



STAFF REPORT

Title: Alberta Policing Oversight - Alberta Police Amendment Act

Meeting Date: September 19, 2023

Executive Summary:

The *Police Act, RSA 2000* (the 'Act') is said to increase police transparency and enhance public confidence by reforming policing practices and strengthening ties to the community. The Act, among other things, mandates the creation of formal civilian governance bodies and gives communities a greater role in setting policing priorities and performance goals, marking the first major reform to this legislation in 34 years and modernizing policing in Alberta.

Prior to the amendment to the Act, being the *Police Amendment Act, 2022*, a municipality contracting RCMP had the option of form a policing committee to meet the civilian oversight expectations. Today the Act requires municipalities with a population over 15,000, such as the City of Cold Lake, to establish a local governance body. The legislated requirements can be found in the attached *Police Act* (RSA 2000, c P-17, s 23, <https://canlii.ca/t/8216#sec23>, retrieved on 2023-09-13)

The purpose of Administration's report is to engage Council with the aim of receiving direction on the governance body appropriate for the City, at this time. Administration will then move forward with developing:

- a draft bylaw governing the policing committee's operation, as well as selection and appoint its members, and
- policy manual outlining, among other things, mission, vision, values and public communication.

Administration's report will limit the conversation to the option of a local governance body or Policing Committee, details of which are held within the Act.

Background:

The role of a policing committee is to act as a liaison between Council, the RCMP detachment and the citizens of Cold Lake and to foster responsible community actions towards the creation of a safe and secure community. The Committee advises Council on all policing matters, law and order, for the City of Cold Lake except that of which is the jurisdiction of the Attorney General.



Committee governance has been described as “nose in / fingers out”, meaning that it is appropriate for committee members to seek answers to questions about how well police are serving the community, while leaving the day-to-day management of the police service to the Officer In Charge (OIC).

Policing Committees are made up of citizens from the local community, and can include city employees and/or members of Council (*Police Act, RSA 2000, cP-17, s23*). Committees oversee the Municipal Police Service Agreement (MPSA), and to represent the interests of Council to the police officer in charge. In addition, Policing Committees shall:

- a) oversee the administration of the municipal police service agreement made with the federal government for services from the RCMP;
- b) assist in selecting the OIC;
- c) represent the interests of Council to the OIC;
- d) in consultation with the OIC, develop a yearly plan of priorities and strategies for municipal policing;
- e) issue instructions to the OIC respecting the implementation and operation of the yearly plan;
- f) represent the interests and concerns of the public to the OIC;
- g) assist the OIC in resolving public complaints; and
- h) appoint a Public Complaint Director

A policing committee shall consist of not fewer than three (3) members, and no more than twelve (12). If four (4) or fewer members are appointed, one (1) may be a member of the council or an employee of the municipality. If five (5) or more members are appointed, two (2) may be members of the council or employees of the municipality.

The term of office of a person appointed to a policing committee is:

- 3 years, or
- a term of less than 3 years, but not less than 2 years, as may be fixed by bylaw.

While the Act pertains strictly to policing, some policing committees also work with municipal enforcement and designate a senior City employee to attend Committee meetings in a non-voting advisory capacity. Additionally, some policing committees appoint a youth member between the ages of sixteen (16) and eighteen (18) who attend school, or as otherwise appointed by Council.

A Policing committee member is supported by formal and informal education, training, and professional development. Training should begin on appointment commencement and continue throughout the prescribed term.



As previously noted, policing committees are not involved in the daily operations of police services as the RCMP are bound by federal legislation and policies. In the context of these requirements and responsibilities, policing committees acknowledge the balance between the independence and authority of law enforcement, and their accountability to the public, and interests of the public.

The attached documents provide relevant background information on the subject matter including the *Police Act*, legislative framework, and oversight standards and roles and responsibilities.

Alternatives:

Council may wish to consider the following:

1. Direct Administration to bring forward a bylaw to establish a policing committee for Council's review and recommendation at an October 2023 Regular Meeting of Council.
2. Direct Administration to bring forward a bylaw to establish a policing committee for Council's review and recommendation at an October 2023 Corporate Priorities Committee of Council.
3. Council receive the report titled "Alberta Policing Oversight - Alberta Police Amendment Act" as information.

Recommended Action:

That Council direct Administration to bring forward a bylaw to establish a policing committee for Council's consideration at Council's October 24, 2023 Regular Meeting of Council.

Budget Implications (Yes or No):

Yes

Submitted by:

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