



NIAGARA REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE

Police Services Board Report

PUBLIC AGENDA

Subject: Annual Report – Marine Unit – January 1 to December 31, 2023
Report To: Chair and Members, Niagara Police Services Board
Report Date: 2024-02-29

Recommendation(s)

That the Niagara Police Services Board (Board) receive this report for information.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to advise the Board that the Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS) is in compliance with By-Law 227-2000 as it relates to the Marine Unit.
- The Chief is required to make a written annual report to the Board with respect to the Marine Unit.
- This report will set out the particulars with respect to the procedures required, and compliance with the procedures.
- This report will identify areas the Marine Unit has been utilized by other services, including the extent of such utilization.

Financial Considerations

There are no financial implications relating to the recommendations contained within this report.

Analysis

In accordance with By-Law 227-2000, the Chief shall make a written report to the Board on or before August 30 of each year in respect to the Marine Unit. The report shall include:

- a) a summary of the procedures for the Marine Unit;
- b) the status of Service compliance with the said procedures; and
- c) whether or not the Marine Unit has been utilized by other services and the extent of such utilization.

This Board Report will outline each of the above and confirm our compliance with the By-Law.

a) *“...a summary of the procedures for the Marine Unit...”*

Under Section 10(6) of the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, the Service shall provide policing in respect of all navigable bodies and courses of water within the Region of Niagara. General Order (GO) 144.07 sets out the procedures and policies of the Marine Unit. The Marine Unit, unless otherwise provided by law, shall be responsible for effective waterways enforcement, general patrol, and emergency response throughout the waters within the Region of Niagara.

b) *“...the status of Service compliance with the said procedures...”*

The Marine Unit is fully compliant with the policies and regulations as prescribed by the GO, Criminal Code of Canada, and the Canada Shipping Act, 2001. During 2023, the Marine Unit was staffed with 1 sergeant and 6 constables. A current list of Marine Unit personnel is maintained by the Inspector of Emergency Services.

With two members accredited by Transport Canada as course providers (Small Domestic Vessel Basic Safety and Small Vessel Operator Proficiency), all members meet monthly emergency drills and annual skills evaluations.

During the winter months (November to April), the members of the Marine Unit provide support to frontline patrol services. In addition to this support, the members conduct mandatory training in Surface Ice Rescue, Sub Ice Diving, and Swift Water Rescue to address the search, rescue, and recovery of persons and vessels on the waterways within the jurisdiction of the municipality.

c) *“...whether or not the Marine Unit has been utilized by other services and the extent of such utilization...”*

Members of the Marine Unit provided support to Niagara Parks Police and Niagara Falls Fire Department through the use of equipment and personnel for swift water rescues and recoveries in the Niagara Gorge.

Further, members of the Marine Unit provided training to the Hamilton Police Service, the Ontario Ministry of Labour and our Auxiliary Unit. This training provided the agencies with Transport Canada certifications in Small Domestic Vessel Basic Safety and Small Vessel Operator Proficiency.

The Marine Unit provides support to the Joint Rescue Co-ordination Center (JRCC) and the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) with search and rescue incidents on Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, Niagara River, and Welland River. During the 2023 season, the Marine Unit

responded to 76 dispatched, JRCC and CCG requests, including the search for missing persons, as well as stranded, disabled, abandoned, and overdue vessels.

The members of the Marine Unit are also part of the Service's Hostage Rescue Team and are referred to as the Tactical Support Group (TSG). In 2023, the members of the Marine Unit responded to 35 Emergency Task Unit operational requests that consisted primarily of ground searches, armed persons, and high-risk warrant support.

The following operational chart has been included to show the activities of the Marine Unit over the past three years. Water-related calls for service include search and rescue operations and missing persons investigations in proximity to water. Frontline calls for service include police response to incidents while Marine Unit officers are redeployed to general patrol.

| Marine Unit Activities | 2023 | 2022 | 2021 |
|--|------|------|------|
| Calls for Service – Water-related | 76 | 105 | 133 |
| Calls for Service – Frontline | 570 | 352 | 431 |
| Provincial Offence Notices – Water-related | 259 | 185 | 215 |
| Arrests | 9 | 4 | 8 |
| Community Public Safety Events | 8 | 6 | 7 |
| Search and Rescue Calls | 28 | 47 | 62 |
| TSG Calls for Service | 35 | 25 | 38 |
| Explosives Disposal Calls | 2 | 1 | 6 |

Alternatives Reviewed

Not applicable.

Relationship to Police Service/Board Strategic Priorities

To comply with the provisions of Police Services Board By-Laws and to maintain compliance with the Provincial Adequacy Standards Regulations.

Relevant Policy Considerations

Board By-Law 227-2000 - Marine Unit
General Order 144.07 – Marine Unit

Other Pertinent Reports

8.9.2023.03.23 – Annual Report – Marine Unit – January 1 to December 31, 2022.

This report was prepared by Jon Pilkington, Sergeant, Marine Unit, reviewed by Jamie Munro, Staff Sergeant, Emergency Services, Paul Webb, Acting Inspector, Emergency Services, Steve Magistrale, Acting Superintendent, Emergency and Investigative. Recommended by Todd Waselovich, Deputy Chief, Operational Services.



Submitted by:

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Chief of Police

Appendices

Not applicable.