



ALBERTA FEDERATION
OF POLICE ASSOCIATIONS

ALBERTA POLICE BEAT

The Official Voice of the Municipal Police Associations in Alberta

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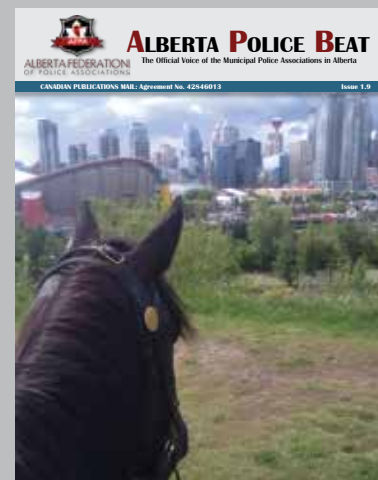
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From the President

Johnny Orr

Hello and welcome to the newest edition of Alberta Police Beat, the official publication of the Alberta Federation of Police Association. As always, I would like to thank Darryl Hubich from the Medicine Hat Police Association. As the editor of the magazine, he puts in a ton of work to bring our members the best publication possible!

I have been fortunate enough to serve AFPA for the past six years, as a Director, Vice-President, and now President. I will be concluding my two-year term as President following our AGM, which will take place in Calgary in May and my time at AFPA will come to a close. As I sat down to write this article, I realized this will likely be the last time I will do so.

As I sit and reflect on the past six years with AFPA, I have come to realize how proud I am of the work that has been accomplished by the hard-working people who have filled various positions in AFPA, as well as all of our member organizations.

I wanted to use this opportunity to provide you a quick update on some of the current initiatives being undertaken by AFPA.

It has been a busy year for us so far. By the time you are reading this, the Special Forces Pension Plan (SFPP) will have completed a complete overhaul of their governance structure. Under the new structure, those of us with "skin in the game" will have say on what happens to the security of our financial futures.

AFPA has been discussing governance changes to the SFPP for years. Under the old structure, the Minister of Finance filled the role of trustee of

our plan. This meant that in order for us to change anything substantive, we needed the approval of the Provincial Government. This was always a problem for me, given that they were not involved in the plan, other than this critical role. They do not contribute to the plan, nor do they represent anyone who is a beneficiary of the plan; yet they were in complete control.

The other major flaw with this structure was that Governments and Ministers change often. It took years to make changes and whenever we thought we were close, an election would come along and the whole regime would change (aka; we started over).

Last year, the Government of Alberta advised us that they were going to finally change this flawed structure. Their initial plan, however, did not meet our needs. It was a very large and cumbersome structure, which would have seen us lumped in with much larger Public-Sector Pension plans in the province. I have no doubt that our members interests would not have been adequately represented in such a structure.

We reached out to the government, who were very responsive to our concerns. Myself, as well as representatives of our member organizations attended meetings with the Finance Minister's staff as well as members from the Premier's office and outlined our proposal for a more suitable governance structure, where we had a say and real control in our futures.

We worked with Liz Doughty, the Director of the SFPP as well as members of government and came to an agreement on a structure that, I believe, will allow us to gain control of the plan and

its future. This is not to say there is not oversight. We have some of the most experienced pension experts in the field, who are advising our new Pension Boards and there are still robust protections in place to ensure the security of our plan for decades to come.

On another front, we have been working closely with the Solicitor General's office in relation to Police Act reform. It has been widely reported that this antiquated piece of legislation is in desperate need of change, and we agree. AFPA authored a position paper outlining the changes to the Police Act we feel are required. We have consulted with Government, police commissions, as well as executive members from the AACP in relation to this important issue, and the work is ongoing. The public consultations will wrap up in the spring, and we will see what happens!

While these are two of the major projects AFPA has been working on in the past year, I think that some of our most important work happens during the day to day interactions we have with our member Associations. This work has amplified since we hired Howard Burns as our executive director a couple of years ago. Howard has proven to be an invaluable resource to our members. When a member Association comes to us with an issue they have not dealt with before, we can assist by advising them, based on the experience of all our member associations. These issues include discipline, legal issues, negotiations, benefits, human rights issues and more. This is only made possible because of the hard work of the directors who work tirelessly to make working conditions

better for their members.

