



**HAMILTON POLICE SERVICES BOARD**

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DATE: March 4, 2016

TO: Stephanie Paparella, Legislative Coordinator  
City Clerks, City of Hamilton

FROM: Lois Morin, Administrator

SUBJECT: **2015 Firearms Amnesty Results – Comparison to 2006 and 2014 –  
Final Report  
PSB 16-030**

Subjoined for your information and attention please find a copy of the resolution respecting the above, which was approved by the Police Services Board at its Public meeting held on Thursday, February 25, 2016.

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**4.5 2015 Firearms Amnesty Results – Comparison to 2006 and 2014 – Final Report (PSB 16-030)**

- a) That the Police Services Board receive the report as printed, and
- b) That a copy of this report be provided to Hamilton City Council in response to the correspondence from the Office of the City Clerk with respect to the Safer City Initiative – Gun Amnesty and Buyback Program for Unwanted and Illegal Firearms.

## HAMILTON POLICE SERVICES BOARD

### - INFORMATION -

**DATE:** 2016 February 25

**REPORT TO:** Chair and Members  
Hamilton Police Services Board

**FROM:** Eric Girt  
Acting Chief of Police

**SUBJECT:** *2015 Firearms Amnesty Results -  
Comparison to 2006 and 2014 - Final Report  
(PSB 16-030)*

#### **BACKGROUND:**

In an attempt to enhance public safety by preventing firearms from falling into the hands of criminals through break-ins, former Chief Glenn De Caire directed that during a six-week period – September 23<sup>rd</sup> - November 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Hamilton Police Service would once again run a Firearms Amnesty Program.

The goal of the Amnesty was to provide law-abiding citizens of our community a safe, stress-free opportunity to turn in unwanted firearms or ammunition for destruction. In addition, the program would serve as reminder to ensure that all firearms in our community need to be properly secured in homes.

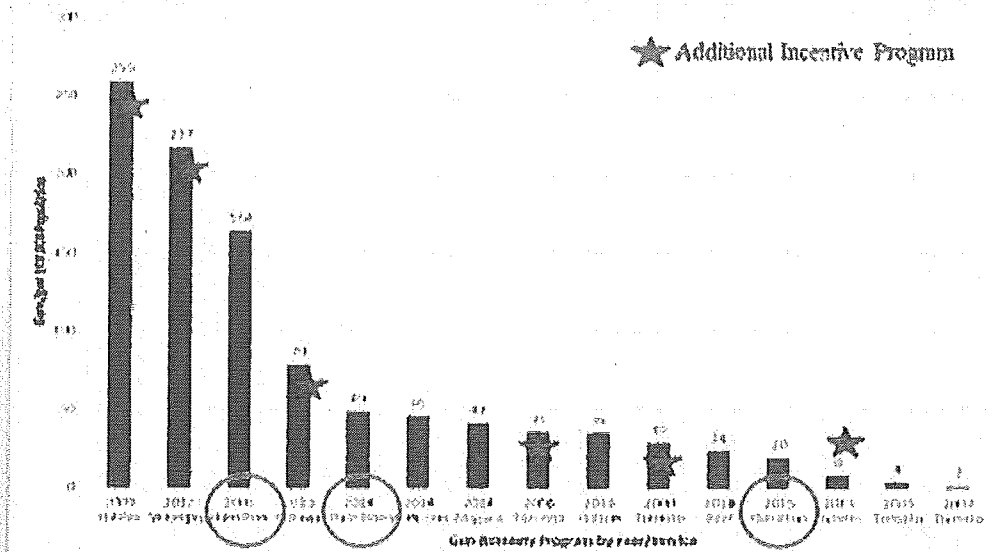
During the Amnesty Program, the Hamilton community response was again nothing short of outstanding; police responded to 116 homes for firearms pickups, resulting in the surrender of 152 firearms. Of the 152 firearms turned over, 24 were handguns, 113 were long arms and 19 were classified as pellet or replica. In addition, 10,000 rounds of ammunition were recovered.

Comparing the two (2) previous Firearms Amnesties from 2006 and 2014, the following results were achieved. In 2006, a six-week Amnesty resulting in 1,254 firearms. Of the 1,254 firearms turned over 133 were handguns, 692 were long arms and 156 were classified as pellet or replica. In 2014 a similar Firearms Amnesty resulted in 374 firearms being turned over. Of the 374 firearms turned over 75 were handguns, 160 were long arms and 37 were classified as pellet or replica. In addition, 19,000 rounds of ammunition were surrendered.

The following graph compares historical results from previous Firearms Amnesties run by Hamilton Police Service and by other Police Services. The columns noted with a red star are Amnesties that offered an incentive.



## Firearms to Population Surrendered



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After analyzing the ratio of firearms retrieved per 100,000 population, comparing agencies who used incentives vs those who did not, Hamilton's 2006 program ranks third only behind Halifax and Winnipeg Police Services, but considerably ahead of other agencies who spent a considerable amount on incentive programs.

Some incentive programs can be costly, not only in rewards, but also in administration costs. For example, in 2000, the City of Toronto provided \$50 for every operational firearm up to \$100 per person, to a program maximum of \$50,000. A follow up program, "Pixels for Pistols", was a partnership between Henry's Camera and Toronto. Henry's Camera funded the program providing a \$175 Camera Voucher for surrendered firearms. Participating agencies were required to collect and test fire all firearms to ensure they were operational prior to vouchers being issued.

Sec 117.14(1) provides Authority in law for the government to grant an Amnesty period providing immunity from certain possession and storage offences. The section provides no powers to police agencies to provide additional financial incentives or physical incentives in exchange for immunity. It may be reasonable to expect police participation in providing a cash incentive, outside the lawful authority granted in Sec 117, may be inferred as an inducement ultimately creating Canadian Charter issues with criminal proceedings should a firearm be traced back to a crime.

The historic and current Amnesty model employed by Hamilton Police Service is just one (1) part of a balanced three-pronged approach of a prevention, intervention and enforcement strategy to address gun violence in our community. It is unrealistic to expect criminals to turn in their firearms, although having law abiding citizens turn in their unwanted firearms eliminates the future opportunity of a firearm ever becoming crime guns. The additional goal and success of the Amnesty and associated media campaign has also provided a platform of getting the message out to firearm owners to properly secure their firearms to prevent thefts or home accidents.



Eric Girt  
Acting Chief of Police

EG/M.Worster

cc: A/Deputy Chief Paul Morrison, Community Policing  
Inspector Mike Worster, Community Mobilization Division