

## Amherst Board of Police Commissioners Regular Meeting Agenda

Date: Tuesday, October 15, 2024

Time: 3:00 pm

Location: Council Chambers, Town Hall

**Pages** 

#### 1. Call To Order

#### 1.1 Territorial Acknowledgement

"I would like to acknowledge that our gathering today is taking place in (MEEG-MA-GEE), the traditional, unceded and ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaw people. I would also like to acknowledge that Nova Scotia has another unique people. These are the Indigenous Blacks of Nova Scotia whose legacy and contributions date back over 400 years predating confederation of this land. We are all treaty people."

- 1.2 Amendments to Agenda
- 1.3 Approval of Agenda
- 1.4 Acceptance of Minutes September 17, 2024

1 - 3

#### 2. Presentations

2.1 Homelessness/Substance Use Disorder - Ashley Legere - Cumberland Homelessness and Housing Support Association

4 - 30

- 3. Business Arising
  - 3.1 APD Strategic Plan Verbal Update
- 4. Discussion / Information Items
  - **4.1 APD Crest** 31 35
  - 4.2 APD Badges Verbal Update
  - 4.3 Safe Approach Rescue Vehicle Verbal Update

- 5. Reports
  - 5.1 Chief's Report

36 - 37

- 6. Next Meeting
- 7. Closed Session
  - 7.1 Approval of Agenda
  - 7.2 Acceptance of Minutes
  - 7.3 MGA 22(2)(h) public security
  - 7.4 MGA 22(2)(c) personnel matters
  - 7.5 MGA 22(2)(c) personnel matters
    - 7.5.1 MGA 22(2)(c) personnel matters
    - 7.5.2 MGA 22(2)(c) personnel matters
    - 7.5.3 MGA 22(2)(c) personnel matters
- 8. Adjournment

#### Town of Amherst Amherst Board of Police Commissioners

#### **Minutes**

Date: September 17, 2024

Time: 3:00 pm

Location: Council Chambers, Town Hall

Members Present Commissioner Paul Calder, Chair

Commissioner, Charlie Chambers
Commissioner George Baker

Commissioner Hal Davidson, Vice Chair

Commissioner Caprice Barbour Commissioner Sandy Fairbanks

Members Absent Commissioner Angela Ryan Bourgeois

Staff Present Dwayne Pike, Chief of Police

**Tim Hunter, Deputy Chief** 

Kim Jones, Director, Corporate Communications & IT Sean Payne, Corporate Communications Officer Sharon Bristol, Director, Community Living Cindy Brown, Administrative Assistant

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#### 1. Call To Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM.

#### 1.1 Territorial Acknowledgement

The Chair gave the Territorial Acknowledgement.

#### 1.2 Amendments to Agenda

The Chair called for any amendments to the agenda, to which there were none.

#### 1.3 Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as circulated.

#### 1.4 Acceptance of Minutes - June 18, 2024

The Chair called for any errors or omissions in the minutes. There being none, the minutes of the June 18, 2024 meeting of the Amherst Board of Police Commissioners were accepted as included in the agenda package.

#### 2. Presentations

#### 2.1 <u>Inspector Brian Gairns Promotion</u>

Police Chief Pike presented Brian Gairns with the new badge/stripes, regalia, and promotional certificate for his new Inspector position. Gairns was recently promoted to the position of Inspector after 35 years of service with the Amherst Police Department.

#### 2.2 Dave Hirtle Retirement

Dave Hirtle was not present.

#### 3. Business Arising

#### 3.1 Strategic Planning Update

Sharon Bristol presented the Strategic Planning update, noting she has met with local stake holders, and that any other data that could be collected would be from the public.

Moved By Commissioner Barbour Seconded By Commissioner Davidson

That the Amherst Board of Police Commissors direct staff to arrange a structured public meeting with no police present, provide an online survey for additional feedback and advertise the public meeting and the survey well ahead of the meeting.

Motion Carried 3-2 Commissors Fairbanks and Baker Nay votes

Moved By Commissioner Baker Seconded By Commissioner Fairbanks To amend the motion to read to include police officers.

