



MINUTES

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, April 9, 2025, 4:00 P.M.
Boardroom, Service and Resource Centre
411 Dunsmuir Street, Nanaimo, BC

Members: Councillor Armstrong, Chair
Councillor Eastmure
James Bowen, At Large Member
Scott Brodie, At Large Member
Kim Coulthard, At Large Member
Doug Cowling, At Large Member
Jennifer Millbank, At Large Member

Absent: Destiny Herman, At Large Member
Kevin Lambert, At Large Member
Collen Middleton, At Large Member
Ruth Taylor, At Large Member

Staff: D. LaBerge, Director, Public Safety
Staff Sergeant R. Graves, Acting Operations Inspector
K. Robertson, Deputy Corporate Officer
C. Wood, Manager, Social Planning
D. Hopkins, Community Policing Coordinator
J. Vanderhoef, Steno Coordinator
L. Young, Zoom Moderator
A. Chanakos, Recording Secretary

1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER:

The Public Safety Committee Meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

It was moved and seconded that the agenda be adopted. The motion carried unanimously.

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the Public Safety Committee Meeting held in the Boardroom, Service and Resource Centre, 411 Dunsmuir Street, Nanaimo, BC, on Wednesday, 2025-FEB-12, at 4:00 p.m. be adopted. The motion carried unanimously.

4. COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS:

(a) 2024 Public Safety Committee Annual Report

Karen Robertson, Deputy Corporate Officer, advised that during the 2025-MAR-03 Regular Council Meeting, Council adopted the following motion:

“That Council accept the following initiative themes to be prioritized by the Public Safety Committee in 2025 based on the Public Safety Committee Workplan 2024 to 2026, and that Staff be directed accordingly:

- Transportation Safety
- Crime Prevention (City)
- Homelessness, Addiction, and Community Impacts
- Health and Wellness
- Advocacy
- Education”

5. PRESENTATIONS:

(a) Public Safety Department 2024 Overview

Dave LaBerge, Director, Public Safety, provided an on-screen presentation advising the following:

- The Social Planning Department was integrated into the Public Safety Department in 2024 as the Social Planning Department’s initiatives closely align with the Public Safety Department
- In 2024, the Social Planning Department had a number of accomplishments including the implementation of the Nanaimo Youth Strategy, which received \$1.8 million in Public Safety Canada funding, coordinating the opening of The Hub at 55 Victoria Road,

and assisting BC Housing with the implementation of the HEART and HEARTH programs

- Other initiatives achieved by the Public Safety Department include the creation of the Community Safety Officer (CSO) and Clean Team programs, implementation of pay and resident exempt parking in the hospital area, and the allocation of \$4.5 million in capital projects in parkades within the next five years
- CSOs respond to encampments and social disorder in the downtown area, while Bylaw Officer enforcement covers the entire city
- CSOs currently work 16 hours per day, seven days per week; however, the goal is to increase working hours to 21 hours per day
- The City was recently awarded a federal grant of \$450,000 for municipal responses to overdose events. This funding will be used to purchase three electric vehicles equipped with automated external defibrillators (AEDs) and other medical supplies to decrease response times for overdose emergencies

Committee and Staff discussion took place. Highlights included:

- The Bylaw Department primarily enforces parking violations regarding traffic; however, one Municipal Enforcement Officer is responsible for the enforcement of commercial vehicles, including trucks travelling off truck routes, dangerous goods and parking over-sized vehicles on City streets
- To ensure payment of unpaid fines, the City would need to go through debt collection or small claims court. As a result, approximately 60-75% of fines remain uncollected
- Currently, there is no mechanism for the Bylaw Department to implement the Restorative Justice Program in the community. The Committee expressed a desire to discuss this at a future Public Safety Committee meeting
- The City can obtain a court order under the *Community Charter* to ban a person from engaging in a specific activity for a period of time; however, the expenses associated with this are high

6. OTHER BUSINESS:

(a) Verbal Report re: Neighbourhood Safety Audits

Dan Hopkins, Community Policing Coordinator, provided a verbal report and advised the following:

