

# **Final Report to the Mass Casualty Commission**

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**RCMP Veterans Association NS**

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## **Introduction**

The RCMP veterans have 900 members of the association in Nova Scotia and many more living here that we served. We are a supportive group of those veterans and serving members of the RCMP and their families.

Our purpose on the Mass Casualty Commission (MCC) has always been to explain to the Commission and the public how this mass casualty event has affected veterans, members and families so negatively not only here in Nova Scotia but across the country.

We recognize that the RCMP made mistakes as would any other police force in Canada and that was stated by Superintendent Wallace Gossan (York regional), very clearly when he said there is no police agency in Canada that would have got it right, not one. He said this type of event has never happened before or a suspect had so many crime scenes and moved in such a fashion over such a vast space. This was a brand-new scenario that police have never dealt with before.

We recognize that the working with the media needs to be improved. There was so much misinformation created, which has led to a great deal of undue mistrust and astonishing negativity toward the RCMP. This has hurt those who have served a great deal not only emotionally but also mentally and physically.

The Commission has been very clear that the process is not supposed to cause more harm to those involved.

The RCMP were directly involved yet they have been treated as not even being human beings by most of the media and even many of the lawyers' representing families in the Commission as well as by the public and even by other police agencies in the province.

Much of the media allowed and even created conspiracy theories and promoted such misinformation and continues to do so and does not report the facts that show there is misinformation, and they do not correct anything they find to be false that they previously reported.

Many lawyers appearing at the MCC have blamed the RCMP for having inadequate resources available in the first instance response. This is true, but the cause was that neither Colchester nor the province selected/funded sufficient resources. If Colchester resourced to the Canadian average, 67 officers would have been provided by the municipality resulting in a first response of

9 - 13 officers (greatly improving ability to respond quicker, establish a cordon, and interdict the Gunman). The RCMP were provided with 28 patrol officers by Colchester resulting in 4 officers available to interdict the Gunman within no more than 20-minutes after their arrival, a practical impossibility. Providing 28 patrol officers to respond to 36,500 residents distributed over a landmass of 3600 square kilometres is inexcusable if not negligent. This under resourcing is 60% less than the Canadian average. Why did the municipality and the province believe this was adequate, effective or efficient (NS Police Act)? The RCMP were communicating this issue as early as 2009. It was not municipal wealth; Colchester had an accumulated surplus of \$100 million at the time of the tragedy. (The NS RCMP Veterans' Association has provided detailed and factual data on this inadequacy via reports to the Commission, yet this key element of an effective response has been ignored by Commission Counsel).

Of all people the lawyers should know that inquiries are not to lay blame but to find better ways to deal with such events. It is clear some of these lawyers have a different agenda of which is to pursue civil legal actions and not to meet the purpose of the Commission.

Municipal police are acting like a shark who smells blood in the water. They see this negative response to the RCMP as a means for them to take over all policing in the province. Build their empires. The facts surrounding this can be found in COMM0000392 on A Safer Nova Scotia written by Nova Scotia chiefs and then recently voting the RCMP off the Nova Scotia Chiefs of Police Association. There are many other examples. There is evidence given by many of the police agencies to the Commission that state that they could have done a much better job than the RCMP did, yet the facts show that those agencies do not have the expertise, the equipment, the training or the authority to conduct such complicated investigations. They do not have the capacity to back fill and relieve officers on such a complicated case where the RCMP brought in 400 members to do just that from across the country.

The public have not been educated on policing in Nova Scotia by the media. This leaves either a void of any knowledge or with completely tainted misinformation about policing issues and how it is set up in Nova Scotia. Very few of the public have any understanding of policing in Nova Scotia.

The situation is so bad for the RCMP that they are being spit on by members of the public since this has happened. Their family members are shunned in the community and even called out by the public in schools grocery stores etc. It is so bad in some areas of the province that the serving member must escort their family for daily needs like grocery shopping. This is fundamentally legally and ethically wrong to treat other Canadians in this manner.

In recent public meetings in Cumberland County on policing most citizens want to see officers and have easy and ready access to the police service. The public want more service but has not been educated by the Province or Municipality on how policing is resourced, governed, and organized in NS. Indeed, if Cumberland County resourced policing at the same rate as Amherst or Truro, they would be investing 60% more for policing and receive 60% more police availability and service. There is a theme in this province that many municipalities using the RCMP through the Province's scheme are consistently underfunding police services and

ignoring their responsibilities for good governance through an effective police advisory board. Again, since Service Exchange, many county governments have been responsible for adequate, effective and efficient police services, but believe and act that the responsibility is not theirs. We are very concerned that all of this may get missed in the recommendations from the Commission.

The above issues are part of our concerns with respect to the Commission and what recommendations will come.

We as veterans want to see change not only in the RCMP, but also in finding a policing model that this province can afford. A policing model that will make Nova Scotians feel safe. One that provides a new path forward not looking at the past or old ideas. One that ensures we have the multifaceted expertise, specialized sections, capacity to move forward with the ever-changing technology, legal issues, society changes, court demands and have the capacity to handle major events by drawing upon national resources to backfill and assist.

### **Move to a national standard model such as Quebec's**

In referring to a national model of policing we recognize that a true national policing model would require a change to the constitution which currently give policing to the provinces. This is or could be a long-term goal for the future.

What we are referring to is a model such as in Quebec which they call a national model, but it really is a provincial model. The Quebec model does mirror many other national policing models around the world, but it is a provincial model.

The research done by many PhD's and others on moving to national standards and forces, is strong yet the argument for fracturing the system with multiple agencies is very hard to make a case for.

Multiple small agencies all without the ability to conduct high level investigations and muster up the expertise and special sections and equipment is impossible. Even when they talk of sharing resources it falls flat because what they are talking about there is standardization. This can be done with the current provincial policing contract with the RCMP with some minor changes such as adopt the RCMP standards as provincial standards, Hold all agencies accountable to those. Keep the RCMP and properly resource them and then figure out what to do with the very small agencies. Also have the RCMP provide the experts, specialized services and sections to all municipalities to prevent duplication of these costly and high requirements for training and equipment.

In the case of Netherlands and Scotland there have been growing pains in the transition from several agencies to a national one. Over the years since 2013 when they nationalized, they have made many changes to meet the requests of the communities and improve the policing. They are still and always will be working on issues to improve the national model. Overall, they know it was the right thing to do and it solved many issues such as sustainability of the police, having recognized that the small police forces were not sustainable. There are cost savings they made by nationalizing as well as increasing the ability to handle major crimes and specialized

investigations and buy the much-needed specialized equipment that police need today to fight the ever-changing types of crime.

New Zealand was different and had fewer issues. Canada already has a national police force that contracts services out to provinces and municipalities so the change if any to a national police force or at the very least to an expanded provincial police force in NS would be pretty much seamless once the contract was ironed out to meet the needs of NS and the changes needed in the RCMP structure are made from recommendations from this enquiry.

Some of Scotland's issues were around small villages and towns who were not used to dealing with a large police force. The RCMP have done this role in Canada for 150 years.

Nothing is simple. If we move to a model like Quebec or the Netherlands etc. there will be issues. The path through that is to set up a system that sets goals and desired outcomes, of which are measurable and are measured and analyzed to determine if the outcome was achieved, then the needed adjustments or changes can be identified and made.

This is the path to a new policing model in Nova Scotia. We are already more than halfway there. It will just take courage and insight to push forward to make the change and improve policing in NS for the next generations. The Quebec model gives the pathway.

### **Retirement badges, destruction of old police cars and destruction of all police uniforms including dress uniforms**

The MCC has heard from the round table on this topic and read other submissions on this including from the RCMP Vets.

The solution here for this one-off event where a mad man created a marked police car, a uniform and maybe a badge, is just that, a one off. The odds of this happening again are low as they were very low in the past.

If used the Occupational Health and safety risk assessment system, you would come out with a low risk and need for little change.

There are current laws in place under the Criminal Code of Canada that will meet the needs to prevent this in future.

The key is enforcing existing laws. There are many examples of laws not enforced in Nova Scotia right now, i.e. Bicycle helmet laws not enforced, blue lights displayed on motorcycles and cars and truck not enforced (this is restricted to police cars only). There are so many more that are not enforced. If enforced maybe, then these issues would be resolved. Creating new ones will just add to the list of laws not enforced.

Cancel culture may be at play here. Canceling things or banning them does not make the changes expected. In almost all cases of banning items once legal, the only people punished are those with those items legally. The criminal (as their name implies) do not follow the laws no matter what they are, new or old.

The next mass casualty has already happened, and it was not done with a marked police car, uniform or badge. It did not even use a gun. They are all different and will be different so banning these things now does not change the fact that mass casualty events will continue no matter what.

The Gunman was a madman who created a replica car, received old uniform, and bought items legally and illegally. Passing a law will not impact anyone intent on this path should they wish to costume themselves as an officer. The Gunman illegally possessed firearms and ammunition - did that stop his charade?

The uniform and badge issue only harm and affect the police who have served their country and makes their service meaningless and a clear message of no one caring about that sacrifice and service. That is all that will change with banning dress uniforms and retirement badges.

In our legal system those who are innocent are to be found guilty of an offence and are not to be punished for an offence if they have not committed one.

In this case banning retirement badges and dress uniforms, is doing just that. And worse it is punishing those who wore that uniform and carried the badge to protect all people in Canada, by now criminalizing those items in the possession of those who wore them and served.

## **Recommendations.**

**Recommend** not to make changes to police badge issuing in retirement. (Retired police are not the problem)

**Recommend** not to remove the use or ownership of police dress uniforms. (Dress uniforms are not daily working uniforms and reserved for special events)

**Recommend** not to destroy used police cars and allow the sale of them. (Total waste of taxpayer's money and any one can buy a white car or have a car painted white in the 1000 plus shops in Nova Scotia)

**Recommend** that the provincial DOJ take control of public safety and policing in the province, removing it from the county governments. Ultimately the responsibility of DOJ to do so. This is the only way to raise the level of public safety in the province and to create the ability for all police to begin to work at the same level as the current provincial police which is national.

**Recommend** expanding the RCMP contract to accommodate more officers, specialized sections and equipment to be able to provide those services to municipal agencies free of charge so those municipalities do not have the burden to pay for such services in their own dept, thus decreasing their police budgets and provide all the expertise (just like Quebec).

**Recommend** Nova Scotia adopt a modified Quebec policing model using the RCMP contract to control policing with many changes to the contract to accommodate Nova Scotia's policing

needs. We already have the contract, so we are well on the way to this model. The Quebec model is already in existence in NS now for the most part. What needs to change is recognise that the contracted police force will be the model and provide the experts, special sections and resources to assist municipal police in the province. This will stop the duplication and empire building that prohibits the growth of experts and specialized sections because of the duplication of services which cost millions. Further this model will save millions of equipment and buildings etc. since the RCMP already have these in place but if they leave, these will all be gone. We are already 3/4 of the way into the Quebec model.

**Recommend** the immediate adoption of the RCMP standards which are proven and tested and exist today in the province and should be the provincial standards since the current ones are at such a low level today. This would mirror what Quebec and other national police force countries have. This also makes it seamless and simple for the province to create and put into effect tomorrow if desired.