Motion Defeated 2-3 Commissors Chambers, Davidson, Barbour Nay votes

#### 4. Discussion / Information Items

#### **4.1** Provincial Policing Standards Review and Summary Verbal Update Chief Pike presented the Provincial Policing Review. Information item only.

#### 4.2 Conference Review Verbal Update

Chief Pike discussed the Canadian Police Association Conference he attended in August in Quebec City. Commissioner Chambers discussed the Canadian Association of Police Governance Conference he attended in August in Halifax. Information item only.

#### 4.3 SARV Verbal Update

Chief Pike discussed the SARV; information item only.

#### 4.4 Recruiting / Staffing Verbal Update

Chief Pike discussed the current recruitment of two new additional officers. Information item only.

#### 4.5 Police Chaplain

Chief Pike discussed how the APD will be advertising soon for a new Chaplain as the current one has retired. Information item only at this time.

#### 4.6 Provincial Appointee

The Chair informed the Police Commission that he does not intend to stay on after his appointment expires in May 2025. The process to replace him can be timely therefore the Chair recommended that if anyone is interested to please file their application with Applying for Agencies, Boards and Commissions.

#### 5. Reports

#### 5.1 Chief's Report

Chief Pike and Deputy Chief Hunter reviewed the Chief's report, included in the agenda package.

<b>6</b> .	Next	Meeting
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The next meeting will be held at 3:00 PM on October 15, 2024.

7. Closed Session
Moved By Commissioner Fairbanks
Seconded By Commissioner Baker
To go into Closed Session.

**Motion Carried** 

8.	Adi	iourn	ment
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The Chair adjourned the meeting.

Kim Jones	
Director of Corporate Communic	ations & IT
Paul Calder Chair	



# Amherst Police Department

Serving the Town of Amherst

21 Havelock Street, Amherst Nova Scotia



#### Cornerstone

Serving the residents of Cumberland County

10 Prince Arthur Street, Amherst Nova Scotia



Over the last 3-4 years, homelessness issues have become a grave concern and topic of discussion. While we have always had a homelessness problem in our community, since the pandemic, the problem has increased dramatically not only in our town but across the country. We see some of the evidence every day. It is not just about people 'couch surfing' as the evidence is more visible than ever

# PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS FACE SOME OF THE HIGHEST RATES OF ILLNESS AND MORTALITY IN CANADA

Evidence has shown that even
a modest 25 bercent reduction
in homeless less could prevent
nearly 2 300 do ioid overdose
deaths, 850 cases of alcohol
poisoning, and 540 cocaine
overdoses.



# Homelessness – Is this a new problem? Then vs Now









#### Slide 4

DP1

Dwayne Pike, 2022-11-07



Since 2022, our Department started tracking files that have an association with 'homelessness'

It is very important to remember that police contact with homeless people is not necessarily the norm. Police often deal with the smaller percentage of homeless people who have struggles that may be related to mental illness, substance use disorder or trauma. In this way, homelessness is a very complex social problem that the police, who are often the agency of last resort and one of the few 24/7 resources, are left to deal with

#### **HOMELESSNESS**

### PROBLEM?

Police may come into contact with some homeless people as a result of complaints that include:

- Trespassing
- Causing a disturbance
- Tenting/Occupying private or town property
- Damage to property, littering
- Thefts
- Requests for assistance
  - Drives to the hospital
  - Assistance with meals
  - People looking for lodging
  - Well-being checks









#### HOMELESSNESS – IS THIS A NEW PROBLEM?

In August 2022, homelessness files peaked, and we had 140 complaints of our 683 had a connection to the homelessness situation;

