

## SPRINGFIELD POLICE BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, January 9, 2019

### HISTORY

In 2013 following the accident that took the life of Crystal Taman, Police Boards were legislated into being in Manitoba. Any city, town or municipality that had their own police service were required to form a board under the Manitoba Police Services Act. The RM of Springfield is one of the only rural municipalities in Manitoba fortunate to have its own dedicated police service as well as being serviced by the R.C.M.P. The Oakbank/Beausejour Detachment of the R.C.M.P. serves Springfield, Beausejour and Brokenhead, a large area. When the writer, former Chair of the Springfield Police Board, Heather Erickson, was elected as Councillor for Ward 4 in October 2014, I was assigned the responsibility of Protective Services which included police. In late November I was informed that I had to produce a Police Board consisting of myself and three others and I subsequently discovered there existed a Provincial Representative who was also the Vice Chair of the previous Board and whose tenure continued past the election. This Board would be responsible for providing an Annual Report for 2014, however there were no files available, only minutes of two meetings held in 2013. Boards are required to hold 4 regular meetings a year. A Board was formed, the first Chair of which was Ron Bylo who was tasked with a rather daunting responsibility. However he rose to the occasion and produced an Annual Report and served until his resignation in 2015. At that point, I was appointed Chair by Council, who are responsible for appointing board members and chair with the exception of the provincial representative and approving the final police budget. During an evaluation conducted by the Police Commissioner in 2018, our Police Board was rated right in the centre of others in the Province and he was pleased with the progress that had been made since 2014 and the direction in which it was going. The public who took an interest in the meetings were allowed to participate in the discussion. When I left office, I ensured the Police Board files were in order and turned the key over to the Assistant CAO for safekeeping until it could be given to the incoming Chair of the Board. Further I completed the Annual Report Highlights of Activities and Achievements, Police Board Meetings, and Status Report on Strategic Objectives up to the end of my tenure in October. I arranged for a title page to be produced by Kelly Bourns of the Springfield Police Service. The Table of Contents would be the same as the previous year. The only missing element would be an address by the incoming Chair and the addition of any meetings held subsequently and activities and achievements since October and the report on Finances which is provided by the Chief Financial Officer of the municipality at the end of the year. Further I arranged to have an ad requesting expressions of interest in serving on the Police Board placed before the election with a closing date right after the election so the new Council would have a pool of interested parties from which to choose their new Board. The interviews were not held until December 13, 2018 and the scheduled meeting to be held in December was rescheduled by the CAO until January 2019 as the Provincial Representative appointed prior to October resigned her post I believe on election day. Meeting agendas, minutes and annual report were posted on the web site after being approved by the Board. I provide this history as the implication at this meeting was that, and as Mr. Breward stated he would not like to throw the former Chair "under the bus", I had in some way reneged on my duties and left the incoming Chair to do all the work. In point of fact, the outgoing Chair, myself, submitted her resume for consideration on this Board and was not selected by Council. The interviews were conducted by Reeve Fell and Councillor Fuhl.

### Meeting

The Board all filed in together, Ann Wowchuk, Chair, Michael Breward, Vice Chair, Greg Penner, and Councillor Williams as well as Kelly Bourns, Recording Secretary and Chief Mark Kane. Lynn Lemire, the Human Resource Officer, was in attendance as well, it appears, to received signed Codes of Ethical Conduct and Oaths of Office of the Police Board members. The purpose of the Board is to prevent political interference with the Police Service.

**Question: Why is Administration in the possession of files that are Police Board material? The Chair of the Police Board is responsible for these files and their security. A keyed file drawer was provided by Administration in 2015 for just such a purpose. Why does Administration now have access to these files?**

The agenda was approved and the Minutes from September 12, 2018 accepted.

### 4. Unfinished Business

- (a) Springfield Police Board Strategic Plan
- (b) Self-Evaluation of the Police Board
- (c) Annual Risk Management Audit
- (d) Summer Personnel Report
- (e) Municipal Police Board Policy 2018
- (f) Springfield Police Board Annual Report 2018

Chair Wowchuk asked Vice Chair Michael Breward who previously was Vice Chair to speak to this as he was on the Board when it dissolved in October. **QUESTION: Why would this be necessary as in the January 3, 2019 issue of the Clipper it states "Wowchuk.....is studying the Police Board minutes to catch up on the Board's progress since her resignation....".** Presumably this information was provided to the reporter

writing the article. Any progress would have been reported in the minutes of meetings. **QUESTION: If as stated in the same article she resigned from the Board in 2016 because it lacked "vision, leadership and consistency", was that not a good reason for her to persevere and remain on the Board to work with the other members to improve the situation or at the very least attend subsequent Police Board meetings to voice her concerns and remain informed.** Mr. Breward spoke to the Risk Management Audit which he stated now that he was back he could address, possibly with the help of his university classes come the fall. This project was assigned to him in April 2016 and was brought up in several of the minutes in the intervening term of the Board. At the same time it was assigned to him, a Communication Plan was assigned to a former member, Renee Riglin, who completed the assignment in 2017 and the plan was approved by the Board subsequently. Mr. Breward further stated he would not like to throw the former Chair "under the bus" but that while she had stated she was going to have the annual report ready, it would appear that did not happen. In point of fact, Kelly Bourns has all the completed elements and has had them in her computer since the election. As she stated, only the Finance Report could not be included until the end of the year and as provided by the Chief Financial Officer. Chair Wowchuk then opined that as the previous Chair did the Annual Report, and as no one volunteered to assist, she said she would be doing it alone.

