



NIAGARA REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE

Police Service Board Report

PUBLIC AGENDA

Subject: Special Fund Request for Telecommunicator Week
Report To: Chair and Members, Niagara Police Services Board
Report Date: 2025-01-12

Recommendation(s)

That the Niagara Police Service Board (Board) approves a special fund request of \$2,000.00 for the Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS) Communications Unit to recognize its members during the internationally celebrated Telecommunicator Week April 13-19, 2025 to assist with costs associated to prizes, awards, and dinner.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to seek the Board's approval for a \$2,000.00 Special Fund donation for the NRPS Communications Unit to assist with recognizing their members.
- Members of the Communications Unit will be recognized for the hard and stressful work they do. Each day a different member of the unit will be highlighted on the NRPS social media avenues to engage and educate the public in exactly what it takes to be a Communicator. This public exposure will hopefully engage the public and enhance the image of the NRPS and the Communications Unit.
- Telecommunicator week will be celebrated internationally April 13-19.

Financial Considerations

The Board has a discretionary pool of funds, which it uses for grants and donations. Disbursements from the fund are in accordance with guidelines provided in the Community Safety and Policing Act (CSPA), 2019, and with Board By-law 403-2024, Special Fund Administration, Limitations and Guidelines. Section 258 (2) of the CSPA establishes that the Niagara Police Service Board has the sole authority for spending the proceeds from the sale of property which lawfully comes into the possession of the police service. The Act stipulates that "the Chief of Police may cause the property to be sold, and the Board may use the proceeds for any purpose that it considers in the public interest, including charitable donations." These funds do not form part of the police operating budget and are separate from the Regional tax base.

If this request is approved by the Board, the cheque can be made payable to the Niagara Regional Police Service.

Analysis

Telecommunicators week was established in 1981 as a way to recognize the hard work done by 9-1-1 Operators who are often heard but never seen. Each year, the second full week of April is dedicated to the men and women who serve as public safety telecommunicators. This week is an opportunity for the public and the service alike to understand the extent and magnitude of the work done by the members of the Communications Unit answering the public's call for help every day.

The Communications Unit is comprised of 62 full time members and 12 temporary members. Each year our Communications Unit answers over 450,000 calls for help from members of the public. In 2024 our Communications Unit answered 197,133 emergency 911 calls, 283,095 nonemergency calls and entered 145,694 calls for police response. The NRPS Communications Unit is one of very few Communications Units in Ontario that are currently meeting the call answering standard set by the National Emergency Number Association (NENA the governing body for 911 standards in the industry). That standard is to answer 90% of all 911 calls within 15 seconds, not only do we meet this standard, but we exceed it, which is impressive to say the least.

Most times the media highlights the efforts or positive stories of the Police Officers responding to the emergency calls, but rarely does that include the efforts of the 911 Operators who took the initial call. 911 Operators are the first, first responders. We often de-escalate situations and console callers prior to Police Officers arriving on scene. Communicators are often affected emotionally and mentally by the trauma they take in every day. The uniqueness of the job does not always allow the Communicator closure to many of these calls, never fully knowing the outcome which can take a toll on the 911 Operator. The purpose of this incentive is to recognize and reward the sacrifice and dedication of these members, who choose to answer the public's call for help every day. Through highlighting members on social media the intention is to increase public awareness and appreciation for the people they are talking to on what is possibly the worst day of their lives. The hope is to also boost the morale of the unit with the recognition and prizes awarded.

Historically, any prizes or awards have been funded through the generosity of the supervisors/managers of the Unit. Although, their kindness is appreciated, they are also telecommunicators who have spent many years of their lives dedicated to the profession. We are asking for your consideration in this one-time donation, to allow us to celebrate our staff this year and allow us the time to put together a more permanent solution to fund the week in the coming years.

Alternatives Reviewed

To not support this request or consider supporting it with an alternative donation amount.

Relationship to Police Service/Board Strategic Priorities

This is an opportunity to highlight members of the NRPS Communications Unit, engaging with community and enhancing the image of the Service while providing NRPS members with prizes and awards boosting morale and creating a positive environment.

This incentive also aligns with the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan Goal 2: Community Engagement and Collaboration - Objective 1.0; namely, to strengthen relationships and build trust with our community by giving members of the Niagara Region the opportunity to recognize the people that are answering their calls for help and understanding the job they do in keeping the public and officers safe. It is our hope that this will also enhance the image of the Service and its members in our community and with our partners.

Relevant Policy Considerations

Board By-Law 403-2024, Special Fund Administration, Limitations, and Guidelines.

Other Pertinent Reports

Not applicable.

This report was prepared by Chantelle Brown, Communications Supervisor, in consultation with Robin Johnstone, Communications Administrator and Jay Nesbit, Inspector, Communications, reviewed by Shaun Parrent, Superintendent, Operational Services. Recommended by Todd Waselovich, Deputy Chief, Operational Support.



Submitted by:

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Acting Chief of Police

Appendices

Not applicable.