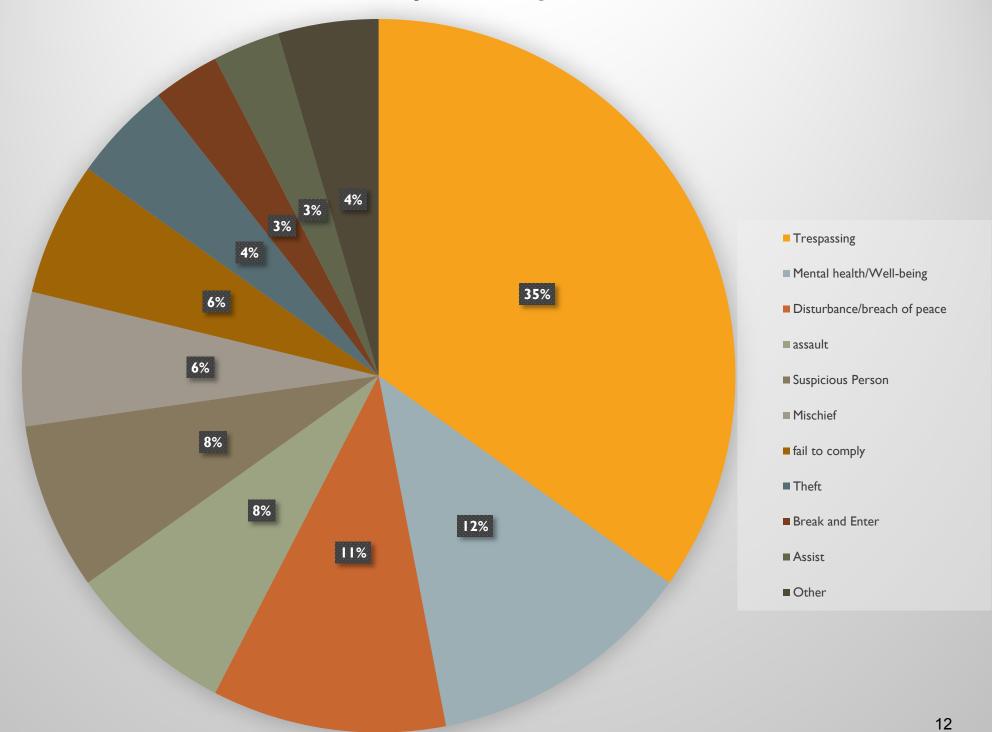
More recent stats have dropped off considerably, especially since the homeless shelter was erected.

Police no longer get many of the requests for assistance that we did in 2022 and 2023.

In November 2023, our stats fell to 7 of 439 occurrences. Since that time, they have steadily climbed. In May of 2024, we had 70 of 624.



#### Homelessness Compliants May 2024- Breakdown



#### **HOMELESSNESS**

## IS THIS A NEW PROBLEM?

- IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT:
- Our stats are based on police contact with persons who are homeless and may not accurately affect the real scope of the problem
- Often stats may be driven by repeated contact or calls for service relating to a small number of people
- These stats do not capture people who are precariously housed or who may be on the verge of being homeless





Poverty, Substance Use and Mental illness are still seen by the public as moral failings, as though they are somehow controlled by people's choices solely and not by circumstance and socioeconomic factors.

Because of the complexity of homelessness, we cannot 'police' our way through this issue.

Laying charges or making arrests for some of the calls that police receive does not do anything to resolve the core issues that are driving the homelessness issue.

We work closely with our community partners to address the concerns people have and often try to refer people to resources that can provide solutions

# WE NEED TO GUARD OURSELVES AGAINST THE CRIMINALIZATION OF HOMELESSNESS



Our Crime Prevention
Coordinator often acts as a
point of contact between these
and other support agencies
that facilitate 'intakes' and
assists with seeking resources
and support based on
individual situations. With
Cornerstone in our
community, these requests
have become less and less over
time.

We prefer to 'negotiate' when dealing with issues, being patient and understanding, but when we do take enforcement action, we need to keep in mind that homelessness in and of itself is not a crime, that many people who are homeless are desperate and are looking for ways to get by, just to survive.

# When a person finds themselves homeless, when their basic needs of food, shelter, safety and security are not being met, people can experience:

Increased Social Increased Increased victimization Loss of self-Increased **Psychological** tendencies exclusion Fear and propensity assaults. Health issues worth and risk of distress and to substance towards anxiety sexual depression incarceration violence assaults. loneliness abuse thefts, etc

These can be overwhelming and result in a downward spiral that is nearly impossible without strong and consistent community and health support.