I am very proud of the work that has been done over the past several years and I have no doubt that you will continue to be very well represented into

the future!

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank all of you that I have had the honour of representing over the past several years. I wish you all the best! ■

Stay Safe,

Johnny Orr



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From the Vice President

Michael Elliott

Stress: *A state or mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances. This is the definition of stress.* To first responders, we all know stress, but we would not define it as such. We live in a society which if we have an issue, we call someone for help. Feeling sick...we call an ambulance who will take you to see a nurse and physician. Have a fire... we call the fire department. A family member is lost the forest during a hike... we call search and rescue. You are involved in a collision... call the police.

We are grateful we live in a society which have these services to help us. What do they all have in common? They all involve first responders who will help you but are employed in professions which cause stress. Stress can be cumulative as first responders attend call after call with little to no time or avenues to decompress. First responders feel the affects of seeing, smelling, and hearing the calls when responding. First responders see death and injuries. First responders smell the blood and decaying bodies. First responders hear the screams of injured people or the cries of the loved ones.

How do a high number of us respond or cope? We develop anxiety, mood swings, depression, panic attacks, digestive issues, sleep issues, the list is long and wide.

I can personally attest to the stressors of the profession. I was diagnosed with anxiety and depression which was related to the calls for service I attended as a Police Officer. With help from my peers, counselling and

my physician, I have recovered and have developed coping mechanisms to assist me when things begin to feel overwhelming. I pray no other first responder will down that dark path as I did.

In larger cities such as Edmonton and Calgary there are programs and personnel available to assist some of our first responders. In smaller towns there are little to no services available. How do volunteers acquire help? We have thousands of Albertans whom work their regular jobs throughout their day and volunteer at the fire department, search and rescue, police services, the list goes on. Whether you work in a large agency in Edmonton or Calgary or you volunteer in a small town in rural Alberta, our first responders all deserve help when they need it after a traumatic incident. Alberta requires a network to help everyone.

In late 2018 the Alberta Critical Incident Provincial Network (ACIPN) was created. ACIPN is a peer led, peer driven network of first responders for first responders, whose volunteers are trained in best practices and deliver support. We were created to provide 24/7 assistance and provide training and the sustainability of peer driven, peer support program for public safety personnel.

ACIPN would like to be a catalyst of change and a new approach for all Albertans which can be a role model for the rest of Canada to emulate. ACIPN is a non-profit counsel which all funding is funnelled towards helping all first responders. We are calling on the Alberta Provincial Government to become a leader in

Canada and providing funding for this program. We are also calling on our citizens to ask the government to help our first responders, who help you, our citizens.

For more information on this worthwhile cause, please visit www.abcism.ca or call 780-953-CISM (2476)

Our go fund me page is located at <https://www.gofundme.com/alberta-critical-incident-provincial-network>

On a final note, I wish to thank the previous and current board members of the Alberta Federation of Police Association for their dedication and desire to help all Police members and their communities across our province. I will be stepping down in May 2019 as the Vice President. It is time for new members to bring new ideas and new energy to AFPA. I will be continuing with my roles and responsibilities within the Edmonton Police Association, Canadian Police Association and the Alberta Critical Incident Provincial Network. It has been an honour and privilege to represent the membership across the province since my first election to AFPA in 2009. The AFPA board members are more than just colleagues, they are my friends. Thank you. ■

Michael Elliott
Vice President - AFPA



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From the Secretary/ Treasurer

Marc Gaumont

Greetings from the Windy South! As I write this article on January 2, 2019 the winds are at 54 km with gusts to 85 km and we are under a wind warning...so it must be true! I was also told long ago that you don't shovel wind, so there is a definite benefit.

