



# **TOWN OF KENTVILLE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS MINUTES**

**354 Main Street, Kentville Town Hall**

**March 29, 2023, 1:00 p.m.**

**Present:**

Commissioner Jaimie Peerless, Commissioner Virginia Brooke, Commissioner Samantha Hamilton, Commissioner Craig Gerrard, Commissioner Gillian Yorke.

Staff present: Chief Jim Butler, Deputy Chief Marty Smith, Recording Secretary Jennifer West

**Regrets:**

None.

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

**2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Addition: Education, item 7.c

**It was moved by Craig Gerrard and Samantha Hamilton that the agenda of March 29, 2023 be approved as amended.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**It was moved by Commissioner Craig Gerrard and Commissioner Jaimie Peerless that the minutes of February 24, 2023 be approved.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**4. PRESENTATIONS**

None.

**5. CHIEFS REPORTS**

Approved April 26, 2023

Chief Butler described his reports and documents submitted for March 2023, with highlights including financial statistics and trends, stat time for staff and finalizing budgets for 2022-2023.

Regarding Council's concern that staff is not working with Jennifer Holleman around human trafficking - clarification that work is ongoing with Ms. Holleman and other provincial, regional and local groups to create a strategy to stop human trafficking in Kentville.

Chief Butler asked for clarification on the format that the Board wishes to see in the Chief's reports. The Board will provide more details on report content and format as the strategic plan and other details are worked out.

*See report for more information*

## **6. NEW BUSINESS**

### **(a) Board Manual Work Plan**

Chair Yorke reviewed the purpose of the draft policy manual, and recommended review for use by the Board. She asked for feedback on this suggestion and was open to other ideas. Commissioner Yorke suggested creating a working committee- Commissioner Hamilton, Commissioner Brooke and Chair Yorke offered to work on this committee.

ACTION: Commissioner Yorke will set up a date and time with other members to work on this manual.

Chief Butler recommends a manual that is strongly connected to the Police Act, and not the Halifax Board Manual, which is based on Ontario policies and standards.

### **(b) Board Strategic Plan**

Commissioner Peerless had reviewed several board of commissioners strategic plans in the region and had some recommendations. Commissioner Yorke encourages members to review plans but to bring the information to meetings for collaboration in open session.

It is acknowledged that the plan will be strongly connected to feedback from the engagement sessions and to the board manual.

It is also acknowledged that the board strategic plan will be separate from the police service strategic plan.

## **7. OLD BUSINESS**

### **(a) Symbols on Uniforms**

Commissioner Yorke opened the floor for discussion on this matter.

Commissioner Peerless gave a statement based on her case study on this issue. She found that her research group consisting of black and indigenous residents, was mostly against the wearing of the thin blue line. She shared select comments to expand on these concerns.

Commissioner Hamilton gave a statement supporting the different patches worn on uniforms. She expressed support for first responders who put their lives at risk every day.

Commissioner Brooke expressed support for all officers. She expressed that symbols are problematic because they can be ambiguous and can mean something different to different people.

Commissioner Gerrard shared that conversations with active and retired officers resulted in uncertainty about the intent of the line by members who wear it.

Commissioner Yorke shared that all members support first responders and their high-risk jobs.

Chief Butler expressed that uniforms are full of symbols and symbolism. He wants to improve trust and support in the community.

Commissioner Yorke explained that symbols don't have context or explanation in the moment.

Chief Butler wants members to recognize that officers also put the patch on in support of their colleagues.

The Chair opened the floor for next steps on this issue.

The Chief will support any decision made by the Board.

ACTION: The Chief will share his red-lined draft of the policy, and that members will review the policy before the next meeting.

### **(b) Public Engagement Meeting**

Commissioner Yorke described the planning stages of the engagement event around community policing in Kentville. Ms. West described the outline of this kind of event. Members suggested an invitation that can be given out by Harlon Wood, Ashley Ettinger and other officers. Members want to see equity deserving groups and youth at this event.

ACTION: Commissioner Brooke and Commissioner Peerless will help with a planning committee for this event.

### **(c) Education**

Commissioner Brooke reviewed broad education and training standards for board members. Members had some questions about membership in the Nova Scotia Board of Police Governance and the Canadian Association of Board of Police Commissioners.

ACTION: Commissioner Yorke will ask for clarification at the next NSAPG meeting around membership.

## **8. Public Comments**

**Brent O'Connor**

Mr. O'Connor expressed support and respect for the Kentville Police Service. He explained the importance of operational effectiveness in all parts of the police service. He believes that the wearing of the thin blue line may, in some scenarios of a civilian-police interaction, negatively impact operational effectiveness. "Is wearing a thin blue line patch (initially expressing support and appreciation for officers) an impediment to operational effectiveness?" How does this compare with an officers' right to express themselves by wearing the patch.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further matters to discuss, it was moved that the meeting adjourn at 3:03 pm.

The next meeting will be held on April 26, 2023 at 1:00 pm.

DRAFT