

HAMILTON POLICE SERVICES BOARD

- INFORMATION -

DATE: March 12, 2020

REPORT TO: Chairman and Members
Hamilton Police Services Board

FROM: Eric Girt
Chief of Police

SUBJECT: *Five Year Report: Freedom of Information Branch Statistics*
PSB 20-017

BACKGROUND:

The Hamilton Police Service (HPS) Freedom of Information Branch maintains annual statistics on the number of requests received for the release of information within local police data banks. This includes, but is not limited to, incident reports, audio and visual recordings, crime scene or other investigative photographs, officers' notes, relevant correspondence and any other record or document to which the applicant is eligible to access. Access requests fall under two categories: Personal Information, and General Records.

Under the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, police services may collect fees associated with search time, photocopying and materials used to satisfy a request.

While volumes have remained reasonably consistent over recent years, the complexity of the files has increased significantly. Files are more voluminous due to the type and detail of information sought, and there is an increasing trend of appeals and challenges being filed. Accordingly, the time spent on individual files has grown considerably, particularly when a decision is made to deny full or partial release of a report for reasons supported in the *Act*.

The following table reflects the number and category of requests received during the past five (5) years, and includes staff time, appeals filed and fees collected:

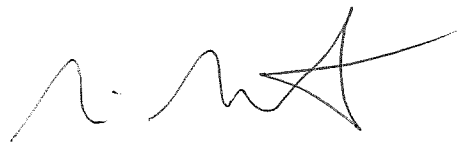
Year	Personal Records	General Records	Total Requests	Appeals Filed	Staff Time* (Hours)	Fees Collected
2019	967	608	1,575	11	330	\$7,780
2018	739	619	1,358	15	390	\$6,700
2017	662	583	1,245	12	360	\$6,320
2016	578	732	1,310	9	300	\$6,375
2015	599	739	1,338	8	280	\$6,260

* Staff time is the number of hours spent by various staff across the police service in the collection and provision of records to comply with requests

There was a 13.7% increase in requests in 2019 over the previous year.

Over this five year period, the difference in the range of annual volumes from lowest (2017 at 1,245) to highest (2019 at 1,575) is 330 requests.

The HPS Freedom of Information Branch continues to rank very high amongst Ontario municipal police services in the volume of access requests. In 2019, they were able to respond to 98% of our requests within the 30-day legislated timeframe.



Eric Girt
Chief of Police

EG/P. Bailey

cc: Anna Filice – Chief Administrative Officer
PC Dana Barron – F.O.I. Coordinator