

# **SARNIA POLICE SERVICE**

## **WORKLOAD ANALYSIS**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The Sarnia Police Service has arrived at a difficult point in its history. After years of service to the community it has undergone an organizational review, major changes to the senior management staffing, a contentious inquest, a number of deleterious incidents involving police staff, all in the context of a possible disbandment. At the same time, the new management cadre, with the support of the Police Services Board *and the Police Association*, has begun to appraise the organization and set it in a more positive, progressive direction that will benefit the members of the Police Service and the community they serve.

The Sarnia Police Service does not have an overabundance of uniformed or civilian staff, but if it were operating at a full complement, it would have sufficient uniformed staff to adequately respond to its current level of calls for service and criminal caseload. With the exception of one particular area, human resources management, the civilian staff, supplemented by part time employees, is able to provide effective support service. It is apparent that the Police Service is adequately providing the core functions mandated in section 4. (2) of the Police Services Act of Ontario.

This is not to say that the Police Service could not benefit from additional staff and, in fact, some uniformed officers should be transferred out of positions that can be filled by fully qualified civilians, and returned to positions that benefit from their law enforcement training and experience. The terms of the grant programs that currently provide substantial levels of revenue to the Police Service do not allow for a reduction in the approved complement of police officers, so every effort must be made to ensure that the existing complement of sworn officers focuses on duties that relate to law enforcement and public safety.

The most pressing need for the organization is to encourage those who are unavailable to perform the duties for which they were hired and trained to return to positions that better utilize their skills and experience. The new management team, working in concert with the Police Services Board, must initiate positive changes in the administration of the Sarnia Police Service that encourage and reward those staff members who meet or exceed the organizational expectations. At the same time they must firmly and fairly confront the problems within the Police Service to create a more positive working environment.

While the consultants were impressed by the commitment and dedication of the staff who were interviewed, it was apparent that morale in the Police Service was not at the level you would expect in an organization that provides a superior level of service and has received consistent support from its civilian oversight body. The causes are complex and not easily resolved. To the extent possible, this report outlines the main elements within the Police Service that account for this situation and provides some practical recommendations for rectifying them. The organizational difficulties with respect to morale have been exacerbated by the uncertainty that the decision to seek a costing from the Ontario Provincial Police has created.

The problems identified in this report have developed over a long period of time. Since the Request for Proposals was issued, the senior management cadre has experienced significant, positive changes, with the appointment of a new Chief and a new Deputy Chief. They are aware of the need to initiate new approaches to develop a more positive corporate culture, and build on the excellent working relationships that now exist within most of the organization. Almost all members of the Sarnia Police Service who were interviewed by the consultants expressed concern about some aspects of the Police Service while demonstrating a commitment and openness to change, loyalty to the organization, and dedication to their community. With the support of the Board and the Sarnia Police Association, the new senior command is unquestioningly able to address current problems and initiate improvements in policy, procedures and management capability to ensure the problems are rectified.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

The Sarnia Police Service issued a Request for Proposals to develop a comprehensive workload analysis of both police and civilian personnel of the Police Service. The consultants were to assess the ability of the current complement of uniformed and civilian staff to meet the core responsibilities as set out in the Police Services Act of Ontario. In pursuing this objective they were to analyze workload procedures and identify barriers to effective service delivery, and suggest efficiencies that could be introduced. Recommendations were to focus on; staffing levels, changes or job integration to create efficiencies, introduction of improved equipment or technology, impact of workload demands on the members of the Police Service, and the complement needed to provide adequate service delivery now, and in ten years.

Historically, the workload statistics captured by the Sarnia Police Service indicate significant yearly variations, with few identifiable, consistent trends. *This may reflect the demographic changes that have occurred since Sarnia amalgamated with Clearwater on January 1, 1991. At that time the total population was approximately 70,000. By the census of 1996 it had increased to 72,738, only to experience a period of decline that resulted in a 2001 population of 70,876. The population is currently estimated to be approximately 75,000 and the 2009 Development Change forecasts a further net population increase of 2,112 in the next ten years. These fluctuations have presented workload and organizational challenges for the Sarnia Police Service as it initially had to integrate and streamline two separate municipal police organizations, and subsequently downsize as a result of municipal retraction.*

The review examined numerous aspects of the Sarnia Police Service but this report focuses on those that are of particular pertinence to the mandate outlined in the Request for Proposals. The primary descriptions and observations included in this report are those which have relevance to the recommendations contained in the final section.

## **METHODOLOGY:**

As identified in their response to the RFP, the consultants followed a four phase approach that began with a review of the pertinent documentation. This included: the current business plan, the annual report, multi-year statistical data, prior inspection reports, *the 2007 Internal Service Report*, police service policies and procedures, annual budgets, attendance records and numerous other reports related to the operation and administration of the Police Service. On their first trip to Sarnia they toured the police building and briefly examined and evaluated both the facility and the equipment being used by the staff in the various branches.

The core strategy for the assignment was full and honest consultation with police staff. Throughout the entire process the consultants liaised with senior management, who at all times were cooperative and helpful. At no point were the consultants denied access to information or obstructed in any way. They reviewed all units within the Police Service and identified the key staff members who they wished to interview. In addition, they interviewed any member who requested an opportunity to contribute information, observations and opinions. The consultants found the staff to be knowledgeable, dedicated and straightforward. The duration of the interviews ranged from one to two hours as the consultants did not impose any time restrictions. Members were also invited to contact the consultants at any time during the project if they had any further information, comments or suggestions which they wished to share.