**Recommend** adding to the RCMP contract that their standards must be reviewed annually to raise the bar but never to dumb down the standards. Also be able to improve the standards by addressing provincial differences, again never dumbing down the standards.

**Recommend** making police training, education the same across the country using something like Quebec where candidates must attend a two- or three-year approved program at a community college or university before attending a police academy.

**Recommend** all police attend a police academy for their final part of training that is based on a national standard (like BC, PEI, Quebec, Depot but all teaching the same material) (removing the cost from the province or municipality)

**Recommend** population based to determination of what a police agency is allowed to have for special sections like Quebec as this removed duplication and reduction in expertise and raising the costs of policing for municipalities.

**Recommend** that the commission not consider the Truro proposed model of several regional police agencies in the province and the RCMP out of contract policing and only doing federal policing. This is not feasible and way beyond the abilities of the province to afford and will create huge duplication of services and costs. (Let's say the province is broken down to six regional police agencies covering the whole province. This would create 6 telecoms sections, six bomb squads, six ERT, six dive teams, no aircraft, six armoured vehicles, six marine sections, and on and on. It would also have to purchase buildings, cars, computers, everything as those items that exist now with the RCMP contract will all be gone.) The total lack of knowledge and experience in rural policing by these municipal agencies that will now take over rural policing.

**Recommend** the province fund a full time RCMP ERT plus a couple of part time ERT that will have member stationed all over the province to be on scene fast anywhere in the province while they wait for the full teams to arrive. This allows for experts on scene to assist and act if required before the full teams arrive.

**Recommend** that the RCMP and CAF have standing agreements for the use of their aircraft for moving the ERT around the province. Until then have an MOU with DNR as a temporary fix to the issue of maintenance grounding aircraft. This was done when the RCMP had SERT (the anti terrorist team now JTF2 in CAF of which RCMP ERT is modeled today) and the SERT team had several CAF Helicopters assigned to them for their use and for training. It could be done then so it can be done now. (This brings to the difference between ERT teams in Canada, the RCMP are JTF2 essentially, yet no other team is close. Special training in the RCMP ERT. Aircraft assault, ship boarding, rappelling from helicopters and speed roping, setting up ambushes, escaping ambushes, rural and forest combat, advanced driving for VIP and special OPS, explosive entries, hostage rescue, to name a few.

**Recommend** a national case management system. PROS is now used by most police including the RCMP nationally (exception as an example are BC and Halifax where RCMP have to use other systems), Halifax chose Versaterm and they need to be on the national system in order to share information of cases and have officer from other parts of Canada work on their files seamlessly. This was also a recommendation of the Homolka inquiry but never implemented fully.

**Recommend** RCMP adopt a more open and transparent relationship with the public. Develop constant dialogue with the media on all major cases and be open with the media and public constantly with timely updates on major investigations

**Recommend** the national standard for incident command be ICS. This system is used throughout Canada, in many organizations including NS EMO. It is used by many police agencies including some RCMP. It needs to be a standard as it is now used worldwide.

**Recommend** that all members in RCMP selected to be incident commanders have the operational background that is up to date and active (including a solid knowledge of special sections such as ERT, Dog, Dive team etc.) to be selected for the role and that they get several levels of the ICS model.

**Recommend** the incident commander practice ICS operations several times a year to be proficient at their role

**Recommend** that the upper management of the RCMP understand their role in ICS and that is to let the incident commanders do their job and upper management is to provide resources requested by ICS commander.

**Recommend** more open and legal information sharing between police and mental health professionals, social workers and intimate partner organizations to prevent those who are deemed risky from acting against others.

**Recommend** the laws change around obtaining search warrants made easier to obtain in cases where violence is the likely result. (Intimate partner abuse cases, track people who commit violent acts, similar to the system in place now that tracks licensed firearms owners which a criminal record check done daily on all 2.3 million firearms owners)

**Recommend** that once the proper capacity of RCMP is met in rural areas the province must properly fund the RCMP contract in order to stop district policing and re-open many of the closed RCMP detachments to meet the community needs.

**Recommend** the RCMP develop more effective accountability standards that are more open, transparent and build public trust. Have an independent review and investigation team to handle internal investigations into complaints of police wrongdoing that is more like many provincial models.

**Recommend** Nova Scotia have one 911 dispatch for the province to better share information and to save costs of small telecoms units that are duplications, (Truro, Cape Breton Regional, HRP etc. it is the same job, but we are paying for three extra comms centres, this money could be better used in the department)

**Recommend** all police enforce existing laws on impersonating police. Currently no one is allowed to display a blue light on vehicle, yet there are hundreds of cars, trucks and motorcycles that have blue lights on them, and the police see them and drive right past ignoring the obvious violation. This is the case with most of the provincial statutes (examples, keep right except to pass, improper lane usage, bicycle helmets, not taking the lane closest to you at an intersection etc. not of these are enforced). If existing laws are enforced, we do not need new ones that will also not be enforced.

**Recommend** that all recommendations meet the legal standard of using the best practice in all incidents or recommendations. There should not be any dumbing down of standards, SOP's, training etc. Only the highest of those can be used. i.e. if one ERT team has one month training and less equipment and the other has extensive equipment always updated and 2.5 years of training course. Obviously the high one in this example is the 2.5 years training which means it must be the standard. Anything less will be a lawsuit in civil court.

**Recommend** that Canada stay completely clear of the America model with 18000 police agencies which has lately been the model being looked at in Canada. This is flying in the face of the evidence that this commission has collected. A national standard with strong federal policing is the proven method as presented by many experts in the MCC and from many countries that have a national system.

**Recommend** that the RCMP remain as the federal police force, and be able to contract to provinces, municipalities for policing. In doing so they must change to allow more local decision making and input by local governments and that the national standards remain in the hands of

Ottawa but not the daily operations or investigational decisions. If the investigators are adhering to the standards the focus should be on changing the RCMP not removing them. Internationally many countries have recently moved to a national model because of the need for seamless operations and building the required specialties and expertise in policing today.

***The following submission by retired RCMP H Div. Commanding Officer Steve Graham is attached here to drive home key issues identified by the commission with the evidence on hand in the MCC. Mr. Graham has provided well researched and fact-based information on the failure of the province to meet their responsibility in providing adequate policing in Nova Scotia. He also points out the province created an environment where municipalities do not have the same levels of policing and the true costs to municipalities by making comparison between municipal agencies and the RCMP.***

***His information MUST be at the center of creating a new model of policing for Nova Scotia, one that provides capacity which not only looks at number of officers, but the broader definition of capacity, where you include what an agency brings to the table in terms of special sections, expertise, especial equipment, higher standards and ability to draw upon outside resources and investigate outside of Canada.***

***To not look at these issues would be a catastrophe in the MCC and would not be due diligence.***

#### **From Steve Graham RCMP Vets**

I honestly believe that had they been properly resourced by Colchester and the Province the probability of having a showdown with the Gunman was strong, his rampage significantly shortened, and many would have been spared this tragedy of omission on the part of the Province and Colchester. Those who responded were asked to contain, find, and eliminate the threat within 20-minutes of arrival with 4 people.

The issue of resourcing goes further. Colchester and the Province have implied they always responded positively to requests. This is deflection. The NS Police Act is clear - these governments, with their Board, are to decide on the adequacy, effectiveness and efficiency of the police service - the RCMP are expressly removed from the model, as the province sells the service. Moreover, no evidence has been taken from former Colchester commanders and COs about dealings with Colchester County - I would be pleased to state my experience of dealing with Colchester Council and the Province more than a decade ago.

Regardless, "Every municipality is responsible for the policing and maintenance of law and order in a municipality and for providing and maintaining an adequate, efficient and effective police department at its expense in accordance with its needs."

[novascotia.ca/just/global docs/NSRCMP Fact Sheet.pdf](http://novascotia.ca/just/global_docs/NSRCMP_Fact_Sheet.pdf)

The DOJ representative stated that quantifying a definition for "adequate" might lead to the implicated governments telling residents that adequate, if defined, could be unaffordable. Is that not better than pretending otherwise and then looking for those who respond to defend the gap created by bureaucrats and politicians? Is this not what Joe Howe meant by "responsible government", where accountability rests with those making the decisions? A Commissioner then said she did not favour defining "adequate as it could lead to a minimum level." Such an approach was "dated". The Commission may have too many criminologists and sociologists but lacks applied business and economics advice - more quantification is needed.

Statements by Colchester and the Province that no one told them their responsibilities are untenable positions and political deflection of the worst kind. Additionally, the Minister of Justice and AG is to also ensure critical mass for the entire province. If the province delegates policing to municipalities, then the Minister must assure horrific events such as this are equally captured by that delegation or have a clear strategy of how to deal with them.

### **RCMP Veterans' Association - Nova Scotia Division - 2022-08-09 Fact Sheet on Policing for Nova Scotia MCC Submission**

The Mass Casualty Commission (MCC) has undertaken its work with diligence and much academic support. For instance, theories of community health and wellbeing, how police training and response might change, the adequacy of communications strategies and systems, and the provision of community support, have all been or will be explored. Further, the MCC has undertaken an exhaustive examination of the activities of all participants in various locations, while being sensitive to victims and the public's exposure to the often-horrific events. Governments have provided the MCC with financial backing in the tens of millions of dollars.

However, there has been little insight provided about how policing is resourced, organized, and governed in the province, and the roles/decisions of key entities and individuals in that process. To date, the evidence of implicated Attorneys General and Ministers of Justice, the Mayor of the Municipality of the County of Colchester, and Chair of the Colchester-Stewiacke Police Advisory Board, have not been called by the MCC. This is odd given their key roles: statutory lead responsibility for resourcing/capacity, priority setting, and governance. They determine a large component of police operational response ability, regardless of the entity providing police service.

Further fracturing of policing in Nova Scotia - to create many independent and separate municipal police entities aligned to municipalities - could work against strengthened public safety. A foundational question needs to be explored: Are municipalities the best level of government to assure public safety? A fractured municipal system would be akin to the United States' model where 18,000+ police entities exist with overlapping jurisdictions, operational and

leadership conflicts, muddled accountability, and multiplied costs. Further, many municipalities in Nova Scotia have claimed inability to resource an adequate and effective police service.<sup>1</sup>

There are better models for maximum efficiency, standardized service, ability to allocate resources rapidly to an urgent need, shared training, clarity of command and accountability:

- Australia, another large and federated country, has state and federal policing structured on their constitutional and statutory roles<sup>2</sup> - no municipal police services exist. However, they have struggled to create well-integrated national police services due to state dominance.
- Scotland/Ireland/New Zealand<sup>3,4,5</sup> have unitary “national” models - one police service regardless of city, town and rural governments’ structures.
- The Province of Newfoundland and Labrador(NL) has two provincial police services: the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary(RNC) and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police(RCMP). Again, municipalities do not have direct policing responsibilities regardless of size.
- The Province of Quebec’s model requires municipalities of less than 50,000 population to use the Sûreté du Québec (SQ)<sup>6</sup>. The Province directs the amount of service it believes necessary to meet a municipality’s or region’s needs at a cost to municipalities the Province unilaterally establishes. The Province also has the SQ provide specialized services to all municipalities, and controls the level of investigations a municipal police force can undertake (i.e. serious crimes).

