

Hanover-Owen Sound Task Force January 11, 2021 – 1:00 pm

The Hanover-Owen Sound Task Force met on the above date through electronic participation with the following members in attendance:

Present: Chair Brian O’Leary; Councillors Desai, Milne and McQueen; and Warden Hicks

Staff

Present: Kim Wingrove, CAO, Randy Scherzer, Director of Planning, Savanna Myers, Director of Economic Development, Tourism and Culture, Anne Marie Shaw, Director of Housing, Barb Fedy, Director of Social Services, Scott Taylor, Senior Planner, Stephanie Lacey-Avon, Intermediate Planner, Heather Morrison, Clerk, Brian Tocheri, Hanover CAO and Tim Simmonds, Owen Sound CAO

Guests: Chief Chris Knoll, Hanover Police Services, Chief Craig Ambrose, Owen Sound Police Services

Call to Order

Chair O’Leary called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

There was none.

Business Arising

Randy Scherzer provided an update of the Recommendations and Opportunities document related to the December 11 and 14th meetings. The December 11 meeting spoke to employment related issues while the December 14th meeting related to child and senior services. Mr. Scherzer provided highlights, opportunities and further information requested from previous Task Force meetings.

Mr. Scherzer spoke to questions arising from the previous meetings.

Delegations

Owen Sound Police Services-Chief Craig Ambrose

Chief Craig Ambrose provided an overview of Owen Sound Police Services. He highlighted call volume increases noting 14,399 calls in 2011 compared to 17,510 calls in 2019. He noted that in Owen Sound, the Crime Severity Index, received from Statistics Canada, has risen from 65.32 in 2011 to 109.34 in 2019, an increase of 67%.

Chief Ambrose highlighted some of the issues seen by Owen Sound Police Services including centralized social service and support agencies which brings more marginalized residents to the area including those that need support with mental health, addictions, poverty, food security and homelessness. He noted that homelessness, mental health and addictions drive police calls up and people dealing with these issues are more likely to be victimized.

Chief Ambrose then spoke to criminal code offences noting that in 2018 Owen Sound had 54.8 per officer. He noted that more calls are received between 6 am and 7pm than during the overnight hours. He also highlighted a significant increase in mental health calls over the past several years.

Chief Ambrose then provided an overview of court services noting that Owen Sound Police Services provides court security to the provincial court located in Owen Sound noting that the province does not cover 100% of these costs, and the shortfall then falls to the taxpayer.

Discussion commenced related to the successful move to a more transparent process related to the Police Services budget and the review of other funding opportunities.

Increased demand for service calls was reviewed including the scope of calls currently responded to by police officers. Chief Ambrose did note that the increase in mental health calls has contributed to the overall increase in calls. Questions arose related to community stakeholder assistance with these types of calls. The Chief noted that recently the Mobile Mental Health Addiction Response Team (MMHART) has been implemented to assist with these calls for service. Other models are also currently being reviewed. The goal is to be proactive and work through these calls at the beginning with the assistance of community stakeholder supports. Chief Ambrose noted that the community support officer is not in uniform when they respond to these types of calls to provide a more positive first response. The Wellington County model for mental health calls was highlighted.

Discussion on the increase in number of calls related to the number of officers occurred noting that a request to increase the number of officers which is included in the draft 2021 budget currently being reviewed by Owen Sound City Council. Court security was

reviewed noting that if provincial funding was not received, the cost of court security would be approximately \$750,000.

Ms. Wingrove spoke to the Provincial Offences fine revenue. Municipal bylaw fines are returned to the municipality who laid the charge, less an administration fee. Other fine revenue, such as from traffic offences is used offset court operation costs for Grey and Bruce and any excess is provided to each county based on their proportion of the population. Court security costs for the Provincial Offences Court are estimated to be \$25,000 per year.

Hanover Police Services-Chief Chris Knoll

Chief Knoll provided an overview of the Hanover Police Services. He noted that the Hanover Police Services has been in existence since 1930, covers a population of 8,100 residents and has 24 full and part time staff. He spoke to the current population, noting that many are marginalized, transient in nature and suffer from mental health issues, poverty, homelessness and drug or alcohol dependencies. Chief Knoll also provided an overview of household incomes in Hanover.

Chief Knoll spoke to workload demands stating the Hanover Police Services are second in the province out of 50 municipal police services for the number of criminal charges processed per officer with 56.6 criminal charges per officer in 2018 with the provincial average being 23.3 and national average being 29.7. He also spoke to calls for service noting a large increase in 2019.

Chief Knoll then highlighted the 2019 Crime Severity Index noting that Hanover was second on the list at 125.2 just behind Timmins at 137.85. The Crime Severity Index monitors severity level of police-reported crime, both violent and non-violent crimes, and measures the overall seriousness of crime from one year to the next.

In 2019, Hanover Police Services handled 5,098 calls related to crime, traffic, mental health and social disorders. The top five frequent crimes include thefts, break-ins, assaults, frauds and mischiefs. Chief Knoll noted that many of these are survival crimes that often feed drug addictions. He noted that a steady increase in the number of mental health calls for service were received from 2015-2020 totaling 821.

Chief Knoll then spoke to community partners within the Hanover area including Hanover and District Hospital, Mental Health Urgent Response, Canadian Mental Health Association and Probation and Parole Services. He also noted they work with other local stakeholders including YMCA Housing, Keystone Child and Youth Services, churches and seniors' groups as well as the local schools.

Questions and comments then followed from Task Force members. Discussion occurred related to the Hanover casino and associated calls. Police service calls to the

casino are limited, but Chief Knoll noted that the casino sees approximately 800-1000 visitors per day with calls happening generally outside of the actual casino. Calls spike during the day from 10:30 am-5:00pm and rise during the progression of the week with the highest number of calls on Fridays.

Questions arose related to charges per officer after a review of these numbers provincially. Chief Knoll noted that there is no difference in overall policing. Each force follows the same processes, criminal code etc.

Discussion occurred on the costs of mental health and whether providing more funding upfront may reduce the number of associated police calls. One dollar spent saves \$7 later and this includes education, health care, policing, mental impacts on resiliency etc. Barb Fedy spoke to the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan and the implementation and strategies associated with this plan to build the infrastructure. Guaranteed income security, national childcare strategy, etc. were also discussed.

Chair O'Leary thanked both Chiefs for their presentations today.

Other Business

There was none.

Next Meeting Dates

January 15, 2021 9:30 am.

On motion by Councillor Milne and Councillor Desai the meeting adjourned at 2:46pm.

Brian O'Leary, Chair