



January 9, 2026
Ref: 685339

Her Worship Barbara Desjardins
Mayor of the Township of Esquimalt
1229 Esquimalt Road
Victoria BC V9A 3P1

Her Worship Marianne Alto
Mayor of the City of Victoria
No. 1 Centennial Square
Victoria BC V8W 1P6

Elizabeth Cull
Finance Committee Chair
Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board
c/o 850 Caledonia Ave
Victoria BC V8T 5J8

Dear Mayor Desjardins, Mayor Alto, and Elizabeth Cull:

On June 18, 2025, the Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board (the Board) submitted a request asking me to make a determination under my authority in section 27(3.1) of the *Police Act*, RSBC 1996 c. 367, (the “Act”), resulting from the Township of Esquimalt Council (the Council) decision not to approve funding for seven full time positions in the Board’s 2025 provisional budget.

I received the following submissions following the Board’s application letter and attached report with supporting information:

- Township of Esquimalt Response, September 24, 2025.
- Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board Response, November 25, 2025.

I write now to provide my decision.

Legal Considerations

Statutory Framework – The *Police Act*

The Act sets out the legal framework for the delivery of police services in British Columbia.

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Section 2 of the Act charges the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General with the responsibility to ensure that an “adequate and effective level of policing and law enforcement is maintained throughout British Columbia.” Section 39 of the Act requires that the minister designate a director of policing and law enforcement services (the “director”) who is responsible for superintending policing and law enforcement functions on behalf of the minister. Under this superintendence role, the director is required under section 27 to determine whether items or amounts must be included in a provisional policing budget on the application of a municipality or municipal police board.

Section 15 of the Act sets out the financial obligations of a municipality with a population over 5,000 persons with respect to policing as set out in the Act, regulations or director’s standards, including:

- (i) Funding sufficient numbers to adequately enforce laws and maintain law and order;
- (ii) Funding adequate accommodation, equipment and supplies for the operation of the department and detention of persons in custody; and,
- (iii) Funding care and custody of persons in detention.

The process for the director to follow on an application is set out in section 27 of the Act:

- (3) If a council does not approve an item or amount in the provisional budget,
 - (a) the council must promptly notify the municipal police board, and
 - (b) the council or municipal police board may, at any time before May 15 of the year to which the provisional budget relates, request the director to determine whether the item or amount must be included in the budget.
 - (3.1) If on May 15 of the year to which the provisional budget relates, there are items or amounts in the budget that have not yet been approved by the council,
 - (a) the council must promptly notify the municipal police board, and
 - (b) the council must request the director to determine whether the item or amount must be included in the budget.
 - (3.2) After making a determination in respect of a request made under subsection (3) (b) or (3.1) (b), the director must notify the municipal police board, the council and the minister of the determination.

Further Legal Context

The City of Victoria and the Township of Esquimalt are serviced as a combined area by an amalgamated police department (sections 7 and 8 of the Victoria and Esquimalt Municipal Policing Reorganization Regulation, OIC 467/2024). The Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board, the City of Victoria, and the Township of Esquimalt have agreed as to the apportionment of costs and resources for the amalgamated police department in a framework agreement dated April 17, 2014. The apportionment of costs under the provisional budget of a municipal police board is not within my authority under the *Police Act*.

In summary, the legal framework requires me to evaluate the factual information provided by the parties with respect to the budget item and consider:

- i) Is it necessary to meeting an obligation under the *Police Act*, regulation or director’s standard including but not limited to:
 - a. Adequate and effective levels of policing and law enforcement.
 - b. Any relevant priorities, goals and objectives of the following:
 - i. The Minister
 - ii. The Municipality
 - iii. The Police Board
 - c. Any duties of a municipality under the *Police Act* (s.15).

Factual Background

The facts I have relied on in making my determination are from my review of the following submissions of the Board and Council:

- Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board Application (letter and attachment), June 18, 2025.
- Township of Esquimalt Response, September 24, 2025.
- Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board Response, November 25, 2025.

(collectively “the Submissions”)

The Submissions are appended collectively as Appendix A. Although I have reviewed these detailed submissions, for efficiency I will summarize only the relevant facts, which I relied on in making my determination.

The items and amounts in dispute are as follows:

| Budget Item: | Amount included in the Board Provisional Budget: | Amount approved by the Township of Esquimalt Council: |
|--|--|---|
| 2 Constables - Strike Force | \$210,725 | \$0 |
| 2 Constables - Community Resource Officers | \$210,725 | \$0 |
| Community Programs Manager (civilian) | \$100,892 | \$0 |
| Cybersecurity Analyst (civilian) | \$75,786 | \$0 |
| Logistics Coordinator (civilian) | \$65,452 | \$0 |
| Associated One-Time Hiring Costs | \$261,845 | \$0 |
| TOTAL AMOUNTS: | \$925,425 | \$0 |
| TOTAL DISPUTED AMOUNTS: | | \$925,425 (suggested reduction) |

The Board’s provisional budget for the items in dispute total \$925,425.