Chief Kane was consulted about, I believe, the Summer Personnel Report, which only he can provide and said he can prepare something for the Board for the next meeting. Chief Kane should have come to the meeting prepared to report on Staffing complement and on the value of the peak season term employment program.

## 5. New Business

(a) Chair Wowchuk stated there will be a change in the format of meetings. **There will be no discussion of the operation of the Springfield Police Service at Police Board meetings.** This is contrary to the indications given to the public by the Police Board at the meeting of April 20, 2015 where it was stated "there would be a public consultation process" with the citizens of Springfield regarding the essential role they see for the personnel of the Springfield Police in the provision of a policing service amongst other things. There will however be time allotted by the new Board when the public can have input but not on the operation of the Springfield Police Service. Any such inquiries can be addressed to the Chief of Police during his regular business hours. This would appear to be contrary to the open communication essential to community policing insofar as the sharing of common concerns, and not good use of police resources.

The Police Service Act states:

### General duties of police board

28(1) The police board must (a) after consulting with the police chief, establish priorities and objectives for the police service; (b) establish policies for the effective management of the police service; (c) direct the police chief and monitor his or her performance; and (d) perform any other prescribed duties.

### Human Resources

21 A municipality's police board must appoint a person with prescribed qualifications to serve as the chief of the municipal police service.

23(1) The police board may appoint eligible persons to serve as police officers in the police service, or it may delegate that power to the police chief. **(prior to Chief Kane, both the Chief of Police and members of the Board participated in selection committees)**

The Board is responsible for evaluation of the Chief of Police and for ensuring **best practices** are followed in the selection of staff.

**These responsibilities are definitely related to the operation of the police service.** While the Chief of Police conducts the day to day operations of the service, such as scheduling, ordering supplies, discipline, researching better ways to operate, writing policy and procedure manuals related to policing, networking with other services and administrative staff, etc. which would not be the purview of the Police Board, the Board must set policies that determine the focus and priorities that reflect the needs of the community and they can only do this by listening to those willing to offer their thoughts at board meetings. Failure to listen to the input of the community with respect to issues facing residents is not conducive to good administrative oversight which is the mandate of the Police Board and certainly not indicative of a willingness to be open and transparent in the conduct of its business.

**QUESTIONS TO ASK: (1) Why are two constables hired for term periods in the peak months of 2018, terms which were to have ended by at the very latest the end of November, still in the employ of the Springfield Police Service? (2) If these Constables, one from B.C. and one from Alberta, are still in the employ of the Springfield Police Service, in what positions and by what process were they hired, who was on the Selection Committee that hired them, and was the Police Board involved in the hiring, having just been appointed at the December 18, 2018 Council meeting? (3) At the November 20, 2018 Council Meeting Reeve Fell with the agreement of Council, one would expect, gave authority to the Chief of Police to hire another full time constable for the Springfield Police Service for the duration of 2018. Council does not have the legislative authority to circumvent the Police Board and give authority to hire to the Chief of Police. This is the very reason Police Boards were introduced in 2013 in Manitoba, to prevent political interference in police services. (4) Council does have the authority to, during budget deliberations, authorize the creations of a new position for the Springfield Police Service but no such position was approved in the 2018 budget and subsequent public Financial Plan hearing. (5) Council also has the authority under the Police Service Act to make appointments to the Police Board and had every opportunity to do so once the advertisement in the local weekly the Clipper closed November 2, 2018, I believe. Why did they not hold the interviews for positions on the Police Board until December 13, 2018? (6) If there are two vacant positions in the Springfield Police Service, why are these not being advertised in the appropriate publications or the local weekly newspaper and Winnipeg Free Press to allow interested persons to apply?**

(b) Priorities

Chair Wowchuk asked if the Board had any suggestions. What happened then was more of a discussion among the members of the Police Board without any effort to include or inform the audience. Councillor Williams brought up the subject of budget meetings. I believe Chief Kane stated he had already consulted the Chief Finance Officer and had a preliminary budget prepared but with all the background discussion occurring, it was difficult to hear. As an example, Williams mentioned an article in the Carillon recently in which Chief Kane was featured and felt Springfield should have been on top of that. I am not aware of the article to which he referred and he did not elaborate. The Police Board meetings are held in the Council chamber which has microphones and it would have been beneficial if these were turned on and the members used them.

(c) 2019 Meeting Schedule

Chair Wowchuk said there should be meetings in March, June, September and December. She stated she did not have her calendar. Four meetings a year is mandated in the Act. I believe I heard her say March 13 and June 12 but the rest of the discussion was unintelligible. These of course should be posted on the web site in the near future under Police Board. Michael Breward spoke of his teaching schedule that could affect his attendance. This was an issue with the previous Board that did accommodate his teaching schedule but this did not always assure his attendance at meetings.

The meeting was then opened to questions from the gallery. **However it was re-emphasized there would be no discussion of operational matters.** Mr. Speer spoke to the fact that in spite of numerous requests to both Council and the Police Board, as yet the RCMP Oakbank Detachment is not providing the monthly reports it submits to D Division. He was told this was not a subject for the Police Board but should be directed to Council. He disagreed. This information is basic to developing policing strategies and also risk assessment. There was a discussion about cooperation between the RCMP and the Springfield Police Service and Chief Kane responded there was a liability issue but former Chair Erickson stated there were at least two signed Memorandum of Understandings between two different Staff Sgts. and Chiefs of Police. Chief Kane stated these were deemed not to be legal. Two members of Citizens on Patrol in the audience stated they had not heard one word that was said because the Police Board members did not have their microphones turned on and their discussions were not directed toward the audience but between themselves. The Chair adjourned the meeting and announced the Board would remain to speak informally with members of the audience.