As we flip the calendar to 2019, I am drawn to an article on PoliceOne.Com written by Alexandra Wessling titled, "5 Agency improvements police officers want to see in 2019". #5 on the list is "An end to the recruitment crisis". This is definitely in my top 5 and our Police Service will welcome 11 new Police Officers in 2019 and will also welcome several CPO's that will take over some of the tasks currently being done by Police Officers and assist with the Downtown Policing. We look forward to those members joining our ranks! #4 on the list, "Equipment Upgrades". I believe this is extremely important for our members to have equipment that is up to date and functioning correctly for when it's needed, it's really needed! 2019 will see our Police Service move to a new Pistol for our Members, the third time this has happened in my career and it sounds like a great move. Our Police Service has also implemented "Smart Squad" and for the other members in the Province, this is an Application Based Technology on our iPhone's that allow for access to our Police Reporting System and to allow for digital note taking and audio or video statement taking.

Moving on to #3, "Changes in Public Perception". This one is a tough

one for police and never has public scrutiny been so high. We have a tough job and will be forever under the microscope. Policing has changed in the 22 years that I have seen it and will continue to evolve and grow. A quote from the article states, "[I'd like to see] departments brave enough to educate the public on the realities of the profession instead of cowering in silence". A large task, I wonder if the public would want to know the realities of our profession?

Getting to #2 we find, "Mental Health Support and Destigmatization". Police officer suicides rates continue to climb and there are three times as many officers that die by suicide than in the line of duty. Mental Health support has continued to grow within the police service for having support in place for those that reach out for it. That first step will always be the most difficult, but in the end, there is nothing to lose for trying. We owe it to ourselves to keep our mental health in check and there should never be a stigma for mental health checks. Most recently our police service brought forward Mandatory Wellness Evaluations in Specialized Areas as a part of the Road to Mental Readiness campaign. Gone are the days of rubbing some dirt on it!

And finally, we get to #1, "New Year, New Gear: Ditch Duty Belts". There are studies that support the need for Load Bearing Vests. We need to get some gear off the belt and onto the vest, we need to have that weight spread out and

move everything off the lower back. Too many tools on the belt are creeping their way onto the back and that in turn drives that tool into the members back during their shift while they drive in their car or just move around. Studies have shown that load-bearing vests are ergonomically superior to duty belts and can help limit hip and back problems. Careers are 25 to 35 years, so anytime we can have technology save our backs, then it's something that should be embraced and not ignored.

Thanks so much to PoliceOne.Com for the great article and thank you for taking the time to read mine. ■

Marc Gaumont
Secretary/Treasurer
AFPA



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From the Director/Editor

Darryl Hubich

Thank you for reading the spring 2019 edition of the Alberta Police Beat magazine. Since the last APB issue, I made the extremely difficult decision to not seek re-election for my Vice President spot on the MHPA board in our December 2018 election. This was an agonizing decision for me as I truly have a passion for the well-being of all members. It was because of this dedication that I began to feel, more and more, that with every new internal investigation or personal issue that I was assisting members with, that it was becoming more difficult to separate those issues from my own personal and work life. I felt as though I needed to remove myself, at least for the time being, from some of the 'behind the scenes' info that you become privy to as an executive member and try to "dis-connect" a little from the information overload.

As I write this, we are still in the midst of an intense cold stretch in Alberta. Being held up indoors for the better part of February gave me occasion to reflect on my association experience over the last decade.

I remember the intense learning curve when I was first elected as a Director with the MHPA in 2010. Within 6 months, as I was just getting comfortable with my MHPA portfolio, I found myself accepting a nomination to the AFPA board.

I learned very quickly how lucky I was to be in Medicine Hat, when I heard the term "candy-land" at my first AFPA meeting. Even though we had local issues that we were always dealing with, the rest of the province seemed to have a "utopian" view of us, believing that our problems were

so insignificant that they would barely register if brought up in other Services/Associations. As I reflect now, I believe part of that assumption came from a long standing history of our positive negotiated settlements with our city, excellent working conditions, and at least to some degree, luck. To a certain extent, I also attributed this expectation of outside members to the fact that the MHPA tended to deal with issues internally and not seek input from others who may have experienced similar problems. One of the accomplishments that I am proudest of during my AFPA time is working with the board to build a network of knowledgeable and reliable connections throughout Alberta and Western Canada.

