice. Through a partnership with the municipality, cadet recruitment advertisements were also featured on digital advertising throughout the duration of the campaign.

Community outreach is a key component of our cadet recruitment campaigns. HRP connected with our partners within the African Nova Scotian, Indigenous, Jewish, Muslim and more communities to promote the 2025 PSP class. Both sworn and civilian HRP members volunteered their time as recruitment ambassadors to help share information about this important organizational initiative. Included within the recruitment ambassadors was a Diversity Team, comprised of the current and former Diversity and Equity Officer for our organization, as well as other diverse officers. HRP's highest-ranking Indigenous officer oversaw the work of recruitment ambassadors, which included attending the following events:

- Saint Mary's University Job Fair
- Dalhousie University Job Fair
- Mount Saint Vincent University presentation
- Dalplex presentation
- Downtown Dartmouth Ice Festival
- YMCA Gottingen Street
- Ummah Masjid Mosque
- Halifax Mooseheads Game
- Halifax Thunderbirds Game
- Halifax Shopping Centre
- Police Week
- Camp Courage, (a weeklong camp that introduces young women and gender-diverse youth aged 15-19 to professions in the emergency services)
- Halifax International Boat Show at the Halifax Exhibition Centre
- Zoom Online Information Session in partnership with Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS)

¹ These statistics are based upon self-identification and are not broken down further by demographic, for privacy reasons

In addition to the above opportunities, two HRP members, who both represent diverse groups, took part in a live interview on CTV Morning Live to promote the PSP class. Recruitment ambassadors and HR staff would also assist interested candidates with one-on-one meeting opportunities, when possible, and respond to queries from a dedicated email inbox, hrrcruiting@halifax.ca.

This is the fourth cadet class HRP has held in the last five years. Following each cadet recruitment session, a debrief is held to discuss efforts and look at ways to improve the process for the next recruitment campaign. HRP believes a yearly recruitment cycle would remove the barriers that exist for some community members, such as preparing the required documentation and acquiring the tuition fee to attend the PSP and is actively working towards this. Two positions dedicated to organizing and running the PSP were approved in the 2024/25 budget cycle and have been filled (Sergeant and Constable). This was a significant step in building capacity to run the PSP on an annual basis, something which would also allow recruitment ambassadors to be out in the community earlier to connect with interested individuals and allow for a more robust marketing campaign to be developed.

This year, HRP also added a second Talent Recruiter to alleviate some of the pressures associated with processing PSP applications, a position which will spearhead future cadet recruitment campaigns.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No financial implications are associated with this Information Report at this time. During the 2024/25 budget process the Board was informed that future budget requests in relation to the PSP should be anticipated. This remains accurate.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement was required for the purpose of creating this report. The report itself outlines how HRP engaged with a variety of communities leading up to, during, and after the 2025 PSP recruitment campaign.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Police Act, 2004, c. 55, section (3), states:

- (3) Without limiting the generality of subsection (1), a board shall...
 - (c) ensure that community needs and values are reflected in policing priorities, objectives, goals, programs and strategies;
 - (d) ensure that police services are delivered in a manner consistent with community values, needs and expectations;
 - (e) act as a conduit between the community and the police service providers;

Section 8 (2) (h), (i), (j) and (k) of By-law P-100, which provides:

- 8 (2) The Board in accordance with the *Police Act* and HRM Bylaws may carry out any of the following roles and responsibilities: ...
 - (h) carry out any studies or investigations respecting its civilian governance responsibilities;
 - (i) monitor gender, ethnic and minority group issues and making recommendations concerning these matters to the Chief of Police;
 - (j) ensure that community needs and values are reflected in policing goals and methods;

(k) act as a conduit between the community and the police service providers.

ATTACHMENTS

This Information Report does not require attachments.

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