Mental health and substance use will both suffer when people are at risk of or are homeless, but they do not always co-exist.

- A single issue does not cause homelessness but is the result of a combination of factors that can include:
  - Poverty
  - Unemployment and/or precarious employment
  - Lack of affordable or suitable housing
  - lack or shortage of community support in the areas of health and social welfare
  - Substance-use disorder
  - Mental illness and related issues
  - Discrimination (of all kinds)
  - Health problems

Negative consequences associated with substance use, such as poor mental and physical health, can be amplified when combined with homelessness or the risk of homelessness, but one does not create the other.

## HOMELESSNESS IN CANADA AND AT HOME

The annual number of homeless individuals in Canada – 150,000 – 300,000

Halifax homeless population – 1326

Amherst – 49\*

\*new data to be released this fall



# HOMELESSNESS SUPPORT BY THE METRICS IN CUMBERLAND COUNTY

Since May 2023, CHHSA has served 22,778 meals. We serve more meals to those housed than unhoused.

This way we are able to help those experiencing food insecurity not have to choose between food and rent.

We have assisted in getting 35 individuals housed in our community. 29 in private market and 6 in our supportive housing units

We have helped 23 individuals enter treatment programs for substance use disorder.

We supported 2 individuals to reunite with their families and move back into their family homes

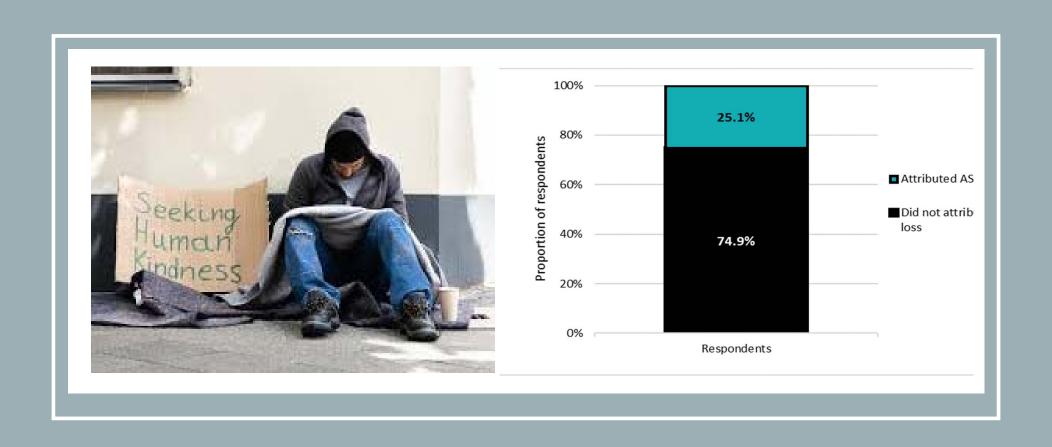
CHHSA staff assisted 11 individuals reentering the workforce







## ONLY 25.1% OF PEOPLE IN CANADA WHO EXPERIENCE HOMELESSNESS LOST THEIR HOMES DUE TO THEIR SUBSTANCE USE



### What is xylazine?

Xylazine, a veterinary sedative with effects similar to the depressant benzodiazepine, was identified in a Health Canada report in 2022 as an emerging additive to illegally sold opioids. The drug is added to the mix to "increase bulk and enhance or mimic the effects of other illicit drugs

Xylazine is just one of the many dangerous additives being found in the illicit drug supply.

79% of exhibits containing Xylazine contained two to four other substances It affects the skin and causes horrific skin infections. Infections can go very deep, can lead to amputation, and are hard to heal.

Exposure results from this co-occurs with opioids, benzodiazepines or both. Most xylazine exposure results from this co-occurrence, meaning it is unintended.

Xylazine can cause skir ulcers and extensive wounds involving tissue death, possibly because of its effect on blood vessels. Standard wound care should be applied, including topical and oral or injected antibiotics.

However, getting wound care and antibiotics can be challenging outside hospital setting for PWUD, and protocols should be developed to support those who can not or do not want to receive hospital care.

The combination of xylazine with opioids, benzodiazepines or both increases the risk of drug points and complicates response proceeds see to prolonged sedation.

