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Export date: Fri Oct 30 0:06:26 2026 / +0000 GMT

OPP delivers costing proposal, first year costs to hit $3.2 million

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Council convened Monday evening to hear the new OPP Costing for providing policing services to the Town of Shelburne.

However, prior to hearing the costing Mayor Wade Mills addressed a few words towards the tiny but vocal minority of residents who have taken to social media to generally malign and spread misinformation about the process and the reasons for it. Although he believes that many residents are simply looking to broaden their understanding of the process and the potential results, he stated that some are simply choosing to ignore the facts and although everyone is entitled to their own opinion, they are not entitled to their own set of facts. To that end, the mayor took a moment to outline the facts, that brought Council to it's decision to request a second costing process.

This Council, was elected in the middle of the first OPP costing, and, given the facts that they were given at that time, they considered their options and formulated their decision. At that time the primary consideration for receiving a costing was the need to provide new housing for the Shelburne Police Service. The Council decided that it could augment the accommodations by renovations and that although neither a perfect nor long-term solution, it would allow the Town to retain the SPS.

It would, however push the Town to it's financial limits and minimize it's ability to borrow money, as well as go against the recommendations of Town staff, in regards being able to meet future fiscal issues.

Then, in December of 2019, Orangeville Council voted to disband the Orangeville Police Service and move into a contract with the OPP for policing services. At this time, several new pieces of information were presented to Shelburne Council. The loss of the OPS presented three issues for Shelburne. First, was a doubling of the cost for dispatch services, which had previously been handled by Orangeville. Second was the need for significant supervisory staff requirements, and thirdly it eliminated any ability to share policing services in the future. Due to this new information and a dramatic increase in annual policing costs, it was incumbent on Council to re-evaluate it's previous decision. Council was not being underhanded, nor wishy washy, it was rather, being fiscally and morally responsive and responsible to the taxpayers of Shelburne.

Sergeant Ken Kees led the OPP delegation and began by outlining that the format would be the same as the previous costing. There would be no comparison with the Shelburne Police Service, with whom the OPP have a good working relationship. He outlined that the report would cover several areas - provincial support, regional support, services provided by the Dufferin detachment, OPP accountability and reporting, the transition contract and the costs of policing. The OPP currently police 326 of Ontario's 444 municipalities, on a cost recovery basis. They have been policing Ontario communities since the 1940's and employ over 8,900 personnel.

Sergeant Kees went on to emphasize that although the OPP is large, those members who police Shelburne will continue to provide services that cater to the needs and the people of the community. He outlined a large number of provincially and regionally managed services available to Shelburne and highlighted some of the specialist services that come with the OPP policing services. These included, canine units, emergency response teams, tactical units, incident commanders and forensic identification services.

In addition, the OPP are a turn key service, they provide all the requirements of policing thus leaving staff more time to handle projects and priorities for the people within the town. The OPP are also, accepting of all liabilities associated with policing the community. This in itself, potentially saves the Town thousands of dollars and all the headaches of dealing with a police generated incident.Also dispatch, media services, community policing and criminal investigation are all handled by the Regional Headquarters in Orillia.

Staff Sergeant Nicol Randall, commander of the Dufferin OPP, next addressed Council about her detachment and it's services. Located at Primrose, this is where the Shelburne OPP would be headquartered. Randall is a 25 year veteran of the OPP. In

conjunction with the Shelburne Police Services Board, she will direct the policing in Shelburne.

There will be 24/7 coverage for the five zones within Dufferin detachment, with Shelburne classified as it's own zone. As a result, there will be three constables and a sergeant assigned to Shelburne.

Community policing plays a big part in the OPP approach to policing. Consequently, the local Police Services Board is an integral part of how the OPP will police Shelburne. The priorities, objectives and policies of the PSB will guide the OPP approach to the Town. The OPP have a number of programs to help interact with the community and to provide instructional assistance to schools and organizations.Community presentations can be made on such subjects as elder abuse prevention, drugs, internet safety and bullying, as well as displays at community events.

The OPP reports that 97.7 percent of respondents to a poll felt safe or very safe with the OPP Dufferin Detachment and 92.2 percent felt very satisfied or satisfied with the OPP's ability to work with communities to solve local problems.

Sergeant Kee explained why there is a transition contract for the first 3-plus years of the partnership. Firstly, it is provincially mandated, secondly it allows the OPP to collect relevant data for the policing requirements of a new municipality and finally it is required by the Ontario Civilian Police Commission, in order to establish that adequate policing is provided for the town and that police services personnel are treated in an equitable manner.

The Transition Contract is based upon FTE, or full-time equivalent calculations, with one FTE equalling 1,417 annual hours, either uniform of civilian personnel. These are the boots on the ground hours involved in active policing duties.Following this the Town will move to the OPP Billing Model, comprising Base Service, Calls for Service and other costs.

The costs presented for the transition, which included start up costs, a one time only expense, amounted to, an estimated $3.2 million. This number was derived from the total salaries and benefits of $2,65 million plus the other direct operating expenses of $229,630 and the initial start up costs of $417,913, less a one year adjustment of $29,610 for uniforms and equipment.

Following the presentation, Council had a few questions. Coun. Walter Benotto asked if accommodation could be made for senior citizens who do not drive and would have a hard time traveling to Primrose. Sergeant Kee stated that a satellite office could be opened in town, at the town's expense, for this purpose. Walter then asked about the one required civilian employee and whether or not they would come from Shelburne. The answer to this was yes, they would be a local employee.

Mayor Mills asked if regular beat patrols and officers in the schools would be accommodated through the regular base service ,and was assured by Staff Sergeant Randall that this was indeed the case and was considered to be normal policing activities. Coun. Lynda Buffett asked about officers at events, such as parades and whether or not the town would be billed for their service. It was explained that given enough notice and provided there was availability the Town would not, necessarily, be billed extra. CAO Denyse Morrissey interjected that currently, when Shelburne officers are required at such events, they are generally paid duty officers and the event organizers are billed for their services. Staff Sergeant Randall mentioned that these types of duties could also be handled by the OPP Auxilary Force, now available in Primrose.

The CAO also asked about the transition timeline and was told that February of 2021 was the probable date if Shelburne accepts the OPP Costing. Council now has six months,