The Portapique tragedy has laid bare challenges of the dated police model used in Nova Scotia since the Service Exchange<sup>7</sup> initiative launched in 1992. Policing became an almost exclusive municipal responsibility based on an exchange of cost (social services for local roads and policing), and not what was best for effective public safety using analysis and assessment of provincial needs. Somehow pavement and policing were linked. Residents of the province receive varied levels of service, even in the same municipality. The Department of Justice, at

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<sup>1</sup> HRM, CBRM, Colchester, Cumberland - all have launched police reviews with concerns over cost.

<sup>2</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law\\_enforcement\\_in\\_Australia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law_enforcement_in_Australia)

<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law\\_enforcement\\_in\\_Ireland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law_enforcement_in_Ireland)

<sup>4</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Police\\_Scotland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Police_Scotland)

<sup>5</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New\\_Zealand\\_Police](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Zealand_Police)

<sup>6</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S%C3%BBret%C3%A9\\_du\\_Qu%C3%A9bec](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S%C3%BBret%C3%A9_du_Qu%C3%A9bec)

<sup>7</sup>[https://books.google.ca/books?id=SvURRf7mGi4C&pg=PA145&lpg=PA145&dq=Service+Exchange+NS+1995+policing&source=bl&ots=frOpS5Nxul&sig=ACfU3U1W9stQ4f\\_nDjfAyWZdWW3bxEfdRg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewjE66rx2pn5AhUkF1kFHUKRA-UQ6AF6BAGsEAM#v=onepage&q=Service%20Exchange%20NS%201995%20policing&f=false](https://books.google.ca/books?id=SvURRf7mGi4C&pg=PA145&lpg=PA145&dq=Service+Exchange+NS+1995+policing&source=bl&ots=frOpS5Nxul&sig=ACfU3U1W9stQ4f_nDjfAyWZdWW3bxEfdRg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewjE66rx2pn5AhUkF1kFHUKRA-UQ6AF6BAGsEAM#v=onepage&q=Service%20Exchange%20NS%201995%20policing&f=false)

least concerning municipalities policed by the RCMP, seems to be occupied with requests to reduce service levels and cost. That said, municipalities using the RCMP generally spend notably less on policing per resident than those with their own police service. All municipalities tend not to have sophisticated systems to quantify their needs and measure public safety effectiveness.

The Municipality of the County of Colchester (Colchester) and the Province of Nova Scotia(Province) share nearly absolute responsibility for the responding police service's capacity, effectiveness and efficiency relative to the Portapique tragedy. And capacity has an outsized impact on both effectiveness and efficiency. The service provider, in this instance the RCMP, provides a service level directly linked to the capacity provided by these two governments. No police service in Nova Scotia maintains non-funded police resources for mobilization. The MCC's ability to achieve its mandate is directly linked to the significant resources available to do so, just as a police service is fully dependent on those who govern and fund it.

How is the model of police services for the Province of Nova Scotia organized?

1. Nova Scotia, as all provinces are under the Constitution, is responsible for the administration of justice, including policing within its jurisdiction. The Province manages its responsibility through the Nova Scotia *Police Act* and Regulations (<https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/police.pdf>).
2. Policing in Nova Scotia is predominantly a delegated municipal responsibility, with oversight by the Attorney General and Minister of Justice(Provincial Minister). "Every municipality is responsible for the policing and maintenance of law and order in a municipality and for providing and maintaining an adequate, efficient and effective police department at its expense in accordance with its needs."<sup>8</sup> - Section 35, *Police Act* of Nova Scotia. Key takeaways: all geographic areas of Nova Scotia are part of a municipality, and the municipality is responsible to provide an adequate, efficient and effective full police service to meet the needs of its residents - urban or rural. The responsible **municipality determines the level of policing as approved by the Attorney General and Minister of Justice**. The Provincial Minister not only must consider adequacy by municipality, but also how a critical mass response at the provincial level is to be managed and led.
3. The Province of Nova Scotia has had a Police Services Agreement (PSA) with the Government of Canada for RCMP services as its provincial police since 1932. The

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<sup>8</sup> [https://novascotia.ca/just/global\\_docs/NSRCMP\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](https://novascotia.ca/just/global_docs/NSRCMP_Fact_Sheet.pdf)

Province has equally supplied the services of the RCMP, by agreement with a majority of interested municipalities, to meet statutory municipal policing obligations since Service Exchange. The PSA, a public document, provides detailed Terms and Conditions for administration, responsibilities and disputes. The current PSA covers the period 2012 - 2032.

4. Prior to Service Exchange, unincorporated rural and county areas of the province were part of provincial police responsibilities; post Service Exchange (1992), all municipalities (including counties) are responsible to organize, fund and administer complete police services. Provincial policing today is predominantly restricted to specialized services (Forensic Identification, Provincial Traffic, Police Dog/K-9, Major Crime Investigation Services, Emergency Response Team, Public Order Response, Polygraph Examination, etc.) - Section 31 - 34, *Police Act* of Nova Scotia. The MCC's consultant's material is confusing and the Service Exchange transition was ignored. It is foundational to responsibility for policing in Nova Scotia.
5. The Province of Nova Scotia brokers/sells RCMP services to interested municipalities across Nova Scotia - Section 36, *Police Act* of Nova Scotia. Generally, the RCMP is the service provider to 60%+ of Nova Scotia's population covering 94% of its landmass through the Province's scheme<sup>9</sup>. Additionally, the Province reports only four municipalities (Antigonish Town, Pictou Town, Yarmouth Town and West Hants Municipality) have maintained a direct Municipal PSA(MPSA) with the Government of Canada.
6. Ten municipalities in Nova Scotia have their own, or shared, police services: Cape Breton Regional Municipality, New Glasgow, Stellarton, Westville, Amherst, Bridgewater, Annapolis Royal, Kentville, Truro and the former municipalities of Halifax, Dartmouth and Bedford in the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). Section 35 - *Police Act* of Nova Scotia obligates these municipalities to provide a full police service - however, the services of the RCMP (currently provided at no cost) are often relied upon to varying degrees by these municipalities (Major Crime, Forensic Identification, Police Dog/K9, Bomb Disposal, Technological Crime, Emergency Response, Underwater Recovery, Public Order, etc.). Municipalities, receiving these services at no cost from the RCMP, impact resource availability to the Province and PSA municipalities. They also are an operational burden on the service provider.
7. The Province establishes a budget cap for the RCMP and determines a rate per officer that includes all infrastructure, technology, internal shared, and specialized services; and

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<sup>9</sup> [https://novascotia.ca/just/global\\_docs/NSRCMP\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](https://novascotia.ca/just/global_docs/NSRCMP_Fact_Sheet.pdf)

directly invoices PSA municipalities at a cost the Province unilaterally and uniquely determines. PSA municipalities select the number of officers to meet their public safety and residents' needs.

- a. The number of officers requested X per officer cost = a PSA municipality's police expenditure, all in; no additional overhead.
8. The RCMP invoices the Province at each quarter of the fiscal year at the rate of 25% of the budget cap, with the last quarter being a reconciliation for the total year, reflecting adjustments and obligations under the Terms and Conditions of the PSA between Canada and Nova Scotia. This can include cost adjustments for vacancies, officer duty status, reduction/expansion in planned activities, etc. The Province uniquely decides if Provincial invoices are adjusted to PSA municipalities - the RCMP is not part of provincial decision-making, budget allocation, nor invoicing activities between the Province and its PSA municipalities.
  9. The "Minister shall ensure that an adequate and effective level of policing is maintained throughout the province [at a municipality's expense]" - Section 3 - 9, *Police Act* of Nova Scotia. Further, "ensur[ing] that an adequate and effective level of policing is maintained throughout the province" also implies an obligation to assure a critical mass of well-managed and coordinated policing to meet significant operational events. Neither the Province, nor PSA municipalities using the model, have an agreement for policing services with the RCMP. The RCMP is not empowered by the Federal Government to enter any agreement for police services, nor alter any of the Terms and Conditions of the PSA. No police service in Nova Scotia is empowered to "broker/sell" service to another municipality; only government to government arrangements are permitted with the Provincial Minister's approval. PSA municipalities receive the service the Province agrees to provide, while capacity and service level are determined by the number of officers a municipality selects by its own analysis, and the Provincial Minister approves. The RCMP has a General Duty Police Resourcing Model (GDPRM) that can assist a municipality/the Province along a continuum of minimal, optimal, robust. Many PSA municipalities are attracted to minimal - the lowest cost.<sup>10</sup>
  10. PSA municipalities are obligated to establish and maintain an effective Police Advisory Board (PAB) - Sections 57 - 68 *Police Act* and Sections 82 - 84 of the Regulations. The

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<sup>10</sup> An email between DOJ and the CAO Cumberland County dated 2020-10-01 has reference: the CAO suggests the Province should reduce/retask its specialized provincial traffic services to meet Cumberland policing needs at no cost. However, traffic enforcement, motor vehicle serious injury/fatality accidents, and public safety/highway visibility within the County are ignored. A review requested by the Town of Oxford and Cumberland County concerned Cumberland having 3 more RCMP officers than the provincial average - no consideration of land mass, distributed population, resident desires, PAB research, etc.. As will be shown in Colchester County, it is a race to the least cost, not residents' public safety needs, that occupies councils and their administrators.

non-political, resident-majority, PAB's are to lead and review municipal needs/priorities such as: hours of service, policing priorities, response time requirements, reactive and proactive service expectations, recommend the number of officers required to meet community demand, office openings/closings, provide advice and recommendations to Council and the chief officer - Section 68 *Police Act*.<sup>11</sup> The Provincial Minister is to review and approve/alter the requested number of police officers by a municipality to assure adequacy, efficiency and effectiveness of the service.

