

Excerpt from the Edmonton Police Commission's Governance Review related to appointments

MNP Governance Report Recommendation:

Review the practice of appointing members of City Council as members of the Commission.

Rationale: There are some advantages to the appointment of members of Council to the Commission: it establishes a direct link between the Commission and Council; and Council representatives are able to act as a liaison between both bodies, communicating any Council message to the EPC and taking back messages and impressions to the Council. There are several disadvantages:

- The voices and opinions of Councillors tend to far outweigh those of regular Commissioners; they may have more experience and thus confidence in expressing themselves in a public forum and they are elected by a portion of the populace which carries weight of its own.
- Constant clarity regarding what is intended as private or in-camera discussion can be difficult, and messages may be relayed to Council or the Mayor through these informal channels that can create challenges for the Commission
- Council members are automatically conflicted during budget discussions, knowing the restraints placed on the bureaucracy by Council and being pressured by their colleagues on the EPC to approve increases which exceed those applied to the rest of the organization.
- Councillors have access to the Chief of Police through other briefings and engagements in which EPC are not invited. They may, as a result, have a greater impact on policing than members of the EPC.
- The attention of a Councillor is on a multitude of issues arising within a city the size of Edmonton; their principal audience and focus is not policing.
- Council members bring political AND Council influence into the room with them; it is inevitable. Best practice states that anyone being appointed to a decision-making body is to "remove" their other hat(s) before entering that body's chambers and then place it back on when leaving. For many, that is very tough to accomplish.

The City's procedure for Agencies, Boards, Committees, and Commissions includes general appointment principles for decision-making bodies that would apply to the Commission: "As the purpose of this type of Agency is to remove

decisions from the political or administrative process, Councillors and Administration should not be appointed”.

Implementation Considerations

Bylaw 14040 establishes that Council may appoint up to 11 members to the Police Commission, including two members of Council. This Bylaw will need to be updated to reflect the Police Amendment Act which limits Edmonton Police Commission municipal appointments to nine and may also be amended to remove the appointment of members of Council.

Current appointments of municipal councillors to the Police Commission expire on December 31, 2023. Allowing these appointments to naturally expire will minimize disruption, allow for discussion regarding ways to maintain an effective ongoing relationship with Council, and is consistent with the Amendment Act.

The Community Safety & Wellbeing Taskforce also recommended that councillors not be appointed to the Commission.