



March 17, 2021

Honourable Mike Farnworth
Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General
PO Box 9010 Stn Prov Gov
Victoria BC
V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Farnworth,

We are writing to you regarding the amalgamated police service for the Township of Esquimalt and the City of Victoria. The 2002 Order In Council 1137 (OIC) and Ministerial Order M365 to create an amalgamated police service for the Township of Esquimalt and the City of Victoria was intended as the first step in establishing a larger regional police service. It is now almost 20 years later, and no further amalgamation has taken place nor does the Province appear to be planning any future police amalgamation in the Capital Region.

As you are aware, in the time that the OIC and Ministerial Order have been in place forcing the amalgamation, there have been ongoing issues in several areas for both municipalities including budget allocation, budget process, governance model, costs, use of resources, approval for additional resources, use of reserve funds and allocation of surplus. These issues have been the impetus for numerous reviews, consultant reports, efficiency reviews, administrative committee discussions, financing and framework agreements and eventually dispute resolution requests submitted to the Province.

The latest consultant reports commissioned by Director of Police Services have resulted in requests to convene the administrative committee for dispute resolution. While the City of Victoria and the Township of Esquimalt have both expressed their support for a regional approach to policing in the Capital Region, they have also both clearly expressed that they do not want to remain part of the current limited amalgamation.

The recent reports by Mr. LePard reinforce that the existing amalgamated force is not well positioned to adequately address the unique and different needs of each community, and the reports support a conclusion that unless policing is amalgamated on a regional basis, those needs would be better addressed through separate forces governed by their respective boards, as is the case for all other municipalities in the province. For this to occur, OIC 1137, Ministerial Order M365 creating the amalgamated police service must be rescinded.

The Township of Esquimalt and the City of Victoria are jointly calling on the Province to bring all of the other police departments in the region, into an amalgamated police service, as was intended in 2002 or to rescind the OIC and Ministerial Order and allow Esquimalt and Victoria to provide policing independently in accordance with the Police Act.

If the Province is not planning to develop an amalgamated regional police service, we jointly request that the Province reinstate separate police departments to serve Esquimalt and Victoria. This will allow each community to choose and guide policing priorities and objectives through their respective Boards, and subject to the budgetary decisions of their respective communities as provided for by the Police Act, just as all other municipalities in our region and across the Province are able to do.

Sincerely,



Lisa Helps
Mayor of Victoria



Barb Desjardins
Mayor of Esquimalt