I will provide my analysis of the information given by each party and my decision on the amount that must be included in the budget below.

Decision

Item: 2 Constables – Strike Force

Analysis:

Board position: According to the Board, the Crime Severity Index in 2023 showed an increase in violent crime of 6.1% in Esquimalt and a decrease of 9.4% in Victoria. Non-violent crime decreased by 7.8% in Esquimalt and increased by 19.2% in Victoria (Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board Application, p.3). The Board also reported a 26% increase in the violent crime rate in Esquimalt between 2020 and 2023 (Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board Application p.10).

Victoria Police Department’s case load per officer was 31-32% higher than the BC average in 2022 and 2023, with 46 cases per officer in 2023 compared to the BC average of 35 (Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board Application, p.17). The RCMP implemented policy identifying the key roles and positions to safely staff surveillance units and by adding two officers to the Strike

Force section, the Department would be in line with the industry standard (Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board Application, p.30).

Council position: The Council maintains that the programs and positions included in the Board's application are designed to meet challenges unique to the City of Victoria and do not align with the service needs of Esquimalt (Township of Esquimalt Response, p.1). The Council believes that its current policing strength and composition is more than sufficient to address its community safety needs (Township of Esquimalt Response, p.2).

Finding: I have determined that two Strike Force officers are required to provide adequate and effective policing to the area of Victoria and Esquimalt. Surveillance is essential to police investigations and currently, the Victoria Police Department Strike Force Section is functioning below the industry standard. It is evident from the current case load per officer, above the provincial average, that the positions cannot be filled by other officers within the Department. I recognize that violent crime in Esquimalt and non-violent crime in Victoria have increased and additional officer positions are necessary to address crime problems.

Amount to be included in the 2025 budget: \$210,725.

Item: 2 Constables – Community Resource Officers

Analysis:

Board position: In addition to the increases in violent crime and non-violent crime reported in the 2023 Crime Severity Index, the Board noted a 161% increase in the number of police-reported hate crimes in Victoria between 2014 and 2023 (Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board Application, p.10). There was an increase in the number of supportive housing facilities in Victoria (25), with 7 more locations scheduled to open (Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board Application, p.10).

A 2024 public survey by the Department showed citizens primarily requested an increase in police visibility, the hiring of more officers, and more crime prevention programs and services (Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board Application, p.14). The Department currently has 6 Community Resource Officers and plans to expand to 8 to meet the community's needs. These officers provide proactive and community-based policing, strengthening community engagement, providing increased police visibility in key areas such as the downtown core, parks, and high-traffic public spaces, and support early intervention and relationship-building, which are foundational elements of effective modern policing (Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board Application, p.14).

The Department's case load per officer was 31-32% higher than the BC average in 2022 and 2023 with 46 cases per officer in 2023 compared to the BC average of 35 (Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board Application, p.17).

Council position: The Council maintains that the programs and positions included in the Board's application are designed to meet challenges unique to the City of Victoria and do not align with the service needs of Esquimalt (Township of Esquimalt Response, p.1). The Council believes that its current policing strength and composition is more than sufficient to address its community safety needs (Township of Esquimalt Response, p.2).

Finding: I have determined that two Community Resource Officers are required to meet the policing needs as identified through a community survey and to provide essential crime prevention programs in the area of Victoria and Esquimalt, in accordance with section 26(2) of the *Police Act*. With a significant increase in hate crimes (161%) and increase in supportive housing locations (25, 7 more scheduled), building community relationships and visibility is essential to provide adequate and effective policing by the Victoria Police Department. With the current case load per officer, it is evident that other constables within the Department would not be able to support this work and an increase in officers is required to staff these two essential positions.

Amount to be included in the 2025 budget: \$210,725.

Item: Community Programs Manager (civilian)

Analysis:

Board position: A 2024 community survey requested more crime prevention programs and services (Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board Application, p.14). In the last 7 years, the number of Victoria Police Department Community Outreach Volunteers has increased from 46 to 76, enabling attendance at more community and cultural events (Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board Application, p.15).

Currently, the Department civilian strength is below the national average at 21% of sworn officers, with the national average being 28% (Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board Application, p.18). The Department utilizes civilian positions to bridge staffing gaps, reduce policing costs, and enhance community service, including crime prevention education (Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board Application, p.18).

As part of this proposal, two other cost-neutral changes will be made: The Reserve Coordinator position will move from the Community Services Division to CED, The existing Cultural

Community Officer and the Reserve Coordinator positions will be renamed under one job description with the title of Cultural and Community Programs Officer, with shared responsibilities (Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board Application, Appendix B, p.35).

Council position: The Council maintains that the programs and positions included in the Board's application are designed to meet challenges unique to the City of Victoria and do not align with the service needs of Esquimalt (Township of Esquimalt Response, p.1). The Council believes that its current policing strength and composition is more than sufficient to address its community safety needs (Township of Esquimalt Response, p.2).