The interviews were generally limited to police staff, although the consultants did meet with Sarnia's Chief Administrative Officer to obtain a municipal perspective on some of the main issues. The consultants ensured that all senior staff were contacted on every visit if they were available. In addition, it was imperative that all five Staff Sergeants were interviewed, as this is a key position within a police service which bridges the operational component with the senior management and administration. From a practical standpoint, it is officers at this rank who will eventually assume the senior management roles within the organization. The president and vice president of the Sarnia Police Association also provided valuable input into the process. In total, 41 formal interviews were conducted. Twelve of these were with civilian members, including special constables, with the other 29 including representation from every rank within the Police Service.

To fully assess the Sarnia Police Service, the consultants reviewed the situation in five other Ontario municipal police services. There are not many municipal police services in Ontario that police communities in the 50,000 to 100,000 population range, but five were identified that provided relevant comparators and were willing to assist in the project. The city of Sault Ste. Marie has a population of about the same size as Sarnia and provided the best comparator. The North Bay and South Simcoe organizations police municipalities with smaller populations and larger geographic areas, while Brantford and Guelph are significantly larger municipalities. The consultants reviewed the pertinent data from all of these police services and then visited them to meet with senior staff, review their organization, staffing levels, workload pressures and operating procedures in order to identify best practices. A comparative overview of some of the key criteria is included in Appendix "A".

## **ORGANIZATIONAL ANALYSIS:**

Except for some highly specialized activities, the Sarnia Police Service provides a full set of police services to the municipality. It is structured in a manner comparable to other, similarly sized municipal police services, with distinct organizational units clearly responsible for specific components of the workload. The Chief of Police is directly responsible for the administration and planning components of the police service, while the two operational divisions report through the Deputy Chief. In the rare occurrences where specialized services not provided by the Sarnia Police Service are required, the Ontario Provincial Police are available under terms of a mutual aid agreement which identifies the services available and the costs involved for their provision.

There is no single, established organizational structure for municipal police services, although there tend to be basic structural units that are evident in all of them. For example, they all separate criminal investigation and related support units into a division that is distinct from the patrol and traffic components of the organization. Similarly there may be elements that are unique such as the emergency planning function, which is particularly crucial in Sarnia because of the petroleum and petrochemical industries. Consequently, unlike the comparator organizations, there is an identified need to have this function closely affiliated with the senior command. Within the divisional groupings which divide patrol, criminal investigation and administrative services, there are often variations. For instance in Sarnia the communications branch reports through the Administration Division, whereas in some other jurisdictions communications is located within the Patrol Division.

The trend for most municipal police services in Ontario has been to simplify their organizational structures and broadband positions to reduce the number of rank levels. The current Sarnia Police Service organization includes four separate divisions each headed by an Inspector. Due to recent promotions and a retirement, two Inspector positions are vacant. The Planning, Training and Evaluation Division contains a small number of disparate Branches with no specific commonality. In the comparator organizations the crime analysis function is located in the Criminal Investigation area while training and tactical (emergency response) report through the Field Operations area, because most of the staff in these units are normally assigned to platoons. Media relations most often reports to the Chief of Police or

the Deputy Chief, as does the officer responsible for professional standards, who occupies the rank of Staff Sergeant.

*In examining the comparator organizations, it became apparent that the size of the organization determined its degree of self sufficiency. For example, the larger police services had less need for mutual aid agreements with other local police services, and although they may have entered into these types of contracts, they were less likely to rely on assistance from other police services. Similarly, as police services grow they become more autonomous with respect to administrative support. Smaller organizations usually depend on municipal staff for most financial, technological or human resource support. As they grow in size this becomes burdensome for municipal staff, and the police service gradually develops its own expertise. Other factors influencing this are legislative requirements pertaining to police operations and administration that require high measures of confidentiality, and the unique status of police officers under common law.*

With respect to administrative support *in the Sarnia Police Service*, it appears that the respective authorities and responsibilities of some positions are not clearly defined. This may be a reflection of the centralization of authority at the executive level to the point where branch managers are not allowed to initiate routine administrative processes without prior approval from higher in the organization. Delegation of responsibility for normal functions such as budget administration is virtually non-existent. Although some adjustments to the organizational structure might help resolve this situation, a more practical approach would involve a redefinition of respective authorities and reporting relationships to encourage a corporate atmosphere that stresses the need to allow the managers to manage. This is a relatively common occurrence in both private and public enterprises, where organizations experience pressures that necessitate centralization of authority and decision making in order to effectively provide leadership and control, and then eventually mature to a point where these responsibilities can devolve to more appropriate levels within the organization.

It is clear that the Sarnia Police Service is generally well organized and that the organizational structure is suited to the staffing levels and the service delivery mechanisms used by the Police Service. None of the interviewees suggested the need for significant change to the structure of the organization, and they all demonstrated a thorough knowledge of the role their respective units were to play within the Police Service. There are, of course, situations in which staff members or

organizational units could improve their level of interaction, and a number of staff indicated that internal communication had been severely restricted under previous administrations, *as had been identified in the 2007 Internal Services Report*. But these are not the result of deficiencies within the structure of the Police Service. Senior management is committed to improving communication with civilian and uniformed members as well as their Association representatives. Their openness and visibility within headquarters were identified as notable improvements by a number of staff.