11. When PSA municipalities demand to pay less for RCMP services, and the Provincial Minister concurs, less service time and fewer officers will be the outcome - the link is direct. For example, office closures, reduced patrol hours, more reactive than proactive hours available, lengthened patrol response times, increased "on call hours", etc. can be expected - **fewer inputs = less outputs**. The RCMP, as service provider, delivers a gross number of hours of service by municipality aligned to the capacity (# officers) the Province and PSA municipalities select. A municipality with its own police service has the same reality.
12. Non - PSA municipalities with their own police service/department must have a Board of Police Commissioners (BOPC) - Sections 44 - 53 *Police Act* and Regulations Sections 76 - 79 for the same purposes as PAB's. Of note, the BOPC is also charged with budget responsibilities, while PAB's are not. This distinction relates to the Province unilaterally and uniquely establishing an "all in" per officer cost and the PAB's recommending the number of officers to their councils, while a non-PSA municipality's BOPC and chief must build a budget to recognize the itemized costs for a municipality's budget process. Both a BOPC and PAB should make recommendations to, and advise, councils and chief officers.
13. In 2020, Nova Scotia municipalities with their own police service generally invested at or above the Canadian average per resident (\$423, and one officer of service per 500 - 550 residents - 2019 StatsCan data). PSA municipalities using the Province's scheme at times invested <\$200 per resident and selected one RCMP officer for > 1,200 residents, often distributed over much larger landmasses (100+ times). PSA municipalities are choosing

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<sup>11</sup> Most counties do not overtly provide fiscal capacity to accomplish the PAB's work. Cumberland CAO in an email to the DOJ of 2022-10-01 wondered if PAB/RCMP member(s) requested the Provincial Minister seek additional data and analysis. The CAO appears concerned that the PAB might execute its role under the NS *Police Act*, and that was possibly perceived as a problem.

to under invest for 60%+ less policing service than the Canadian average for significantly larger landmasses.<sup>12</sup>

14. PSA municipalities' complaints over service level can be expected if their investment in policing is too low, or the RCMP is unable to staff positions immediately, due to other service demands. The leaner the number of officers selected by municipalities and the Province, the greater impact vacancies have to service levels, and the less capacity to respond to large horrific events. This is not unlike a "just in time" supply chain - a delay or sudden reduction has outsized impact. Fewer officers equals less service time available to meet residents' expectations: hours on shift, response to calls, proactive/reactive policing balance, backfill capacity, investigation outcomes, presence in a small community, capacity to respond and sustain a response to tragic events, availability of specialized teams, etc. The PSA between the Province and Canada has Terms and Conditions that create credits for vacancies, transfer delays, injury/illness, parental benefits, infrastructure changes, etc. Provinces can also establish "forced vacancies"<sup>13</sup> to arbitrarily reduce expenditures. The Province decides how credits are managed, municipalities decide about capacity. The RCMP works with what is provided, not what is needed, and has no voice to push back in the model.
  
15. Policing, healthcare, and other critical public services have long suffered with misguided attempts to wring out "slack"<sup>14</sup> - in policing it would be planning for zero redundancy in normal operations to have a negative surge capacity during urgent circumstances. As has been repeatedly stated by several witnesses (yet never seriously pursued by MCC counsel), the police model for the RCMP in Nova Scotia is one of sanctioned scarcity.<sup>15</sup> There are no "fail-safes" to permit room for human error, unexpected failures, lack of equipment and technology, or other obvious gaps. And now, those who were provided little capacity to meet public safety needs are blamed for an imperfect response.

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<sup>12</sup> The Cumberland CAO considered any resources for the RCMP above the provincial average of other PSA municipalities as "surplus". The PAB does not appear to have been consulted, and no analytical work was noted beyond cost the CAO identified. The CAO saw no need to consult residents or provide analytical outcomes..

<sup>13</sup> A 'forced vacancy' is used by provinces to balance their budgets and ignores the loss of service to communities and the toll on service providers.

<sup>14</sup> Sam Sivarajan, "The lack of slack - and why we should care", [The Globe and Mail](#), 2022-08-01.

<sup>15</sup> The MCC has heard the Emergency Response Team was >50% staffed by those with other substantive positions. This is simply an example: the Province has resisted for decades any serious investment required of modern policing. Municipalities have consistently railed about cost, demanding services for less - the road to "no slack", just in time services. Today, overstretched and under-resourced humans show up because of duty, not because they enjoy healthy support.

16. The Municipality of the County of Colchester established the number of RCMP officers and budget as captured at **Appendix “A”** for fiscal year 2019/20. Appendix “A” also provides publicly available police resource data for the Town of Truro (2019/20) and StatsCan (2019) average police expenditures. Interestingly, if the County of Colchester resourced Truro Police, there would be 9 - 11 officers rather than 36 - 38 officers.

17. RCMP employees at all levels want to provide their communities with the best service and public safety possible, and that meet residents’ expectations. However, there are strains at all levels created by inadequate investment, ill-informed commentary, and unrealistic political expectations in some quarters. Employees working in an environment of constant demand, and resource scarcity, mean missed expectations, reduced public confidence, and muddled accountability. Stress and burnout of employees in policing<sup>16</sup> are caused by two primary sources<sup>17</sup>: being exposed to tragic and horrific events (operational trauma) and staff shortages, increase in workload, inability to meet public expectations (organizational trauma). Trauma leads to harassment complaints, employee frustrations, going to work ill in a culture built to not let anyone down, especially colleagues. Further, the challenges of attracting sufficient new people to a career in policing, coupled with cadet training disruption due to COVID, are very real legacy issues, compounded by political indifference, if not disdain for both police staff and residents.<sup>18</sup>

18. Obvious Questions section follows Appendix “A”:

**Appendix “A”**

<b>2020 Reported Data for the Municipality of the County of Colchester and the Town of Truro</b>	<b>Truro Town Police (TTP)</b>	<b>Canadian Police Average</b>	<b>Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Municipality of the County of Colchester</b>
Reported Municipal Expenditure	CA\$ 5,751,876.00		CA\$ 4,975,428.00
Population Policed	12,600 Residents		36,650 Residents

<sup>16</sup> Matt Logan ‘et al’ - Anshel (2000), Mccarty, Aldirawi, Dewald & Palacios (2019), Papazoglou et al (2019), Mountfort & Wilson (2020)

<sup>17</sup> <https://academic.oup.com/ocmed/article/70/3/183/5802491?login=false>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/systemic-issues-in-policing-across-canada-1.6464175>

Number of Sworn Peace Officers	36 - 38 Sworn Peace Officers		28 - 31 Sworn Peace Officers
Number of Residents per Sworn Peace Officer	332 - 350 Residents	546 Residents	1,182 - 1.309 Residents
Statistics Canada Reported Rate of Sworn Peace Officers per 100,000 Residents	Rate of 286 - 301 per 100,000 Residents	Rate of 183 per 100,000 Residents	Rate of 76 - 85 per 100,000 Residents
Landmass Patrolled	34 Square Kilometers		3,595 Square Kilometers
Landmass per Sworn Peace Officer	0.89 - 0.94 Square Kilometers		116 - 128 Square Kilometers
<b>Reported Cost per Resident</b>	<b>\$456+ per Resident</b>	<b>\$423 per Resident (2019)</b>	<b>\$136 per Resident</b>
# RCMP Officers for Colchester County if comparable Rate to the Truro Town Police			104 - 110 RCMP Officers
# RCMP Officers for Colchester County if comparable Rate to Canadian Average			67 RCMP Officers
Probable #RCMP Officers on shift in the first response to Portapique if resourced to the capacity of the Truro Town Police			15 - 21 RCMP Officers (14% - 20% of available strength)
Probable # of RCMP Officers on shift in the first response to Portapique if resourced to the capacity of the Canadian average			9 - 13 RCMP Officers (14% - 20% of available strength)
# RCMP Officers available and on shift in the first response to Portapique			4 RCMP Officers (14% - 20% of available strength)

# total Truro Police Officers if resourced at the Colchester County rate of total RCMP Officers	9 - 11 Police Officers for the Town of Truro		

Obvious Questions:

1. Do Nova Scotia municipalities and the Province provide similar levels of capacity and service adjusted for workload, population and landmass, across the province?
  - a. The unvarnished answer is “no”; generally, municipalities decide what best meets their needs in accordance with councillor perspectives(taxes), CAO influence<sup>19</sup>(cost), real and imagined fiscal capacity, other demands, and BOPC/PAB(if considered at all) recommendations. Some complaining municipalities focus solely on their budget rather than the needs of their residents and the amount of investment necessary to achieve public safety priorities. PSA municipalities can even see their PAB’s as unnecessary, easy to ignore, and unworthy of proper funding to perform serious work. Strong PAB candidates will not become involved if they see their time as wasted.
  - b. Basic metrics to measure adequacy, effectiveness, and efficiency exist: “*The Canadian Police Performance Metrics Framework: Standardized indicators for police services in Canada*”<sup>20</sup>, has been developed by Statistics Canada and the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (RCMP is active on the Police Information and Statistics Committee [POLIS])<sup>21</sup>. The Framework is an invaluable guide for any police board and municipality exercising their responsibilities for public safety; and has evolved over the past decade or more. The model follows<sup>22</sup>:

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<sup>19</sup> The Cumberland CAO seemed primarily interested in the number of officers relative to the provincial average of officers in PSA communities. The use of one metric implies no engagement of the PAB, nor use of easily available metrics found in the “*Canadian Police Performance Metrics Framework: Standardized indicators for police services in Canada*”.

<sup>20</sup> <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2019001/article/00004-eng.htm>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.cacp.ca/police-information-and-statistics-polis-committee.html#158>

<sup>22</sup> Cumberland and Colchester provide no evidence of serious use of the tool by their PAB’s, CAO’s and Councils. Indeed, Colchester’s PAB did not meet for >2 years.

- c. *Crime and Victimization*
    - i. Crime - rates, youth crime, severity, traffic violations, offenders;
    - ii. Victimization - victimization rates, reporting rates, and perceptions of safety;
    - iii. Offenders - clearance rates and court outcomes;
    - iv. Re-contact - victim and accused re-contact data.
  
  - d. *Police Activities and Deployment*
    - i. Calls for service and response time;
    - ii. Activity reporting;
    - iii. Targeted policing initiatives - proactive traffic enforcement & education, community mobilization against crime, youth outreach, hotspot visibility/enforcement.
  
  - e. *Police Resources*
    - i. Police strength, resourcing, infrastructure;
    - ii. Workforce health and motivation;
    - iii. Training & Development - training time, investment, technology;
    - iv. Operating expenditures - investment, salary, operating expenditures.
  
  - f. *Trust and Confidence in Police*
    - i. Surveys of public confidence;
    - ii. Public engagement - Social Media, community meetings, community outreach;
    - iii. Use of force - authority, training, public complaints, reviews.
2. Would more investment in policing by the Municipality of the County of Colchester, with the linked provision of more RCMP officers, have been helpful during the initial response in apprehending the Portapique Gunman earlier on 2020-04-18/19?
- a. There is a strong probability that, had Colchester District RCMP been provided with resourcing by the Municipality and the Province to the Canadian average, approximately 9 - 13 RCMP officers (14% - 20% of available capacity) would have been on shift that tragic night rather than 4 officers. If Colchester RCMP were resourced at the same level as Truro Police, approximately 15 - 21 RCMP officers would have been available for immediate response. There is a strong possibility that some officers would have been physically in the Bass River/Glenholme/Debert/Masstown/Onslow areas on patrol in either scenario, arriving on scene earlier than the 4 units responding from Bible

Hill/Valley/Salmon River tasked with less urgent calls. The Immediate Action Rapid Deployment (IARD) response<sup>23</sup> would have commenced sooner. Unknown to the responding RCMP officers was that only 15 - 20 minutes were available to find and eliminate the threat in a dark, wooded, rural neighbourhood. Testimony before the MCC by three of the responding RCMP officers that evening clearly stated how they often had gun complaints and rushed from one part of the municipality to another(3,595 sq km) - “a regular occurrence”.

