

Meeting of the Large Urban Policing Working Group

Representatives:

The City of Dauphin
The City of Flin Flon
The City of Portage la Prairie
The City of Selkirk
The City of Steinbach
The Town of The Pas
The City of Thompson

with

The Honourable Gord Mackintosh

Minister of Justice



July 20, 2004

The Large Urban Policing Working Group would like to begin by thanking the Honourable Gord Mackintosh, Minister of Justice, for taking the time to meet with this group today. This group believes that open communication between the Department of Justice and the urban centres represented today is crucial to addressing policing concerns common to these communities. This group hopes that this meeting will lay the foundation for more effective and cost-affordable policing in Manitoba's largest urban centres and appreciates the opportunity to present its position.

On September 11, 2003, the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) arranged a meeting with Manitoba Justice, the R.C.M.P and seven large urban communities in order to discuss policing concerns common to these urban centres. These seven communities have since formed the Large Urban Policing Working Group and consist of the communities of Dauphin; Flin Flon; Portage la Prairie; Selkirk; Steinbach; The Pas; and Thompson. Although this group has many concerns with contract policing in Manitoba, the primary concern of this group relates to the rapid increase in police costs over the past number of years. Many members of this group are worried that because municipalities must determine the appropriate level of police service in relation to their budget, police service may be adversely affected if these costs continue to escalate.

Under the Provincial Police Services Agreement (PPSA), municipalities with a population of over 5000 people are required to pay 70 per cent of the cost of contract policing. These seven urban centres all fall under this arrangement. This group recognizes that the Province of Manitoba provides additional funding under the Provincial-Municipal Tax Sharing arrangement (PMTS) to communities that pay for their own policing, however there remains a great disparity between the cost of policing and any funding these communities receive. Although these communities do not have any control over the costs of policing, they are required to pay a set amount of 70 per cent. Therefore, if policing costs rise dramatically from one year to the next, these communities must absorb these cost increases even though their overall budget may not have increased. Therefore, there is a need to control the cost of policing in these communities, or to afford these communities greater funding for policing in their areas.

When examining GRAPH 8- Annual Expenses and Supplement Comparison 2002¹, you will recognize a large difference between the cost of policing in these communities, and the funding for policing that is provided by the Province. A per capita comparison reveals a strikingly large gap between per capita funding and per capita cost of policing, as revealed in GRAPH 9. For example, in 2002, The Pas’ per capita cost of policing was \$219.55, yet the total per capita funding was \$131.82. As a result of this gap, the annual cost of policing in The Pas was an additional \$491 639 in 2002. In Thompson, the per capita cost was \$183.09, and funding was only \$131.82 per capita. With a population of nearly 13 000, the \$51.27 additional per capita requirement for policing translates into an additional \$660 000 annually for contract policing in 2002.

Many of the group’s representatives believe that the high police costs in these communities is due partly to the impact of outside residents on policing costs, causing a huge strain on the communities’ policing infrastructure. Many of the members of this Group argue that their communities are required to pay for the policing of outside residents, despite the fact that these outsiders do not contribute to the municipalities’ tax base. Each group representative gathered information on prisoner counts from their respective detachments for October 2003:

Resident/ Non-resident Comparison

Representative	Total Prisoner Count	Number of residents	Number of non-residents	Percentage non-resident
1. Dauphin	47	35	12	25.5%
2. Flin Flon	19	13	6	31.5%
3. Portage	151	56	95	62.9%
4. Selkirk	53	35	18	33.9%
5. Steinbach				
6. The Pas	443	306	137	30.9% ²
7. Thompson	656	175	481	73.3%
TOTAL	1369	620	749	Average: 43%

¹ Please see attached statistics- “Manitoba’s Urban Centres Between 5000 and 20 000 Population.”

² This percentage is likely much higher as The Pas’ RCMP classify visitors staying with The Pas’ residents as “residents,” even though they may come from outside communities.

On average, the percentage of crime coming from outside residents in these urban centres is 43 per cent. Therefore, nearly half of the community's policing budget is spent on dealing with residents from outlying areas and in some communities, this percentage is even greater. These seven groups find this situation unacceptable, and believe the Provincial Government must cover some of the costs of policing in these communities based on this evidence.

At the 2003 AMM Convention, these seven municipalities learned that RCMP costs are expected to rise significantly in the future due to increasing salaries, increased RCMP reporting requirements, demographic trends, and rising public expectations. Many new policing initiatives require a greater degree of community involvement than in the past, and point to a greater role for community policing, crime prevention, school programs and restorative and alternative measures- initiatives which require additional community resources. However, the increased cost of policing should not fall solely on these communities represented today. Many of the communities represented feel that the Province should provide "top-up" funding for policing in their jurisdictions. For example, in 2003, the Provincial Government funded directly 40 Constable positions in the Winnipeg Police Service, recognizing that this funding would help Winnipeg meet its policing priorities.³ Although these communities are not of the same size as Winnipeg, the precedent exists and these communities feel that policing effectiveness and affordability would be strengthened by a "top-up" funding arrangement as is present in Manitoba's largest urban centre. Another solution would be to cap the amount of funding required of these communities, so that police cost increases would not automatically translate into a greater municipal financial commitment.

It is clear that much of the crime in these centres comes from residents of surrounding areas and some of these costs should be a responsibility of the Provincial Government. Because the appropriate level of police service in a municipality is dictated by municipal budgets, these representatives are concerned that further cost increases will compromise their ability to provide effective police service to their communities. Therefore the Large

³ Winnipeg Police Service- 2003 Annual Report.

Urban Policing Working Group believes strongly that there must be measures implemented to offset the rapid increase in municipal police costs and would ask for the Province's financial support to do so. This group would like to thank the Minister of Justice for taking the time to meet, and is hopeful that some of the concerns raised today will be addressed in the near future.