The Police Service uses a four platoon system that results in each platoon working twelve hour shifts. Although this type of platoon is favoured by a majority of police officers because it maximizes the number of days off that they enjoy, it creates some operational challenges because platoon strength is usually the same at all times of the day. The Police Service maintains excellent records with respect to the breakdown of calls for service by hour and day of the week. It is apparent from reviewing the impressive charts produced by the software *used by the Sarnia Police Service*, that there are distinct periods of relatively high and low workload obligations. Management has little flexibility to increase staff levels during peak workload periods. This has been partly mitigated; by increasing the minimum platoon strength by one constable during peak periods, through the use of a dedicated Traffic Unit, as well as the creation of the Community Oriented Policing and Problem Solving (COPPS) Section. Some of the comparator organizations utilized alternate shift schedules that provided greater flexibility with respect to officer deployment, although this often requires amendments to the collective agreement.

As noted in a Ministry Inspection Report, which was issued in May 2003, each platoon includes a Staff Sergeant who is normally on duty in the police building, as well as one sergeant who provides operational supervision on patrol. This is consistent with the other municipal police services which were examined as part of this project. Although most platoons have fourteen officers assigned to them, seldom, if ever, are that many available on a shift. The minimum staffing for each platoon has been established at ten; although this can be increased by one for certain peak periods. Shift supervisors are empowered to call in officers on overtime if needed to maintain the minimum complement. Most platoon members identified a preference for one, or perhaps two, additional officers to be assigned to each platoon *in the belief that this* will reduce the use of overtime, and increase proactive police activities such as bicycle and foot patrols. An examination of the response times for priority calls indicated that,

depending on the time of year, highest priority calls experience response times ranging from under one minute to approximately six minutes. Most second level priorities were responded to in seven minutes or less. These statistics suggest that current platoon strength is sufficient to effectively respond to calls, but staffing limitations restrict non response police activities. *The two municipal police services that police populations most comparable to Sarnia's are Peterborough-Lakefield and Sault Ste. Marie, and they employ 125 and 138 uniformed staff respectively.* However, there was no strong evidence that most workload pressures, including the need to enhance proactive, community oriented police functions, could not be met by the effective deployment of all 112 uniformed staff.

Under the provisions of the Police Services Act, Sarnia is responsible for court security in all of the court facilities in the city. This is the primary responsibility of the special constables who work out of the court facility. This court building is extremely inadequate, which complicates the challenges these special constables face. The Province, through the County, provides some funding for court security, and has committed to assuming full responsibility within the next few years. The full time special constable complement is assisted by a number who work on a part time basis. In addition, Sarnia police officers can be required to assist even for routine functions such as the transportation of juvenile offenders to youth facilities in other municipalities.

The Sarnia Police Service does not have any programs that utilize civilian volunteers. Other jurisdictions have implemented units such as auxiliary police that provide some level of assistance and, on occasion, provide recruits for the organization. Non uniformed civilian programs, such as the exemplary one developed by the Cobourg Police Service, supply talented volunteers who provide a wide range of assistance including staffing the front desk, at a minimal cost. All of these programs create a positive profile for the police within their community. Although the participants in these programs volunteer their time at no cost, there are some fiscal implications in equipping and training them. In addition they must be introduced as an enhancement to existing staff with the sole purpose of providing assistance to them, not as replacements or a method of avoiding future staff increases.

## **TECHNOLOGY:**

The Police Services Board has been supportive of technological enhancements and the provision and maintenance of adequate equipment. The officers are well equipped, and although some of them promoted the introduction of new or upgraded technology, none of the interviewees complained that the current situation was inadequate. The communications system, which is the most fundamental technological asset for modern policing, has been upgraded to a digital, encrypted system which provides superior service throughout the jurisdiction. Just as importantly, the Communications Centre is staffed by a proper number of fully trained and qualified communicators who have access to support and supervision on each shift. The traffic reconstructionists have acquired some relatively inexpensive computer software that allows them to perform their role more expeditiously, as it allows them to complete functions that formerly required submission to an outside agency.

A determination to free up as much officer time as possible for operational police duties led to the decision to minimize the amount of time the uniformed staff spends writing reports. The use of data entry staff in the Records Branch to complete most of the report writing is of great benefit for the officers, as well as the quality of the work that is produced. The Sarnia Police Service has recently purchased "voice recognition" software that will reduce the amount of actual information the staff will have to input. The data entry jobs will eventually focus more on editing, organizing and preparing, than on inputting raw information. This should make their jobs more interesting and enhance the quality of the reports. It might also free up sufficient time to allow these staff members to upgrade their training so that they can backfill other civilian positions and reduce the reliance on part time support staff.

The consultants visited the Sault Ste. Marie Police Service where voice recognition technology had already been implemented. The senior staff stressed the many benefits this generated and also emphasized the need to ensure it is properly and thoroughly endorsed by all members of the organization, particularly those records staff who will be using it on a daily basis. A significant amount of time and effort is required to effectively introduce this technology, but the long term benefits for both the uniformed and civilian staff is impressive.

A variety of other technologies came to the attention of the consultants as a result of their observations with the comparator police services and through suggestions forwarded by Sarnia Police members. Most notable was the preference for the addition of in-car computer terminals. It appears that the results arising from the introduction of this technology have been mixed. Some police agencies have had positive results, while others have not been particularly successful. As with all technological enhancements, the potential gains must be measured against the significant financial commitment that must be made for purchase, installation and maintenance.

