
TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL **DATE:** 2016 May 03

FROM: ACTING CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: **PROVINCIAL SURVEY ON AUXILIARY CONSTABLE PROGRAM**

PURPOSE: To respond to a survey initiated by the Province on the future of the Auxiliary Constable Program in BC.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** Council receive this report for information and for further input; and
2. **THAT** A copy of this report be sent to BC Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Attention: Linette Logie.

REPORT**1. INTRODUCTION**

Following a national review of the Auxiliary Constable Program (ACP), the Province of BC is requesting information from local governments regarding the future of the ACP in BC. The request for information is structured into a survey with eight questions and was distributed via UBCM on April 20, 2016. The deadline for the feedback on the survey is May 10, 2016.

The purpose of this report is to present the eight questions included in the Provincial survey and the corresponding staff comments and feedback for Council's further input and deliberation. Chief Superintendent Critchley was provided a copy of the report for review and comment.

2. DISCUSSION

RCMP Auxiliary Constables are unarmed volunteers whose primary purpose is to participate in community policing services such as community engagement and crime prevention. The ACP is operated at the provincial level and is restricted to provinces/territories which have policing contracts with the RCMP. In BC, Auxiliary Constables are appointed under the BC Police Act. The RCMP "E" Division has approximately 750 Auxiliary Constables which accounts for about half of the total

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across Canada. Currently, RCMP Burnaby Detachment has about 44 Auxiliary Constables.

Following the 2014 October 22 shooting of an unarmed member of the Canadian Forces in Ottawa, a review of the ACP was conducted by RCMP National HQ which led to a directive issued requiring Auxiliary Constables to work under the direct supervision of a Regular Member (RM) equipped with all of their intervention tools. After the directive was issued, questions from local governments remained on sanctioned duties of Auxiliary Constables and the diminishing role of their volunteer work in the community. In addition to the policy changes, RCMP National HQ is contemplating changing the uniform standard for Auxiliary Constables to minimize personal safety risks and injuries following the casino shooting in Edmonton 2015 January.

In January, 2016, a further RCMP directive was issued directing all firearms familiarization training and the ride-a-long program be suspended. Further Auxiliary Constables policy review is being undertaken by RCMP to construct a new framework for the future ACP that will permit participation in low risk operational activities while mitigating the safety risks.

In light of the ongoing RCMP review, the Province of BC is requesting local governments to provide their input and comments regarding the future of the ACP in BC. The provincial survey sent out via UBCM is comprised of eight questions and they are described below together with staff comments.

Question 1. Prior to the new RCMP directives being established, what activities/duties did Auxiliary Constables perform in your community?

Staff Comment:

In addition to community crime prevention activities, the Auxiliary Constables participated in ride-a-long, traffic control for major community events, parades, community/school meetings/events and outreach programs, non-enforcement traffic related activities, Restorative Justice facilitation, disaster planning and emergency preparedness assistance, search and rescue, emergency translation services and firearms familiarization training.

Question 2. What benefits has your municipality experienced as a result of the Auxiliary Constable Program?

Staff Comment:

The Auxiliary Constables contribute thousands of volunteer hours in the community every year and provide valuable assistance to RCMP members and their work. The attendance of crime prevention and community meetings by Auxiliary Constables helps Burnaby and RCMP to advance the community policing and engagement strategy. The presence of Auxiliary Constables at public events strengthens and

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fosters a stronger and better relationship between citizens, business owners and the RCMP. The ACP also provides a logical progression for Auxiliary Constables who have taken strong interest in policing work and decided to pursue a career in law enforcement. Nine Auxiliary Constables from Burnaby have joined the RCMP and four more have gone to municipal police services.

Question 3. Has the RCMP's recent decision to cancel ride-a-longs impacted your Auxiliary Constable Program? If so, how?

Staff Comment:

The impact of the cancellation of the ride-a-long program for the Auxiliary Constables is unknown at this time. However, it should be noted that the ride-a-long program is one of the many activities valued by the Auxiliary Constables as an excellent opportunity to gain better insight into policing work. The cancellation of the ride-a-long program, suspension of the firearm familiarization training, restriction on the scope of work for Auxiliary Constables and different uniform standard will have an overall negative impact on the future ACP and enrollment.

Question 4. Has the RCMP's recent decision to require Auxiliary Constables working in uniform to be under the direct supervision of a Regular Member impacted your Auxiliary Constable Program? If so, how?

Staff Comment:

The new directive that requires Auxiliary Constables to work under direct supervision of a RM equipped with intervention tools reduces flexibility in the deployment of Auxiliary Constables. The reduced use of Auxiliary Constables also leads to lower participation and less opportunities for these volunteers. The restrictions on the scope of the ACP will ultimately erode the program to the extent that volunteers will no longer find the program meaningful and an effective use of their time. Many Auxiliary Constables have enrolled in the program for many years because they felt that their work was valued and respected. While the focus of the new directives is on the safety of Auxiliary Constables, the restrictions will discourage many who may want to join the program and take away the original value of the program. In 2014, the Auxiliary Constables in Burnaby had accumulated 2,942 hours of operational ride-a-long.

