

Shelburne Police Service provides annual report to Council

Written By **PETER RICHARDSON**

This week's Council Meeting, saw the Shelburne Police Services present their 2018 Annual Report.

The public meeting was held in Grace Tipling Hall and, like most others, was poorly attended, with perhaps thirty people in attendance. This would either indicate a general lack of interest in the report, or a complacency amongst residents as to the police force, as it is well known to be excellent at it's job.

Nevertheless, more interest could have been shown for the effort that goes into policing Shelburne and for the work preparing the report. Chief Kent Moore and Sergeants, Mark Bennett and Paul Neumann represented the force and presented the data in a concise and informative format.

The force, has served Shelburne since 1879 and is currently comprised of 15 sworn officers, two civilians, one special constable and five auxiliary constables. They have three marked cruisers, one unmarked cruiser, one Automated Licence Plate Reader cruiser and a bicycle. The force is dispatched from the Orangeville Police Service headquarters.

During 2018, the force's auxiliary constables contributed almost 1,000 hours to the community. The current ratio of officers to population, is one for every 600 civilians.

Since 2014, calls for service have risen 36 percent, from 4,648 in 2014, to 6,352 in 2018, while the number of charges laid has increased from 264 in 2014 to 499 in 2018 or 89 percent, showing the tremendous increase in police efficiency that has occurred in only four years.

Since 2016, violent crimes in Shelburne have risen 14.9 percent, however the clearance rate for the force is the highest in Ontario, at 93.3 percent. The clearance rate for property crimes in Shelburne sits at 52.3 percent. Clearance rates for other crimes, such as bail violations or indecent acts is 86.4 percent while illegal drug offences are currently 100 percent cleared.

Since 2014, Provincial Charges have risen by 67.2 percent. These include Highway Traffic Act and Liquor Licence Act charges and speak to the forces diligence in these areas as well.

Across the province, Shelburne rates well in comparison to other forces. They are 32 out of 53 in the crime severity index, 44 out of 53 in the non-violent crime severity index, 47 of 53 in criminal code offences per officer and first of 53 in the weighted clearance rate ranking.

In the 2016 Community Engagement Survey, of approximately 300 respondents, 97 percent felt reasonably to very safe in their neighbourhoods. The public identified Community Watch, Drug Enforcement, Youth Crime , Frauds and Scams, Foot Patrols and Bicycle patrols as their main priorities.

The Shelburne Police Services provides these services to the Town: 24 Hour Police Protection, Freedom of Information, ViClas, Major Case Management, Sex Offender Registry, Impaired Driving Initiatives, Increased Traffic Management and Enforcement, Community Service, Bicycle Unit, Community Foot Patrols, Community Liaison with local Schools, Drug Abuse Resistance Education, Participation in Various Community Committees, such as DART Domestic Assault Review Team.

The SPS officers also took part in numerous courses, symposiums and conferences in 2018, including basic recruit training, domestic violence, use of force and standard field sobriety testing to name a few.

The SPS participated in the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics and the PolarPlunge for Special Olympics in 2018

and raised a total of \$32,500 for the cause. Since 2011 they have raised in excess of \$120,000 and received the award for the highest gross revenue increases in the province, from the Special Olympics. In addition, they have various community initiatives, such as Lock It or Lose It, for vehicle safety, Canada Day Bike Give Away, Stuff-a-Cruiser, D.A.R.E. and Educational talks on Bullying, Internet Safety, Youth and the Law and others. They have also done over 200 on duty R.I.D.E hours in 2018.

Following the presentation, there was a Q&A session which raised some interesting perspectives. Deputy Mayor Anderson was concerned that the increase in crime rates was not solely due to the Town's growth, to which the panel replied that no, it was part growth related and part crimes of opportunity. Chief Moore Pointed out that the recent outbreak of break and enter crimes to vehicles, for instance, was traced back to culprits from Peel Region and not Shelburnites.

The subject of response times was raised, and Sgt. Bennett responded that the average response was 7 to 8 minutes from time of call. He also pointed out that it also would depend upon officer availability and priority rating, of the call. When asked if Shelburne officers were ever out of town assisting other forces, the Chief replied yes definitely. The most recent occurrence being an accident near the Golf course, that they responded too on behalf of the OPP. He went on to say that the OPP often helps Shelburne and vice versa.

Mayor Mills asked how many officers were on duty in an average shift, to which Sgt. Bennett replied regularly, less than two. A usual shift consists of one sergeant and two constables. Councillor Benotto asked if officers were taken off shift for court duties, to which the reply was yes, the investigating officer would be in court. However, Special Constable Kerr frequently handled all of the preparatory work so as to minimize that absence from the field. Walter's question was sparked by the fact that the OPP have a dedicated officer for court duties. Walter also reiterated, for clarification, that Shelburne did not have a policing problem, but rather an accommodation issue and budgetary restrictions.

The presentation ended, with some apparent confusion on the part of one resident concerning the promotion and details of subsequent public meeting concerning the police issue. The inference was that the Mayor and Council were trying to withhold information to further some sort of agenda. Deputy Mayor Anderson was quick to state that there should be no insinuation of such a situation, as Council and Town Staff were diligent in advertising these meetings and what they were concerning. Mayor Mills asserted that no such situation existed and that all public meetings were advertised in the newspaper and on the internet. None of these meetings are mandatory, however Staff make every attempt to publicize them as best they can. Resident, Bella Carter, supported this assertion, saying that even without a computer, she was able to find out about all of these meetings without any problems. At this point, the session was adjourned and business returned to the regular Council meeting, in Chambers.

