

## Crime bureau, staff causes 8.9% rise in police budget

By ANI PEDERIAN  
Herald Staff

Although it's a hefty 8.9 per cent more than last year's budget, the Halton Regional Police force's 1986 budget was approved last week by the region's administration and finance committee.

The \$20,911,800 budget still has to be approved by Halton Region's council. That's expected to take place today (Wednesday) when regional councillors meet for their regular council meeting.

The police budget adds another 19 people to the police staff: 10 uniformed officers, eight full and three part-time civilians. The additional staff are needed for seven programs Chief James Harding wants to initiate or improve this year.

The Chief has asked for \$155,100 for a major crime bureau with two sergeants and two detective constables. This new program impacts on the 1986 police budget substantially.

The new bureau will investigate major crime, drug and morality related cases, including five unsolved homicides in Halton. Its staff will also talk to high school students on drug and alcohol abuse.

Instead of early spring, as originally planned, the major crime bureau will get underway in October, in order to lessen its impact

on the 1986 police budget.

The police chief also got four uniformed sergeants for the Oakville station, who will cost \$79,850 to the region in 1986. They'll be hired in October.

Chief Harding is getting four civilians for the records bureau at a cost of \$91,500 for records data entry. He said the records bureau is having difficulties now with both manual and technical systems to cope with.

These four records bureau staff will be on for 12 months, three of them are records clerks and one is a clerk typist.

Four more civilians to be hired this summer will serve as supervisory staff in the communications department, meaning three uniformed officers can go back to patrol work.

This step is the only cost saving one of all seven programs the force has asked for. It works out to a \$8,600 saving. The civilians will be accountable for the technical operation of equipment, information that's often lost with the changing uniform supervision, the Chief reports.

Temporary staff to monitor, transcribe and report on authorized interceptions of private communications were approved in the 1986 budget to the tune of \$10,000. The intelligence bureau is involved in pro-

active policing.

There's also been \$6,000 allotted in the 1986 budget for a temporary fitness co-ordinator. This part-time fitness co-ordinator will promote physical fitness among the police and maintain a fitness file on participants in the program, as well as do physical testing of all cadet and constable applicants.

Right now, 211 employees are involved in a fitness program. The force employs 420.

### Crime reduced

Despite an annual growth rate of 3,400 new residents, Halton's crime rate has been reduced by 31 per cent over the last four years, the region's chief of police said last week.

"Since 1981, in each and every year, the force has been successful in reducing the incidence of crime," Chief James Harding told members of the region's administration and finance committee. "The 31 per cent reduction in crime rate, makes Halton one of the safest communities in Canada."

He attributed the drop in crimes to the efforts of his officers and citizens of Halton.

From 361 police officers in 1980, when the population was 247,311, Halton now has a Force of 429 officers and a population of 264,498.

This translates into a ratio of one officer per 617 persons. In 1980, the ratio was one officer per 685 persons.

With his 1986 budget, the Chief is asking for 44 officers or a ratio of one officer per 606 persons. That budget is expected to get regional council approval today (Wednesday).

For the Halton taxpayer, policing came with a bill lower than what the neighboring forces charged.

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