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Export date: Fri Oct 30 1:42:34 2026 / +0000 GMT

OPP explains its billing model to Shelburne Council, lays out details of provincial contract

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The big news at Council, Monday night, was the presentation by the OPP of their Billing Model, which explained what the Town could expect OPP policing to cost after the initial three year Transition Contract.

Presenter Kenneth Kee, explained, via a very concise audio visual presentation, how the billing model worked and what extras the Town might expect to be billed for over and above their contract.

The Billing Model is composed of two parts, the Base Service and the Calls for Service. Base service is comprised of all legislated activities, such as crime prevention, officer availability to respond to emergency calls, 24/7 coverage, general and directed patrols, victim assistance etc. It covers proactive policing, such as R.I.D.E., traffic safety, community policing and intelligence gathering, officer training and administrative duties and all Inspector and Staff Sergeant positions.

Calls for Service billing is related to crime calls, assaults, break and enters, mischief, drug offences etc. Provincial Statutes such as the Mental Health Act, Trespass to Property Act or landlord and tenant disputes, motor vehicle collisions as well as general calls for false alarms, lost property, or missing persons are also included.

It does not include incidents normally generated through proactive policing. All Calls for Service are billed according to a municipalities actual usage level, while Base Service is allocated on an equal, per property basis.

Additional Costs are billed on their specific usage and include things such as overtime, court security, cleaning/ caretakers, accommodations, enhancements to the contract and prisoner transportation.

These costs as the name implies, are billed over and above the other two components, while prisoner transportation is billed to all municipalities on an equal per property basis. The OPP define a property, as any household, commercial or industrial property and the numbers are updated annually, using MPAC data. This is the same data used in the calculation of municipal taxes.

In order to equalize the possible highs and lows of Calls for Service, the OPP uses a four year average to calculate what each municipality pays. This limits the volatility factor to an average as opposed to a year by year calculation.

According to Mayor Wade Mills, currently, Shelburne Police costs approximately $800 per property in Shelburne. Under the OPP billing model, that cost would be lowered to less than half of that amount, based on a comparison with communities of both similar size and population to Shelburne. It was revealed that the average household province-wide serviced by the OPP pays $359 per year. This obviously would not include any additional cost, as was described earlier, however, some of those do not apply to Shelburne, such as Court Security, as there is no courthouse in Town. At this juncture, there also do not appear to be any Enhancements likely to be required by the Town either, although that will not be determined until the final contract is played out.

There were several questions presented by Council, following the presentation concerning foot patrols, officers in schools and traffic officers. The reply was that all mom these services are supplied as part of the Base Service and are considered normal police duties. The exception, would be if the Town required an officer to work, for instance, in the high school, full time every shift. This would constitute an Enhancement and would be an extra expense to the contract. The point was raised about how officers would be assigned and Staff Sergeant Randall explained that the officers may choose whether to be assigned to Shelburne exclusively or not. She said that some officers from her Detachment prefer to spend, perhaps, a month in each of the four existing zones, so as to better meet and understand the broader community which they police. She also added that officers could opt to leave their zone, temporarily, to assist in foot patrols in Shelburne, to gain experience in such patrolling methods. As it's own Zone, Shelburne would be allocated full time officers at all times.

In later discussions, it was brought up that even though they are assigned to Zone 4, which is Shelburne, officers could still be called away to a larger emergency. This fact was covered in the initial costing presentation and it was explained that other officers would be relocated to the Town to cover the absence. It should be noted here, that there have been occasions when even the Shelburne Police has not been in Town, at all, due to their presence being required to police an emergency elsewhere. Such occurrences are rare and certainly not the norm for any police service, including the OPP.

Overall, Monday was an excellent presentation and answered a lot of questions. Certainly not all, but definitely ,the financial and policing standards, ones. Anyone wishing to ask questions of the OPP are invited to attend a Public Meeting, in Grace Tipling Hall on April 3rd at 7:00 pm. The OPP will be in attendance and Mayor Mills will moderate the discussion. Anyone is free to ask whatever questions they may have, or express their concerns, as long as they are relevant and presented in a civil manner.

For further information concerning Municipal Policing and a municipality by municipality breakdown of OPP policing cost, you may go to the OPP website at www,opp.ca/billingmodel.