The first item on the agenda for Council, was the issue of the sewage plant odours of recent weeks. Director of Development and Operations, Jim Moss explained the issue and how much longer it might last. Approximately 8 to 9 weeks ago, one of two major pieces of equipment, called a clarifier had to be replaced and had only just been brought back on line. During its absence, the remaining one became overloaded and sewage was diverted into the lagoons, until it could be processed. The single clarifier filled with sludge, during this time, also. In addition, the bio-solids which are usually removed from the plant and spread on farm fields could not be, due to the excessive wet weather making the field too wet to drive in. In combination with the recent easterly winds, this all added up to a lot of odour emanating from the plant. Jim assured Council that things were beginning to balance now and once the bio-solids could be removed, in the next two weeks, the problem should be remedied. This is going to be an ongoing problem, however, as upgrading the sewage plant is one of the infrastructure problems that faces Council in the immediate future. Residents who are wanting to keep the SPS might want to consider how they might endure frequent emanations of sewage odours if the plant remains untouched.

Deputy Mayor Anderson brought up the issue of sidewalks along CR 124 in front of the proposed Fieldgate development, behind Tim Horton's. Town Planner Steve Wever said that they were proposed to be built on the East side of 124 from the Besely Drain South to Highway 89, but there were to be none on the West side of 124. Steve said it had been discussed with the County, but that there was really no room for sidewalks on the West. Steve then asked if trees could be planted to mitigate snow blowing across 124. Steve again pointed out the lack of room on the West side. Walter stated that the NVCA often planted trees on private property and could this be a solution? Steve said he would discuss it with the County. On a related note, Fieldgate has announced that it hoped to

have the commercial side of the development open by 2021 and the residences by the following year.

Steve Wever then reported on the progress of the new development, discussed at the last Council meeting, at Col. Phillips Drive and Hwy 10 in the Northwest of town. He stated that the site plan had gone to the MTO, for approval and that once approved, a permit could be granted to start site work for the new Tim Horton's and the other commercial buildings proposed. It is the developers wish to have the Tim Horton's completed later this year. At this point, Councillor Fegen brought up the issue of trucks stopping along Hwy.10 to go to Tim Horton's, again. Steve responded that really the only solution to this possibility would be police enforcement of the No Parking laws. Mr. Wever then requested that Council accept his report and pass the necessary By-laws to allow the project to proceed to the next phase of development, once MTO approvals were received. This was done.

Next up, the Treasurer presented her Quarterly Financial Report. As of the end of March, everything was in line with the Budget expectations. She outlined five important financial events that have occurred since passing the budget, starting with the loss of the \$1,516, 484 OCIF Top UP Funding, thanks to the Province cancelling the programme. This was to have been used for the Well #3 Arsenic Project. In return, the Town received a one time unconditional funding of \$546, 666 which will be used to offset the costs of Arsenic mitigation in Well #3. Next, it was confirmed that OMPF funding would be received in the Amount of \$435,700 and then announcement that the Federal Gas Tax Dollars for 2019 would amount to \$186,200. Finally, the Provincial Budget announced that the Connecting Link Grant would again be available for 2019. Staff will apply for the grant, which has been unsuccessfully applied for in both 2017 and 2018. If the Town is successful this time the money will be used to repair the connecting link roadways. If refused again, Ms. Holmes said that the gas tax dollars would be allocated to repairing potholes on the connecting link.

Carey then went on, to report the purchasing of the soccer barrier nets requested by the soccer club, to prevent errant soccer balls from entering the sewage lagoons. The cost, of #3,355.50 plus installation, will be charged to the General Operating Budget of Parks and Recreation.

In other business, Council granted a temporary business licence to sell fireworks, to Debbie Tyityan, upon approval from an inspection by the fire chief , Brad Lemaich. They agreed to study a proposal from Melancthon, concerning new Provincial changes to the Police services Act and approved the use of Grace Tipling Hall by the Library for the Grand Finale of Dufferin Reads. Finally, the subject of beer gardens for both the Legion and The Muskies Hockey Club were debated. The Legion requested they be allowed to have a Beer garden, in their north parking lot during the Street Festival. Council, in previous years had refused this request and were prone to doing so again, however Councillors Fegen and Wegener argued that due to the insurance issue, numerous vendors had not yet committed to taking part in Street Festival and that perhaps this would be one way to encourage Festival participation. In the end, permission was granted conditional on Police and Fire approval and proper insurance, which also would indemnify the Town. The Muskies, wanted their Beer Garden to be a part of their Three Pitch Baseball Tournament on June 1st at Hyland Park. Deputy MayorAnderson wondered how Council could get feed back on how these events affected the community around them, in general. He wondered if there was an increased police presence required or if there were other complaints with public drinking in the park. His concerns, were driven by the issue of liability for the Town. Councillor Benotto replied that in all the years that the Muskies have had a Beer Garden, there has never been an issue and Mayor Mills opined that they would probably tailgate out of their cars if a regulated space did not exist . In the end, Council approved the request pending all the necessary insurance and permits being in place.

I discussion after the meeting, Mayor Wade Mills reiterated that the Town had no problem with the level of policing that it received, but that it was both a financial and accommodation issue that prompted looking at the OPP option. He felt that the Annual Report had been excellent and the turnout was about what he had expected. He felt that the force was a known entity to the townsfolk and hence they felt no need to attend. He went on to say that the next step would be the June 3rd meeting at the CDRC, where the consultants report would be presented and that he expected a bigger crowd at that meeting. Following that, June10th would see the staff report on his motion to relook at the possibility of renovating the current station as well as the town engineers report on the costs of upgrading the sewage treatment plant. He expected, that the low end of this would be over \$15 million.