

# HAMILTON POLICE SERVICES BOARD

## - INFORMATION -

**DATE:** 2018 March 22

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

**FROM:** Eric J. Girt  
Chief of Police

**SUBJECT:** *Year End Report: False Alarm Reduction Unit - 2017*  
*PSB 18-030*

### **BACKGROUND:**

In 2015, the False Alarm Reduction Unit (FARU) welcomed a new By-Law and new procedures to reduce the number of false alarm calls to the Hamilton Police Service (HPS). PSB 14-086 was approved by the Board on July 21, 2014. The new program began on September 1, 2015.

The new By-Law introduced a contract between HPS and Monitoring Stations that regulates conditions for an alarm dispatch. The By-Law allows HPS to recover costs for a false alarm dispatch that is attended or cancelled en route. The FARU discontinued the collection of registration fees and removed suspensions from accounts to allow our officers to continue to provide outstanding protection and service.

The PSB annual report provides a summary of statistical information concerning false alarm dispatches, false alarm fee structure, false alarms invoiced, amounts written off and cost recovery generated for 2017.

## 1. False Alarm Response

Table 1.1 – Trend: False Alarm Response

| Year | Total Alarm Calls | Alarm Calls Attended | Cancelled En Route | Cancelled Before Dispatch | Total Cancelled Calls | Valid Alarm Calls | % of False Alarms |
|------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 2013 | 7,614             | 4,595                |                    |                           | 2,629                 | 239               | 97%               |
| 2014 | 7,195             | 4,212                |                    |                           | 2,559                 | 186               | 97%               |
| 2015 | 6,189             | 3,699                |                    |                           | 2,064                 | 164               | 97%               |
| 2016 | 4,956             | 3,107                | 316                | 1,112                     | 1,428                 | 153               | 97%               |
| 2017 | 4,692             | 3,118                | 192                | 994                       | 1,186                 | 135               | 97%               |

### 2017 Rates

False Alarms Attended: \$150 each  
Cancelled En Route: \$ 75 each  
Cancelled Before Dispatch: No charge

## 2. Fee Structure

All fees for service are invoiced directly to the monitoring station representing the alarm owners at a cost recovery rate of \$150.00 per false alarm.

A partial fee of \$75.00 is charged for a cancelled en route dispatch. This is where Officer(s) have acknowledged the call for service and are actively travelling to the call.

There is no fee if the alarm is cancelled prior to an officer dispatch.

There is no fee if the alarm is valid (e.g. Break & Enter, Property Damage etc.).

In the event a home owner or agent acting on behalf of the home owner calls in an alarm, the home owner will be invoiced at the same cost recovery rate directly.

## 3. False Alarms Invoiced

In 2017, \$483,525 was invoiced for false alarms.

## 4. Write Off Totals

As per the Bad Debt Policy in effect, invoices that are two years overdue are written off. Invoices are written off if the customer/business has gone bankrupt or they have moved and we cannot locate a responsible person for the address to seek payment.

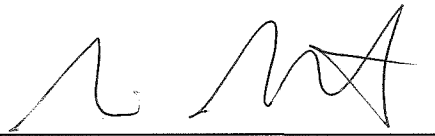
The new By-Law has greatly reduced outstanding debt, bad debt and collection measures, as the responsibility for the payment of false alarms has shifted from residence/business owners to alarm monitoring stations. The final batch of bad debt invoices, dated prior to the new by-law which took effect September 2015, was written off in 2017. There are no further bad debt/write-offs to be expected.

There was \$1,845.00 written off under the Bad Debt Policy.

## 5. Cost Recovery Summary

The Hamilton Police Services Board By-Law allows for the collection of false alarm fees to recover the costs of false alarms to the Service. The following is a summary of cost recovery generated by the False Alarm Reduction Unit, in the last five (5) years.

| YEAR | COST RECOVERY |
|------|---------------|
| 2013 | \$450,193.76  |
| 2014 | \$453,396.46  |
| 2015 | \$276,169.85  |
| 2016 | \$482,208.60  |
| 2017 | \$454,480.00  |



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Chief of Police

EG/M. Schulenberg

cc: Marty Schulenberg, Acting Superintendent – Support Services  
Mark Stiller, Acting Inspector – Support Services  
Barry Stoltz, Sergeant – Support Services  
Karen Derry – Alarm Program Administrator