

Impacts of Orangeville transitioning to OPP could burden Shelburne Police

Written By PETER RICHARDSON

The spectre of rising policing costs in Shelburne was once more placed before Council this past Monday evening.

Following an in-camera discussion with Shelburne's police chief Kent Moore, at their Dec. 17 Police Services Board meeting, the Board Chair, Mike Fazackerley moved a motion asking Council to outline how several time sensitive matters, affecting adequate policing in Shelburne, following the imminent disbanding of the Orangeville Police Service, are to be resolved.

With the cessation of OPS services, Shelburne is now faced with several new costs and responsibilities going forward. In the motion from the SPSB, Council was asked to respond to concerns surrounding the following issues - existing police station deficiencies, supervision, provision for court duties, WASH court, prisoner guarding and transportation and dispatch services. All of these are currently handled by OPS to either some degree, or in total.

Council was, of course, aware of the police station issue and of the matter of dispatch services, however the rest were new concerns. Since the OPP are not mandated to supply dispatch services to other first responders, this service, which was supplied to both Shelburne Fire and Police by OPS, must now be resourced elsewhere. Preliminary review of possible suppliers have indicated that this service will increase in cost, potentially, by more than double. In 2019, Shelburne paid \$65,184 for its dispatching services through OPS.

However, there is more to this change than just suppliers. It is possible that all the equipment in Shelburne will also have to be replaced to keep up with new technologies. This would include radios, the repeater station and possibly more. Currently all researched sources are using digital equipment over analog. The closest source to Shelburne, appears to be Owen Sound, though Fire Chief Brad Lemaich has indicated that Tillsonburg could supply dispatch for the Fire Department.

The matter of court duties and responsibilities also presents some difficult problems for Council. Presently, Shelburne has one officer on duty in POA and other cases in Orangeville Court, weekly. The rest of the week, these matters were being handled by an Orangeville officer. It will now require that a Shelburne officer be in attendance, possibly five days a week during court sessions, to handle Shelburne cases.

It is also mandated that anyone arrested, must face a Justice within 24 hours for a bail hearing, or request. To facilitate this, over weekends and holidays, the WASH court system was put in place. WASH stands for Weekend And Statutory Holidays and is operated in selected areas of the province, to accommodate the mandate. Currently, there is a WASH court in Brampton, which Shelburne uses.

The problem is that it is held on weekends and a minimum of two officers are required to transport a prisoner to and potentially from, court. In the past, Shelburne could double up with Orangeville to meet this requirement, but with OPS disbanding, the total responsibility now will fall to SPS to accommodate. To do so raises the issues of man power and overtime pay.

More officers or special constables would need to be hired for court duties in order to avoid at least some overtime.

It would also require some staff redundancy in order to accommodate vacation time and possible sick days for the new officer(s).

Supervision is also a matter of the law. A senior officer must be available 24/7 to support front line officers, in the performance of their duties. Shelburne does not have the available manpower to do this without placing either the Chief or one of it's sergeants on call. In the past the problem was handled by using the OPS duty sergeant, when Shelburne officers were not available. This service will no longer be available, which will result in a manpower shortage of senior supervisory officers.

As for the police station renovations, although already planned by Council, the time frame for completion has now become an issue as has, the possible size of the new space with the potential increase in manpower and resources suggested by the request from the Police services Board. The Board requested that Council provide it with the answers before it's next scheduled meeting, which predates the next Council meeting, so Mayor Mills, presented a motion to request Staff to research answers to the questions presented and to report back to Council at a special meeting this coming Monday, January 20th, with their findings and recommendations.

Council heard a presentation from Mr. Robert Bingham of Community Services Dufferin, concerning the old Public Works Yard at 420 Victoria Street. CSD is an organization, established in 1954, that provides support for children with intellectual disabilities, within their local communities. It has been serving the area for over 65 years. CLD has 170 full, part time and relief workers on payroll and operates it's own housing corporation, which currently owns 9 of it's 13 group homes. They operate the food concessions at Tony Rose and Alder Street arenas, as well as concessions in the Dufferin County Building and at Georgian College. In the 13 group homes, located in Mono, East Garafraxa and Orangeville, there are currently 55 residents living in and participating in their communities. CLD also supports 23 people living independently in their home community and off a Family Home Programme to support families open to welcoming a person with an intellectual disability into their home. They also run a day programme from their East Garafraxa location and will soon expand it to include weekends. Upwards of 80 people a week participate in community activities through this programme.

What the CLD wants in Shelburne, is to expand their services to include the Town by purchasing the property at 420 Victoria Street, to build a new group home and to further expand their programmes and services to the area. Robert was adamant that they were not looking for special favours of services and intended to pay fair market value for the property. To this end, a local real estate broker has been retained to assist in establishing that value. As part of the community, CLD brings a host of benefits with it. They hire locally, they support local tradesmen and businesses and they support and work in the community for the betterment of all concerned. The first phase would be to build a semi-detached bungalow to support 10 people with intellectual disabilities. Each side of the semi would support 4 individuals on the main floor and one person with more independent skills in a self contained walk out basement apartment. Money permitting, a second story of offices could be added to be rented to NFP's such as Family Transition Place or DCAFS. The home will provide approximately 32 full time positions with wages between \$19.00 and \$32.00 per hour. Total annual payroll will average about \$2.2 million annually. There would also be summer job opportunities as well.

In all, this would be an incredible opportunity for Shelburne, it's residents and businesses and of course those who would be able to avail themselves of the services provided.

In other business, Council read their new Public Nuisance By-Law, which will now go to the Ministry for approval and recommendations before becoming official in four to six months. This comprehensive undertaking, covers everything from loitering to busking and all things in between and will allow police and by-law officers to lay charges and levy fines. Currently, police had to rely on the courts to deal with these infractions. Council also authorized it's annual by-law to authorize the Town to borrow monies from RBC to facilitate bill payments in the event of taxes not being available at the time of payment. The treasurer pointed out that this was a required formality and that in her tenure, the loan authorization had never been used. Councillor Benotto stated that in all his years on Council it had never been required for that matter.