



"If we do this ... we gut this organization."

-PETER CAMPBELL

Cops want a lot more funding

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the cost of provincial downloading — works out to \$11 more per average Halton household, or \$194 total per year for policing as opposed to \$183 in 1997. After trimming about \$350,000, this is down a fraction from the 9.3 per cent budget increase presented to the board previously.

Chief Campbell explained he will seek money from the provincial Special Transition Fund to cover the additional \$450,000 cost of patrolling and enforcement on Highways 5 and 25 transferred to Halton from Queen's Park.

With salaries and benefits the largest component of police expenditures, Chief Campbell explained his budgetary hands are somewhat tied: 5.8 per cent of the 8.3

per cent increase stems from negotiated settlements.

Having said that, the chief launched into his hypothetical cuts that would adversely influence the "priority functions" of police, namely to patrol, respond and investigate. A variety of other mandated Police Services Act functions would likewise be compromised, he said.

Layoffs of uniformed and civilian personnel were what he saw as the most vexing impacts, a move that would necessitate a hearing before the Ontario Civilian Commission on Police Services.

Other proposed cuts included seven of 11 education services officers, reducing all office hours, reducing the Intelligence Unit and re-organizing the Criminal

Investigation Bureau.

"If we lay off all these people, we don't need a recruitment officer," said Chief Campbell, who explained that with these additional officers in the field, nine new constables would be let go.

Patrolling the new highways would be done with existing personnel.

"We're spreading our resources thinner," said Chief Campbell.

Other deep cuts he outlined, but did not recommend, ranged from eliminating prisoner escort officers and reducing patrols on highways to dropping the pipe band and honour guard, as well as canceling the force's 25th anniversary activities.

Revenue recovery, such as increasing false alarm fees and charging for use of the children's Safety Village program in Oakville, might also have to be considered, he said.

Halton's Region's crime rate per capita is the lowest in Canada for municipalities of more than 100,000.

While no concrete evidence exists indicating Halton's proactive — rather than reactive — measures account for this, Chief Campbell and other board members said they'd rather not find out at the community's expense.

The planned hiring of four constables should stay in, said Chief Campbell, to stop the further slide of an officer-to-population ratio that is already in trouble.

Mr. Taylor refuted that idea and said he preferred assurances first that such personnel were "absolutely essential."

Board member Jack Brewer said police personnel should not be penalized because crime rates are going down.

"I think the budget presented has been shaved of all extras that can be shaved," said board member Kelly Culin.

Added member Tony Gabriel: "We would be slipping if we were even thinking of cutbacks at this time."

Crime Stoppers OF HALTON

Cops hunt a gunman

Police in Milton seek information that could help identify the lone gunman responsible for a hold up in the downtown area a week ago.

At 8:45 p.m. Thursday, February 26, a man entered M&M Meats on Main Street at Ontario Street. He approached the clerk and demanded money from the till. When the victim hesitated, the suspect produced a handgun and repeated his demand.

After receiving a small amount from the register, the culprit fled through the rear door. He ran south across Pearl Street and was last seen running between the Seniors' Centre and the library.

The person sought by police was described as male, white, 20 to 30 years of age, six feet tall, with a medium build. He wore a black ski mask and light-coloured clothing.

If you happened to pass by the area that night and saw something, or if you think you can suggest a possible suspect, Crime Stoppers would like to hear from you.

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