In the years that have flown by since I became the Vice President of Administration with the MHPA in 2013, I have been extremely fortunate to have met and worked with several people across this province on various matters. These people have been invaluable as the MHPA found ourselves having to navigate through some difficult WCB issues, an increased number of LERB hearings/ASIRT investigations, serious criminal charges against members, and our first (and then second OIS) in a generation. Without the help of these other provincial associations during some particularly trying times I am certain we would not have had the reasonable and fair results that we ended up achieving in most cases.

Although this list is not exhaustive, I would like to specifically thank Mike Dungey (rtd), Bob Walsh (rtd), Shane Kisinger, Paul Wozney, Tony Simioni (rtd), Tom Kramer (rtd), Mike Lamore,

Mike Danyluik, and Jim Shymka for their critical assistance over the years. I was fortunate enough to be invited to Bob's retirement celebration in Edmonton in November 2018. Bob's experience and knowledge will never be duplicated but more than the loss of his labor expertise, we will all miss Bob's presence at meetings throughout Canada as he was always a welcoming and friendly face to anybody in the room. I consider myself a better person for having met you Bob, best of luck in your retirement!!

I would be remiss if I did not also thank the many past and current MHPA board members for all of the assistance and guidance you have given me over the last several years. I walk away from the MHPA knowing that our members' interests are in the capable hands of an executive that is dedicated, knowledgeable, and who care deeply about its' members.

As this issue is being distributed we are still discussing whether or not I will stay on the AFPA board as the representative for the MHPA or if that privilege will go to someone from the current MHPA board. Regardless of how that plays out, I want to thank every police executive member for doing what you do day in and day out. To Mike Elliott, John Orr, Rayan Najjar, Marc Gaumont, Cory Huculak, Chris Young, and Howard Burns, I appreciate the relationship we have built between our locals and the successes that AFPA has been able to accomplish in the last few years (pre-pay gas legislation and a more sustainable AFPA funding model to name a couple). I am proud to have been able to work with you closely over the years and to call

each of you a friend!

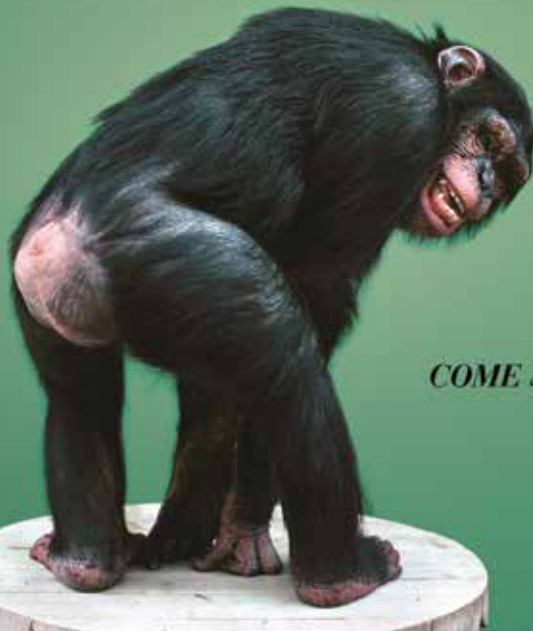
To those that continue to work for your members, please remember that every minute that you find yourself doing something on behalf of your association is a minute away from other important things you could be doing with your family, your friends, or for yourself. I want you all to know that the sacrifices you make for the well-being

of all of us and the assistance that you provide does not go unnoticed when members find themselves in a difficult situation.

I will leave you with one simple request; Whether you are a brand new officer, a retired member, or a member of an Association executive, we all need to do our best to look after and be there for one another whenever any-

one of us needs a hand. Often times stress can be relieved by just knowing that someone cares enough to listen when we are having a bad day. ■

Stay Safe.
Darryl Hubich
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From the Director

Chris Young

True Effective Leadership - It's Not Just What We Need, It's What We Crave!