In the Records Branch, a large area is devoted to records storage. Other organizations have freed up these types of warehousing enterprises by digitally recording all records. Although there is an initial cost for imputing historical data, significant efficiencies can be realized because of the ease of accessing and backing up necessary records. Again, the Sault Ste Marie Police Service has gone completely digital so that disclosure in a criminal case usually involves the transfer of one or more disks, as opposed to reams of printed material that police staff are normally obligated to prepare. *The current Sarnia police administration has identified this as a priority and has begun a phased approach to implementing digital technology into all areas where it will be beneficial.*

Other innovations such as "Blackberries" and interactive training software have been successfully incorporated by other police agencies. Perhaps the most useful addition in the near future for the Sarnia Police Service would be an electronic inventory system that facilitates the monitoring of the equipment and property owned and issued by the Police Service.

The immediate need for improvements to the human resources management capability in the Police Service would benefit from the introduction of comprehensive software to enhance the capability to schedule staff and monitor compliance with policies and procedures. While on site the consultants viewed a presentation on OSL software that meets the basic needs of emergency service providers and has been successfully implemented in a number of Ontario police services.

There are a variety of other technologies that would improve work flow. For example automated ticket machines would; provide the public with a POA document that is easier to read, save officer time, and reduce the number of technical mistakes that can occur. Officer safety would be enhanced through the introduction of GPS technology

into police vehicles. This would be a valuable asset for the dispatchers as they would automatically know where all vehicles were located and where the nearest available officers are for assignment.

The capital costs associated with information technology acquisition, as well as ongoing operating and maintenance costs can appear prohibitive, and they must be assessed in the context of a business plan that identifies cost savings, cost avoidance and service improvements. Much of the technology employed by police services are unique to the nature of the workload and require enhanced levels of security. Nevertheless, if there are opportunities for efficiencies, the Sarnia Police Service should partner with the City or other suitable agencies to reduce costs.

Information technology support is primarily provided by in-house staff, one who is a well qualified technologist and another who is an experienced police officer who has worked with police related technology projects for a number of years. At some point, it may be cost efficient to civilianize this second position to free up a uniformed position for law enforcement and public safety priorities.

The one suggestion for improvement that was not driven by technology is the identified need for a properly situated and furnished "soft" interview room for sensitive situations such as those involving traumatized victims or young children. The comparator organizations had these types of facilities, and the Sarnia Police Service is developing one. This will further enhance an already strong commitment by the Sarnia Police Service to provide a superior level of assistance to victims and innocent people who become enmeshed in criminal incidents.

## **WORKLOAD/SERVICE DELIVERY ANALYSIS:**

Unlike some larger police services, the Sarnia Police Service still responds to all calls for service. Although the Police Service has introduced an alternative response unit to respond to information requests and minor occurrences, any event of significance receives a response from a police officer. In some municipalities, crimes such as "break and enter" do not normally result in an officer being dispatched to the residence or business. This philosophy of "differential response" gained traction in the 1960's and 1970's when police services in busy jurisdictions attempted to create strategies to cope with increasing workloads with limited resources. Unfortunately these policies lessened public safety, and in the past decade or so municipalities such as New York City have had to reverse the trend by adding significant numbers of additional officers to properly respond to all calls for service. The result has been a dramatic decrease in the rate of crime.

Sarnia is in an advantageous position inasmuch as the police service never embraced anything but a full service delivery mandate, and the problems inherent in a differential response philosophy never arose. Nevertheless, if shortages of available police staff were to continue the Police Service may need to explore ways of reducing its workload.

One innovation that has been implemented, even by police services that normally respond to all calls for service, is the establishment of "collision reporting centres". The police services that utilize these centres strongly advocate their usefulness as they reduce the number of calls that need a police response, limit the amount of report writing for police officers, provide extensive data to develop effective traffic management programs, and can even generate revenue for the police service. Senior management of the police services confirmed that the introduction of these centres created little or no criticism from the public because, in many situations, it results in a more expedient resolution for people involved in motor vehicle collisions.

The consultants experienced some difficulty in reconciling the various statistical reports that contain current and historical workload data for the Sarnia Police Service. This was also a problem also encountered with some of the comparator organizations. It might benefit the Police Services Board to familiarize its members with the intricacies of criminal justice statistics to facilitate their civilian oversight responsibilities. Differentiating calls to the communication centre from calls for service, number of incidents and criminal caseload might provide an insight into the true extent of the workload challenges

facing the Police Service. Appendix "B" provides an overview of key statistical indicators for the last six years.

In 2008, the Sarnia Police Service responded to almost 21,000 calls for service. In the preceding three years the number of calls for service had significantly exceeded 22,000, peaking at over 24,000 in 2004. This is an extremely important statistic for a police service which responds to all calls for service. The consultants reviewed the data base used by the Sarnia Police Service. The calls are broken down by zone, and the communication and dispatch policy that provides direction with respect to the priority to be assigned to each call is exemplary.

