



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Community Safety Committee
From: Mark Corrado
Senior Manager, Community Safety Policy and Programs
Date: April 27, 2016
File: 09-5140-00/Vol 01
Re: Response to Provincial Review of the RCMP Auxiliary Constable Program

Staff Recommend

That:

- 1) The staff report titled "*Response to Provincial Review of the RCMP Auxiliary Constable Program*" be forwarded to the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, in response to their request for written feedback by May 25, 2016 and to the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) for information.
- 2) The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General be advised that the City of Richmond would be pleased to participate in further consultation and stakeholder meetings.

Mark Corrado
Senior Manager, Community Safety Policy and Programs
(604-276-4273)

REPORT CONCURRENCE	
CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER 	
REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE	INITIALS:
APPROVED BY CAO 	

Staff Report

Origin

On April 20, 2016, the Province through the UBCM circulated a questionnaire regarding the “Auxiliary Constable Program (ACP)” requesting input from local governments regarding the future of the ACP in British Columbia. Local governments were asked eight questions pertaining to the ACP duties and uniforms. The Province originally gave a deadline of May 10, 2016 to submit responses but has since granted the City an extension to May 25, 2016.

This report also addresses the following referral from the Community Safety Committee meeting of January 26, 2015 regarding the “*Auxiliary Constable Policy Changes*”, that:

“4. staff continue to report on the impact of the policy change in relation to the auxiliary program.”

This report supports Council’s 2014-2018 Term Goal #1 A Safe Community:

Maintain emphasis on community safety to ensure Richmond continues to be a safe community.

1.1. Policy and service models that reflect Richmond-specific needs.

1.2. Program and service enhancements that improve community safety services in the City.

1.3. Improved perception of Richmond as a safe community.

Analysis

Richmond's Auxiliary Constable Program

Richmond RCMP Auxiliary Constables are sworn, uniformed volunteers under the command of the Officer-in-Charge of the Richmond Detachment. Auxiliary Constables have Peace Officer status when on duty, although they do not carry firearms.

The mandate of Richmond's ACP is to support community policing activities relating to public safety; primarily by working at community and special events and participating in various crime prevention programs. Auxiliary Constables are also authorized to perform other police functions under supervision; such as office duties, special events, property checks, traffic control and crowd control. Auxiliary Constables assist Regular Members by gathering information, assisting with minor reports, emergency call-out and disaster response situations.

National RCMP Policy Change

The RCMP has initiated a review of the national ACP after the fatal shooting of an unarmed, uniformed member of the Canadian Forces in October 2014. Shortly after this incident, RCMP National HQ issued a directive requiring Auxiliary Constables working in uniform to be under the direct supervision of a Regular Member equipped with all intervention tools¹.

On January 11, 2016, after consultations with internal partners on a revised policy, the RCMP's Senior Executive Committee approved the following recommendations²:

- 1) Ride-alongs and firearms familiarization training would be discontinued (ride-alongs were cancelled effective January 21, 2016);
- 2) A National Activity Matrix would be created;
- 3) The National Policy would be updated; and,
- 4) Uniform options would be reviewed.

The Richmond ACP falls under the governance of the RCMP National HQ Auxiliary Constable policy. As such, the program changes listed would affect the operations of the Richmond RCMP ACP.

Proposed Response to the Province on the ACP

The City's proposed response to the questions from the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General regarding the future of the ACP is provided in Attachment 1.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

Prior to October 24, 2014, the Auxiliary Constable Program in Richmond had excelled in providing a sense of safety and security in the community through proactive patrols and citizen engagement of the Auxiliary Constables. Following the RCMP National HQ policy changes in November 2014, the ACP volunteer hours have been reduced significantly. It is expected this trend would continue resulting in a significant decrease in the contribution of volunteer hours to crime prevention programs, community events (i.e. Salmon Fest, Ship to Shores, etc.) and community safety initiatives. General police presence in the community is also expected to decrease from the change in the ACP policy.

¹ UBCM, April 20, 2016.

<http://www.ubcm.ca/EN/meta/news/news-archive/2016-archive/provincial-review-of-auxiliary-constable-program.html>

² Same as above.

