



TABER POLICE SERVICE

Community Standards Unit



This document has been created for police executives and police officers from other agencies to provide a snapshot of the program the Taber Police Service spearheaded to respond to Community Standards issues. This information is also shared congruent to our mission statement to inform the public of what we are doing and the results of our efforts.

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Executive Officer
Taber Police Service*

History

In 2009 a business plan was developed to transfer the management and command of the Town of Taber's Bylaw Enforcement Officer from the Town of Taber Public Works Department to the Taber Police Service. The goal in mind was to create a professional and better managed structure that would more effectively assist the community, and the Taber Police Service, with Community Standards issues. The implementation of the Community Peace Officer (CPO), gave the Town of Taber a structured and well trained officer. A restructuring of the service function focused the direction of the Community Peace Officer to more of a visible and proactive role. Emphasis was directed on more patrol and the recognition of offences or problem areas. The CPO was able to effectively deal with community issues. The transition assisted in ensuring that the municipal bylaws were properly enforced and it helped make the Town of Taber a safer and cleaner place to live. The CPO was appointed by the Town of Taber and as a result had two masters. The Town of Taber as an employer and the Chief of Police. This relationship was not congruent with police governance and caused some challenges.

With the new structure in place, a good working relationship with the Community Peace Officer was created within the police service. However, issues surfaced regarding the CPO having access to information as per CPIC audit regulations. Concerns were raised about CPO access to CPIC, radio operability in a CPIC environment and the exposure to Protected B and PROS RMS information. The cost to change was prohibitive so subsequently a new model was needed.

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In 2016, several options were evaluated as a result of the challenges faced with the Community Peace Officer position. One of those was to transfer command of the officer back to the Town of Taber where they could revert back to the bylaw enforcement officer model. This would take the supervisory pressures off of the police service but would not ensure a congruent working relationship between the police service and the bylaw officer. This was of vital importance as often our police officers would handle bylaw complaints in the absence of the bylaw officer whose primary role was the investigation of these complaints. Questions arose about how effective this model would be from a community service delivery standpoint. The costs associated were also evaluated. Costs for a new records management system, office space, CPIC access and the training and supervision of the position were analyzed.

The other option was to completely rethink the position and to present a solution using a basic trained police officer. Instead of a Community Peace Officer or a Bylaw Officer, an individual would be employed with a police officer appointment, with their focus strictly on Community

Standards issues. They would be trained to the level of policing that was consistent with their duties. The community standards issues would include animal control, unsightly properties, parking issues etc. Many different issues had to be considered and several areas were thoroughly examined to ensure this endeavour would be successful for community betterment.

Broken Windows Policing Response

Kelling and Wilson (2012) state that, “disorder and crime are usually inextricably linked, in a kind of developmental sequence. Social psychologists and police officers tend to agree that if a window in a building is broken and is left unrepaired, all the rest of the windows will soon be broken. This is as true in nice neighborhoods as in rundown ones ... One unrepaired broken window is a signal that no one cares. We suggest that “untended” behavior also leads to the breakdown of community controls ... A piece of property is abandoned, weeds grow up, a window is smashed.” (Pg.1)

An important facet of this theory is that the crime or disorder occurring at the lower end of the continuum needs to be thoroughly investigated, and that information needs to be shared with the police organization. The concept of Broken Windows policing is that unattended community issues can affect people’s attitudes and perceptions. By cleaning up community issues, such as unsightly yards, weeds etc., it can encourage others to follow by example. This can assist in limiting the amount of potential criminal activity that would frequent an area due to environmental and social conditions. By employing a trained police officer, the already acquired training and skills can be used to conduct professional and thorough investigations. Information obtained from these investigations can be effectively shared as the officer would have access to Protected B, PROS RMS and CPIC information, and would be part of the Taber Police Service team and culture. A recent example of the effectiveness of this model occurred when our CSO, while on patrol, spotted a suspect that the police patrol members were actively searching for. He notified the on duty patrol members immediately and kept continuity of the person until the individual was taken into custody. This was possible because the CSO had radio access, was monitoring the description of the suspect and was able to quickly share his findings.