The workload per officer in Sarnia is at an acceptable level. Based on the authorized strength of 112 uniformed staff the average number of calls per officer is approximately 190 per year. Appendix "C" provides an overview of how this compares to other municipal police organizations. *The validity of cross organizational comparisons of "calls for service" data is compromised by inconsistencies in reporting methodologies. For example, some police services record a "call for service" whenever a traffic ticket is issued. Nonetheless it remains a valid measure for year to year workload variations within the organization.*

*A more valuable measure identifies criminal caseload. Statistics Canada records the number of Criminal Code Cases per officer on a national basis. This fluctuated between 41 and 44 between 2002 and 2006. In 2006, the Ontario Civilian Commission on Police Services, during a hearing conducted in Cobourg, accepted a ratio of 50 cases per officer as acceptable. In Sarnia, the number of Criminal Code Cases per officer in 2008 was 55 which is far above the national averages published by Statistics Canada, and substantially higher than most of the comparator police services. Considering that the Sarnia Police Service is far from full complement, these averages are, in actuality, higher. Some of the comparator organizations have almost all uniformed staff capable of fulfilling police duties, and none of those that encountered human resource limitations experienced them at the same magnitude as the Sarnia Police Service.*

Reviewing the statistics back to 1994, it appears that Sarnia has experienced reductions in some types of criminal activity most notably; break and enters, theft including motor vehicle thefts, arson and mischief. As a consequence the number of arrests per year has declined from over 1700 per year to slightly less than 1600. Over that

same period, the time required to deal with many types of occurrences rose dramatically reflecting changes in legislation and other factors such as judicial decisions. For example, the processing of one impaired driver takes between three to four hours, and removes the arresting officer from normal patrol duties for that period of time.

With respect to traffic activity, with the exception of parking offences, the Police Service has increased proactive activities over the past five years, with much of the enforcement emanating from the Traffic unit. Nevertheless, the pattern of motor vehicle collisions and fatal accidents has been irregular. The statistics respecting impaired drivers has been relatively stable during this period.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES ISSUES**

### **Uniformed Staffing:**

In 1991, when the amalgamation of the Sarnia and Clearwater police services occurred, the uniformed complement of the new organization was 119. By eliminating duplicate positions, particularly in the senior management and supervisory ranks, the Police Service was able to eventually reduce the number of officers *to 111*. In 1993/94, in response to a population decrease of 3,000, the strength of the Police Service was reduced by three officers. The current authorized uniformed complement of the Sarnia Police Service is 112 which would provide one officer for every 670 citizens if the full complement was available to provide operational police related duties. The level of uniformed staff has remained constant for the last ten years. Appendix "A" illustrates that, relative to the comparator organizations, the Sarnia Police Service is not well staffed. The only municipal service serving a similar population, Sault Ste. Marie, employs 138 officers for a ratio of one to 554. Although not analyzed as part of this project, the Peterborough-Lakefield Police Service employs 125 officers to police a population of 81,148 for a ratio of one to 649. Relative to these comparator organizations, the Sarnia Police Service is modestly staffed with uniformed members. Assessed in relation to the workload, particularly the Criminal Code occurrences, the staffing level is adequate. Most of the members who were interviewed felt that a complement of 112 could cope with the current workload if they were available to perform regular police duties.

To maintain a reasonable level of uniformed officers, the Sarnia Police Service has taken advantage of subsidy programs offered by the Province of Ontario to encourage police services to increase their staffing levels and enhance their ability to improve public safety. Currently there are five officers being partly funded by the Province. In addition, the Police Service has recently accessed additional funds from the Federal Government which are intended to increase the number of police in Canada. *In 2009, this program allowed the Police Service to add one officer and increase its complement to 112.* The Federal program offers more money per officer and greater flexibility with respect to how the funds are used in the first two years than has been the norm with the provincial programs. To ensure that these funds are used to increase the size of police services, and not just fill pre-existing vacancies, the senior levels of government insist upon the

identification of an authorized complement as a starting point before additional officers are hired. The police services report back at regular intervals, and if the approved complement is not being maintained, the grants are withheld. The most prominent example of the benefit that these programs have created for Sarnia is the COPPS unit that provides an impressive flexibility for the deployment of additional uniformed, front line officers for high priority areas.

In the opinion of the consultants the most blatant problem encountered by the Sarnia Police Service, especially with respect to uniformed staffing, is the large number of officers who are not available to perform police duties. The Police Service is currently accommodating 10 uniformed personnel and 4 civilians. In addition, five officers are on the inactive roster, three *of whom receive WSIB benefits and* two of whom have been suspended from duty. *Of the ten officers who are being accommodated, five are filling existing uniformed positions, two are filling civilian positions, and two had positions created for them. Similarly, two of the accommodated civilians are filling existing positions while new positions were created for the other two.* Complicating this further is a horrific experience with respect to lost time originating from sick time usage and WSIB claims. In 2008, these absences amounted to 4 full time equivalents for uniformed personnel, and 2.5 full time equivalents for civilian staff. Collectively these statistics identify a significant proportion of the staff as being unable, or unwilling, to perform the core job functions for which they were hired and trained. In other cases, such as the manager of the Records unit, uniformed staff have been assigned to positions normally filled by civilians to address specific situations that, when resolved, should result in redeployment to a police position.

It is unreasonable to expect all of the staff to resume normal work functions. Some cases are straightforward as the member is physically or mentally unable to perform police duties either on a temporary or permanent basis, and the obligation to accommodate these officers is specified in Section 47 of the Police Services Act. On reviewing the history of some of the accommodated officers in Sarnia, it appears that historically, the senior management of the Police Service accepted the identification of treatable medical conditions, as equivalent to disability, and, as a consequence, provided preferential treatment for some officers who may be capable of resuming normal police duties.

