

## COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

### 5. Enabling the Requisitioning and Hiring of 100 New Police Officers and 100 Mental Health Nurses

Submitted by: Councillor Dominato

#### WHEREAS

1. Mental illness and addictions are experienced by residents from all corners of the city;
2. The Vancouver Police Department (VPD) has a number of successful Mental Health Initiatives to serve people living with mental illness. For more than 40 years the VPD has partnered with Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) to help improve the quality of life for mutual clients living with mental illness, substance use, and addiction;
3. The VPD collaboration with VCH and other community partner aims to reduce harm to both clients and the community, and to reduce a client's involvement with the criminal justice system, law enforcement, and emergency health services, by providing a coordinated response;
4. The VPD's mental health initiatives and partnerships include (but are not limited to):
  - **Car 87/88 – Mental Health Cars** – VPD officers partner with mental health professionals to provide assessments and intervention for people living with mental illness. Specially-trained officers in plainclothes team up with psychiatric nurses seven days a week and respond to requests from patrol officers and Assertive Outreach Team members for mental health assistance. They determine the most appropriate action in each case, which can include immediate referrals for community-based mental health services or emergency intervention.
  - **Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Teams** – A small group of clients have repeated and frequent use of the emergency medical system and extensive contact with police. They also encounter barriers to housing and employment. It makes living in the community challenging. ACT teams provide full-service mental health programs and “wrap-around” care for clients with a history of complex mental health issues. The teams help clients transition to traditional community-based care. Teams are 10 to 12 people, and include police officers, nurses, social workers, psychiatrists, and vocational counsellors.
  - **Assertive Outreach Team (AOT)** – While ACT addresses the most high-risk, high-needs clients through long-term, wrap-around services, the Assertive Outreach Team (AOT) provides short-term bridging services to clients to help them transition from hospital or jail to longer-term

community-based services, such as ACT. VPD officers collaborate with Vancouver Coastal Health psychiatrists, nurses, and clinical supervisors to reduce incidents of violence and self-harm, prevent further deterioration in quality of life, and reduce involvement with the criminal justice system.

- **VPD Mental Health Unit** – The VPD Mental Health Unit works to reduce the number of people cycling through the criminal justice system as a result of untreated mental health disorders. The Unit works with Vancouver Coastal Health Mental Health clinical staff. Together, they ensure a coordinated response.
5. On December 8, 2020, Council approved a net VPD budget of \$316,079,342 plus \$300,000 in separate funding for CPCs, resulting in a VPD budget shortfall of \$5,689,974 for 2021. The VPD quantified this funding shortfall as being equivalent to 61 police recruits, or 4.5% of the VPD’s authorized sworn strength;
  6. On March 8, 2021, the Police Board appealed to the Province’s Director of Police Services for a review of Council’s decision under section 27(3) of the Police Act;
  7. In March 2022, B.C.’s Director of Police Services, Wayne Rideout, ruled that the Vancouver Police Department should not have been denied the additional \$5.7 million it requested in December 2020 to fully fund its 2021 operating budget;
  8. The nature, scope, and magnitude of the mental health and addiction crisis facing Vancouver requires a significant and substantial increase in supports and actions to improve the quality of life for those living with mental illness, substance use, and addiction in our city.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council empower the Mayor to write to the Vancouver Police Board (VPB) and the Board of Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) on behalf of Council to formally advise of Council’s intention to make funding available to the Vancouver Police Board and VCH to enable the requisitioning and hiring of 100 new police officers and 100 mental health nurses to support various mental health initiatives and partnerships between the two agencies;

FURTHER THAT copies of the Mayor’s letters be sent to the senior management of the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) and VCH, the Vancouver Police Union, local Indigenous Governments, and other relevant partners and stakeholders.

- B. THAT Council direct staff to allocate an initial block of funding in the City’s 2023 operating budget in the amount of \$4.5 million to enable the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) to requisition and hire new police officers. Such funding will be made available to the VPD on or after January 1, 2023 subject to Council’s acceptance of plan from the VPD for hiring and deploying the additional police officers to enhance and expand mental health initiatives and partnerships between VPD and Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH), such as the Car 87/88 program, Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Teams and Assertive Outreach

Team (AOT). The interim funding source for the \$4.5M allocation will be the general revenue stabilization reserve, with the final funding source to be identified by Council in the 2023 operating budget.

- C. THAT Council direct staff to allocate an initial block of funding in the City's 2023 operating budget in the amount of \$1.5 million to enable Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) to requisition and hire new nurses. The funding will be made available to VCH on or after January 1, 2023 subject to agreement between the City and VCH on a plan for use of the funds to hire additional nurses to enhance and expand mental health initiatives and partnerships between VCH and the Vancouver Police Department (VPD), such as the Car 87/88 program, Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Teams and Assertive Outreach Team (AOT). The interim funding source for the \$1.5M allocation will be the general revenue stabilization reserve, with the final funding source to be identified by Council in the 2023 operating budget.

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