Naloxone and be used in suspected opioid poisoning, but it will not reverse the effects of xylazine or benzodiazepines.

PWUDs who stop using or seek treatment for opioid use could experience xylazine withdrawal if the opioids they were using also contained xylazine. This withdrawal can be treated with medications that have similar effects to xylazine (e.g., clonidine, dexmed a midine). Benzodiazepines, antipsychotic agents and phenobarbit to been used to manage symptoms. The optimal approach still ne developed.

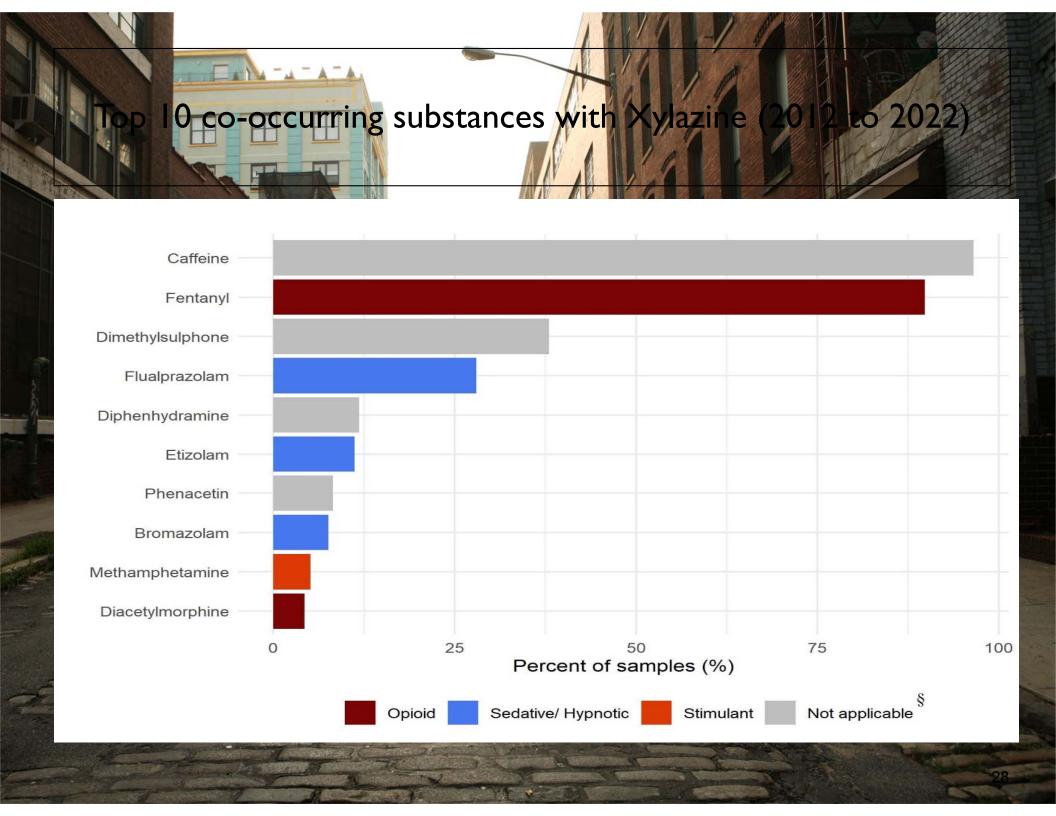
Xylazine is increasingly present in the unregulated opioid supply. The proportion of fentanyl samples that also contained xylazine increased from 1.4% in January 2020 to 9.0% in April 2023