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Senior Manager, Community Safety Policy and Programs
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MC:dl

Att. 1: Prepared by Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Policing and Security Branch, to BC RCMP-Policed Municipalities Regarding the RCMP Auxiliary Constable Program

Attachment 1

***Prepared by Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General,
Policing and Security Branch, to BC RCMP-Policed Municipalities
Regarding the RCMP Auxiliary Constable Program:***

Questions

Part 1: Duties:

1. Prior to the new RCMP directives being established, what activities/duties did Auxiliary Constables perform in your community?

City of Richmond Response:

- The primary duties of Richmond's Auxiliary Constables have been to support community policing activities relating to public safety and crime prevention within the City of Richmond; including working at community and special events and participating in crime prevention programs. Many of the services provided by Auxiliary Constables are not otherwise deliverable by the detachment with the existing availability of Regular Members.*
- Auxiliary Constables also accompanied Regular Members on regular patrols, ride-alongs and performed police functions under both general and direct supervision; such as office duties, special events, property checks, traffic and crowd control, gathering information and assisting with minor reports.*
- As required, the General Duty Watch Commanders have requested Auxiliary Constable "call-outs" to assist with large incidents; providing traffic control, crowd control and assisting with scene security. Additionally, Auxiliary Constables have been called out to assist with urgent searches for missing persons.*

2. What benefits has your municipality experienced as a result of the Auxiliary Constable Program?

City of Richmond Response:

- The ability to have a greater "police" presence visible to the community and at special and community events. Auxiliary Constables primarily focus on community policing and crime prevention programs to supplement existing police resources. Richmond's Auxiliary Constables contributed over 10,000 hours of service in recent years before RCMP National HQ police changes.*

3. Has the RCMP's recent decision to cancel ride-alongs impacted your Auxiliary Constable Program? If so, how?

City of Richmond Response:

- *Yes, significantly. Auxiliary Constables participating in ride-alongs accounted for approximately 25% of the annual total – approximately 2,952 hours in 2014 and 2,052 in 2015. This is an equivalent loss of 2.4 FTEs of Regular Member assistance in the City of Richmond.*
- *Ride-along duties provided regular field training and helped ensure that the skills of our Auxiliary Constables remained up-to-date. As well, ride-alongs provides the experience, knowledge, skills and abilities to allow Auxiliary Constables to handle various situations, if encountered, at community events safely and independently.*
- *Additionally, the participation in ride-alongs helped create a team atmosphere between Regular Members and Auxiliary Constables. The current restriction has created a morale issue among many Auxiliary Constables.*

4. Has the RCMP's recent decision to require Auxiliary Constables working in uniform to be under the direct supervision of a Regular Member impacted your Auxiliary Constable Program? If so, how?

City of Richmond Response:

- *Yes, significantly. Many community events were previously attended solely by the Auxiliary Constables. Additionally, many crime prevention programs were previously also conducted solely by Auxiliary Constables, without issues.*
- *Prior to RCMP National HQ policy changes in October 2014, there was a total of 10,755 ACP volunteer hours from January to October 2014 with an annual total of 11,805 hours.*
- *Subsequent to the October 2014 policy change (direct supervision), the ACP volunteer hours declined to a total of 6,895 hours from January to October 2015 – a reduction of 36% compared to the same period in 2014. The annual total for 2015 is 8,207 hours – a reduction of 30% compared to 2014.*
- *Subsequent to the January 2016 policy change (no ride-alongs), the ACP volunteer hours declined to a total of 586 hours from February to March 2016, compared to 2,130 hours over the same period in 2014 (prior to any policy changes to the ACP) – a reduction of 73% compared to the same period in 2014.*
- *Regular Member resources are limited, and are not readily available on evenings and weekends when most community events and duties occur. As the presence of a Regular Member is now required, this has limited the ability of the detachment to continue to support these events and programs.*

- *Where, if Regular Members are required to participate in an event, there may be overtime costs associated based on shift schedules. If there are no Regular Members available for supervision, the support for the community event would be declined.*

5. Where do you feel Auxiliary Constables face the greatest risk in their volunteer duties in your community? How can the Province and RCMP mitigate that risk?

