

CITY OF NANAIMO

BUSINESS CASE – Police Services: Major Case File Specialist

CURRENT OVERVIEW

The Major Case File Disclosure Unit of the Police Support Services Department currently has three (3) full-time positions encompassing two (2) Major Case File Clerks (Clerks) and one (1) Major Case File Specialist (Specialist). This Unit provides the clerical support and expertise for all major case criminal files requiring disclosure to Crown Counsel to make a decision on criminal charge approval. Major case files, such as but not limited to homicides, are usually very involved, containing thousands of digital documents and are required, under criminal case law and memorandums of understanding (MOU), to be fulsomely disclosed in a timely manner.

The first Clerk was added to the unit when a need was identified to have clerical support outside of the duty function of a Steno to support the member that was seconded to work solely on disclosure. To address a duty to accommodate the Clerk position was created by converting a Police Support Steno position.

In 2018, a Major Case File Supervisor and Major Case File Specialist were added to the unit to address increasing workloads and changing requirements of disclosure rules. The Supervisor position was filled for a short period, 4 months, before the employee resigned. Due to the need for duty to accommodate, the vacant Supervisor position was converted to a second Clerk in 2019.

BUSINESS ISSUE

The Clerks assist the Specialist in the workflow of the major case management applications and assist with the preparation of investigation documentation. However, workload volumes are creating challenges for the Specialist to adhere to required timelines.

The workload surrounding disclosure of criminal investigations has been increasing as a result of:

- Increasing trend of calls for service, approx. 9% annually over the last 3 years, resulting in a proportional increase of major crime type files including homicides, serious assaults with weapons, child exploitation/pornography. Calls for service:
 - 2017- 43,898
 - 2018 – 47,942
 - 2019 – 51,718
- The complexity of the files.
- Case Law disclosure rules, constant changes in disclosure MOU's and timelines surrounding court prosecutions.
- The increased pressure under the MOU with the Attorney General's department for a fulsome disclosure of all evidence gathered during the criminal investigation so it can be disclosed to defence counsel under proper trial procedure rule.
- The sheer volumes of information that needs to be correlated, organized and vetted for disclosure

EXPECTED OUTCOME

The addition of a second Specialist will allow the unit to manage workload to ensure that evidence is disclosed in a timely manner, as required, and will provide additional expertise in the disclosure unit.

OPTIONS

Option #1 – Police Services: Major Case File Specialist

Creation of a second full-time Major Case File Specialist reporting to Manager, Support Services.

Benefits:

- Add capacity for the unit to manage an increasing workload.
- Ensure that Case Law, judicial timelines and fulsome disclosure under the MOU's are met.
- Enhance the specialized expertise and experience of the unit.
- Increase the efficiency of investigations by generating fulsome disclosure package allowing crown counsel a higher rate of successful prosecution and potential convictions, instilling public safety and confidence in the justice system.

Weaknesses:

- Permanent increase to operating budget of Police Services

Financial Analysis:

- The position will be a level 12 with an annual salary of \$76,752 plus benefits for an estimated total of \$97,500.
- No additional one-time or annual operating costs are anticipated. The RCMP will provide the workstation and required computer equipment.

Option# 2 – Status Quo

Benefits:

- No increase to operating budget of Police Services

Weaknesses:

- Timeliness of submitting complete and fulsome evidentiary packages to crown counsel for criminal prosecutions.
- Reduces operational efficiency as members, who are not specifically dedicated to this field, assist with disclosure rather than investigation or performing their operational roles.
- Lack of expertise and skilled personnel in unit to offer direct support and guidance to criminal investigations.
- Staff will continue to struggle with the demanding and increasing workload resulting in low morale.

RECOMMENDATION

Option #1 – Add a second Major Case File Specialist to the Major Case File Disclosure Unit.