Traffic Safety

Due to the police officer appointment there would be no restrictions in terms of Provincial Statute enforcement capability. This enables the officer to effectively conduct regular traffic safety checks, vehicle stops, and other duties as permitted. This allows the police service to have resources placed towards provincial traffic initiatives, enforcement activities, or other traffic safety concerns that may arise.

Officer Safety / Training

The CSO is provided with basic police officer training. This training is important to ensure the proper service is provided to the public. The basic police officer recruit training is 21 weeks in duration while in comparison the CPO program is 6 weeks long. The curriculum for the basic police officer training includes:

- Criminal Justice procedures
- Note taking and report writing
- Law procedures
- Officer Safety
- Diversity Training
- Health, Fitness and Wellness
- Firearms Training
- Investigative Procedures
- Driver training
- Subject Control techniques
- Learning and Leadership
- Traffic Safety and Investigation

Taber Police Association Agreement

From a policing association perspective the implications of having a fully trained police officer strictly focusing on bylaw enforcement and provincial statute duties is challenging. It was proposed that the police officer, in the CSO position, would be placed at a rate of pay that was not historically within the same classification as in other police association contracts in Alberta. The requirement for ridged and realistic job description guidelines were addressed. Discussions occurred between the Police Association executives and the Chief of Police and a Letter of Understanding was created and signed, describing the duties of the Community Standards Officer. The understanding also outlined the appointment of a Police Officer, within the Province of Alberta, under the authority of the Police Act, and the Taber Municipal Police Commission, to perform a specific job function within the Taber Police Service.

The Taber Police Association and the Town of Taber agreed that the member hired to be the Community Standards Officer would be subject to the terms and conditions as set out in the Letter of Agreement. The current collective agreement provisions would be used to address the Community Standards Officer position with the exception of some amended or added articles. The CSO was placed on a separate wage classification and if they undertook duties outside of the terms and conditions of the Letter of Understanding they would be subject to an instant reclassification based on the regular member pay table. In other words, they are paid commensurate with their duties.

The following limitations were placed on the scope of duties

- A CSO is a Police Officer who's role and responsibilities are not limited to, but are focused on, the enforcement of Municipal Bylaws and/or Provincial Statutes/Regulations, as directed by the Chief of Police. Due to their appointment, a CSO has full authority under the Criminal Code of Canada and applicable Federal Statutes. However, the role and execution of those authorities is guided by policy. The CSO is subject to the Police Service Regulations of Alberta and breaches of policy are subject to discipline. A CSO will not

exercise any authority, outside of what is specifically stated within the agreement. A CSO may support, but not supplement, the roles of the remaining Police Officers.

- The role and responsibilities of a CSO shall not include responding to, investigating, or assisting in any matter that has a reasonable potential to involve the enforcement of a Federal Statute/Regulation or the circumstances make the type of enforcement unknown, except and limited to document service, immediate action required to prevent articulable imminent physical harm to a person, arrests warrants and detention on finds committing events, obtaining fingerprints and DNA.
- The Chief of Police will be responsible for ensuring that policies, procedures, and resources are in place to prevent a CSO from acting outside of their role regarding the enforcement of Federal Statutes/Regulations as indicated in the agreement, and that the CSO follows these parameters and does not exercise authorities outside of that role.
- A requirement was put in place that states a CSO shall wear a distinctly different colored or distinctly different shade of shirt and upper outer wear than what is worn by other Members who are not CSO's.

More information on the Letter of Understanding can be obtained by contacting our office.

Labour Protection and Discipline

When the position was created a positive step was taken towards officer protection and discipline. Prior to the CSO position the discipline and protection of the Community Peace Officer fell under the Peace Officer Act. This could lead to lengthy delays in investigations and in the resolution of labour issues. With a fully sworn police officer in place discipline is placed into the control of the Chief of Police who can then use the Police Act and Regulations to investigate matters of misconduct. This appointment is also governed by the Taber Police Commission, which allows for transparent oversight for this position. The CSO is protected by all of the provisions and relevant sections of the Criminal Code, other Federal Statutes/Provincial Legislation/Bylaws etc., as is a regular member. The terms of the Taber Police Association contract also provide some employee protections that are not available to CPO's.

