



## **Town of Amherstburg Council Brief**

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### ***Highlights from the February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025 meeting of Council:***

#### **Report Out from In-Camera Session**

##### **Policing Agreement**

Council directed Administration to explore policing service options beyond December 31, 2028. Administration will initiate discussions with the City of Windsor on contract renewal and explore potential service agreements with the Town of LaSalle. Cost estimates will be developed for OPP service, a standalone Amherstburg Police Service, and a the concept of a Regional or County Police Service will be explored in order to support Council's long-term decision-making. Additionally, Council requested that the Confidential report from the in-camera session be made available to the public (Attached: Policing Agreements with City of Windsor/Windsor Police Services Board).

##### **Committee Member Appointment**

Council has selected Jennifer Freckelton as the newest Environmental Advisory Committee Member for the Town of Amherstburg.

#### **Presentations**

##### **Essex County Library – Adam Craig**

Adam Craig, Chief Librarian of Essex County Library, presented the 2025-2030 Essex County Library Strategic Plan, along with 2024 highlights and milestones. He outlined the library's mission, vision, and values, as well as four core objectives: enhancing community engagement, fostering lifelong learning, improving accessibility and inclusivity, and transforming the library into a vibrant third space. Initiatives supporting these objectives were also presented.

#### **Reports**

##### **2025 Amendments to Traffic Bylaw**

Council passed an amendment to the Traffic By-law to incorporate recommendations from previous meetings and account for new street developments. The updated by-law includes a definition for "Overnight Parking" and revisions to several schedules, including No Parking, Through Roads, and Stop Signs.

##### **Consent Agreement and removal of Hold for VL Easy Street**

Council approved the Consent Agreement and passed a by-law to remove the Holding

Symbol (“h”) on the vacant land on Easy Street. The removal of the hold aligns with the Official Plan and ensures proper planning processes have been completed, facilitating the development of two residential lots.

### **2025 Special Events Approval Part 1**

Council approved all 2025 Part 1 Special Events brought forward which included Pedals and Passport, 2025 Art Crawl and Busk the Burg. An exemption was granted from the Noise By-law 2001-43 for the 2025 Art Crawl and Busk the Burg.

### **User Fees for Temporary Patio Extensions on Municipal Property**

Council received the report and directed Administration to amend the Temporary Patio Extensions By-law 2024-026 to establish an application fee of \$300 per application, plus a \$2.00 per square foot fee, except for applications approved within a road closure. Administration will also bring forward an operating budget issue paper for the 2026 budget deliberations, outlining potential revenue increases from applying commercial lease rates to temporary patio extensions on Town property.

### **KNYP Fishing Report**

Council received the report on addressing complaints related to Silver Bass fishing season in King’s Navy Yard Park. To mitigate these concerns, Council directed Administration to launch a public awareness campaign on proper fishing waste disposal, enhance infrastructure with signage, waste stations, and expanded fishing areas, and strengthen park management and monitoring through increased by-law enforcement.

## **OTHER MINUTES**

### **Drainage Board Meeting Minutes**

Council received the Drainage Board Meeting Minutes of February 4, 2025, and approved updates to drainage projects, including rescinding and replacing the engineer’s report for the Jeths Drain, giving three readings to By-law 2024-046, and appointing R. Dobbin Engineering Inc. to assess drainage improvements for the Major Knapp and Tremblay-Beneteau-Vollans Drains.

## **By-Laws**

### **2023-102 – Housekeeping By-Law**

Council passed By-law 2023-102 to amend zoning By-law No. 1999-52 6101 County Road 20, Amherstburg.

### **By-Law 2024-021 – Collison Drain – Bouchard Bridge – Third and Final Reading**

Council passed By-law 2024-021 to allow for drainage work improvements for the Collison Drain – Bouchard Bridge.