Finding: I have determined that a Community Programs Manager position is required to provide adequate and effective policing in the area of Victoria and Esquimalt through crime prevention initiatives and programs, in accordance with section 26(2) of the *Police Act*. It is evident that a Community Programs Manager is a cost-effective civilian position to manage community outreach, utilizing the 76 volunteers to educate and engage with the community. I also recognize that with the significant increase in volunteers, a new position is required.

Amount to be included in the 2025 budget: \$100,892.

Item: Cybersecurity Analyst (civilian)

Analysis:

Board position: In the last 5 years, the number of new systems or applications used in the department has increased from 50 to 100 at no additional cost and with a 95% refresh of the original 50 applications. Applications are used for case management, administration of the British Columbia mandatory Ethos Police Test for new employee candidates, online crime reporting, peer support management, network disaster recovery, criminal records checks, and HR management (Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board Application, p.16).

Cybercrime includes fraud, human trafficking, trafficking in child pornography and intellectual property, internet child exploitation, cyberbullying, identity theft, privacy violations, drug sales, and terrorism. Statistics Canada released data for police-reported cybercrime, number of incidents and rate per 100,000 population on July 25, 2024. The data for Victoria, BC indicates a 248% increase in the number of incidents over a 5-year period (Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board Application, p.25).

There are compliance and regulatory requirements that this position will manage, including FIPPA, NIST, CIS and police agency-specific regulations. The Department does not currently have a dedicated Cybersecurity position (Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board Application, Appendix B, p. 39).

Council position: The Council maintains that the programs and positions included in the Board's application are designed to meet challenges unique to the City of Victoria and do not align with the service needs of Esquimalt (Township of Esquimalt Response, p.1). The Council believes that its current policing strength and composition is more than sufficient to address its community safety needs (Township of Esquimalt Response, p.2).

Finding: I have determined that the Victoria Police Department requires a Cybersecurity position to address the significant increase in Cybercrimes in the area of Victoria and Esquimalt over the last 5 years (248%), and to manage current and new systems and applications. With 100 systems and applications in place at the Department, that require compliance with legislation and regulations (FIPPA, NIST, CIS), the Department must ensure subject matter expertise, risk management and policy management. This position is required to ensure public safety online, recognizing this complex space for offending and victimization that requires expertise.

Amount to be included in the 2025 budget: \$75,786.

Item: Logistics Coordinator (civilian)

Analysis:

Board position: Smaller police departments, such as Saanich Police Department, have had a dedicated quartermaster role since 2007. The knowledge, skills and abilities of the position, commonly filled by a sworn officer at other police departments, include knowledge of methods, practices and equipment commonly used in police work. It is a specialized position in which the incumbent is responsible for all matters relating to police uniforms and personnel equipment, including maintenance of inventory, issuance and disposal of supplies and equipment, ensuring equipment is properly maintained and stored, maintenance of records consistent with modern warehousing and inventory control practices, and performing inventory of quartermaster stores (Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board Application, p.28).

By hiring this position as a civilian with dotted line oversight provided by a sworn officer and reporting to the Manager of Financial Services, the Department can provide significant cost-savings (Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board Application, p.28).

The Victoria Police Department does not currently have staff dedicated to quartermaster duties (Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board Application, Appendix B, p.42).

Council position: The Council maintains that the programs and positions included in the Board's application are designed to meet challenges unique to the City of Victoria and do not align with the service needs of Esquimalt (Township of Esquimalt Response, p.1).

The Council believes that its current policing strength and composition is more than sufficient to address its community safety needs (Township of Esquimalt Response, p.2).

Finding: I have determined that a Logistics Coordinator is not required to provide adequate and effective policing to Victoria and Esquimalt. While I appreciate that the Board is seeking to civilianize positions that may traditionally be occupied by police officers in other departments to save costs, there was not sufficient information provided to identify the need for a new civilian full-time position to ensure officer and public safety, or to meet legal requirements.

Amount to be included in the 2025 budget: \$0

Item: Associated One-Time Hiring Costs

Analysis:

Board position: The Board did not provide information related to the one-time hiring costs or how the total amount requested was determined in its Application or response submission.

Council position: The Council did not comment on the one-time hiring costs requested in its submissions.

Finding: I have determined there is not sufficient information to make a determination about this item and amount. To have this item and amount considered for decision, **I request that the Board submit a detailed breakdown of these costs no later than January 16, 2026, to myself and to Council for a response no later than January 30, 2026.**

I wish to thank the parties for their submissions with the information necessary for a fair decision.

Regards,



Glen Lewis
Assistant Deputy Minister
And Director of Policing and Law Enforcement Services
Policing and Security Branch

pc: Fiona Wilson, Chief Constable, Victoria Police Department
Nina Krieger, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General

Attachment:

- Appendix A – Submissions