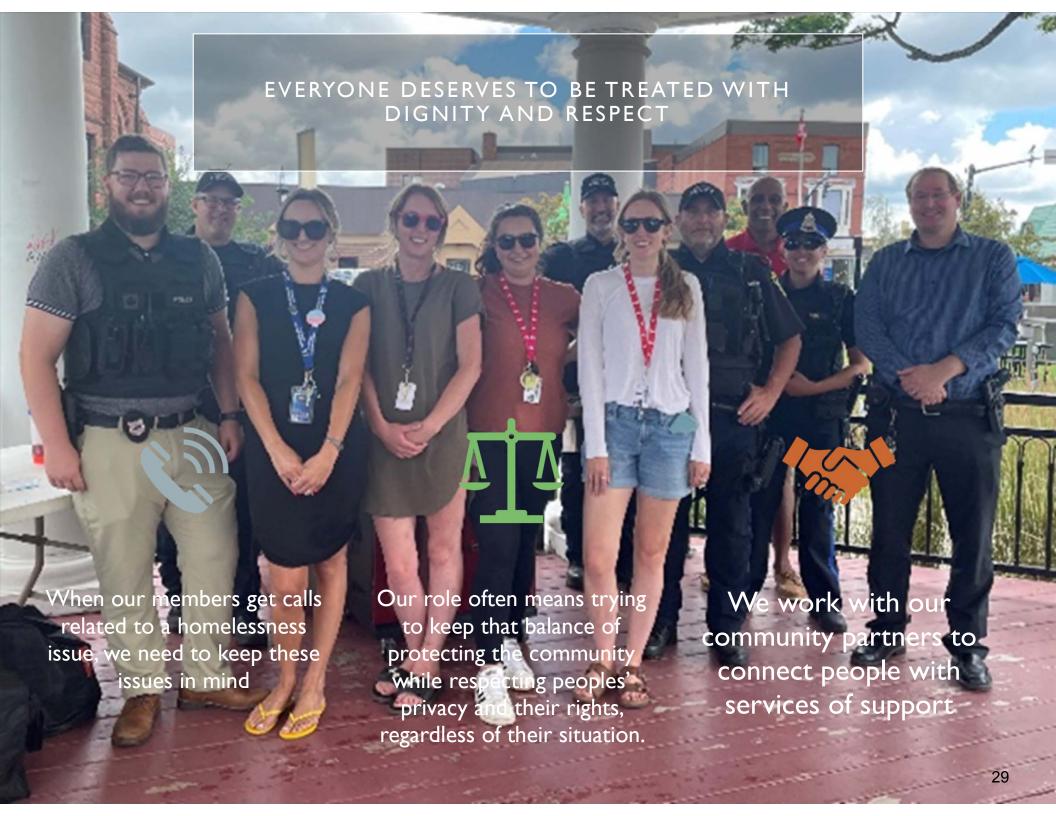




Benzodiazepines
have been present in
up to 60 percent of
the fentanyl supply
they can include:

Valium, Ativan,
Clonazepam, Xanax,
Nitrazepam,
bromazepam,
oxazepam,
temazepam, triazolam,
and flurazepam







## Questions?

#### **MEMORANDUM**

To: Amherst Board of Police Commissioners

From: Dwayne Pike, Chief of Police

Date: October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Subject: APD Flash/Crest Change

Over the past couple of months, we have been doing some research into modernizing our APD shoulder flashes. In the last two decades or so, most Nova Scotia Municipal Departments have changed their shoulder flashes as many have a common theme or look.

In May of 2024, one of our members, Cst Stewart Anthony, forwarded a design idea to D/Chief Hunter

and I for an APD crest. His design incorporated both the traditional Amherst Coat of Arms, but in a modern format as shown in Fig 1.

Drawing from this design, D/Chief Hunter did some further research and added some minor changes and added a green ribbon around police. The green ribbon is the international symbol of mental health awareness. As a part of the APD crest, this represents our commitment to supporting our members and staff and their mental wellness. Another change, which is part of other newer designs, is the partial maple leaf that exists on the newer Truro, Halifax, Annapolis Royal, Bridgewater, Kentville and Westville flashes. We've also included the 'waves' in the background.

Deputy Chief Hunter reached out to a design company and asked that they provide us with an embroidered flash with the suggested changes. Because the Amherst Coat of Arms is very detailed, it was decided to just incorporate the main part of the TOA Coat of Arms, which still includes the traditional details<sup>i</sup>.





are represented by the stylized

The green square refers to the Town's position on the isthmus between the Cumberland Basin and the Northumberland Strait, which

Fig 1

**AMHERST** 

Fig 2

waves. The tower alludes to the fortifications that once existed in the area, and the rose and fleur-de-lis to the English and French troops that once fought over it.