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## THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF AMHERSTBURG

### OFFICE OF THE CAO

**MISSION STATEMENT:** *Committed to delivering cost-effective and efficient services for the residents of the Town of Amherstburg with a view to improve and enhance their quality of life.*

<b>Author's Name: Valerie Critchley</b>	<b>Report Date: February 21, 2025</b>
<b>Author's Phone: 519 736-0012 ext. 2228</b>	<b>Date to Council: February 24, 2025</b>
<b>Author's E-mail: vcritchley@amherstburg.ca</b>	<b>Resolution #: 202106140-203</b>

**To: Mayor and Members of Town Council**

**Subject: Policing Agreements with City of Windsor/Windsor Police Services Board**

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#### **1. RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that:

1. The report dated February 20, 2025 regarding the status of the respective agreements between the Town of Amherstburg and the City of Windsor/Windsor Police Services Board, (the "Agreements"), **BE RECEIVED and**
2. Administration **BE DIRECTED** to:
  - a. Formally advise the City of Windsor that the Town wishes to have discussions regarding renewal of the current contract post December 31, 2028;
  - b. Meet with the Town of Lasalle to discuss the potential of a partnership or contract for service with the Town and its police service post December 31, 2028;
  - c. Conduct further investigations into the approximate cost of the OPP providing service to the Town of Amherstburg; and
  - d. Prepare an "order of magnitude" costing regarding re-establishment of a standalone Town of Amherstburg Police Service; and
3. Report back to Council on the above noted items once all relevant information is gathered.

#### **4. BACKGROUND:**

On February 26, 2018, Council adopted the following motion:

*That:*

1. *The report from the CAO dated February 9, 2018 regarding police services for the Town of Amherstburg **BE RECEIVED**;*
2. *The CAO **BE DIRECTED** to finalize the terms and conditions of a contract for policing services with the Windsor Police Services Board/City of Windsor for a term of 20 years commencing January 1, 2019; and,*
3. *The CAO **BE DIRECTED** to bring back a final contract **SUBJECT TO APPROVAL** by the Ontario Civilian Police Commission.*

On October 12, 2018, as contemplated by the above noted resolution, two contracts were entered into, one with the City of Windsor and the other with the WPSB for the provision of policing services to the Town of Amherstburg, “the ‘Agreements”.

Article 2 of the agreement with the WPSB states as follows:

*Article 2 – Term:*

*This Agreement shall run for a period of five (5) years commencing at 12:01a.m. on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of January, 2019 (the “Commencement Date”). This Agreement shall be renewed automatically for succeeding terms of five (5) years each (a “Renewal Term”) not to exceed a maximum total length of twenty (20) years, unless: (i) either party provides notice to the other party at least eighteen (18) months prior to the expiration of the then current term; or (ii) otherwise terminated pursuant to the terms and provisions herein.*

Further, on February 8, 2023, Council determined that it did not wish to terminate the agreement and that it wished to enter into a further five (5) renewal term of the Agreements pursuant to Council Resolution #20230208-002 which states as follows:

*That:*

1. *The report from the CAO dated January 23, 2023, regarding the renewal of the policing contract with Windsor Police Service **BE RECEIVED**; and,*
2. *The CAO **BE DIRECTED** to exercise the renewal clause in the contract dated October 12, 2018 between the Town of Amherstburg and the Windsor Police Services Board (“WPSB”) for the five-year period commencing January 1, 2024 and ending December 31, 2028.*

Subsequent to the February 8, 2023 Council Meeting, the City of Windsor and Windsor Police Services were advised of Council’s decision and accordingly, the Agreements automatically renewed on January 1, 2024 for a further five (5) year term which will expire on December 31, 2028.

On January 13, 2025 the Town received a letter from the City of Windsor dated January 8, 2025, the sole contents of which stated the following:

*Windsor City Council at its in-camera meeting held December 9, 2024, adopted the following recommendation of the Windsor Police Service Board:*

***“That the Windsor Police Service Board recommends to the Council of the City of Windsor that the policing agreement with the Town of Amherstburg renewed on January 1, 2024 for a five-year period, NOT BE RENEWED, for an additional term.***

*This will serve as your official notice that the current contract between the Town of Amherstburg and the City of Windsor for policing services will not be renewed for a further term.*

The above noted letter was the first communication, written or verbal, that the Town had from the City or WPS indicating that it wished to discuss the terms of the Agreements or that it was contemplating not renewing the Agreements past the current term. A copy of the letter is attached for Council’s reference as Appendix “A”.

## **5. DISCUSSION:**

Upon receiving the above noted correspondence, the CAO immediately informed the Mayor of the same and Council was notified of the letter at its in camera meeting on January 27, 2025. Prior to that meeting, and with the concurrence of the Mayor, the CAO did reach out to the City of Windsor to determine if there was any possibility of further discussions between the Town, the City and the WPS regarding the decision not to renew the Agreements. The City indicated that it would be prepared to discuss the contents of the January 8, 2025 letter and this information was conveyed to Council in camera on January 27, 2025.