With a new Chief on the horizon for the Calgary Police Service, I felt it fitting to write about something that I believe has been lacking in CPS as well as many other Services for a very long time. That being true, effective leadership. I have often felt that the Service tends to train, promote and make good managers, but often falls short, or misses the mark on true effective leadership. Don't get me wrong - I have encountered great leaders on the job in my 15 year career. We have a high number of informal leaders also. However, the "managers" seem to far out-number the "leaders" when it comes to the formal leadership roles and ranks. What's the difference you might ask? Well let's look at the definitions of both.

Manage is defined as: **To be responsible for controlling or organizing someone or something, especially a business or employees:**

Has she had any experience of managing large projects?

He's not very good at managing people.

His job involved managing large investment funds.

When you have a job as well as children to look after, you have to learn how to manage your time.

And **Lead** is defined as: **To control a group of people, country or situation. To show the way to a group of people. To take someone somewhere, by going with them. To show the way by going in front:**

Gandhi and Martin Luther King both led campaigns of civil disobedience to

try to persuade the authorities to change their policies.

The opposition leader led a very forceful attack on the government in parliament this morning.

She knew the way, so she led them.

He led the investigation.

Both are similar, however there are some philosophical differences between the two in my opinion. The manage philosophy is administrative driven and appears to be more geared toward retail associated businesses and organizations. From the definition it appears that the "manage style" does not invest as much personally as the "lead style" or philosophy. In our line of work, that being policing, those that are in a formal leadership role/rank have to invest personally in the Service and it's initiatives otherwise they run the risk of their subordinates not respecting them or buying into what they want to accomplish. The lead philosophy appears to carry more risk to the leader themselves as to effectively lead you must expose yourself and put yourself front and centre to your people and the organization.

When it comes to issues that an organization may face, which style do you prefer? Take this example:

Question: "What are you doing about that issue/problem?"

Answer: "We're managing. We're doing our best and hoping to find solutions. The answers are out there and I have no doubt that we'll find them. We just have to work hard."

Same question: "What are you doing about that issue/problem?"

Different answer: "We're working together. We are a tenacious organization. I believe we are leaders in our field and we're working on effective solutions now. We'll be implementing these solutions soon and I believe other organizations will be looking to follow our example in regards to these types of situations."

One answer is clearly from a manager and the other is clearly from a leader. Policing is a profession that requires leadership. It's something that has been a discussion topic for most of North American law enforcement agencies recently. I read an article on PoliceONE.com the other day on this very subject. It's entitled: **12 Traits of Effective Police Leaders** and it's written by a married couple - an Althea Olson and Officer Mike Wasilewski. Olson is a social worker and Wasilewski is a Police Officer working in the Chicago area. In their article Olson and Wasilewski state: "Effective leadership has the power to make or break a department." They mention how officers need to be informal leaders and leaders in the community. They even have a leadership challenge for officers and teams. This is something I very much agree with. We all need to be leaders especially during challenging times. Our families, the community, our teams and our partners all count on our ability to be a leader. It's easy to give in to negativity and let a dysfunctional attitude trickle in. Part of being an effective leader is to do what is right, not what is easy. We need to step up and be leaders even when it seems that

our actual leaders are incapable of doing so.

The article also talks about the importance of supervisors, and people of the higher ranks examining their own behaviour and attitudes in regards to effective leadership.

There is an excellent quote from the author of the book *The 5 levels of Leadership*, Josh Maxwell, in the article:

“The bottom line is that an invitation to lead people is an invitation to make a difference. Good leadership changes individual’s lives. It forms teams. It builds organizations. It impacts communities. It has the potential to impact the world.”

