



July 10, 2024

The Honourable Mike Ellis
Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services
404 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Re: AAPG 2024 Resolutions

Dear Minister Ellis:

As you are aware, the Alberta Association of Police Governance (AAPG) recently held its 2024 Annual General Meeting (AGM). The AAPG is an association of police commissions, policing committees, advisory committees, and associate municipal members from across Alberta. Our primary objective is to support best practices in civilian governance and oversight of the police.

Four (4) resolutions were presented and Three (3) passed at the AGM that are relevant to your Ministry. These three (3) resolutions are:

- Opposition to the Elimination of Public Complaint Directors for Policing Committees and Police Commissions, Guidelines for Skill sets, Training and Access, along with Regulation for Local Liaison, should elimination occur.
- Development of an Alberta Focused Police Governance Course.
- Joint AAPG, Ministry, Police and Policing Governance member Roundtable on Workplace Harassment and Bullying.

We have attached our resolutions for your consideration. We look forward to your response on how your Ministry is planning to address or collaborate with AAPG or other Ministries on these issues of importance to Albertans.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our resolutions.

Sincerely,

Victoria Chester
Executive Director
Alberta Association of Police Governance

Incl: 2024 AAPG AGM Resolutions

Cc: Curtis Zablocki, Wendy Moshuk, Rachel Melnychuk

Public Complaints Directors for Policing Committees and Police Commissions in Alberta

The Government of Alberta has signaled its intention to eliminate the Public Complaints Directors positions for Policing Committees and Police Commissions and create the Provincial Review Agency for Public Complaints against Police as a part of the *Police Amendment Act Regulations* to modernize and bring transparency and:

WHEREAS AAPG recognizes the importance of local Civilian oversight and Governance to build public confidence in Policing.

WHEREAS Policing Committees and Police Commissions in Alberta provide the linkage between the Community, the Police and Municipal Government through citizen oversight and governance.

WHEREAS a community based nonpartisan contact that can receive citizen complaints, expressions of concern or general questions relating to local policing, provides a safe point of contact for those that may have anxiety about directly contacting the Police or a Government Review Agency.

WHEREAS Public Complaint Directors for Policing Committees and Police Commissions have provided a valuable service to their communities by receiving, assessing, and referring complaints or concerns for appropriate and timely resolution at the lowest possible level.

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT *AAPG opposes the elimination of Public Complaint Directors for Policing Committees and Police Commissions in the Province of Alberta through the Police Amendment Act Regulations.*

THEREFORE, LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED THAT *AAPG requests guidelines be developed to ensure the Public Complaints Director has the required knowledge, skill sets, updated training for the position and access to files within the central agency.*

THEREFORE, LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED THAT *AAPG requests that should the Province of Alberta proceed with the elimination of Public Complaint Directors from community Policing Committees and Police Commissions, the Province of Alberta create regulations to include a localized liaison for each community Policing Committee and Police Commission to provide line of sight reporting to and from the Provincial Review Agency.*

Background

The stated purpose of the Police Amendment Act and Regulations is to modernize policing in Alberta. One of the hallmarks of modern policing is transparency and strong civilian oversight and governance. This is in line with the principles of modern Policing: The Police are the community, and the Community are the Police. Over the past few years, there have been many calls to defund the police and there has been an erosion of the public trust of the police.

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The Government of Alberta has announced the formation of the Public Review Agency, that will investigate all public complaints against the police in the Province of Alberta. The Government has also indicated during consultation for the *Police Amendment Act Regulations*, of its intent to no longer authorize Public Complaint Directors for Policing Committees and Police Commissions.

The ability for a member of the public to make a complaint or raise a concern to a local Committee or Commission, is a valuable linkage for the public and helps to build trust in the complaints process within a community. Many who have concerns with police conduct are marginalized and or lack trust in the Police or large Government organizations. The ability for Committees or Commissions to receive complaints allows persons to be heard in their community. The professional handling, in confidence, of those concerns or complaints by a Public Complaints Director, allows those concerns to be addressed at a local level and guided towards the appropriate handling of the matter.