The belief that abuses of the sick leave provisions have been allowed to perpetuate is widespread throughout the organization. Because of the innate inequity of the situation, resentment has been prevalent

within the ranks, and this negatively affects morale. As observed previously, the Sarnia Police Service does not have an abundance of uniformed officers. The unavailability of such a large number of trained officers results in the remainder having to pull more than their fair share which leads to resentment and burnout.

### **Civilian Staffing:**

Since 2000 the number of civilian members in the Sarnia Police Service has risen from 42 to 46. Over these years they have been supplemented by between 19 and 22 part time and casual civilian staff. The ratio of full time civilian staff to uniformed personnel in the Sarnia Police Service is 2.5, which is similar to or slightly less than the comparator organizations. The ratio for Sarnia is consistent with the national averages as reported by Statistics Canada. In fact, police services in Canada have increasingly civilianized in the past few years. In 2002 the ratio of uniformed staff to civilians in Canadian police services was 2.82, and by 2006 it had been reduced to 2.61. The Sarnia experience relative to the comparator organizations is summarized in Appendix "C".

On examining each of the civilian job categories, it appeared that the Sarnia Police Service was adequately staffed. This is due, in part, to the fact that a number of accommodated uniformed staff are filling functions that could be performed by properly trained civilian staff. Other police organizations are following the national trend to utilize increasing numbers of civilians in administrative and technical positions. For example, many of the larger police services have a civilian filling a Chief Administrative Officer function at either a senior officer level, or in one case, at a deputy chief level. The North Bay Police Service has staffed its Forensic Identification Unit exclusively with civilian members in order to have qualified uniformed members concentrate on law enforcement and public safety functions to the greatest extent possible.

*Consistent with the need to return trained police staff to positions that require police officer training and experience, the Sarnia Police Service will need to hire additional civilian staff to backfill these positions. In effect, an increase in civilian staff will allow the Police Service to increase its actual, available uniformed staff level closer to the 112 that now appears as the authorized police complement.*

### **Staff Training:**

Although the Sarnia Police Service policies with respect to staff development are adequate, the consultants noted particular areas of weakness where the organization paled in relation to the comparator police services. In an attempt to control overtime costs and increase availability of police staff for operational duties, training for uniformed staff has been reduced from four days to three *for at least a one year trial period*. Considering that the mandatory training obligated by the Province through the Police Services Act and its Regulations, specifically those which apply to “use of force” training, require two days, little time remains for refresher training or skills and knowledge upgrading. The norm in other organizations is five days per year.

The consultants acknowledge the scheduling problems that training days create, particularly for platoons that must maintain a minimum staffing level and have less flexibility because of their shift schedule. In the worst case this leads to increased use of overtime, which is not a cost effective practice. Some other police organizations have introduced innovative methods of accommodating training days, the most dramatic being the practice in the Peterborough-Lakefield Police Service of scheduling training on days off, and then managing the lieu time that is taken in order to minimize the effect it has on service delivery. It appears the flexibility to arrange training days with the least disruption to the organization more readily occurs in police services that have shift schedules other than the four platoon/twelve hour schedule used in Sarnia. Nevertheless, policing is becoming increasingly complex, necessitating greater emphasis on enhanced training and education.

### **Overtime Usage:**

The limitation on the actual number of qualified available police officers is one factor creating a heavy reliance on the use of overtime. Traditionally overtime costs were less than six percent when compared to regular salary expenditures. Beginning in 2003 this changed as the amounts spent on overtime increased year to year and in 2007 it peaked at 9.4%, for a total expenditure of over \$800,000.00. Although the Ontario Provincial Police now use a ratio of nine percent when providing a costing estimate, for a municipal police service operating in a relatively small geographic area, the current expenditure levels are far too high.

Expenditures on overtime represent one component of police operations where some spending is discretionary and, perhaps, controllable. The nature of police work routinely requires staff members to work on an overtime basis, and some of the policies with respect to this emanate from the collective agreement. *Overtime usage is not a cost effective method of supplementing staffing requirements over the long term. Nevertheless, there is a danger that police staff begin to view overtime usage as an opportunity to supplement income. In some police services this has led to systemic manipulation of overtime.* Effective supervision and control of overtime accounts begins with accurate tabulation of the hours used, classified according to the purpose for which it was approved such as backfilling vacant shifts or court appearances. The organization must ensure that requests for overtime, and approvals, are justified in order to limit costs. At the same time, extensive use of overtime for an organization that enforces effective, rigorous controls normally indicates that the staff level is not adequate to properly respond to the workload levels. *Senior management in the Sarnia Police Service maintains and scrutinizes detailed reports on overtime that should facilitate the development of reduction strategies. If overtime is properly monitored and controlled, and no reduction results, workload reductions or staff increases will be the only methods remaining to reduce expenditures on overtime.*

### **Human Resources Management**

One prominent organizational weakness is the lack of human resource management experience. This is a subject that was raised by a large number of interviewees from both the uniformed and civilian ranks, from all levels of the organization. Recent, notable improvements notwithstanding, many of the human resource difficulties, particularly the response to accommodation of staff and employee absenteeism, have been attributed to a lack of firm and consistent interpretation and enforcement of progressive human resource management practices. While management is currently trying to address outstanding staffing issues and personnel problems, the lack of an individual with extensive, senior level, human resource management experience, preferably within a policing or public service environment, is a particular weakness. Uniformed police are "office holders" and as such, much of the normal legislation governing employer/employee relationships is not applicable. Contentious situations are most readily resolved when an expert with the appropriate combination of skills and relevant experience becomes responsible. The comparator

organizations utilize a senior position for the development and implementation of effective human resource policies and procedures. Recently, the Peterborough-Lakefield Police Service identified the need for senior level, in-house, human resource management expertise, completed a successful competitive process, and hired an individual who has been warmly welcomed by both the management and the Association as a key improvement for their organization. They are normally key members of the senior management team and bring a level of expertise and experience that is difficult, if not impossible, to develop within the organization in a reasonable period of time.