I couldn’t agree more with Mr. Maxwell. Effective leadership is a difference maker. Olson and Wasilewski also mention that “effective leaders focus on developing a culture of rewards versus a culture of punishment.” They list the following traits as a necessity to accomplishing this culture change:

1. **“Live their values”** - They describe effective leaders as having a strong moral compass. That they follow a code of ethics specifically on how they treat people and that their behaviour backs up what they say.
2. **“Realize position does not define leadership”** - In my opinion, this is a big one that CPS and other Services can learn from. Olson and Wasilewski mention that a position or rank alone does not define leadership. They explain that it is often those that show an inability to work well with others that rely on title or rank to influence subordinates. They talk about these types of people missing that leadership is about working with others and often failing as leaders because of this.
3. **“Set goals for interpersonal skill development”** - Here they explain that personal development needs ongoing attention just like hard, tactical or officer safety skills do. Effective leaders are able to identify personality strengths and continue to attempt to make them stronger.

They identify their weaknesses and set improvement goals and work on such things as becoming better listeners, communicators and treating others with more respect.

4. **“Say ‘Thank You’ often”** - They explain that it’s important for leaders to appreciate their people and acknowledge their strengths and efforts by encouraging or thanking them. Acknowledgement and gratitude of good work goes a long way.
5. **“Admit their mistakes”** - Olson and Wasilewski explain that an approach with humility rather than justification and defensiveness is best regarding leadership and mistakes. Taking ownership is truly effective in terms of leadership in my opinion. The idea is to move forward rather than stay fixated on “blame and shame” according to the article.
6. **“Are mentors and coaches”** - The idea here is that leaders encourage their people to achieve their highest potential. This philosophy is not just for the high ranking people in the organization, but the entire organization as it “minimizes necessity at the most basic operational level.”
7. **“Accept influence”** - A good leader never stops learning and takes the opportunity to learn and grow from anything and anyone. They realize they are not the smartest person in the room.
8. **“Hold people accountable”** - They explain that leaders need to lead in challenging and tough situations. They need to be able to properly “negotiate conflict with authority and decisiveness without degrading another person.” They also hold all to account despite position or rank. This includes holding themselves accountable.
9. **“Delegate to the expert in the room”** - This touches on ego and ambition and that a leader should not allow these things to hurt or affect the culture of the organization. “A true leader knows how to follow first and then steps up to lead when

there is a gap in the knowledge or skill level.”

10. **“Vision cast goals”** - They explain the ability to set clear and concise goals for the organization that creates momentum and productivity. The difference between “dictator” and “vision caster” is explained. The dictator approach creates resentment and low morale. The vision caster creates excitement and achieves true buy in.
 11. **“Forgive”** - This trait speaks to a culture of forgiveness and truly learning from mistakes, rather than holding them against someone for the rest of their career. It also talks about accepting an idea even if it isn’t your own and assisting with the implementation of it, even after losing the argument against it.
 12. **“Are solution-oriented”** - Instead of doing the easy thing and complaining about an issue, leaders find the solutions by being creative, thinking about the issue, involving others to brain storm and come up with a realistic solution. They also think about the affects of both the issues and the possible solutions and how they may affect their people.
- There is also a responsibility that all leaders have and that is to protect their people. They are the head of the organization and therefore must be it’s voice. There are many groups out there that have an agenda and preach from a position of ignorance especially when it comes to the subject of law enforcement. It is the leader’s duty and responsibility to attempt to educate these groups and the public and to publicly defend their officers when necessary. It is also the duty and responsibility of the leader to educate civilian oversight when their opinion, philosophy or desires for the Service are not realistic and ignorant in the realm of the realities that all law enforcement officers face. Leaders must do what is right, not what is easy. The same applies to the Associations. Your respective memberships have elected people to your respective

Boards to be effective leaders also. Association Boards must adhere to these same traits if they wish to be effective. Ego, personal ambitions and personal biases all can prevent Associations from achieving their main purpose, which is to improve the work place for their respective memberships.