Recent changes to policing crests in Nova Scotia have common attributes which include the maple leaf outline (often in blue) and the 'police' ribbon at the bottom. Several crests also have a similar shape, flattened at the top and coming to a peak at the bottom. The BPS, HRP, TPS, ARPS and the APD draft all have the waves in the background. See Appendix A for the crest changes in other Nova Scotia Municipal Police Departments.

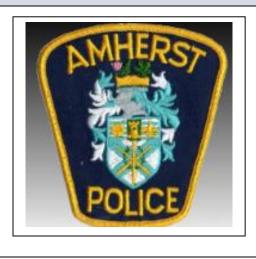
We would maintain the older crest for our dress uniforms, as we have many in stock. Our plan is to roll the new crest out over the next year, adding it to new issued clothing and slowly switch over to clothing already issued. The change in crest would not impact any other current design on either the vehicles, stationary or our building as we also use a separate crest for those items. Financial impacts are minimal.

We are seeking the support of the Amherst Board of Police Commissioners to implement this change, or if required, provide any suggestions to the changes in our crest.

#### Appendix A

#### **Older Crest**

#### **Newer Crest**

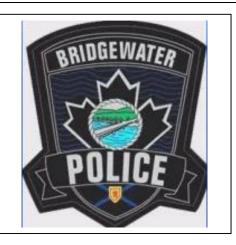








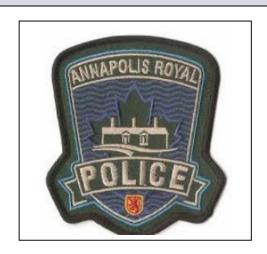




#### **Older Crest**

#### **Newer Crest**













 $\frac{^{i}}{https://www.gg.ca/en/heraldry/public-register/project/3456\#:^:text=Symbolism,whom%20the%20town%20was%20named}.$ 

## Chief's Report Amherst Board of Police Commissioners October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024

This report covers the month of September 2024



#### **PERSONNEL**

**New Employees**: Shannon King was recently hired by APD to fill in for dispatch/admin shortages. During a competition held in August 2024, 7 people were interviewed for this position. The interview team all recommended that Shannon be hired on a part-time basis and as a result, she started working in dispatch in late August and throughout September with dispatch coach officers. She was scheduled to attend PROS end-user training from September 9<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup>, returning the following weeks to work with a dispatch coach. On October 2<sup>nd</sup>, she started working dispatch shifts alone.

#### **TRAINING**

**SSVR (Street Smarts Virtual Reality) Training:** Cpl Derek Hebert, Cpl Jeff Walsh and D/Chief Tim Hunter participated in SSVR training on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024. This virtual reality training system was funded by the Department of Justice and provided to the Amherst Police Department for use and training, not only for our staff, but for our policing partners in Truro, New Glasgow, Stellarton and Westville. As a result, members representing those departments were also present. The SSVR provides members with realistic virtual reality scenarios that respond to officer decisions and actions, and focuses on decision-making, de-escalation and use of force. There is still more training to be conducted for instructors before we can schedule regular training with our members.



**PROS End-User Course:** Constable Lauren Millard and our new dispatch/admin employee Shannon King both attended the PROS end-user course from September 9<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup>. Staff are required to successfully complete this course in order to access the PROS file maintenance system. The course was held at RCMP Headquarters in Dartmouth.

CIT – Train the Trainer: Cst Michelle Harrison has been selected to attend the Crisis Intervention Team 'train the trainer' course in Halifax. She is attending from October  $7^{th}$  to the  $10^{th}$  (4 days). This course will enable her to be a part of the training team

that provides CIT training for police officers. The majority of APD members are CIT trained and certified, which provides them with extra tools, skills and resources for dealing with people in a mental health crisis. Sergeant Graham had also been selected to attend, however cancelled due to staffing shortages.