Some fundamental aspects of progressive human resources management are missing or underdeveloped in the Sarnia Police Service. Most notable was the lack of regularly scheduled performance appraisals, which was observed during the Ministry Inspection in 2003 and, to date, has not been effectively addressed. Providing and obtaining feedback is a fundamental principle for successful management, and should be considered a right for each member of an organization. Performance appraisals are also crucial if the Police Service wishes to develop and evaluate staff for future advancement. There is no quick and simple method of achieving an effective performance appraisal system because it needs to be comprehensive and involve honest interaction between the employee and his or her supervisor. Logistically this can be most difficult for platoon sergeants due to the large number of staff for whose direct supervision they are responsible.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The consultants developed a number of recommendations based on their observations about the Sarnia Police Service, and input from the comparator organizations. They are roughly listed in priority order.

### **1. Acquire high level human resource management capability.**

The Police Service needs to find a properly qualified individual to assist senior management in resolving current issues and implementing effective human resource management practices throughout the organization. Preferably this individual would join the Police Service on a permanent basis. If this is not possible within the current budgetary limitations, then access to this type of assistance must be acquired on a part time contractual basis.

### **2. Resolve outstanding human resource issues.**

The Police Services Board should direct the new management team to identify those staff who should be encouraged to return to their primary job functions. A fair but firm approach must be developed to ensure that qualified police officers migrate out of civilian positions into the mainstream of normal police work. This would also necessitate the development and implementation of an intensive "attendance management program" to encourage absent employees to return to work, and to minimize the use of sick leave or WSIB. It may also be worthwhile to encourage staff who are eligible to retire to pursue that option if they are unable to perform the primary functions for which they were trained.

### **3. Reduce dependency on overtime**

Overtime usage must be thoroughly analyzed, and approval policies and mechanisms strengthened to prevent abuse and reduce expenditures. To assess the impact that additional platoon staff levels might have on overtime usage, two additional constables should be assigned to one platoon for a one year trial period as soon as they become available. An analysis of the comparative rate of overtime use for that platoon, and other factors such as proactive policing initiatives, must be provided to the Board to clearly identify the impact increased frontline police have.

#### **4. Restructure the organization**

The Sarnia Police Service should reduce the number of divisions to three and eliminate at least one inspector position, which would be replaced by a new staff sergeant position to maintain the complement level dictated by the grant agreements. This would save some money and provide enhanced lateral, developmental opportunities for the staff sergeants. Consideration should also be given to having the corporate support division managed by a senior civilian manager, rather than an Inspector.

#### **5. Enhance training**

A comprehensive training program should be developed that establishes clear direction with respect to both mandatory and optional training for civilian and uniformed members. The decision to limit training days for police officers to three days should be reconsidered and, if possible, raised to the norm of five days. If this is cost prohibitive, or impossible to schedule without generating excessive overtime costs, the Police Service must enhance its use of video and electronic training to assist officers in obtaining the upgrades needed to stay current and seek advancement within the organization.

Promotional policies should be adjusted so that a premium is placed on training or educational upgrades for which a staff member provided funding or completed while off duty. Similarly, participation by staff members in volunteer, community activities in Sarnia should be considered when promotions or lateral transfers become available.

#### **6. Create a comprehensive career development program.**

Morale could be increased if the Police Service identified those staff who are capable of advancement, and developed training and job enrichment opportunities to assist them in meeting their personal and corporate goals. This would form the basis for succession planning. The key component would be regular performance appraisals and should include a job rotation system which encourages and plans for lateral movement every three to five years for most staff.

## **7. Identify new technology or equipment**

The Police Service should provide the Police Services Board with a list of various upgrades to equipment and technology that could improve the quality of service delivery provided to the community. It could include items listed in this report and should provide an accurate estimate of all cost implications as well as identifying the benefits, and potential cost savings or cost avoidance that could result.

## **8. Collision Reporting Centre**

The management team should examine the potential benefits that could arise from the establishment of a collision reporting centre. This would include an estimate of potential costs and revenue, in addition to the officer time that could be redirected to other priorities. Ultimately a subjective determination would be required from the Police Services Board as to whether this represents an acceptable method of providing service to the public in Sarnia.

## **9. Multitask some positions**

Assuming technological innovation will free up some time for civilian members, qualified staff should be encouraged to upgrade their skills and training so they can provide backup for positions that are currently backfilled by part time or casual employees such as the communicators. This can be viewed as job enrichment as well as a practical method for maintaining an active roster of qualified candidates who can compete if vacancies arise.

## **10. Special Constable Complement**

The Police Service should evaluate the special constable complement well in advance of the date in which the Province assumes full financial or operational responsibility to ensure it represents the full complement needed to fulfill all of their responsibilities. To that end the use of police officers to perform functions that can be adequately completed by special constables should be minimized or, preferably, eliminated. If an increase in the number of special constables is needed it is imperative that they be added well in advance of the transition to the Province.

