




HAMILTON POLICE SERVICE

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Hamilton Police Service Board
BOARD MEETING DATE:	September 26, 2024
SUBJECT:	Hiring of Additional Full-Time Special Constables
REPORT NUMBER:	24-088
SUBMITTED BY:	Frank Bergen, Chief of Police
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

That the Hamilton Police Service Board (Board) approve the hiring of 16 full-time Special Constables of the Hamilton Police Service (HPS).

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: The proposed hiring will result in an increase of \$463,216 or 0.22% to the 2025 budget. This increase is inclusive of salaries and benefits with a September 1, 2025 deployment date.

Staffing: The authorized Civilian staffing would increase by 16 full-time Special Constables.

Legal Implications: N/A

INFORMATION

On April 1, 2024, the Community Safety and Policing Act (CSPA) came into effect. The provisions of this act allow for Special Constables to be designated with additional powers and authorities than they were previously permitted. The Special Constables can now exercise duties under the Highway Traffic Act s. 134, Liquor Licence and Control Act, Trespass to Property Act and provide custodial care under the Mental Health Act. In addition, Special Constables can now be used to provide security at crime scenes, assist with road closures, transport property, collect, tag and process lost/found property, controlled substances and weapons, provide a visible presence in the community and assist with other administrative tasks as directed.

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Since January 2024, the HPS has been running a pilot program titled “180 Wagon” whereby Special Constables have been employed to perform some of the above noted tasks associated to the CSPA. Data validates that their work has eased the pressures on frontline patrol officers which in turn has allowed those officers to focus on their core policing tasks and ultimately the provision of public safety. To date, the pilot has diverted a total of 805 events, totaling an estimated 2,172 hours of work away from the frontline Constables.

The HPS is required to provide court security at the three Hamilton Courthouses – John Sopinka Courthouse, Unified Family Courts and Provincial Offences Act Court. HPS has an authorized strength of 41 Special Constables, however, 5 of these Members are off on WSIB. We further employ 3 Special Constable Supervisors and 44 part-time Members to service the demands of courts and custody. In addition to providing security at these locations, Special Constables are also responsible for prisoner transportation and prisoner movement throughout the courthouses.

The Province currently provides funding to assist municipalities in offsetting their costs of providing court security and prisoner transportation (CSPT) services in their jurisdictions. A maximum of \$125 million is designated toward the CSPT program. The funding is allocated based on each municipality’s relative share of the total CSPT costs incurred in the prior year. For 2023, the Service’s CSPT related costs totaled \$7.59M. For 2024, HPS will receive \$4.88M in funding from the province under the CSPT program, representing a recovery of 64.3% of the 2023 costs.

Funding under this program is contingent on HPS continuing to meet the CSPT service obligations required by the Province. Hamilton is the regional hub for the Central-West Region and John Sopinka Courthouse has become the location of choice for many high profile and high security trials. These added trials have put a heavy burden on the court staff and require extra Special Constables to be deployed for the safety and security of the public, Judiciary and Members of our Service, resulting in HPS running at well above the authorized strength of 41 Special Constables. Historically, staffing the courts required approximately a total of 74,880 hours per year (35.9 FTE). These trial pressures have increased the staffing requirements in the past 12 months to 122,502 hours (58.7 FTE), a 64% increase. An investment in additional Special Constables will right size the current workforce to ensure that the HPS has the human resources necessary to continue to provide these services without interruption, and offset our overtime demands.

Furthermore, the annual salary and benefits costs for additional Special Constables will increase the amount reported to the province annually for CSPT funding consideration. An increase in HPS costs may result in higher funding that may potentially offset the cost of the additional Special Constables hires.

To alleviate the strain on the current full-time Special Constables workforce, the HPS utilizes part-time Special Constables. Currently there are 44 part-time Special Constables. These part-time Members are subject to the maximum number of hours allowed under the Civilian Collective Agreement (112 per month), which are routinely reached. Once this threshold is

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reached, it results in call-in or overtime hours for both part-time and full-time Members, contributing to higher overall overtime costs. In the past 12 months, part-time labour has been used to service 49% of the total hours required for court security, reducing the need for overtime to cover full-time employee absences such as sick and vacation.

All the above factors create a need for additional full-time Special Constables. It is recommended that 16 part-time Members are converted into full-time Members, which will provide a better operational split of full-time versus part-time labour, increasing the percentage of HPS' Special Constable full-time headcount from 48% to 67%. Converting 16 part-time Members into full-time Members will improve retention and security, thus lowering costs associated with recruiting and training new Members.

By approving these additional 16 full-time Members it will allow the Service to right size its complement of Special Constables. It further supports the expectations and expanded powers provided to our Special Constables under the newly implemented CSPA and increases our ability to provide public safety to the City of Hamilton.

FB/M. Spencer

- c: R. Diodati, Deputy Chief – Operations
- P. Hamilton, Deputy Chief – Support
- M. Spencer, Superintendent – Field Support
- S. Dzaferi, Director – Finance
- R. Ballantyne, Director – Human Resources

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