#### **GENERAL OPERATIONAL UPDATES:**

**47**<sup>th</sup> **Annual Canadian Police and Peace Officer's Memorial Service:** On September 29<sup>th</sup>, Inspector Gairns attended the 47th annual Canadian Police and Peace Officers' Memorial Service. This annual service is held to honor police and peace officers who lost their lives while serving their communities. Inspector Gairns marched with hundreds of other police and peace officers from agencies across Canada.

Canine Therapy for First Responders – Rotary: On Monday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, Tracy Ryan of CTFFR spoke to the Amherst Rotary Club about the CTFFR program and how it benefits not only our department, but also our community. Also in attendance was Chief Pike, D/Chief Hunter, Sgt Aaron Graham, Cst Michelle Harrison, Crime Prevention Coordinator Melanie Siddal, and of course, Rocky, Lola and Walter.

**True Patriot Love:** On September 21<sup>st</sup>, Chief Pike and several members/staff attended and participated in the 'True Patriot Love - Canadian Walk for Veterans', walking around the 'big block' three times to raise money and awareness for our veterans.

**Special Olympics Truck Convoy:** D/Chief Tim Hunter and Sergeant Aaron Graham attended the 'Truck Convoy' in Halifax on September 21<sup>st</sup>. This initiative raises money and awareness for the Nova Scotia Special Olympics and this year 270 trucks were involved, the largest number of trucks in the convoy.

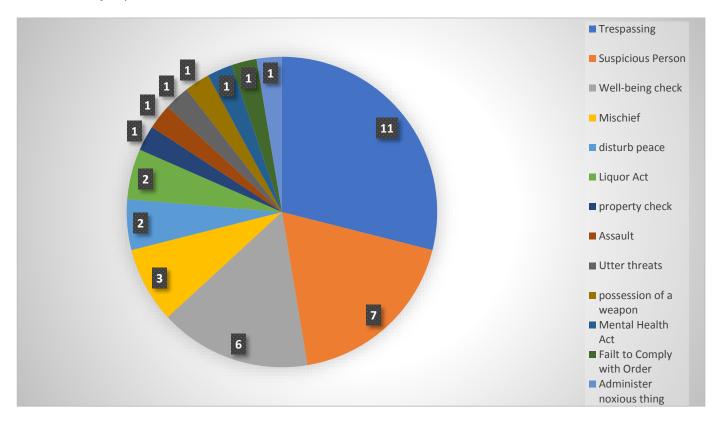




**National Police Women's Day:** On September 12<sup>th</sup> we celebrated National Police Women's Day. We are very lucky to have such excellent Police officers working at the Amherst Police Department. Their expertise and dedication to keeping our community safe is greatly appreciated!



**Homelessness**: Continuing with the lower numbers as observed in August (30), September had 38 complaints that had a nexus to homelessness. This is a stark contrast when compared to 110 complaints in July, 76 in June and 73 in May. Of these, 11 of them occurred at or within close proximity of the shelter. Many of the complaints are surrounding 3-4 of the same people. In the case of the low numbers for both August and September, these can be attributed to people that were not in the Amherst area for the majority of this time.



**Shoplifting Complaints**: Overall, our shoplifting complaints remain fairly consistent. In August 2024, we had 10 complaints of shoplifting in total. This increased slightly to 11 in September. This reflects recent drops, likely as a result of arrests/incarceration or even 'relocation' of specific individuals. We are also confident that the reported stats likely do not reflect the actual as such activities are often under reported or go unnoticed. Many stores cite employee safety as a reason for not taking proactive actions to stop shoplifting when it occurs. Aside from shoplifting, APD also received 23 complaints relating to thefts, especially in relation to gas drive-offs (9 reported complaints).

#### <u>OPERATIONAL STATS – SEPTEMBER</u>

498	Criminal Code Charges:	57
1	CDSA:	0
0	CBCA:	0
1	Traffic Tickets:	19
0	Traffic Written Warnings:	10
107	LCA:	5
52hrs, 13 min	Bike Patrol Hours:	0
0	Parking Warnings:	0
	1 0 1 0 107 52hrs, 13 min	1 CDSA: 0 CBCA: 1 Traffic Tickets: 0 Traffic Written Warnings: 107 LCA: 52hrs, 13 min Bike Patrol Hours: