

2. Equitable Police Funding

MOVER: Councillor Kim Capri
SECONDER: Councillor Suzanne Anton

WHEREAS on Monday, November 26th, the City of Abbotsford unanimously endorsed a motion calling upon the provincial government to address the issue of equitable police funding for all British Columbia municipalities.

AND WHEREAS Abbotsford Council requests support from all local governments with policing services provided by non-RCMP forces.

AND WHEREAS the City of Vancouver strongly supports the Province of British Columbia in its position that traditional cost sharing formulas from the Federal government need to be updated to reflect the ever-increasing complexity and challenges of police work.

AND WHEREAS with federal and provincial fiscal position greatly improved, it would be appropriate to reconsider this approach.

AND WHEREAS compared to growing provincial and federal surpluses, municipalities across Canada are struggling and changes in social safety nets and senior government funding have placed an ever-growing strain on police forces throughout British Columbia to deal with issues related to gangs, organized crime, addiction, mental health, domestic violence, and a host of other challenges.

AND WHEREAS where senior levels of government are able to reduce taxes, the burden on municipal taxpayers is growing as municipalities take on increasing responsibilities in social housing, child care, arts and culture, social services, transportation and regional policing.

AND WHEREAS to meet these increased service demands and growing infrastructure deficits, municipalities have been left with little choice but to increase property and business taxes and user fees.

AND WHEREAS other revenue sources available to municipalities cannot fill the gap between growing costs to service our citizens and a sustainable level of property taxation, and municipal revenues have not kept up with federal and provincial growth.

AND WHEREAS at the same time, payments from the Provincial and Federal Governments now comprise a smaller portion of the overall revenues of many municipalities; this decline is in contrast to the rate of federal transfer payments to British Columbia.

AND WHEREAS since 2001, our province has benefited from billions of dollars of increases in federal transfer payments (CHST and Equalization entitlements) and in 2008-09, the federal payments to British Columbia are likely to increase even more.

AND WHEREAS for over 50 years, a serious and unjustifiable inequity has existed in many British Columbia communities related to the funding of police resources.

AND WHEREAS the existing Federal/Provincial Agreement entitled "Provincial Police Services Agreement" provides RCMP services to most small towns and rural areas, as well as offering many larger municipalities RCMP policing through the "Municipal Policing Agreement". These agreements provide communities a contribution of federal funds of between 10%-30% depending on the size of the municipality towards policing costs.

AND WHEREAS 12 municipalities in the Province which collectively are home to over 1.2 million British Columbia residents, local policing is provided by a municipal police force instead of the RCMP. This results in the entire cost of local policing falling to the local taxpayer with no funding subsidy. For these communities, policing costs are without exception the single largest annual cost to the local taxpayer.

AND WHEREAS the City of Vancouver believes there must be a level playing field for cost sharing of police services between the Federal/Provincial Governments and all British Columbia communities.

AND WHEREAS the City of Vancouver believes that the senior levels of government should contribute to adequate resources for the higher costs of policing all international points of entry to British Columbia, including airports, borders, and coastlines.

AND WHEREAS the City of Vancouver believes that all provincially mandated systems, including PRIME, should be fully funded by senior government.

AND WHEREAS the City of Vancouver believes that all British Columbia communities, be they RCMP or municipal forces, will benefit from standardized performance measurements and accountabilities. The City believes that all Union of British Columbia Municipalities should be consulted on the development of these important measurements and that a single Provincial set of standards be developed for all police services.

AND WHEREAS the City of Vancouver believes that Federal/Provincial cost sharing formulas for the creation, upgrading, and expansion of all police facilities must be developed for all communities in British Columbia.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Vancouver request the Federal Government, Province of British Columbia and Union of British Columbia Municipalities to urgently address the issue of equitable police funding by developing an equitable funding program for all British Columbia municipalities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Mayor Sullivan, as Chair of the Vancouver Police Board present a copy of this motion, to the Vancouver Police Board along with a request to endorse this call for equitable funding.

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