

From: [Corporate Services](#)
To: [Sarah Holloway](#)
Subject: FW: VicPD 2023 budget and line items for attention
Date: March-13-23 1:02:24 PM

Copy of correspondence forwarded to:
Sarah, Deputy Corporate Officer – For Late Agenda Item COTW Mar 13

From: Barb Desjardins <Barbara.Desjardins@esquimalt.ca>
Sent: March-13-23 7:48 AM
To: Corporate Services <Corporate.Services@esquimalt.ca>
Subject: Fwd: VicPD 2023 budget and line items for attention

Begin forwarded message:

From: Stephen Harrison <[REDACTED]>
Date: March 12, 2023 at 11:10:46 PM PDT
To: Barb Desjardins <Barbara.Desjardins@esquimalt.ca>, Ken Armour <Ken.Armour@esquimalt.ca>, Andrea Boardman <Andrea.Boardman@esquimalt.ca>, Duncan Cavens <Duncan.Cavens@esquimalt.ca>, Jacob Helliwell <Jacob.Helliwell@esquimalt.ca>, Tim Morrison <tim.morrison@esquimalt.ca>, Darlene Rotchford <Darlene.Rotchford@esquimalt.ca>
Subject: VicPD 2023 budget and line items for attention

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Dear councillors,

In light of tomorrow's budget discussion, I am writing to oppose the provisional 2023 budget prepared by the police board. Chief Manak has portrayed VicPD's 10% budget increase request as both "status quo" and "lean." Both claims are false. I have provided some background as well as some ideas for some specific line items or amounts council may wish to reject.

As an Esquimalt resident, I would also like to say that Esquimalt's focus on police resources dedicated to Esquimalt is disappointing, as is the limited scope of a review of alternative policing options. Esquimalt has an opportunity to move away from traditional policing. Council should not be looking to entrench a replacement.

Reasons to oppose a 10% VicPD budget increase

1. VicPD is over funded and over resourced.

- According to the [Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General](#), VicPD is the most expensive municipal police department in the province per capita.
- Funding VicPD cost \$570 per person in 2021, while the average for a B.C. municipal police department was \$378. The proposed \$69.5 million budget would cost \$611 per person.
- According to Statistics Canada, VicPD has more officers per capita than any other stand-alone municipal police force in the country, for areas with more than 100,000 people.
- While VicPD is in the centre of the capital region, its policing requirements are not as unique as the department portrays.
- In 2021, VicPD had more officers per capita than 82% of American police departments serving areas with more than 100,000 people. VicPD has more civilian employees than at least 78% of those departments (Source: [FBI, Law Enforcement Employees Data, 2021](#)).

2. There is no correlation between police funding and crime ([link to one summary article](#)).

- By claiming the community is unsafe despite having one of the best staffed police departments in Canada and the United States, VicPD and the police board are making the case that police budget increases do not keep the community safe.
- Funding police as a response to poverty and visible mental health crises will not undo the choices that left people in poverty and without access to resources.
- Police budgets can be reallocated to assist those individuals through housing and other supports to keep those people safe.

3. Funding VicPD harms residents.

- Funding VicPD harms people indirectly, by diverting resources —\$69.5 million — from supports such as housing.
- An increased police budget and more officers will result in more direct harm, not less, to people in need of supports.

- VicPD kills people in crisis, including Lisa Rauch, Rhett Mutch, and a still-unnamed man on September 12, 2021.
- VicPD killed John Rice during an arrest, blaming the discredited phenomenon “excited delirium.”
- In 2020, VicPD used weapons to threaten at least 303 people, including at least 49 people who were in mental health distress.
- In 2020, VicPD used weapons on at least 59 people, including at least 27 people who were in mental health distress.

Line items to reject

In light of the police board’s request that the city identify specific line items to reject, I would suggest council reject all proposed new spending. However, here are some specific suggestions. Note that these cuts would still not reduce VicPD to a “status quo” budget.

1. Body Worn Camera Pilot Project – \$150,000 (2550 4822)

- Bodycams do not keep people safe, and it is not necessary to fund a bodycam pilot that will lead to a program with increased annual expenses for no community benefit.
- A VicPD-specific pilot is also unnecessary in the context of other departments using bodycams or engaging in pilots.

2. Cafeteria upgrades – \$150,000 or more (50459)

- This represents a new expense and can be cut.
- VicPD should identify how it plans to spend the requested \$250,000, as the total amount could be reduced by more than \$150,000.

3. New officers – \$425,000

- As noted in the background above, VicPD has the most officers per capita in Canada for areas of a similar population, and more officers than 4/5ths of comparable departments in the United States.

- Money for officers can be better spent on community resources.

4. New civilian positions \$322,250

- As noted in the background above, VicPD has a high number of civilian staff compared to other departments.
- None of the identified business case risks in the budget mention safety.
- This money can be better spent on community resources.

5. Professional Services – \$260,000 (2510 4230)

- VicPD is requesting a significant increase to fund in-house mental health services. As noted at the joint board and council meeting, while mental health resources are important, VicPD employees enjoy significant benefits.
- This money could be spent on community mental health resources.

6. Computer Forensics Support Services – \$150,000

- As identified by VicPD, the choice to outsource this service represents an additional cost.

7. Public Affairs budget – \$133,685 (2524 4016; 2524 4102)

- VicPD appears to fund approximately four public affairs employees.
- Between 2015 and 2019 VicPD averaged 207 press releases a year. According to VicPD's community dashboard, its number of press releases increased to 507 in 2020 and 517 in 2021.
- Funding the promotion of VicPD and its portrayal of the community as unsafe does not increase community safety. VicPD's Public Affairs department stokes fear and hostility towards our neighbours.
- Upon VicPD's disclosure of amounts spent per employee in the Public Affairs section, Council can request the elimination of the

amounts needed to fund one or more positions.

- Eliminating one position may result in approximately \$133,685 in savings across Salaries – Civilian (2524 4016) and Benefits – Civilian (2524 4102).
- Council may also consider eliminating the police (2524 4004; 2524 4104) or exempt (2524 4010) positions from the Public Affairs section.

8. Police board conference travel – \$10,000 (2521 4116)

- The board is currently planning to send members to conferences in Nelson, Halifax, and St. John's. Only one in-person trip for one board member is required this year (to Nelson) as that member is the current BC Association of Police Board president.
- The budget could be cut back from \$15,000 to \$5,000, which would still allow one annual trip and virtual attendance at other conferences, which is increasingly an option.

9. School resource officers – \$301,520 (2571 4004)

- VicPD ended the school resource officer program several years ago and reallocated the positions to “beat and bike.”
- It is inappropriate to continue to request line item funding for a program that does not operate.
- Additionally, the school liaison officer program is harmful and council can require its removal from the budget on those grounds.

10. Officer bonus program – \$240,000

In November 2021, the Police Board approved a hiring incentive of \$20,000 each for up to 12 officers (\$240,000 total). The Board voted to extend it in November 2022, for an additional \$240,000. VicPD says it has been funding this program out of unused salary (“salary slippage”). VicPD provided no justification for why it settled on offering \$20,000 per officer. While VicPD said they would evaluate whether to extend the program, VicPD and the board published no evaluation prior to renewing it and simply stated the program was “successful.” It may not have been necessary to attract officers. It has also not, to my knowledge, been subjected to council scrutiny.

VicPD would have to clarify what line item this is represented in or best represented in (e.g. is it 2560 4004, Patrol Salaries – Police; 6035, Contingency, etc.) It is possible the single year budget impact would only be \$120,000; however, it could be stopped.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Stephen Harrison
Esquimalt