City of Richmond Response:

- *In the City of Richmond, there have not been any instances of significant injury or perceived immediate threat to Auxiliary Constables.*

6. In your view how effective is the current Auxiliary Program in your community in relation to:

a) improving police-community communications,

City of Richmond Response:

- *Prior to October 2014: Good. The frequent presence, visibility and public interaction provided by the Auxiliary Constables allowed for regular positive and proactive interactions between "police" and the community.*
- *Subsequent to October 2014: Police-community communication decreased due to the restricted participation of Auxiliary Constables. Please see response to Question 4 for the volunteer hours.*

b) improving crime reduction activities, and

City of Richmond Response:

- *Prior to October 2014: Excellent. Auxiliary Constable duties were frequently adjusted to support changing Crime Reduction initiatives. The availability of a large group of eager, trained, uniformed volunteers allowed the delivery of crime prevention programs well beyond what could be provided by otherwise limited resources. The fact that these programs were delivered by uniformed members provided identifiable value to the community.*
- *Subsequent to October 2014: Crime reduction activities decreased due to the restricted participation of Auxiliary Constables. Please see response to Question 4 for the volunteer hours.*

c) improving the community's sense of safety and security?

City of Richmond Response:

- *Prior to October 2014: Excellent. Auxiliary Constables focussed on proactive crime prevention programs and positive community events providing regular community engagement. Auxiliary Constables were often thanked for their presence and efforts by many in the community.*
- *Subsequent to October 2014: Community's sense of safety and security decreased due to the restricted participation of Auxiliary Constables. Please see response to Question 4 for the volunteer hours.*

Part 2: Uniforms:

7. The uniform of an Auxiliary Constables is very similar to that of a Regular Member. Do you support modifications to the uniform to ensure unarmed Auxiliary Constables are distinguishable from armed Regular Members? How can the risks associated with Auxiliary Constables continuing to wear their current uniform be mitigated?

City of Richmond Response:

- *Currently, the Richmond Auxiliary Constables wear the uniform of the RCMP with the notable differences:*
 - a) *Solid colour navy pants (instead of yellow-stripe pants of Regular Member)*
 - b) *Solid colour navy forage cap (instead of yellow-band forage cap of Regular Member)*
 - c) *Shoulder flashes has wording "Auxiliary/Auxiliaire" (instead of "Police" of Regular Members)*
 - d) *All outer gear and jackets has large "Auxiliary/Auxiliaire" displayed front and back (instead of "Police" of Regular Members)*
 - e) *A different version of the soft body armor with large "Auxiliary/Auxiliaire" displayed front and back (instead of "Police" of Regular Members)*
 - f) *Intervention options includes: baton, oc spray, radio and hand cuff.*
- *The Current uniform standards have already provided an acceptable level of unique identification between regular member and Auxiliary Constables to the general public. Should there be a change in the current uniform and intervention options, there may be operational impact and officer safety concerns of the Auxiliary Constable on duty.*
- *The City of Richmond only supports the modification to changing the shirt colour (similar to municipal Reserve Constables). This would further provide additional visual differentiation between Auxiliary Constables and Regular Members.*

8. If the uniform were to change, what would be an acceptable uniform? What would not be acceptable?

City of Richmond Response:

- *The City of Richmond does not support the change to the uniform of Auxiliary Constables with the exception of shirt colour.*
- *As indicated, many crime prevention programs have been previously organised and run solely by the Auxiliary Constables. An Auxiliary Constable wearing the current uniform provides a level of professional presence and authority to the public which contributes significantly to the effectiveness of program delivery. Any proposed option of civilian dress for Auxiliary Constables participating in these programs and events would not provide any significant value to our clients beyond that provided by a Community Policing Volunteer with significantly less training. The community preference is to see uniformed presence at public events, and around the community.*
- *In addition, there is a significant cost in changing the uniform of the ACP. This cost has not been budgeted in the City of Richmond finances and would need to be approved through the City's capital planning process.*