The Government of Alberta is recognizing the valuable role Policing Committees and Commissions have, through the *Police Amendment Act* and the forthcoming *Regulations*. Committees and Commissions are a vital conduit between the Community, the Police and local Government. By having the legislated ability to receive complaints and ensuring they are forwarded for proper investigation or response, the connection to the community as an impartial body is enhanced. The loss that ability can be seen as sending the wrong message to the community as to how open the Police are, and certainly would impact those with a greater lack of trust in the police or those that are marginalized within a community.

The current training for Public Complaints Directors is dated and in need of revision. Due to the importance of the Public Complaints Director position, robust training and selection criteria are key.

The Alberta Association of Police Governance members believe that the elimination of Public Complaints Directors will not enhance public trust or provide a mechanism for the marginalized to be heard. We feel that the position of Public Complaints Director should be enhanced and used as a conduit to the Public Review Agency or local Police for appropriate and timely resolution. This would include reporting to the Police and the Review Agency to show transparency and help to build further trust in the process.

Development of a Police Governance Course

WHEREAS one of AAPG's strategic goals is to create a police governance certification program complete with curriculum and reference resources, and,

WHEREAS Commissions and Boards across the province recognize that there is a significant public responsibility in providing governance and oversight over their police services and acknowledge that member contribution can be greatly enhanced by the delivery of a comprehensive orientation and training program, and,

WHEREAS local police governance can only be effective through role clarity, including mandatory police governance training with appropriate resourcing,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT *the AAPG call upon the Provincial government to develop a new comprehensive, Alberta focused, police governance course for Commissions and Boards using curriculum development experts from a post secondary institution who leverage current adult learning theory.*

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT *the Government of Alberta and the AAPG partner with both the Edmonton and Calgary Police Commissions to collaborate and use employee expertise for the initiative.*

Background:

Currently, the Government of Alberta offers an online only Police Commission training program through the Canadian Police Knowledge Network (CPKN) which has not been reviewed or updated since its launch in 2016. This course is also only available online which assumes that the self-directed learning methodology is suitable for every individual's learning style and needs.

There are various principles or theories on how adults learn and coursework for governance bodies require changes to delivery that includes offerings through a variety of avenues such as in-classroom or group learning, as well as online.

The Edmonton Police Commission is vested in ensuring this project is initiated and successful. Accordingly, they are willing to commit a portion of funds for this project.

Canadian Association of Police Governance [CAPG] has received a \$100,000 Federal government grant to create a National Police Governance Training Program. Compiling the existing training materials in use across Canada to develop discussion guides for use in focus groups. Anticipated start in July 2024 and overview presentation at the August 2024 CAPG Conference. Development of training to follow, with training to be provincially segregated and Province specific with roll out proposed late 2024 to early 2025.

Roundtable on Workplace Harassment and Bullying

WHEREAS The RCMP and BC municipal police services have recently faced class action lawsuits over bullying and harassment in the workplace and police boards in Ontario have identified workplace harassment as an area of concern; and

WHEREAS Alberta's Occupational Health and Safety Act requires police services to prevent and address workplace harassment and bullying; and

WHEREAS Public allegations of workplace harassment in Alberta police agencies continue to arise despite efforts to address the issue;

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT *the Alberta Association of Police Governance should coordinate the hosting of a roundtable where the province, police commissions and committees, and police services can discuss challenges addressing workplace harassment and discrimination, share best practices, and develop recommendations for future improvement.*

Background

Allegations of systemic bullying and harassment in the Calgary Police Service came to light in 2017. After significant work to address the issue, employee survey results show that employees still believe harassment is not being properly addressed and public allegations of cultural problems persist.

Recent class action lawsuits brought forward by female police officers against the RCMP and BC municipal police services demonstrate that cultural issues with bullying and harassment are not unique to Calgary. Police boards in Ottawa and Toronto have also identified a need to address this issue within their police services.

In 2021, a roundtable was held with police services across Ontario to discuss a more coordinated approach to bullying and harassment in policing. Hosting a similar event in Alberta would allow police commissions, police services and the province to focus on this issue more collaboratively.

Given that work is still ongoing to update Alberta's *Police Service Regulation* and to create the new Police Review Commission, a roundtable would also be an opportunity to provide input into how the province can better support local agencies in fostering culture change.

As the Alberta Association of Police Governance has limited resources, the intent of this resolution is that the association would take a leadership role in forming a committee of people from police commissions and police services to then organize and facilitate the roundtable.

Timeline discussion to be completed within the year or as quickly as possible.