- b. Moreover, rapid deployment to the first call shortly after 10PM from other areas of the Municipality of Colchester in either scenario (9 - 21 officers vs 4 officers) would have supported quicker cordoning actions. It has been reported that some units responding that evening came as far away as Cumberland, Pictou, East Hants and HRM - travel time.<sup>24</sup> Truro Police lacked integrated communications, and although resourced better than Colchester District, only had three officers (8%) on shift that were quickly consumed by their own public safety needs, including the lockdown of the Colchester East Hants Health Centre. At a minimum, why did Truro Police management not assign a call-out officer to the 911/OCC located in Truro overnight to monitor the unfolding tragedy for its own potential response preparedness? The Gunman is reported to have traversed the Town of Truro (34 sq km) unmolested.
- c. The Mass Casualty Commission (MCC) reports the first 4 RCMP officers of Colchester District arrived at the Head of Portapique Road within minutes of one another at approximately 10:30PM. One officer remained at the Head of Portapique Road to assist victims and guard against egress by the Gunman, while three officers began an on-foot IARD tactical approach in the dark. RCMP officers believed the Gunman was to the South in the community; they were drawn to calls for help, gunshots/explosions and fires established or beginning.
- d. However, with hindsight the MCC believes the Gunman exited the Portapique area using a neighbouring and private blueberry field lane to Provincial Highway 2 within 15 - 20 minutes of RCMP first responders' arrival (approximately 10:45PM - 10:50PM). The one officer at the known entrance to Portapique could not see nor confront him while awaiting backup units. More officers on scene initially, would probably have led to roadblocks on Highway 2 as part of

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/gazette/stopping-an-active-shooter>

<sup>24</sup> The MCC implies some responding RCMP units from other districts may have met the Gunman well outside of Portapique operating his simulated police cruiser. However, awareness at that moment, coupled with driving urgently as a solo operator, hampered this recognition by patrol officers from neighbouring districts.

cordoning efforts. The predicted outcome would be gunfire exchanges and possible serious or fatal injury to RCMP officers and the Gunman. Equally, responders would have confirmed knowledge much earlier that the Gunman was driving a simulated RCMP vehicle, was wearing a uniform, and possessed a significant arsenal of weapons. If the Gunman managed to escape (he would have the element of total surprise), hot pursuit would have occurred. Further, additional arriving police units from other locations would have been better informed what and where to intercept.

3. Is the Municipality of the County of Colchester hampered fiscally, or restricted by their Police Advisory Board (PAB), to provide an adequate investment for policing then or now?
  - a. The audited financial statements of the Municipality of the County of Colchester for Fiscal Years 2019 - 21 follow:

Municipality of the County of Colchester Audited Financial Statements	2021	2020	2019
	CAD \$	CAD \$	CAD \$
Cash and Cash Equivalents	CA\$25,569,789	CA\$23,563,752	CA\$20,372,323
Annual Surplus/Deficit “-”	CA\$8,212,760	-CA\$747,047	CA\$781,112
<b>Accumulated Surplus</b>	<b>CA\$108,543,502</b>	<b>CA\$100,330,742</b>	<b>CA\$101,077,789</b>

- b. The Municipality was not, nor is, fiscally challenged; therefore, there was no impediment to invest in policing due to financial hardship. What oversight did the Provincial Minister exercise concerning investment in policing?
    - c. In 2020, and specific to the Colchester - Stewiacke Police Advisory Board, and public safety governance generally, Section 63 - *Police Act* and Regulations mandated (and mandates) that PAB meetings are to be held “at least every 3 months”. The Municipality of the County of Colchester reports **no meetings were recorded or held between February 2019 and March 2021**<sup>25</sup>. The

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<sup>25</sup> Devin Trefry, Research, Policy and Community Engagement, Municipality of the County of Colchester, - email 2022-04-27, 12:19:14 ADT.

commitment of the Municipality to public safety, policing capacity, and sound governance was absent. A functioning PAB was not in place more than a year before, and nearly a year post-Portapique - total 2 years+. Was the Province aware, and if so, what did the Minister of Justice and Attorney General do about the requirements of the NS *Police Act*? How satisfied was the Minister of the composition, training, management, functioning, capacity and work of the PAB?

### **Charles Thompson, TPD (NSCPA) desired policing model for the province**

It was not our intention originally to go into detail about the proposed intention of the municipal police in Nova Scotia and what they see as the new model of policing for Nova Scotia, but Mr. Thompson laid out those intentions very clearly for all of us in his oral presentation. He laid out the plan that has been in place since the 1980's in the "A Safer Nova Scotia" document the MCC currently has in evidence, written by the Nova Scotia Chiefs Association (NSCPA). Mr. Thompson although representing Truro PD is clearly also representing the wishes and goals of the NSCPA.

Mr. Thompson informed us that he would provide us more details on this model of policing from the 1980's proposed by NSCPA so long ago, in his written submission.

It is because of his offering of the proposed model that the RCMP vets will drill down into that proposal here in our submission.

Thompson said he questioned why the RCMP did not ask TPD for assistance that night. He referred to answers that were given by the media, and others that were not true. The reason the RCMP gave much later were, as he says, training is not as extensive in TPD, different equipment or less equipped, standards are not the same at all, what were the actual resources available, TPD did not have the same level of radios as RCMP.

He said that these reasons have created a concern in the Truro population that their police may not be up to keeping them safe and it has created a lack of confidence by the public in the TPD.

Let's put the shoe on the other foot and look at the conditions the RCMP work under in this province with constant talk of removing the RCMP from policing in the province, most of this talk generated by municipal police agencies and the NSCPA. Starting with the document "A Safer Nova Scotia" from the 1980's written by NSCPA that was very clear about removing the RCMP in favour of municipal police taking over policing the province. Add to that the never-ending policing reviews in Halifax Country and Colchester country to remove the RCMP.

Can you imagine what it must feel like to be in a job where you are constantly under the pressure of being removed and your job lost? Put yourself in the shoes of the men and women in the RCMP policing communities in this province. Mr. Thompson forgot to mention those facts.

He stated that the reasons for not calling in TPD the RCMP gave are not true. Maybe so, to a degree, but there are still some legitimate concerns attached to those reasons given that have been issues.

The fact is from this point on in what has been said by TPD is that in the 13 hours this event took place the RCMP were working as hard as they could to stop this and find the accused. It was constantly changing and there was little information to go on.

Could some discussions have been made better? Yes, but let's be realistic here, if Truro PD was in charge, could they have done better? No, no police service in Canada would have got it all correct, as Supt Wallace Gossen of York Regional Police stated.

Truro PD have far less resources, no understanding of rural policing, and not legally allowed to conduct such an investigation. While TPD was angry the first few days claiming not being called to help, it was months later that they started making claims of what they could have done. They used the extensive, detailed information from the RCMP investigation. This investigation was second to none and no stone left unturned. It even had digital videos re-creating the incidents visually. The RCMP traveled the world obtaining information in the case seeking evidence and statements. Truro PD basing its comments on the RCMP investigation when making claims of their abilities that night. That is not fair because the RCMP were working without those facts in the 13 hours this case went on. It is not a fair assessment at all.

Let's look at some of the issues they comment on re the reasons for not being called to help.

Resources, one can say yes, they have a lot of police officers (38). They only had three on that night and one was assigned to guard the hospital which left two in the town and that means no one was available.

If we look at TPD compared to the national average of 159 officers per 100,000 population in an urban setting, then Truro is well staffed by being double the national average at 300 per 100,000 pop.

Mr. Thompson said that they could have called out 17 officers, maybe, but urban police are not used to being called out and it would take time and where would they get the police cars to get that many on scene? They don't have that many.

RCMP on the other hand are like firefighters and are used to being on call thus get called out constantly and are ready to go.

We also must add some other factors to this call out. Carbine rifles, they don't have that many even if the officers are trained, they have six portable radios that can communicate with RCMP this means several officers would not be able to communicate directly.

Chief McNeil also said that his officer would be there in 45 minutes. That is once they got in a police car. The RCMP responded faster than that. TPD officers are only allowed to travel 20 KPH over the limit with emergency equipment on. The RCMP responding averaged 130 KPH while driving in 100KM, 80-KM, 60KM and 50KM zones.

The RCMP are all trained in highspeed driving and gravel road driving and have a lengthy driver training program because in rural communities the single biggest killer of police is car crashes. So, the RCMP takes a great deal of time training officers to reduce the risk. Driver training, no comparison and reason for it in RCMP is because in rural policing the speeds are higher, roads are dirt as well and they have had more officers killed and injured in MVA.s than any other way. To prevent this, they focus on driving to save lives.

No municipal police agency in NS does this. So, training differences exist. If we are told they take driver training, remember that not all driver training is the same. This goes for all training courses. YOU must evaluate the course not just take it on face value.

TPD says they have training and standards. Of which they do have both. Truro PD is a good police force. The town budget is huge for policing in Truro and that is how they are over resourced and are provided equipment and training. Unlike the county governments responsible for policing under the RCMP contract who do not resource their police force, the RCMP.

Re the provincial standards. They are very weak and worded like this, "you must have a policy on impaired driving, you must have a policy on use of force, you must fill out the use of force provincial form, etc.". Then the agency must write a policy, of which most NS police forces go to Toronto, Edmonton and other police agencies across Canada to draft their policies. It is interesting that they would do this when their neighbouring police agency is the RCMP, and they do not adopt or even ask for their help in policies. If they had done this NS would not have an issue with working together.

Training differences I have already touched on but are an issue despite Truro PD being trained on many things the training is different. I mentioned driver training but there are many more examples, carbine rifle training is different, Active shooter training is different and the RCMP have a rural component to both of those, Truro does not. The point here is just to say you have training therefore I can work with you is not true. Not all training is the same and unless Truro and the RCMP are taking the same training and practicing together then there is a gap, and a gap can mean risks to officers and the public.

The commission must consider this issue on training and not accept that all training is the same. It is not at all the same and this needs to be understood that this is an issue for safety, police capabilities and inner agency operability.

He said they can communicate with the RCMP, and they have 6 encrypted portable radios. If so, then why were they not using the equipment and communicating? Maybe if they had they may have been able to make a change here and get on scene. There must be some onus on TPD for not being pro-active and get out there and communicate explaining as to how they could help. They also had the option of going to the RCMP telecoms which at that time was on Prince Street the same street TPD is on. They would then be able to get real time info and see just how chaotic it really was.

There are other issues in communications as well not mentioned yet. Example RCMP use international radio protocol the same as all militaries, aircraft, ships around the world. Halifax PD do not.

Here is an example of how this complicates things. A plane flying into Halifax airport would Call to Halifax airport (YHZ) then state the aircraft number (AC206) an air Canada plane. So, it who you are calling then who you are. Halifax PD do the opposite. They say who they are the “TO” who they want. That would be like walking into a poorly lit bar from outside in the sun to meet me for lunch. I see you and try to get your attention. Would I not call out your name first and then say it is me over here? Or would I do like Halifax and say my name first then yours and say over here? That is not even normal conversation.

In the end of this part of Mr. Thompsons comments he said there were missed opportunities to contain the perpetrator. That is a huge assumption to make considering everything we now know and the limits I have identified in the possibilities of TPD on that night. Is it possible? Yes, anything is possible, and Steve Graham has pointed out here that if the municipal government in Colchester County have met the national standard for policing capacity there would have been 8 officers there not 4. The question is not what was possible but what was probable. In that case even with more officers it is still probable the perpetrator would have escaped. This argument is purely hypothetical and not fact.

#### Standards

Mr. Thompson brought this up and I mentioned it already how the provincial standards are written. They are not standards but directions for agencies to write policies.

