

Clerk's Department, Mayor & Council

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10th April 2024

To the Trusted Members of the Kincardine Council,

We would like to start by saying thank you for the significant role you have in shaping our community. This role is heavy with responsibility, and we value the dedication, heart, and hard work you put into making this community better for our families and the future generations of Kincardine. Thank you.

At the March 13, 2024, Council Meeting, there was extensive discussion regarding the options to continue or not continue funding the School Resource Officer. The outcome of the first vote was to continue this role in our community – Option One in the meeting. A subsequent vote occurred regarding time frames, a 3- or 6-year commitment – a 3-year term was passed.

The robust debate prior to these votes is to be commended. Various perspectives were given, and it was clearly a difficult position for council to be in. We very much appreciate the tight timeframe with which you had to work, only having received the information from the Ministry of the Solicitor General on the 1st of March 2024. We also appreciate the funds being allotted to this role. The amount of \$120,000 per annum was mentioned several times in this and the subsequent meeting on March 27, 2024. The finality of Option Two was very clear. If this agreement was not renewed, we would no longer have access to a School Resource Officer. There would also be no way to reinstate this role if the agreement was not signed. Movement towards obtaining outcome measures over the next several years for quality assurance purposes was also suggested. The consensus among councilors to ensure funds are being spent in the best interests of the children of our community was evident.

At the March 27, 2024, Council Meeting a second vote was held. This vote eliminated the School Resource Officer. As members of our Kincardine community and of our St. Anthony's School family, we hope you can provide us with an understanding of what further research occurred during the period of March 13-27, 2024. At the close of the March 13th meeting, it appeared no further action was required to maintain the role of a RSO in our schools. However, this does not appear to have been the case. We would like to know how students and frontline school staff responded to your inquiries regarding the removal of the School Resource Officer. We would also like to hear how the OPP responded to the request of how outcome measures could be implemented.

Additionally, there are some observations we have from an article published in the Kincardine Record on January 18, 2024, on which we would appreciate your thoughts. The article states, ***"Now, it is funded through the Community Safety and Policing Grant – Local Priorities which provides \$32,788.55 each funding year, with the municipality providing an additional \$77,007.45. The current funding cycle ends March 31, 2025, with an option for a three-year extension. It is expected the grant will continue. "The school resource officer provides service to more than 2,600 students who are attending school in Kincardine, or will likely be attending school in Kincardine, for Grades 9-12," said Williams."*** Based on

this information, it would have cost \$29.61 per student per annum using the 77,007.45 figure; or approximately \$46.15 per student per annum, should we use the \$120,000 figure.

Our second observation comes from the following quoted figure, ***“In 2023, the officer responded to 419 calls for service in the schools - almost double the calls in 2022.”*** This is a significant increase. We would contend it would certainly merit continued observation of the trends of support this valuable service provided.

Based on the above observations and the value we have always placed on this treasured service, we feel there is now a significant void in the schools of our growing community.

Our students face so many challenges in today’s world: internet vulnerability, substance use, and human trafficking etc. If there is no option to reengage with the School Resource Officer, which we strongly feel remains the wisest course of action, we would appreciate any reassurances you may have concerning what steps will be taken to protect and benefit the children of Kincardine. This is a significant concern for our families.

We are looking forward to hearing your response.

Thank you again for your dedication and time. They are very much appreciated.

Respectfully yours,

Parents of St. Anthony's Catholic School Council