

Government announces consultation on re-composition of OPP Detachment Boards

On January 15th, the Honourable Sylvia Jones, Ontario's Solicitor General, wrote to Heads of Council to announce province-wide consultations on the drafting of regulations needed to support the establishment of new OPP detachment boards. These discussions will include changes to the billing framework allocating costs between municipalities with a shared OPP detachment board. AMO strongly encourages the participation of local elected officials in these discussions.

For municipalities, the goal of this engagement is a regulatory framework that supports successful and effective governance and delivers strong local civilian oversight of policing by the OPP. This should include mechanisms for every municipal council to be represented on an OPP detachment board and the equitable distribution of costs between municipalities.

The need for new OPP governance regulations is as a result of the new *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019*. Key governance-related changes include:

Structure of Boards and Local Say

- There shall be one OPP detachment board per detachment (with flexibility for unique circumstances/geography). A board's composition, terms of office, and remuneration will be provided for in regulations and has yet to be determined.
- In effect, these changes extend police governance to about 200 municipalities (which do not have a board, ie. Section 5.1) but will consolidate multiple existing boards within a detachment.

Activity of Boards

- Boards shall determine local objectives, priorities, and policies in consultation with the Detachment Commander, consistent with the Solicitor General's strategic plan for the OPP.
- Boards shall consult with the Commissioner of the OPP regarding the selection of the Detachment Commander.
- The Detachment Commander shall prepare and adopt a local action plan in consultation with the board.

- Training for board members will become mandatory (Ministry support and funding is needed).

Financial Considerations

- There will be no distinction between contract and non-contract in the future. Effectively all policing will become contract.
- The focus of the billing related regulations will be to address transition matters and to account for service differences between municipalities as well as existing contracts expiring at the end of 2020.
- It should be noted, billing model changes will not lower the overall cost of policing for the municipal sector.

OPP Governance Advisory Council (Provincial)

- The establishment of this Council is to provide advice to the Solicitor General with respect to the use of the Solicitor General's powers related to the OPP.
- More generally, this change will enhance civilian governance of the OPP.

AMO Advocacy

AMO has impressed upon the Ministry of the need for:

- open and transparent discussions;
- a recognition that policing is fundamentally local (ie. it is important to maintain the close proximity of a community to its board and the police);
- locally workable governance arrangements; and
- the representation of every municipal council.

Key Municipal Considerations

For local elected officials participating in the government's consultation, here are some key considerations:

1. For communities without existing police service or detachment boards: boards are an opportunity to expand the democratic oversight and governance of policing. In the words of Sir Robert Peel, the father of modern policing, "the

police are the public and the public are the police.” A detachment board helps to align policing objectives, priorities, and policies with community expectations.

2. For communities with existing OPP boards: the legislation aims to consolidate existing municipal board boundaries with OPP detachment board boundaries (thus potentially including multiple neighbouring municipalities in the same detachment). However, the legislation provides for flexibility to address unique geographic circumstances. If you feel your area’s needs are unique, help the Ministry understand that uniqueness in a province-wide context.
3. The size and composition of detachment boards have not been determined. This is your opportunity to inform the regulations which will determine board composition.
4. On the issue of policing costs, speak to your local circumstances. Highlight areas where your property taxpayers would benefit from greater transparency or illustrate steps that could be taken to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of policing in your community (ie. shift scheduling). This should include highlighting the need that all new policing regulations (governance and operations) should aim to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of policing and not drive policing costs even higher.
5. On the issue of OPP billing, note that billing changes alone will not lower the overall cost of policing by the OPP. The equitable distribution of costs across the detachment is a key goal of all municipalities.

The Solicitor General has advised that regional roundtable meetings will be taking place in Kenora, Thunder Bay, Sudbury, Timmins, London, Brockville, and Orillia. The Ministry will communicate the dates and times of these meetings shortly in separate correspondence.

In addition, the Ontario Association of Police Service Boards is convening an [OPP Governance Summit](#) on January 30, 2020 which will include a presentation by the Ministry.

AMO will continue to engage the Ministry in discussions related to OPP detachment boards and other regulations which affect policing (OPP and own-force) in all municipalities in the months ahead. Please feel free to relay any positions or concerns of sector-wide interest to AMO.

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