Special Forces Pension Plan

The implementation of a police officer in this role also allows for the employee to contribute to the Special Forces Pension Plan. This has several benefits for both the plan and the individual. First of all, if other agencies adopt a model similar to this and employs police officers to fulfill these roles, it provides a larger pool of contributors to the plan. From the individual contributor's standpoint, it offers the incentive of having a 25 year service factor as compared to other plans where a combined age/service ratio needs to be at 85 in order to retire. This serves as an incentive for individuals and a benefit for employers regarding the hiring and retention of personnel.

Emergency Response / Operational Planning

The scope of the CSU officer is narrow in regards to function and duties but there is a clause which can allow the Chief of Police to utilize the officer in an out of scope function if operational requirements dictate. To prevent backfill and quick fix solutions being considered with this position, a monetary increase would accompany an increase in scope. This prevents mission or position creep. The Letter of Understanding does however allow for the CSO to take immediate action if it is needed to prevent articulable imminent physical harm to a person.

Succession Planning

The Community Standards Officer position allows for a starting platform for new police recruits to become acclimated to our culture. The opportunity to apply for future vacancies in regular patrol function is presented when vacancies appear. As of December 2019 the first CSO appointed by the Taber Police Service has recently been promoted to the regular patrol officer rotation and function. The time the officer spent in the CSO position was valuable in preparing her and it allowed her to obtain a knowledge base that made the transition seamless. An officer that graduated from the police recruit class in the spring of 2019 is currently in the position of Community Standards Officer.

Financial Implications

There is a positive and negative impact on salary budgeting dependant on the years of service of the CSO. As a comparison to the previous structure with the Community Peace Officer a cost savings was seen. The CPO wage in 2017 was \$63,523 with the current starting wage of the CSO at \$55,415. This is an initial cost savings of \$8108 on paper. **(See row 1)**

A snapshot can now be analyzed at the scenario of a CPO at 5 years service and a CSO at 5 years service. The CPO would be at \$66,435 while the CSO would cost \$73,740. This is an increase of \$7305. **(See row 2)**

Years of Service	Community Peace Officer	Community Standards Officer	Difference
1. Starting Wage	63,523	55,415	- \$8108
2. 5 Years Service	66,435	73,740	+ \$7305

Figures were extrapolated from the CUPE contract that was in place in 2017 when the CPO was last utilized and the current Collective Agreement with the Taber Police Association and the Town of Taber.

Given the increase of ability, training, community effectiveness and professionalism the cost differences are miniscule in comparison. A major factor would be the availability of patrol constable positions and the performance of the CSO which could effect placement and wage allocations.

Conclusion

It was necessary to create a response to this issue that is in line with our mission statement and core values.

**WE ARE THE TABER POLICE SERVICE ESTABLISHED IN 1904.
WE STRIVE TO INFORM, INVOLVE AND PROTECT THE COMMUNITY OF TABER.**

WE, THE MEMBERS OF THE TABER POLICE SERVICE, BELIEVE THAT:

- police work is not performed in a social vacuum;
- there needs to be a partnership between the police and the community;
- we exist to serve and are therefore accountable to the community;
- the citizens of Taber are the ultimate consumers of police services and should be provided the opportunity for input into our priorities; we must determine community concerns and be proactive in the community to address those concerns;
- every effort must be made to inform the community of what we are doing and the results of our efforts.

With this transition the Taber Police Service was able to evoke a ground breaking response to policing environment issues. This model had demonstrated benefits for our community and it should be considered by police agencies or communities that have experienced similar policing challenges.

References

Kelling, G. L., & Wilson, J.Q (2012). Broken Windows. *The Atlantic*, November 2012.
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