Further, at the January 27<sup>th</sup> in camera meeting, Administration advised Council of its options for the provision of policing services post December 31, 2028, which include:

1. Negotiations with the City of Windsor/WPS regarding the continuation of the present service;
2. Engaging the Town of Lasalle Police Service (the only other standalone police force in the County) in negotiations for the provision of policing services;
3. Requesting a proposal for service from the Ontario Provincial Police, (“OPP”); and
4. Re-establishment of the Amherstburg Police Service as a standalone police service.

At that time, Council directed that Administration liaise with all parties necessary, including the City of Windsor, in order to gather preliminary information regarding the options available to Council, including but not limited to:

1. Pursuing the said discussions with the City of Windsor;
2. Liaising with the Town of Lasalle to inquire if it would be interested in discussion the provision of policing services to the Town of Amherstburg;
3. Liaising with the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) regarding the process to be followed should Council wish to pursue a contract with that entity.

Further to this direction, on February 12, 2025, the CAO and Deputy CAO met with the CAO for the City of Windsor, Joe Mancina and the WPS Chief of Police, Jason Bellaire. During the discussion, the City indicated that the main reason for making the decision not to renew the present contract was financial and that, as policing costs have risen, it has determined that the contract is no longer financially feasible for it as written. The CAO did express the Town's disappointment that these issues were not raised with it in advance of a decision being made, particularly given the excellent working relationship which the Town and the WPS have experienced for the past 6 years. The result of the discussion was that City Administration indicated that, should the Town of Amherstburg request, it would recommend to Windsor City Council to engage in negotiations to continue the present service.

In addition, the CAO met with the CAO for the Town of Lasalle on Friday, February 21, 2025 to explore the concept of the Town of Lasalle Police Service providing policing services to the Town of Amherstburg. The conversation was constructive with the CAO of Lasalle indicating a willingness to discuss the issue further. At the conclusion of the meeting it was agreed that a further meeting would be convened between the respective Mayors and CAOs of Lasalle as well as the Lasalle Police Chief in order for the concept to be explored in further detail.

With respect to the possible engagement of the OPP to provide policing services, Administration has reached out to the OPP to make preliminary investigations into the process to be followed. We have been advised that the the first step in the transition process is for Council to pass a resolution formally requesting a Policing Resource Plan from the Ministry of the Solicitor General (the "Ministry"). Such a resolution would signify Council's intent to explore a transition to OPP policing services. Once the ministry receives the request, it will be reviewed and the Ministry will then advise the Town of its decision. Before making this formal request, it would be advisable for Council to have a sense of the costs that would be involved in a transition to the OPP and as such Administration is currently gathering the necessary data to calculate the projected approximate costs under the OPP Billing Model and the same will be reported back to Council.

Finally regarding the fourth option listed above, namely re-establishment of a standalone Amherstburg Police Service, it is expected that there will be two main factors to consider when weighing this option being overall cost (vis a vis level of service provided) as well as the ability to recruit officers for a new police force. With respect to the first consideration, it is anticipated that Council will want, at the very least, an "order of magnitude" costing of this option and Administration will work to gather this information. Regarding the second consideration, we know, anecdotally, that recruiting for any police service has become more difficult post pandemic. Again, anecdotally, it has been reported that the Town of Lasalle did have some difficulty recruiting for their last two open positions and experienced serious competition from the WPS for the attraction of candidates. Therefore any analysis of this option will include full information regarding the recruitment challenges that can be expected as well as the level of remuneration and benefits that would be needed to attract new employees.

#### **4. RISK ANALYSIS:**

The main risks for the Town with respect to this issue are:

1. Financial; and
2. Reduction in level of service.

The mitigation strategy for these risks is the timely execution of due diligence regarding the options outlined in this report in order for Council to be able to make the most informed decision possible regarding policing in Amherstburg post December 31, 2028.

**5. FINANCIAL MATTERS:**

At this time the financial impacts of this issue are no known and will be reported to Council as more information is available.

**6. CONSULTATIONS:**

City of Windsor  
Windsor Police Service  
Town of Lasalle

**7. CONCLUSION:**

At this time, in order to complete the required due diligence regarding this issue, it is recommended that Administration be directed to investigate all options available to the Town for the provision of police services beyond December 31, 2028, liaise with all necessary parties in order to gather the information necessary for each option and to report back to Council regarding all said options in open session.

  
Valerie Critchley  
**Chief Administrative Officer**