## **11. The use of Volunteers**

Volunteer programs could be introduced to help supplement the regular staffing and create additional avenues for liaison with the community served by the Sarnia Police Service.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

*While the consultants were onsite there were significant changes within the senior command of the Sarnia Police Service. The consultants maintained consistent, positive dialogue with the members of the senior command and the representatives of the Sarnia Police Association and acknowledge that progress has already been made with respect to many of the initiatives and observations included in this report. Implementation of all of the major recommendations should begin as quickly as possible. This will require acceptance of this Workload Analysis by the Sarnia Police Services Board, and clear direction to the Chief of Police to develop a comprehensive plan to address the concerns and recommendations contained in the Report specifically those pertaining to personnel issues.*

*Most importantly, the Board must support the senior command in acquiring the necessary senior level human resources expertise for the Police Service. Simultaneously outstanding human resource problems must be fairly and systematically addressed. The Board should work with police management and association representatives to adjust the organizational structure to develop a more rationale division of responsibilities. However, these initiatives should not delay the promotion of a third Inspector.*

*These initial steps should be completed by the end of the summer. The remaining recommendations should be addressed no later than the end of this calendar year, and those that involve fiscal implications should be completed in time for inclusion in the budget process.*

*The Board must also acknowledge that staffing levels will rise as uniformed staff are removed from civilian positions and returned to "police" duties. In addition long term population projections for the next ten years suggest the need for at least three additional uniformed staff and one more civilian position to maintain staff strength at the current ratios.*

## Appendix "A"

### SIMILAR SIZED POLICE SERVICES – COMPARATIVE STATISTICS 2008/09

CATEGORY	S.S.P.S.	N. BAY	<b>SARNIA</b>	S.S.M.	BRNTFRD	GUELPH
<b>POPULATION</b>	58,500	57,000	<b>75,000</b>	77,000	92,000	120,254
<b>AREA</b>	485.21 Sq. kms	333.8 Sq. kms	<b>165 Sq kms</b>	322.28 Sq.kms	75 Sq. Kms	87 Sq.Kms
<b>KMS OF RDS</b>	963 kms	381.9 kms	<b>1116 kms</b>	553.53 kms	422.72 kms	561 kms
<b>UNIFORM STAFF</b>	78	93	<b>112</b>	138	157	192
<b>CIVILIAN</b>						
Fulltime	40	38	<b>45</b>	42	58	78
Casual	0	0	<b>19</b>	0	4	
Part-time		24	<b>3</b>	10	5	4.67
<b>SWORN OFFICERS PER CAPITA</b>	1:750	1 : 612	<b>1:670</b>	1:554	1:586	1:647
<b>CALLS FOR SERVICE</b>	25,425	18,829	<b>20,917</b>	34,673	45,269	34,440
<b>CRIM. CODE OCC'S</b>	2,144	3,533	<b>6,114</b>	7,111	6,509	6,412
<b>CRIMES of VIOLENCE</b>	300	577	<b>1,037</b>	1,101	1,290	1,618
<b>C.CODE Other</b>	584	564	<b>1339</b>	944	548	1,506
<b>PROPERTY CRIMES/OCCS.</b>	1,260	2,289	<b>2,634</b>	4,819	4,480	3,076
<b>CRIM. CODE OCCS.TRAFFIC</b>	160	103	<b>233</b>	247	191	212
<b>C.C. RECORD CHECKS</b>	3,282	4,411	<b>2,712</b>	5,070	6,135	8,299
<b>FOI REQUESTS</b>	126	95	<b>322</b>	91	310	338
<b>2009 BUDGET</b>	\$13,585,863.	\$15,230,000	<b>\$17,745,882.</b>	\$19,465,165	\$23,000,000	\$29,577,966
<b>POLICING COST PER CAPITA</b>	\$232.23	\$267.19	<b>\$236.60</b>	\$256.35	\$250.00	\$214.00

Appendix "B"

SARNIA POLICE CRIMINAL CODE STATISTICS  
AND  
CALLS FOR SERVICE

NOTE: Other Criminal Code increased significantly in 2006 and 2007 because of Bail Violations, and a change in how Disturb the Peace offences were recorded.

Category	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Calls for Service	23,292	24,047	22,646	23,001	22,944	20,917
Crimes against Persons	2,071	2,281	2,502	1,033	1,036	1,037
Property Crimes	3,142	3,002	2,869	3,545	3,389	2,634
Other Criminal Code	751	797	997	1,509	1,617	1,339
Traffic Criminal Code	187	137	158	233	220	233
<b>TOTAL CRIMINAL CODE</b>	<b>5,031</b>	<b>5,252</b>	<b>5,316</b>	<b>6,878</b>	<b>6,902</b>	<b>6,114</b>

**APPENDIX "C"**

	<b>South Simcoe</b>	<b>North Bay</b>	<b>Sarnia</b>	<b>Sault Ste. Marie</b>	<b>Brantford</b>	<b>Guelph</b>
<i>Criminal Code Cases Per Officer</i>	35	38	<b>55</b>	52	41	33
<i>Calls Per Officer</i>	326	202	<b>188</b>	251	288	179
<i>Ratio of Uniformed Staff to Full Time Civilians</i>	2.0	2.4	<b>2.5</b>	3.3	2.7	2.5
<i>Ratio of Uniformed Staff to Civilians</i>	2.0	1.5	<b>1.7</b>	2.6	2.3	2.3