



## The Police Governance Post

Volume 8

### IN THIS ISSUE:

#### Update from AAPG Chair

Doug McLaughlin, Chair of the  
Lethbridge Reg'l Police Commission

#### Civic Elections and their Impact on the Policing Committee

Terry Noble, Public Complaint  
Director and former Chair of the  
Fort Sask. Policing Committee

#### AAPG 2011 Conference

#### CAPB Conference Highlights

Patricia Tolppanen,  
Executive Director, AAPG

#### Orientation Sessions offered by

Kristine Wolski, Policing Oversight and  
Complaints Manager, ASGPS

### *Update from AAPG Chair Doug McLaughlin*

Here is what has been happening with AAPG since our Spring Newsletter...

AAPG Vice-Chair Arlene Yakeley, Executive Director Patricia Tolppanen and I met with Alberta Solicitor General Frank Oberle in Calgary on July 13, 2010. The Minister indicated it was his intention to move ahead in the fall session with the legislative changes that are required vis a vis the police complaints and disciplinary process and the new funding model.

With respect to AAPG's 2010 resolution on the province taking back responsibility for staffing arrest processing units, the Minister agreed that police officers should be on the street, not doing administrative tasks, but said it is not in the provincial budget this year or next to have Corrections take over arrest processing. With respect to AAPG's 2009 resolution on demerit points for drivers whose passengers do not wear seatbelts, the Minister expressed concern about the potential impact of such a change on the court system.

AAPG's Board of Directors determined the AAPG priorities for 2010/2011 are supporting and assisting policing committees and encouraging the development of new policing committees, bringing First Nations police commissions back into our membership, promoting civilian oversight of the RCMP, and the 2011 AAPG conference.

In line with supporting policing committees, the AAPG hosted a Chairs' Conference Call on October 5<sup>th</sup> for policing committee chairs only. Matters discussed included staffing challenges at RCMP detachments. AAPG is also working with Kristine Wolski of Alberta Solicitor General and Public Security to develop a handbook for policing committees.

AAPG is currently arranging meetings with policing committees and communities considering forming a policing committee. If you would like to have one or more members of the AAPG Board meet with your committee or municipal representative, please contact our office.

Doug McLaughlin,  
Chair



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## Civic Elections and their Impact on the Policing Committee

Every three years, policing committees experience the impact of change that results from the outcome of local civic elections. Sometimes that change can be very challenging, to say the least.

The policing committee, generally a respected voice within the community, operates as a direct link communicating the crime and public safety concerns of community residents to the local city council. Communication between the policing committee and city council is primarily through an elected member of the committee – typically the mayor or a city councillor. This elected representative ensures that city council and city administration are kept abreast of key policing issues and concerns as raised by or through the policing committee.

When a new city council is elected, the mayor often appoints a new council member to the policing committee. The new council representative on the policing committee will find themselves on a very steep learning curve of policing issues. At the same time, the policing committee must maintain its communication with the rest of city council and will expect that their concerns and input will continue to be relayed to council on a regular basis.

If this weren't enough of a challenge, many newly elected councillors may have made election promises on public safety issues such as improved policing, reduction in crime rates and the elimination of illegal drug trades. Newly elected councillors may be surprised to learn that a policing committee acts as a buffer between politics and policing.

Policing committees must be prepared to educate and mentor the newly appointed council representative about the realities of policing and crime within the community, and about the processes and protocols as mandated by policy and regulation. Forging a positive and strong relationship with the council representative is not only critical; it must be done expeditiously.

The success of any policing committee depends heavily upon a strong working relationship between the committee's community representatives, the community's elected representatives and the officer in charge of the local RCMP.

## AAPG 2011 Conference

Plan to attend the AAPG 2011 Annual Conference and AGM, being held April 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> at the

Lethbridge Lodge, Hotel and Conference Centre

Conference theme:

Governance Challenges for the Decade Ahead

Agenda to include:

- Policing Rural Alberta
- Strategic Critical Success Factors for Policing
- First Nations Policing
- Alberta Solicitor General and Public Security, and
- Workshops for police commissions and policing committees

We look forward to seeing you in Lethbridge!

## Canadian Association of Police Boards Conference Highlights

The 2010 CAPB Conference in Saint John, New Brunswick, held over three days in August, was packed full of important information and dialogue. The agenda included presentations on workplace health and well-being, transforming lives through poverty reduction and community development, harassment and discrimination in police agencies, and negligent investigation and the cost of liability for police services. It also included workshops on risk management, legislation and lobbying, intelligence-led policing, and managing health and safety for due diligence.

One of the most important conference sessions, and one that stimulated significant discussion among delegates, was the session led by Fred Biro on behalf of the CAPB entitled "Is There a Future for Sustainable Public Policing?"

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities maintains municipal taxpayers cannot continue to finance the ever-increasing cost of policing. Salaries and benefits, which make up approximately 85% of municipal policing costs, are part of the reason that policing costs continue to escalate. As policing is a round-the-clock service, the average cost of the street-presence of one officer is four times the cost of one officer's salary, or \$456,680/year. Further, many police services report being over-worked and understaffed.

Changes in the law make police work more and more onerous, such as the *Stinchcombe* case that requires all Crown information relevant to the investigation be disclosed, or the increased number of steps required for processing drunk-driving charges. Further, the Internet Age has made some criminal investigations very complex. As the Internet is entirely unregulated, identifying and bringing to justice perpetrators of cyber-crime such as fraud, child pornography and identity theft is extremely costly and time-consuming.

With respect to the future of sustainable public policing, the CAPB asserts that funding sources do not align with policing responsibilities and legislated requirements, that funding restraints at the federal and provincial levels will typically lead to downloads to municipal governments, and that the status quo is no longer viable.

The CAPB is recommending the federal government convene a meeting of concerned parties to explore options to provide a comprehensive framework for the delivery of police services that properly align resources with responsibilities. CAPB also recommends that the national bodies representing policing be recognized as the "content experts" and provided standing at such a meeting.

### ORIENTATIONS SESSIONS OFFERED BY ALBERTA SOLICITOR GENERAL

With the municipal elections concluded, and the fall drive for volunteers winding up, many commissions and committees may have substantive changes to their members.

SGPS is considering hosting orientation sessions for any members who would like to participate in the "Roles and Responsibilities of Policing Oversight."

Once interest in such sessions is gauged, SGPS will be in touch regarding timing and location.

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by November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010.