I will close with a quote from Simon Sinek who is an author, motivational speaker and organizational consultant. He's written many books on the topic of leadership and on the millennial perspective. He can be out there with some of his stuff, but this quote hits

home on this subject in my opinion. I'll share it with you:

"Leaders are the ones who run headfirst into the unknown. They rush toward the danger. They put their own interests aside to protect us or to pull us into the future. Leaders would sooner sacrifice what is theirs to save what is ours. And they would never sacrifice what is ours to save what is theirs. This is what it means to be a leader. It means they choose to go first into danger, headfirst toward the unknown. And when we feel sure they will keep us safe, we will march

behind them and work tirelessly to see their visions come to life and proudly call ourselves their followers."

There is no summarizing it better than that. I truly hope that Calgary's next Chief is an effective leader and that we, the members in Calgary can all proudly call ourselves his or her followers. Effective leadership is a lot more than just what we need. It is what we truly crave. ■

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From the Director

Rayan Najjar

I know it's a bit late, but Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the Blood Tribe Police Association. Hope everyone had a fun and safe holiday season with your friends and family. Let's get right into it. I had a hard time thinking of a topic to write about, so I reached out to a colleague of mine for ideas. He reminded me the reason for taking a second term with AFPA, to continue to bring awareness to First Nations Policing and their archaic funding model.

Last March, I and other members of the Blood Tribe Police Association attended the Canadian Police Association Lobby Day in Ottawa. I was approached by the CPA to present at the conference and bring awareness of the current situation with First Nations policing and the First Nations Policing Program (FNPP) funding model. They felt it would benefit those that may not be aware of the differences between the FNPP funding model and those of municipalities.

Just prior to presenting at the conference, Ralph Goodale had an opportunity to address the attendees. He mentioned to the group that back in January 2018, the Federal government had announced an additional \$291 Million increase to the FNPP over the next five years. Part of that funding would include an additional 110 positions to be rolled over the next two years (2019/20), split equally 55 per year. Sounds great, right?

What he had failed to mention to the group was how these positions would be distributed. One major thing you need to understand about the FNPP is that it is broken down into two main categories: Self-Administered (SA)

and Community Tripartite (CT) agreements. SA agreements are those like the Blood Tribe Police Service while CT agreements are First Nations communities that are policed by the RCMP.

Currently there are about 38 SA and 136 CT agreements in place. That's a total of 174 agreements fighting over 110 positions. The Federal government had sent out a survey to all SA and CT agencies to plead their case on why they should receive additional members. Only speaking on my observations at BTPS, I saw the amount of time and resources that our agency put into gathering the statistics to attach to the survey in an effort to secure additional positions for our ranks that we desperately needed.

What the CTs have over the SAs is essential service funding. The CTs have the resources of the RCMP and the funding that comes with it. The SAs are limited by the provisions of the FNPP. If the Federal government announced that only the SAs were eligible to receive those 110 positions, then that would be a step in the right direction, however that was not the case.

The current agreement at the BTPS had expired two years prior and two consecutive 1 year extensions were 'negotiated'. Each year carried an increase in the operational budget of 1.5% per year. That is not enough to match the standard of living in Canada.

The Federal government's idea of negotiations is ignoring the Band's request to sit down in meaningful discussion and approach them in the final hour (usually near the end of the fiscal year) with a 'take-it or leave-it' agreement. With concern of losing their police service, the Band is forced

to sign the agreement.

As our Association makes attempts to secure better conditions for our members, we are asking our employer to stretch an already overstretched budget. With very little being added to the budget, we are left with a very difficult task to provide our members with a competitive compensation package or risk losing qualified officers to other agencies.

As our counterparts in municipalities negotiate more lucrative contracts and more comprehensive compensation packages, First Nation Police continue to fall behind. Until the Federal government recognizes First Nations Policing as an essential service and fund them as such, we are doomed to continue this path.