Question 5. Where do you feel Auxiliary Constables face the greatest risk in their volunteer duties in your community? How can the Province and RCMP mitigate that risk?

Staff Comment:

Auxiliary Constables who work in an urban centre encounter levels of risk different from those who serve in the rural community. In an urban environment such as Burnaby, support and backup services are readily available and can be provided much quicker than that in a remote rural community. Standards and practices

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developed for Auxiliary Constables based on isolated event(s) experienced in rural communities may not be applicable for urban centre such as Metro Vancouver. Generally speaking, responding to a call for service or traffic stop checks probably carry a higher risk than attending a public crime prevention education event. All jobs carry a certain level of risk and the appropriate response to risks is to identify the risks and develop ways to manage them. Risk mitigation for Auxiliary Constables may include better training in situation awareness and assessment, personal safety protection, and hazard identification, and separate protocols for urban and rural community Auxiliary Constables deployment.

Question 6. In your view how effective is the current Auxiliary Program in your community in relation to:

- a) improving police-community communications,
- b) improving crime reduction activities, and
- c) improving the community's sense of safety and security?

Staff Comment:

- a) *The thousands of hours of service performed by the Auxiliary Constables are noticeable in the community of Burnaby. Their presence at parades and special community events and their interaction with the general public is a part of the City's community policing plan.*
- b) *Auxiliary Constables attended crime prevention sessions with RCMP members and civilian staff. Their work is integral to the delivery of the City's crime prevention program and the overall strategy.*
- c) *Again, the ACP is a part of the City's policing plan. Burnaby has created and funded an Auxiliary Constable Coordinator position to support the program and to provide the necessary training opportunities to the volunteers. If RCMP National HQ decides to scale back on the role of Auxiliary Constables and the scope of the program, thousands of hours of volunteer service will be lost and the citizens of Burnaby will lose the valuable services provided by the Auxiliary Constables.*

Question 7. The uniform of an Auxiliary Constables is very similar to that of a Regular Member. Do you support modifications to the uniform to ensure unarmed Auxiliary Constables are distinguishable from armed Regular Members? How can the risks associated with Auxiliary Constables continuing to wear their current uniform be mitigated?

Staff Comment:

Modifying the current uniform may adversely affect the Auxiliary Constables and their ability to carry out their duties effectively. Currently, the general public can identify Auxiliary Constables at community events and approach them for assistance if required. The current uniform also provides the Auxiliary Constables an appropriate level of authority and recognition in the course of their duties. Reserve Constables with the Vancouver Police Department have similar uniform to that of a Regular Member. Changing the Auxiliary Constables uniform may not reduce the

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risk level but would certainly have the effect of a diminishing role and recognition for the Auxiliary Constables. Please see answer #5 on risk mitigation.

Question 8. If the uniform were to change, what would be an acceptable uniform?
What would not be acceptable?

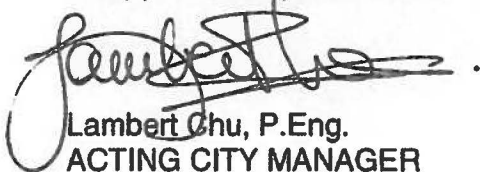
Staff Comment:

An acceptable uniform would be one similar to the current uniform. It must project a certain level of authority and association with the police services. "Auxiliary Constable" must be clearly marked on the front and back of the uniform to distinguish them from the Regular Members. Golf shirt and takis pants do not reflect the status of Peace Officer and are not appropriate for Auxiliary Constables on duty. It is recommended that Auxiliary Constables be consulted on the uniform change proposal and their input be considered as part of the overall review process.

3. CONCLUSION

The Auxiliary Constables Program (ACP) is operated at the provincial level and the program serves as a valuable asset to many communities including Burnaby in the delivery of community policing services. In concert with the program review being conducted by the RCMP National HQ, the Province of BC is requesting input and comments from local governments on the future of the ACP in BC. The survey includes eight questions and was sent out by UBCM on 2016 April 20 with a deadline of May 10 for comment submission.

This report provides a summary of staff comments in response to the survey and is provided to Council for consideration. There are approximately 47 Auxiliary Constables in the Burnaby Detachment and these volunteers contribute thousands of hours of service every year to the community towards crime reduction and education and provide valuable assistance to RCMP in non-operational activities. While personal safety for Auxiliary Constables on duty is of paramount importance, their important role in the community and recognition by the general public should not be minimized. Risk mitigation may include better training and different deployment protocol for urban and rural communities. Subject to Council's review and further input, it is recommended that a copy of this report be sent to the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General.


Lambert Chu, P.Eng.
ACTING CITY MANAGER

Copied to: RCMP, Burnaby Detachment, OIC C/Superintendent Critchley