

MEETING NOTES

Of a Meeting with a Committee of the Whole of Council
And O.P.P. Commissioner Julian Fantino
Monday, April 7, 2008
2:30 p.m. – Council Chambers

PRESENT:

Mayor Compton, Councillor Cuthbert, Councillor McCann, Councillor McMillan, Councillor Poirier, Councillor Van Wallegghem, and Staff: B. Preisenzanz, CAO, Joanne L. McMillin, City Clerk.

Also Present:

*Julian Fantino, OPP Commissioner
Deputy Commissioner Chris Lewis, Chief Superintendent-N/W Region, Mike Armstrong,
Superintendent Brad Blair, Detachment Commander Don Denver, Superintendent Paul Laing, and
Sgt. Paul Van Belleghem.*

Mayor Compton welcomed Commissioner Fantino and those joining him, and indicated the City was pleased to accept his offer to come to Kenora to meet with Members of Council. Mayor Compton then read Commissioner Fantino's biography for the information of those in attendance.

Commissioner Fantino introduced those accompanying him. He advised that of 444 municipalities in Ontario, 315 are policed by the Ontario Provincial Police. Commissioner Fantino reviewed the variety of services offered under contract, indicating the resources they have available to offer such as: training and expertise in finding missing persons, joint forces unit, public safety issues, organized crime, and inappropriate use of the Internet. He went on to explain the O.P.P. is not in competition with anyone, and they simply respond to requests from municipalities for a costing. There is a process that they follow and rules of engagement based on the data they receive from the municipality. He indicated the O.P.P. does not always succeed in having municipalities relinquish their municipal police force, and that to the extent he has been involved with the O.P.P., they are not embellishing, but rather responding to communities' requests.

Commissioner Fantino explained that passion and conflict always seem to prevail in a community that is about to lose its municipal force and he indicated it is to be admired that any community would feel passion for longstanding police services. However based on the data and the calculation of figures and the formula offered by the O.P.P., the citizens of Kenora will be well-served by their service; and with a savings of over \$1 million each year for a start. He also noted there will be 'bench strength' in the community. He explained they have been fair and ethical, and not criticizing. He further explained they are not into the misinformation, miscommunication or the bantering; they have provided the straight goods and that at some point in time these things will fade away however Council has to deal with them in the meantime.

Reference was made to the misinformation that Kenora Municipal Police Officers will not be hired, and Commissioner Fantino explained this is not the case. An offer of employment will be given and those officers will be absorbed provided there are no extenuating circumstances. He explained there is not a job for everyone as they are not a carbon copy of the K.P.S., but there is an opportunity for officers to move forward, noting the O.P.P. is ready to go; pending completion of the O.C.C.P.S. hearing.

Mayor Compton then allowed an opportunity for Members of Council to ask questions and Councillor Van Wallegghem advised while he did not have any questions, he thanked Commissioner Fantino for coming to Kenora and assuaging his concerns on the decision made by the City.

Councillor McMillan expressed concern whether or not services currently enjoyed through K.P.S. will continue with the O.P.P, i.e. violence against women and family matters. Commissioner Fantino stated this is a valid issue and concern, and went on to explain the O.P.P. model is a stand alone, localized delivery of services that takes into account the control aspect, and while they may have to do a call in regarding these aspects, Kenora will have a tailored service; tailored to the Kenora community to deal with issues at the local level; and with services to address local needs.

Councillor McMillan also referred to the positive working relationship the K.P.S. has in the community with Treaty Three and asked how the O.P.P. will address working together with the First Nations community. Commissioner Fantino advised they just came from a meeting with the First Nations and the Elders group; and not a first meeting, and he advised they recognize the challenges inherent in Kenora. He suggested the Detachment Commander will have to engage widely in the challenges in the community with respect to homelessness for example, and to continue building trust and relationships, and that these issues will have to be embraced. He noted we are always in learning mode but whatever issues are out there now will be addressed in the future as they will have the experience of the K.P.S. on staff to assist in this regard.

Bill Preisenz asked when the O.P.P. will be vacating the Highway 17A location and Commissioner Fantino advised the schedule is that the new ID Unit will be under construction in 2010 and renovations will be made to the Water Street location in 2 to 3 years at which time they will be able to move.

On behalf of Council, Mayor Compton thanked Commissioner Fantino for attending and the meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.