As always, take care of yourself and your families. Stay Safe. ■



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From the Executive Director

Howard Burns

YOU WORK TO LIVE, NOT LIVE TO WORK

I'm writing this article on New Year's Day. I'm on cup # 2 of my morning brew and the cobwebs from my New Year's Eve celebration are starting to dissipate. Reflecting back, I can say that 2018 was a pretty good year for me. I continued my work as the part-time Executive Director for the Alberta Federation of Police Associations, which in my opinion is a great job for a retired union guy. There is absolutely nothing more fulfilling than being able to help our members navigate the trials and tribulations of being police officers. Our officers have one of the most difficult jobs on earth. We need to look after each other if we hope to survive and achieve that magical retirement we all work for and dream of. I retired from the Calgary Police Service in 2016 after 28 years of policing. I enjoyed my job, but policing is definitely a young man's game and it was time to go. Only about 50% of my recruit class made it to retirement and that speaks volumes about the challenges policing presents; however, I'm happy to report that all of my classmates are alive and well and 3 of them are still plugging away with the police service.

Looking back on my time with the Calgary Police Service, I came to two realizations. The first was that when I signed up in 1988 at the ripe old age of 21 years, I had no idea what I was getting myself into. The second was that my career exposed me to a lot of things and not all of them were positive or good. It is really not too surprising that only about ½ of those who embark on a policing career stick with it. Be-

ing a police officer can sometimes feel like being on a roller coaster. There are multiple peaks and valleys, and the landscape is constantly changing while you're on the ride. Some love the thrill, some are terrified, and for others the experience just makes them sick and they can't wait to get off.

I have to be honest, there were times over the course of my career that I contemplated joining the other ½ of my class and packing it in. When I was at one of those low points and the roller coaster was down in a valley, I found that the best strategy for me was to take a time out. For police officers, the opportunity for a time out comes in the form of a vacation. Most Alberta collective agreements provide association members with up to 7 weeks of annual vacation. That, combined with accumulated time provisions, provide ample opportunity for our members to take a break and recharge when needed.

Knowing when to take that much needed time off is part of the puzzle. I would suggest that like changing the oil in your car, you set up a vacation maintenance schedule. I know that in our busy world it is tough to make plans too far in advance and often these plans must sync with those of other family members, but I would suggest that planning in advance will improve your chances of having your vacation approved. If the plan doesn't come together, you can always request a cancellation and reschedule for a time that works better.

A sign that it is time to take a break is when you find yourself losing motiva-

tion and becoming frustrated too easily. That's your body and brain telling you it has had enough. Continuously ignoring these warnings can result in some serious health consequences and can be disruptive to your work and personal life. If you find yourself being terse with those you care about for no particular reason, it is probably time for a vacation.

Taking a break from work allows you to temporarily put some distance between yourself and your stressful work life. It allows you to take a step back and to put things into proper perspective. It's a chance for your brain to reconcile what is happening in your life and essentially reboot itself. **That's healthy!** Often work related problems don't appear as serious after there is a chance to reflect upon them. An added benefit of taking a vacation is it provides an opportunity to reconnect with your family and friends. Keeping your personal support network healthy is important and perhaps a topic for a future article.

So how long should your vacation be? Taking time off is more about quality than quantity. A few days off can be just as beneficial as a few weeks if the time is spent wisely. Vacation is a time to put yourself and your family first. Do something that you enjoy that will allow you to unwind and recharge your batteries.

Taking time off means just that – turn your cell phone, computer and any other work related devices **off**. Bringing your work with you on vacation can rob you of the benefits discussed earlier, as you never really get

a chance to disconnect from your job. If you just can't help yourself, go to a location where there is no cell service or internet. Force yourself to disconnect. If that just isn't possible, then set parameters around answering e-mails and phone calls (i.e. 20 minutes a day at a set time).

Taking your vacation time is an important part of staying healthy, being

productive at work, and making it to retirement. We have all seen those members who bury themselves in work and impose a 24 x 7 schedule on themselves. More often than not, those people crash and burn with dire consequences to their health, family and career. Don't get me wrong, members should work hard when they are at work, but there needs to be a healthy

separation between your work and personal life. To quote an old saying: **"you work to live, not live to work".**

Start planning your next vacation now! ■

Howard Burns – AFPA Executive Director (part-time)

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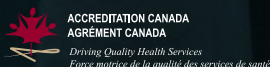
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