



Item No. 3

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: HRP Recruitment Strategy that Aligns with the Principles of Employment Equity

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) approved motion 10.2.2 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 a report from Halifax Regional Police (HRP) on how its recruitment strategy aligns with the principles of employment equity. This report will focus on how HRP's strategy aligns with the principles of employment equity when recruiting new police officers (cadets), experienced police officers (EPOs) and civilian employees.

DISCUSSION

HRP's vision is to build and maintain confidence, trust, and safety in partnership with our communities. As an organization, we are committed to being reflective of the diverse communities we serve and aligning with the principles of employment equity. With the increasing population of Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), HRP recognizes the need to increase our presence of individuals from various diverse communities.

As is done with other municipal business units, HRP 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.

HRP has a Diversity and Equity Officer who works closely with the organization's Human Resources department to identify potential recruitment opportunities within diverse communities and how best HRP can support each community in their own, unique way.

HRP is always looking for ways to reduce potential barriers, streamline and improve the recruitment process for its Police Science Program (PSP). HRP has removed the cost for interested applicants to apply to the PSP and now absorbs the cost for a medical and psychological evaluation for recruits, which previously would have cost approximately \$800. Starting this year, HRP now also incurs the cost of potential recruits completing the Physical Abilities Requirement Evaluation (PARE).

During the recruitment process for the 2025 PSP class, potential recruits who resided outside of the Atlantic provinces were allowed to write their aptitude test, conduct their PARE and participate in an interview remotely from where they live, only travelling to Halifax once to complete their medical and psychological assessments. Prior to this year, potential recruits would need to travel back and forth to Halifax to complete the various recruitment steps.

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 various community events including those at the Ummah Masjid Mosque, a Zoom Online Information Session in partnership with Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) and Camp Courage, a weeklong camp that introduces young women and gender-diverse youth aged 15-19 to professions in the emergency services.

In addition to recruiting cadets for its PSP program, HRP also engaged in recruitment strategy meetings in conjunction with HRM in relation to recruiting EPOs to the municipality. The first phase of a marketing campaign to attract EPOs to HRP began on May 28, 2024, and ended on June 30, 2024. The campaign included a paid social campaign on Facebook, Google search ad campaign, Google Display ad campaign, utilizing HRM's external digital screen network and Spotify ads. Phase two of the marketing campaign, a video featuring more than a dozen HRP members, launched over the summer. Many of the members featured in the video represent our diverse communities,

In addition to its sworn members, HRP also hires civilian members to fill a variety of positions such as call-takers and dispatchers, prisoner care facility staff, crime analysts, communications advisors and multiple other specialist civilian positions. Job postings for civilian staff are posted internally and externally, and welcome 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. Applicants are also encouraged to self-identify on their electronic application.

HRP has three Chaplains that are available 24/7 on an on-call basis. The newest Chaplain to volunteer with HRP is a local Iman. It is important that HRP members and the community have access to clergy members to provide emotional and spiritual assistance, when required. New and existing employees are informed and reminded of these valuable resources, as well as other support services such as the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP), to ensure members are aware of the help and supports available to them in all diverse aspects of their personal and professional lives.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The marketing campaign to attract EPOs to HRP identified in the discussion portion of this report cost \$28,659.71 net HST during the 2024/25 fiscal year. This cost will be managed through the current 2024/25 operating budget allotted to HRP. HRP has identified advanced marketing campaign initiatives to attract EPO's and recruits as a pressure for the 2025/26 and for future annual operating budget planning purposes.

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, and during, 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.

Report Prepared by: Natasha Pace, Coordinator, Halifax Regional Police, 782.409.9593
Report Approved by: Chief Don MacLean, Halifax Regional Police, 902.490.6500