He then went on to say that the MCC should not get too focused on standards arguing that standards would not make a difference in this case. He sighted that the province has recognized that they have outdated standards and they have started working on the changes now. I go back again and ask the question, why would the province try to re-invent the wheel where they have in their hands the contracted provincial police forces standards already. Why would they not just adopt those and move on to improving those and always make sure it is an improvement and not a dumbing down of standards. We would have new standards today they did this. But here we are re-writing and asking Toronto, Edmonton etc. what they want and not looking at a single system in the province that we have and can implement now.

I guess the other thing to question Mr. Thompson and TPD on is, you state you have standards and follow the provincial model, yet in the next breath says the province acknowledges that those standards are dated and need to be changed. So, which is it? You either have effective detailed accurate standards or you have outdated ones? Maybe that is why he recommends that the MCC not focus on standards.

He did state that the reason the RCMP did not call them to assist is not because of the standards, and likely is true. As for the real reason they were not call, we may never know for sure, but we do know is that it was chaos and that affects decision making.

Mr. Thompson said there have been many cases of co-operation between RCMP and TPD and that is true. There have been many. Recently the murders in Truro including the young Indian man stabbed to death, and the RCMP major crime section comes in to work on the case with a member or members of TPD with them. There are other times when the RCMP member is too far away when a call comes into McClures Mills, Truro Height, Salmon River all of which border Truro. they ask if TPD can go there first until they get there. In some of those cases the RCMP get there before TPD, but that is OK as it is not their area in the first place, and they may have been tied up. So yes, there are many cases of support which works both ways.

Here is a case where the RCMP offered assistance to TPD, in the form of dive team, helicopter, boats, dog and members and Truro PD turned the offers down. It was the Dylan Ehler is a Canadian boy whose disappearance on May 6, 2020. I could use MR. Thompson's analogy of the Mass Casualty case and not calling TPD could have tipped the tide and apply the refusing assistance from the RCMP to Missing child case could have turned the tide. Reality is, nothing is perfect. Decisions are made and the what if never gets answered.

TPD says the RCMP are unable to meet the capacity needed for policing here, yet they totally left out the fact that that capacity is the responsibility of the municipalities who have not properly funded or met the capacity needs of their communities. They have laid blame for this on the RCMP who is not responsible.

They also said that the RCMP is having trouble recruiting officers. They failed to tell you that all police in North America are having trouble recruiting because of the negative media coverage of police. I checked with Calgary, Edmonton, York Regional, RCMP, Toronto PD and others. All are having problems recruiting. Surrey BC who has removed the RCMP in favour of their own municipal force have huge problems and have had to keep the RCMP for an extended period because only 20% of the RCMP were willing to move to the new force and the BC police training centre can only give Surrey PD 17 recruits per year. The total number of police for Surrey is 900. This is not a unique issue to the RCMP at all.

TPD said the RCMP have not been good at implementing changes over the years, yet they have changed constantly over their 150 year history. Including implementing changes from enquiries like Moncton and the MacNeil recommendation all of which were adopted, The Mayerthorpe inquiry and many others, all have implemented changes in the RCMP, including changing training, equipment, standards and policies. Where people get confused is that in some cases the changes are left up to the divisions (provinces) and those commanding officers to make the changes and they make decisions based on budgets and other matters in their respective provinces. This is exactly what TPD has asked for in their recommendation to move to regional police forces in the province, except they would be dividing these changes up by regions in the province.

They are telling us the RCMP is too big, but at the same time the RCMP because of its national policing role has over 200 special sections and federal funding to develop expertise as it arises to combat new and more complex crimes. The move to national police models is growing worldwide because countries demand the ability to work seamlessly together, same training and

equipment saves money, all police the same allows for control over duplication, grows expertise and special sections to combat new and rising crimes.

It has become quite evident that the information presented by Mr. Thompson on behalf of the TPD is the thoughts of the NSCPA.

He claims that moving the RCMP to a nonvoting status on the NSCPA is not harming the RCMP because they can attend most of the events, they just can't vote. So, what this is essentially is the RCMP are now spectator not participants. Not at all part of the organization.

He stated that the reasons for this action are justified because the RCMP and the Chiefs differed on policy issues. All along I thought this was the purpose of the organization to meet and to work toward common ground not to simply toss one out because they disagree. According to the NSCPA that is main purpose of the organization. Chief MacNeil testified that it made no difference in the NSCPA to remove the RCMP as a voting member. Then why was it done?

Mr. Thompson went on to list some recommendations to MCC.

RCMP needs to improve the relationship between them and municipal police. My understanding of conflict resolution and de-escalation is that both sides must meet and work things out not just one side.

RCMP to remove irritants like potentially charging for special services. That is not driven by the RCMP but by the province and the municipalities who under fund the RCMP and not meet needed capacity. This has caused the RCMP to find ways to deliver services with less and that put the charging for services on the table. If the contract was written like that in Quebec this would not be an issue at all.

He admits that having different model of policing is a problem in NS.

He said the RCMP does not have the capacity to everything and be all for everyone.

He clearly does not understand who is responsible for capacity and it is not the RCMP, it is combined with the province who does not fund the contract correctly and the municipal governments who are totally responsible for capacity of RCMP and refuse to fund them properly.

This idea he has about this is driven by the fact the province and other governments have been to date, successful in deflecting this problem to the RCMP and have the public believing it is the RCMP's fault.

He raised the closing of detachments and moving to a centralized policing model is the RCMP problem but again this was caused by the lack of capacity driven by government underfunding the RCMP and they had to find ways to save money and still deliver policing. If they were properly funded those detachments would still be open.

He is disturbed that the specialized sections of the RCMP are all based in Dartmouth in HQ. Claims this leaves other areas of NS without access to those services.

His solution and that of the NSCPA dating back to the A Safer NS paper of the 1980's is to recommend NS move to several regional police agencies and have the RCMP out of contract policing and only doing federal policing.

So let us see what that really looks like.

Geographically lets in theory break the province into six regions all with a regional police service.

Cape Breton, Antigonish/New Glasgow region as one, Truro and Amhurst as One, HRM as one, South shore Yarmouth as one and Valley as one.

To solve his issue with special sections all in HRM he will have pay for six of these groups in the province. So, 6 ERT, 6 dive teams, 6 marine sections, 6 of everything, including 6 armoured vehicles (\$800000.00 each). The cost of this will be out of reach of Nova Scotia. This is exactly why Quebec uses a national policing model, to prevent this.

The RCMP could if funded, have a full time ERT that can be delivered anywhere in NS by Military helicopter like they did with SERT in the past. Then they could have two part time teams made up of members from all parts of the province thus providing quick response anywhere to act or to contain until full teams are on site. Far less costly and providing the best ERT in Canada to Nova Scotians.

Nova scotia is already  $\frac{3}{4}$  into the Quebec model. All that needs to happen to bring it in further is to make the RCMP standards the provincial standard. Then expand the contract to give the RCMP the ability or capacity to deliver the 200 specialized sections to all agencies free in NS. All of this would save municipalities money, make seamless interaction between agencies, and provide 200 specialized services over the 30 or less that regional police agencies could afford.

We have already heard Mr. Thompson say that Truro needs consideration to be lax on training due to costs to the town. We do not want this in NS, we want more than that.

How would these regional agencies handle a case like this one or a Swiss Air? They would not have the resources or expertise to do so. The RCMP brought in 400 officers from across Canada for this case plus a fisheries dispute at the same time. No other agency in Canada can do this.

If we had regional agencies instead of the RCMP we lose the 30/70 cost split with the federal government leaving NS holding 100% of cost. We would have to buy hundreds of vehicles of all kinds including boats etc. Everything the RCMP have here as assets would be gone to other provinces and this province would have to buy all those assets including buildings. The cost would be unbelievable to NS taxpayers. With the RCMP those assets are already here and paid for under past and present contracts.

I for one as a citizen of NS want to pay more for less. That is exactly what we will have with a regional system as laid out but Mr. Thompson (NSCPA). The politics of this is dangerous in that it seems to be more about making regional police grow while removing a system that works in other counties and in Quebec and our own country.

Not enough space here to get into all the cons of a regional policing system over a national system. We would love to be part of the discussion on this topic in drafting recommendations.

The advantages of the RCMP our national police force with all the resources and with the largest number of specialized sections of any police force in Canada is a huge asset to us in NS and we already have it in the contract that we can have changed to improve the RCMP capacity and accountability. So, simple. Not political at all, just common sense.

It is interesting that municipal police agencies do not see the benefits of joining the RCMP. Better pay, better and earlier pension, better medical and medical in retirement, VAC for any medical pensions rather than WCB that ends at age 65 plus does not cover as much. If Chief MacNeil went with the RCMP he would be at the very least an Inspector and make more money than he does now. He would also have promotion opportunities which he does not now as he is at the top in his structure.

The only reason they do not want to be a member of the RCMP is that they don't like the idea of being transferred. That is, it. Very weird as transfers help individuals grow, have a larger network of friends and get to learn about other cultures and areas of the country. You get to deal with different criminals not the same ones your entire career. There is no real negative to transfers.

Mr. Thompson's model (NSCPA model) demonstrates pure politics driving such a model.

### **Some key points from Truro PD's oral presentation**

Training cost Mr. Thompson said are too high, so they want consideration to lower training reducing the courses and time spent on training to meet budgets. This is not what is needed to improve police capabilities or to perform under pressure when called to do so. Reality is that training and practice are the only ways to have officer perform under pressure.

Fire service, military personnel all train constantly and practice. They rarely fail under pressure. Yet Mr. Thompson says TPD are highly trained and capable of doing a better job than the RCMP that night. Yet he wants to be spared the cost of training and practice in his town. This demonstrates a lack of understanding of what is needed to improve policing in Nova Scotia, which is a new model, not going backwards and not to fulfil political agendas.

They want several regional police agencies in the province to replace the RCMP and have the RCMP only in plain clothes roles in federal policing. This will increase the need for training because the expertise required in the province will be gone with the RCMP. It will then be up to those regional police agencies to get that expertise and provide 200 special sections and equipment. The cost will be totally on municipal governments of which Mr. Thompson has already said need to be cut some slack on training because they can not afford to train now. If the

RCMP stay in contract policing Nova Scotia will have the 200 sections and equipment, we already have under the contract. Not need to start from scratch and pay for this all over again, because we already have it with the RCMP in the province now.

Let us not forget that the contract with the RCMP gives us a 70/30 split on policing cost with the federal government paying 30% and province 70%.

What Nova Scotia loses with the loss of the RCMP.

Loss of the 70/30 split cost sharing,

Loss of the 200 special sections

Loss of all special equipment, TAV armoured vehicle and bullet proof suburban's and cars, boats etc.,

Loss of things like dive teams

Loss of the highest trained and equipped ERT in Canada (RCMP SERT trained JTF2 and their ERT is modeled off the JTF2 program now and use the same tactics and equipment.

The loss of the ability to handle a mass casualty event or a Swiss air where hundreds of officers must be brought into the province from elsewhere. You can not bring in the RCMP then nor any other agency in Canada because we would be different than those and would have no costing agreements

Loss of ability to investigate outside of Canada (like this case)

Loss of access to Canada Research Council for doing research in policing matters and equipment

Loss of aircraft (the cost of a helicopter is the small part. A minor maintenance is \$10000.00 (oil change and tighten nuts and bolts), rotor blades are replaced often and two of the are \$60000.00 plus depending on the aircraft.