- Neighbourhood safety audits provide a snapshot of what's happening in each neighbourhood regarding public safety. Following the initial audit, a second audit takes place at a later date to determine if there has been a change in the perception of safety in the neighbourhood
- The audits consist of three components: crime statistics pulled from the neighbourhood, a survey of the residents to get an idea of how they feel about where they live and the perception of crime, and a neighbourhood walk with community members to get an idea of what's happening and take physical/photo evidence
- A draft of the report is shared with the Neighbourhood Association/block watch members for comment, and is then published for the public

Committee and Staff discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Several recommendations are made during the audit process, and a review takes place every few years to ensure recommendations are followed through
- Often RCMP cannot increase police presence due to capacity
- The main benefit of the audits is that they empower residents to act and take responsibility for their neighbourhood
- Neighbourhood safety audits are a time-consuming process, entailing hundreds of hours of work, and collaboration with other community agencies
- Neighbourhoods are often perceived as unsafe due to graffiti or unhoused individuals nearby, and not necessarily due to property crime

(b) Discussion re: RCMP Nanaimo Detachment Priorities for 2025

Staff Sergeant Rob Graves, Acting Operations Inspector, Nanaimo Detachment, RCMP, led a discussion to determine priorities for the Nanaimo RCMP Detachment in 2025, including the following:

1. Traffic safety, primarily at intersections
 - Lights are not always in sync with the speed limit, causing frustration and an increase in drivers running red lights
 - The RCMP Traffic Unit has two members, so enforcement can be challenging
 - The number of fatalities has increased significantly

- The Committee requested that the following be added as priorities for the Detachment in 2025:
 - Advanced crosswalk signals installed at some intersections
 - Seeing more cameras at intersections to aid in enforcement
- 2. Anti-gang measures
 - Increasing random traffic stops around schools as gang members tend to frequent these areas
 - Ensuring school Liaison Officers are present in schools, and other officers are aware of the prolific gang members
- 3. Property Crime
 - Currently the only perceived benefit for reporting property crimes is initiating an insurance claim
 - The Repeat Violent Offending Intervention Initiative (REVOII) Program has helped target the most prolific offenders, and they will be considered differently in the court system
 - There is a perception that the unhoused population is committing the majority of property crimes; however, it is usually individuals who are more mobile or resourceful that commit these crimes. The unhoused population is more likely to commit petty theft and crimes of opportunity

(c) Verbal Update re: Social Issues and GIS Data Mapping

Christy Wood, Manager, Social Planning, provided a verbal update regarding social issues and GIS data mapping. Highlights included the following:

- The Geographic Information System (GIS) Department is developing a social services managing map. It will be an information tool to assist Staff in analyzing the relationship between complex social services and the vitality of the neighbourhood to help distribute services throughout the City
- The mapping system will help identify areas of risk for social conflict and disorder, and help identify new locations for social services
- GIS is also looking at mapping positive activity generators such as education institutions, parks and recreation spaces, community centres, transit hubs, libraries and walking distances to services and amenities

- The project will include static maps, and will be interactive tool for City Staff to use
- Staff will present some static maps at the 2025-MAY-12 Governance and Priorities Committee meeting

Committee and Staff discussion took place regarding including data related to seniors. Currently, Staff are focussing on community feedback around the concentration of social services; however, additional data, such as data on seniors, can be integrated later.

7. QUESTION PERIOD:

The Committee received no questions from the public regarding agenda items.

6. OTHER BUSINESS: (CONTINUED)

City Staff plan to provide the Public Safety Committee with a questionnaire or survey in the near future to gather Committee member feedback on the progress of the Committee.

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- The Committee has been valuable in informing the public around what the City is doing to help mitigate public safety concerns
- The Committee expressed an interest in more presentations from groups such as Neighbourhood Associations, high school/university students, or other groups, to determine community priorities

8. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 5:11 p.m. that the meeting adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

CHAIR

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

DEPUTY CORPORATE OFFICER