There are many more losses but too many to list here.

When the RCMP go the province and municipalities will have to buy all equipment and buildings, vehicles, computers, etc. These regional agencies will want an NS training center that will be paid for by NS taxpayers, RCMP do their own at no cost to Nova Scotians in Regina.

The TPD model is a move from making everything the same to a splintered model and one that will see as an example six regional police forces or more covering the whole province and all asking for all their own special sections such as ERT. This is going way beyond just duplication of services it is 6 times the number of separate services. All 100% costed to the province and municipalities.

There will be huge increased costs of WCB, which no one talks about. The RCMP fall under the federal military system Veteran Affairs Canada (VAC)

*The following submission by S/Sgt Steve Mills retired, on Incident Command System (ICS) and on Alert Ready system is all based on firsthand knowledge and research that he has completed. Mr. Mills has the operational knowledge of being a detachment commander in the Bridgewater area for many years and from his second career after retiring from the RCMP, working for Nova Scotia Emergency Management Office (EMO).*

*Mr. Mills was at EMO when the Alert Ready was introduced and he also is well trained in the ICS system.*

*To not listen to his information provided here would be a mistake as his information is not influenced by anyone but based on his inside knowledge, experience, and facts on these two issues that are part of the issues identified by the evidence in the MCC.*

## **Recommendation Submission of the RCMP Veterans' Association - Nova Scotia Division**

### **Incident Command System (ICS)**

The testimony of the Critical Incident Commanders and others have indicated that the current command structure utilized during the mass casualty is a system taught at the Canadian Police Collage (CPC). While the **Command Triangle** works very well for the vast majority of Critical Incidents, it is not easily expandable and does not address an incident to the scope of what occurred during the mass casualty. The RCMP and many Municipal and Provincial Police Agencies utilize the Command Triangle for Critical Incidents. There is another system used for major planned events such as G8, the Olympics and others that is known as **Gold, Silver, Bronze Command Structure**. This system migrated from the United Kingdom to Canada and is recognized as being a good system for planned events but not as well for Critical Incidents.

*In my opinion it serves little purpose, and is not efficient both in terms of resources, effort and funding, to utilize multiple incident management systems when one system can address any type of incident regardless of how complicated or how large the incident grows.*

The **Incident Command System** is a standardized, on scene, all hazard incident management concept. ICS allows its' users to adopt an integrated organizational structure to match the complexities and demands of single or multiple incidents without being hindered by jurisdictional or political boundaries.

ICS has considerable internal flexibility. It can grow or shrink to meet different needs. This flexibility makes it a very cost effective and efficient management approach for both small and large situations regardless of whether they are Critical Incidents or Planned Events

### **ICS Purpose**

ICS is a proven management system built on best practices and is the result of decades of lessons learned in the organization and management of emergency incidents and planned events. ICS has been tested in more than 30 years of application, by all levels of Government and in the private

sector. It represents organizational “best practices” and is becoming the standard command and control structure for emergency management across Canada.

Since ICS is a collection of best practices, the application of ICS provides for processes that:

- The safety of responders and others is one of the overall priorities.
- Ensures all incidents are managed by a set of tactical objectives.
- Ensures the efficient use of resources through effective span of control and unity of command.

What ICS does not solve are inter-jurisdictional political problems nor is it a substitute for experience. ICS supports, it does not replace, policies and procedures. ICS is by design a management process put in place to ensure that Operations can be supported so that they can complete tasks and assignments developed so that they can meet the incident objectives.

### **ICS Background**

ICS was developed in the 1970s following a series of catastrophic fires in California's wildland urban interface. Property damage ran into the millions, and many people died or were injured. The personnel assigned to determine the causes of these outcomes studied the case histories and discovered that response problems could rarely be attributed to lack of resources or failure of tactics. Surprisingly, studies found that response problems were far more likely to result from inadequate management than from any other single reason.

Weaknesses in incident management were often due to:

- Lack of accountability, including unclear chains of command and supervision.
- Poor communications due to inefficient uses of available communications systems and conflicting codes and terminology.
- Lack of an orderly, systematic planning process.
- No common, flexible, pre-designed management structure that enables commanders to delegate responsibilities and manage workloads efficiently.
- No predefined methods to integrate interagency requirements into the management structure and planning process effectively.

ICS consists of procedures for managing personnel, facilities, equipment and communications. It is designed to be used from the time an incident occurs until the requirement for management and operations no longer exists.

Designers of the system recognized that ICS must be interdisciplinary and organizationally flexible to meet a number of management challenges.

- Meet the needs of incidents of any kind or size.
- Allow personnel from a variety of agencies to meld rapidly into a common management structure.
- Provide logistical and administrative support to operational staff.
- Be cost effective by avoiding the duplication of efforts.

Extensive experience has shown that to make ICS work well, it should be used all of the time. If the system is utilized everyday for every call it becomes ingrained within the organization, and when the response to an incident needs to expand, that process becomes seamless.

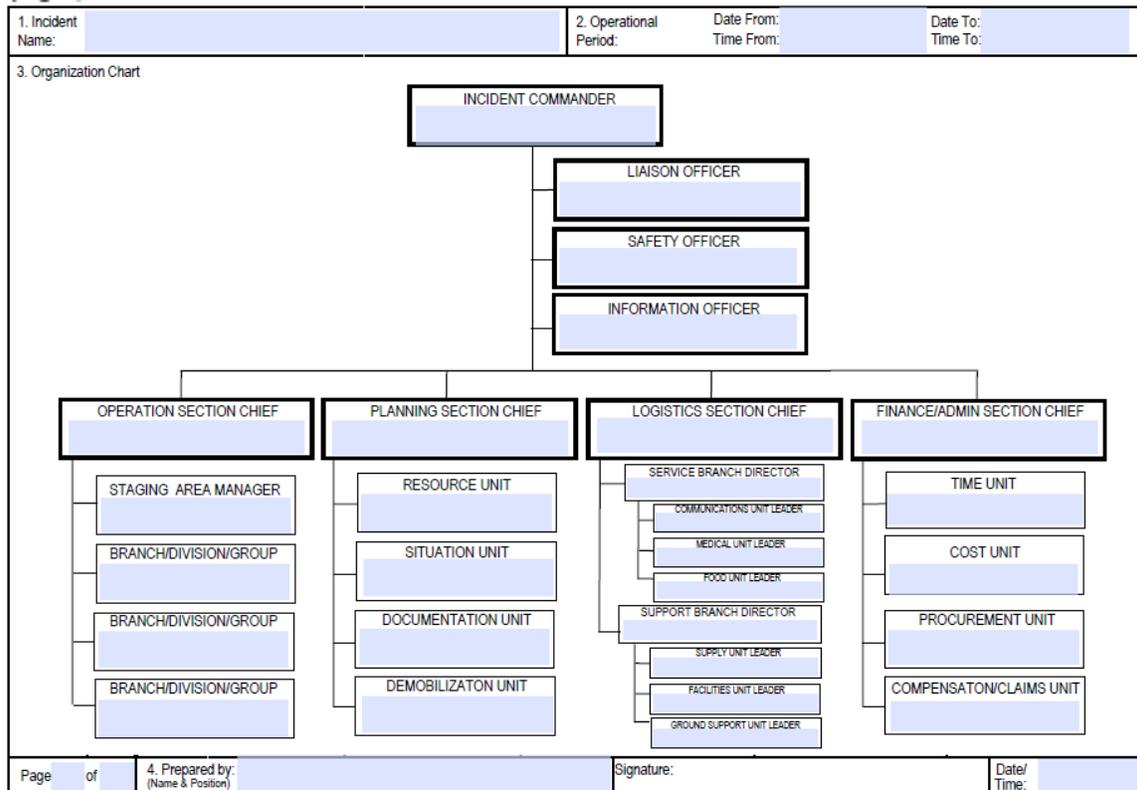
### **ICS in Canada**

In 2002 the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre (CIFFC) and member agencies adopted the Incident Command System (ICS). Several ICS documents and a complete training curriculum was developed and adopted by wildland fire agencies across the country. The CIFFC ICS curriculum focused on the organizational structure and processes for managing wildland fires but was adopted as the Canadian standard ICS system by a number of provinces and local authorities over the rest of the decade.

<https://www.icscanada.ca/>



## Incident Organization Chart (ICS 207)



ICS 207-CAN

People get intimidated when they look at the above org chart, but the chart is merely an instant reminder of the functions that are necessary to bring any event, no matter how large or small, to a successful conclusion. One person can be responsible for all of these functions during very small events. As the event becomes larger, as was the case during the mass casualty, these functions need to be delegated to other qualified individuals by the Incident Commander to ensure they are not overwhelmed. One need only to look at this chart and see where folks could have been placed during the mass casualty that would have assisted the Incident Commander. (ie.. Information Officer, Liaison Officer, Planning Section Chief, Communications Unit, just to name a few).

**ICS Canada is now expanded beyond wildland fire response, to provide a pan-Canadian ICS command and control structure that will enable organizations to respond to any incident, regardless of cause, size, location or complexity.**

**In December 2009, Public Safety Canada released the *Federal Emergency Response Plan*, which is based on the Incident Command System.**

<https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/mrgnc-rspns-pln/index-en.aspx>

The RCMP, Municipal and Provincial Police, EMO's and many other First Responder agencies have begun to utilize ICS over the past number of years, but it is a patchwork of adoption throughout the country. There has been a fair amount of training on ICS to the point where the RCMP in particular has added the first module of ICS 100 to its training curriculum at Depot.

They have further added other modules to their online Agora training platform. The RCMP Division Emergency Operations Centre (DEOC) have used ICS for several years, but the system is not used for Critical Incident Response.

In the fall of 2015, the “H” Division Emergency Management Section with assistance of EMO NS personnel and other Emergency Management subject matter experts, compiled an excellent operational handbook on Critical Incident Response that incorporated the Incident Command System. This booklet known as C-3 Command, Control and Communications was submitted to the RCMP Atlantic Regional Council of Criminal Operations Officers. Evidence heard by the MCC indicates this document was never adopted by the RCMP.

The Command Triangle is for all intense and purposes a hybrid of the Incident Command System and the tenants of ICLEAR and SMEAC are easily blended into that system. The majority of the work was completed in 2015 and it would not take a big leap for ICS to be fully adopted for Critical Incidents and planned events. That is what ICS was designed for and why every agency in the USA has been mandated, by Presidential decree, to utilize only the ICS. It is time for all first response agencies throughout Canada to do the same.

**Recommendation:**

1. That all Police and First Responder Agencies throughout Canada adopt the Incident Command System for all types of emergency responses and planned events both large and small.
2. That adequate training in all modules of ICS commence at the earliest opportunity.

Respectfully Submitted,



Stephen Mills, Staff Sergeant (Ret.)  
RCMP Veterans Association

Emergency Management Planning Officer (Ret.)  
Emergency Management Office, Nova Scotia

## **Finding of Fact Submission of the RCMP Veterans' Association - Nova Scotia Division**

### **Alert Ready**

Much of the narrative surrounding the Alert Ready System has been based on inaccurate and misinformed testimony by a variety of witnesses. I wish to provide a clearer picture of what Alert Ready is and the operational state of the system in April of 2020.

In 2012 the then S/Sgt Mark Furey sent a briefing note to his superiors regarding what was known then as the Public Alerting System (NAADS). At the time a process had been started by EMO Nova Scotia to put devices in radio stations across the province what would enable broadcast intrusive alerts. The same alerts would show as a red ticker tape on the Weather Network channel on television. The system had severe limitations as the Alert would only be heard or seen by those who had a radio or television on. The addition of cell phone technology was still 7 years away.

In the time period between 2012 and 2019 when the cell phone system was added, no operational Alerts were ever broadcast in Nova Scotia. This included weather, civil emergencies and policing type Alerts. There were Weather and Boil Water alerts sent in Western Provinces but no police type Alerts. The Amber Alert process at the time was a fax based system sent to traditional media.

In 2016 Paul Mason of EMO made a presentation to Supt. Sean Auld of the HRPS, Sgt. Paul Muise of CBRPS and Cpl. Brian Stones of the RCMP asking that these agencies take on the responsibility for broadcasting all emergency alerts. COMM0000992 refers. Following that meeting there was an email exchange between Paul Mason and Supt. Auld who was responding on behalf of the three agencies. COMM0043675 refers. The gist of the email was that any requirement for an alert would remain the responsibility of EMO NS through a request made by a policing agency. The reason for this was that every other province in the country utilized their EMO's or similar entity to perform this function and the three agencies did not feel this was a policing function.

Between 2016 and April of 2020 there were no policies or procedures developed by EMO NS or any of the policing agencies to facilitate an Alert being requested by a policing agency. There was no training for any of the policing agencies in Nova Scotia, nor were there any further presentations given by EMO NS to senior management of any policing agency in Nova Scotia. There are references to the Alert Ready system in meeting minutes and one action item to further the conversation with police agencies but no evidence that those discussion ever took place. COMM0043666, COMM0043680 and COMM0043682 refer.

In 2018 the cell phone capability of Alert Ready began to be tested. In 2019 the cell phone capability of Alert Ready became operational. In that year 5 Amber Alerts were issued in Alberta and 16 Amber Alerts in Ontario. No other policing type of Alerts were broadcast in Canada. The very first Operational Alert since 2012 issued in Nova Scotia occurred on April 10th, 2020 and was a "Stay at Home" order due to Covid. In fact, the first policing type Alert that was ever issued in Canada, other than an Amber Alert, occurred in Nova Scotia on Friday April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020 after the Mass Casualty.

Two Chiefs of Police testified that they were aware of the Alert Ready system and knew how to access the system. Yet neither Chief could articulate who in their organization was aware of the system or that they had put in place any policies or procedures or provided any training to their personnel on how to access the Alert Ready system. There has been no evidence provided to the MCC that any of the foregoing existed at the time of the mass casualty.

During his testimony at the MCC Rodney Legge of EMO NS was asked a question as to how long it would take to issue an alert, and he responded 15 minutes. The context of that question was completely erroneous as Mr. Legge's answer was in response to his belief of how long it would take from the time the fully drafted and approved alert could be inputted into the system and sent.

In reality the complicated process to issue an alert during quiet hours at the time of the mass casualty and as noted in COMM0001001 would suggest significantly longer. There are several layers of authority, the Provincial Coordination Center has to be activated, EMO NS personnel must drive to and assemble in the PCC and the content of the Alert reviewed and then send out if approved. In all likelihood the entire process would take one to two hours at a minimum. In order to update an Alert the process would have to be repeated. During a dynamic and fast moving scenario such as was experienced during the mass casualty, the system would not have worked very well even if the Critical Incident Commanders were aware of the system. It must be kept in mind that the system can be used with text only. There is no capability to broadcast a photo or a video. In spite of the unfortunate time delay in sending the tweet, Twitter enables real time updates and the ability to broadcast photos and video. At the time Twitter was the best platform to inform the public as traditional media would have and did rebroadcast the information.

**Finding of fact recommendation** - The Alert Ready system was in its infancy at the time of the mass casualty. It had never been utilized by any policing agency throughout Canada other than for an Amber Alert. The system was unknown to RCMP members who responded as Critical Incident Commanders or at any level within the RCMP. Nor was it known as an available tool for any other policing agency in Nova Scotia.

As a direct result of the mass casualty, the Alert Ready system is now a fully operational alerting system for police in Nova Scotia. Policy, procedures and appropriate training has been received by all police agencies in the province and this will assist in the future to alert the public regarding policing types of emergency events.

Respectfully submitted,



Stephen Mills, Staff Sergeant (Ret.)  
RCMP Veterans Association

Emergency Management Planning Officer (Ret.)  
Emergency Management Office, Nova Scotia

## SUMMARY

The next mass casualty event will likely not use a police uniforms, or marked police cars. It may not be in a rural area or be the responsibility of the RCMP. There will be other events and we will be back here trying to figure out how to deal with them better once more.

We don't know what the circumstances will be in future mass casualty events that will unfortunately occur in Canada. What we do know is that they will happen, whether they occur in rural or urban settings the policing community must be prepared to respond and investigate. To that end, this commission can put forth ideas and recommendations that will benefit those objectives.

The response to this event was done in the best way possible with the information responding officers had at the time and the resources that the province had given the RCMP at the time. There were mistakes made and things that could have gone better. This will be the same in the future for another force responding as well.

The commission, the public, the media all are judging now based on the very information that the RCMP found in the extensive investigation conducted by them. That information the officers did not have in the hours they were trying to stop the murderer.

The fact is they had very little info at the time, and they did their best. They did stop the murderer. This seems to be lost today because of the huge amount of information the RCMP later uncovered in their investigation of which is now what they are being judged on for their actions before such information was available.

The Mandate of the MCC respecting what the RCMP Veterans can comment on, is the responses of the police agencies and the steps taken to inform the public that was most affected by the incident.

The MCC has identified the gaps in the abilities of the multiple police agencies in Nova Scotia involved in this case. The mistakes made by these agencies have been identified. A broken policing model in Nova Scotia has been identified.

The solution to improve policing in Nova Scotia and to respond to mass casualty events in the future, is staring us all in the face. The obvious is a more nationalized policing model not a broken-up mess of local forces and regional police forces all working at different levels and with very different abilities, capabilities, expertise, specialized experts and equipment. That is where we were when this incident happened, and we are today, and we can not have that any longer.

We can, with some very simple changes get a model that brings our policing in Nova Scotia to new higher levels with seamless interagency interoperability. It would be a Quebec national style of policing model which is also seen internationally as the answer to modernizing policing and getting the best bang for your buck. The RCMP contract in Nova Scotia has us already  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way to that model now.

To make this happen the province must take the responsibility for policing back and remove it from the municipalities. The province must also fund policing properly. Other wise we will pay more, duplicate services and diminish capacity in the broad definition, which includes not only the number of police officers but also specialized sections, specialized equipment, ability to bring people in from across the country to help in major events, ability to be on the same standards and training and much more.

In creating recommendations at the MCC many things must be considered but focusing on a policing model requires very in depth looks at the items found in the MCC as well as looking at the needs in policing arising from this incident as well as the ever-changing needs in policing.

MCC has heard so much from so many on many matters. They have heard from many on the need for changes in policing. We would caution that many who have given input on policing changes are focused on their individual agenda, knowledge of policing. This approach creates an environment that is not conducive to looking at the things that will make the needed change and solve the problems in our broken policing model in Nova Scotia.

The participant organizations are grouped under the following in the MCC.

Victim advisory organizations

Health-related organizations

Firearm organizations

Gender-based organizations

Police-related organizations

We would add one more to this which the Academic based research on policing as well.

In that list, all but the policing and academic based organizations have knowledge of what is needed to improve policing in Nova Scotia and fix the problems identified by the MCC.

There is a need to listen to all the organizations because they provide insight into what roles could be moved away from the police and to where the experts reside. They have provided information on the need for more open information sharing between all organizations and agencies to be more pro-active on preventing these crimes we address here in the MCC. This means those organizations not familiar with what police do, need and will need add a great deal

of value but when it comes to finding a new model of policing for Nova Scotia, they hold smaller pieces of the puzzle.

Our observation from the MCC has identified several agendas and the ones most concerning are in the police-related organizations.

IN the policing world we would identify it as empire building. People focused on building their status and power rather than on fixing the problem and providing real solutions that work and Nova Scotia can afford.

As police veterans we hold no power, we have no empire, or ranks or status. We are retired Nova Scotians who want the best policing we can have with the most capabilities and at a cost we who are on fixed incomes can afford.

Our approach to the MCC has always been focused on those ideas. We came here to offer some history on policing in Nova Scotia. To offer expertise we gained in our careers on policing. We came to offer what needs to change in the RCMP from the inside perspective not as an outsider.

The RCMP Vets Association is very concerned with the idea of not moving to a national styled policing model. The Truro (NSCPA) proposed model of removing the RCMP replacing them with several regional police agencies scares the hell out of us.

We have demonstrated and given evidence and information to the MCC that shows the extremely high cost of municipal police agencies here and the hidden costs placed in other budgets in the municipalities. We have identified the lack of specialized sections and experts as well as capacity to bring in resources from other parts of Canada to help. We have identified the lack of ability of municipal agencies to be able to travel internationally on investigations, and so many other issues.

If we go to a national type of model like Quebec, we solve all of these. Surete du Quebec provide all the special sections to municipal police when they need it. This reduces the costs, duplication of services, equipment purchases, special teams etc. These will cost Nova Scotia billions if we go to a regional policing model over the Quebec style.

We have the model  $\frac{3}{4}$  or more in place with the RCMP contract. All that must take place is the province change the contract, take over policing in the province and make this happen.

We were floored when the lawyer for the province said they are re-writing the policing standards. This will not solve our problem because the municipal police are tied to those not the RCMP. The RCMP on the other hand can not march to a lower standard for legal reasons. The fix is to apply the RCMP standards to all police in the province. Just like Quebec, Scotland, Netherlands, Finland have all done. The province just has to step up and get the contract re-

written and then pay to get the proper number of RCMP in the province meeting national police averages.

We have stated before is the model we propose perfect. NO, it is not but it is far better and easier to implement than that proposed by the NSCPA (Truro PD) and it is a lot less expensive than their proposal as well.

If the public was aware of the loss of expertise, specialised sections and equipment, the costs of buying cars, buildings, more police officers, multiple ERT, Dive, Ident, teams, etc. They would not support such a broken up, American style model as proposed by the NSCPA. The public must be educated on this.

If the public were asked just a few simple questions such as, would you like access to 200 or 30 specialized sections in policing? They will say 200. Would you like to buy armoured vehicles and helicopter or use the ones that exist now? They would say use what we have.

The public is not informed, and they must be.

The idea of regional policing over RCMP contracting is exactly what this mass casualty event should tell us never to go to a multiple police agency model if you want to have the expertise, the equipment, the resources and the seamless working together. A group of regional police agencies is the exact opposite of what this event should be teaching us. This will meet the needs and objectives that this commission has before it.