

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Abbotsford Police Board

24 June 2026 at 8:30 AM

AbbyPD HQ (3rd Floor Boardroom), 2838 Justice Way, Abbotsford, BC, and Video Conference*

POLICE BOARD MEMBERS' PRESENT:

Mayor Ross Siemens, Chair
Gordon Holloway, Vice-Chair
Mandy Padda
Paula Olmstead
Amrik Narang
Amar Rai
Shannon Charney

REGRETS:

SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM & STAFF PRESENT:

Chief Constable Colin Watson
Deputy Chief Constable Jason Burrows – Administration
Deputy Chief Constable Dan Culbertson – Operations
Director Bea Nicolato – Finance & Budget Branch
Inspector Kevin Murray
Sergeant Paul Walker

GUEST(S):

MINUTE RECORDER:

Sangeeta Hussain

The meeting was called to order at 8.33 am.

1. Adoption of Agenda

It was moved by A. Rai and seconded by S. Charney that the Agenda be **approved**. The motion was **adopted**.

2. Presentations (*Inspector K. Murray & Sergeant P. Walker*)

Topic: Abbotsford Police Department – Patrol division Microdrone Program

The Abbotsford Police Department presented its Microdrone Program as a tool to enhance community safety and modern policing by providing real-time aerial information that supports faster, more informed decision-making during complex and rapidly evolving incidents. Microdrones are small, remotely operated aircraft used selectively in situations such as search and rescue, emergency response, and active investigations to reduce risk, improve situational awareness, and help locate missing or vulnerable individuals. The program emphasizes responsible, limited, and proportional use under strict policies, legal compliance, and supervisory oversight, with all deployments documented and conducted by trained, certified officers. Strong privacy protections are embedded through minimal data collection, adherence to Canadian laws, and officer training on privacy expectations. Overall, the program aims to improve officer and public safety, reduce unnecessary exposure to danger, and enable more measured policing outcomes, while maintaining transparency, public engagement, and ongoing community trust through communication, accountability, and continuous evaluation.

The discussion primarily focused on introducing the Abbotsford Police Department's patrol-based microdrone program, emphasizing its purpose as a limited, rapid-response tool for real-time public and officer safety, rather than surveillance. The members discussed how the small, low-cost drones are deployed selectively for high-risk incidents (e.g., missing persons, collisions, violent calls), with strict supervisory approval, policy compliance, and privacy protections, including no live recording and minimal data retention. Significant attention was given to training, safety, airspace coordination, and cybersecurity, as well as transparency with the public and oversight through tracking and documentation of every use. Overall, the conversation highlighted a cautious, incremental approach to adopting new technology, balancing operational benefits with privacy, accountability, and community trust while noting potential future advancements.

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3. Consent Agenda

It was moved by G. Holloway and seconded by P. Olmstead that the consent agenda be **approved**.
The motion was **adopted**.

4. Board Correspondence: BC Civil Liberties Association – Policing Free Schools (CW)

Motion/Status: Letter Received for information.

The Board reviewed correspondence from the BC Civil Liberties Association and Policing-Free Schools Canada calling for the elimination of police-in-school programs. Members acknowledged the concerns raised but emphasized the strength of local partnerships between police, schools, and youth. It was noted that the incidents referenced occurred in other jurisdictions and do not reflect local experience. The Board supports continued monitoring of the issue and maintaining appropriate safeguards while preserving local decision-making autonomy.

Action: No action required.

5. BCAPB Report (MP)

There were no updates reported.

6. Chiefs Report

6.1) Acknowledge of Policing Risks (CW)

The Chief acknowledged recent fatalities and serious injuries involving police officers in Toronto, Montreal, and Saskatchewan, recognizing the inherent risks of policing and the sacrifices made by officers across Canada. The Department will continue to support national policing partners, including attendance at memorial services.

6.2) Gun Buy Back (JB)

It was reported that there are currently no plans for the federal gun buyback program to operate in Abbotsford. Surrey is expected to host a mobile collection point.

6.3) Update on E-Comm Union Strike (JB)

The E-Comm matter is proceeding to mediation. Further details will be made public upon conclusion.

6.4) Recruitment and Training (JB)

Six recruits are expected to graduate from JIBC on July 10 in New Westminster. Recruitment efforts continue, with hiring targets adjusted to four positions to align with current staffing needs. Human Resources is conducting an additional intake to support future operational requirements.

6.5) Leadership Week (JB)

The annual Leadership Week was successfully delivered, with strong participation across all ranks and over 100 attendances recorded. The initiative continues to promote engagement and development, with plans to repeat the program next year.

6.6) Extortion Response Update (DC)

A significant decline in extortion-related incidents was reported, with the majority occurring earlier in the year. Violent crime has also decreased by approximately 3%, reflecting positive trends in community safety.

6.7) Grant Funding (DC)

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The Department secured approximately \$1.23M to \$1.3M in external funding to support violence reduction and youth initiatives, including programs focused on prevention and intervention. Funds will be administered through Finance in alignment with project objectives.

6.8) Chief's Engagement and External Relations (CW)

The Chief reported ongoing engagement through speaking opportunities, participation with JIBC, and collaboration with policing and justice partners to strengthen relationships and share best practices, particularly in the area of intimate partner violence. Additional engagements included serving as Reviewing Officer for the Air Cadet Annual Review and an upcoming presentation at a national policing conference.

6.9) Community Engagement (CW)

Members will participate in upcoming Canada Day events, including the community parade and internal staff activities. Board members were invited to attend.

6.10) Staff Recognition (CW)

The annual Staff Recognition Awards ceremony was held on June 11, highlighting exceptional contributions of sworn and civilian members, as well as long service achievements.

6.11) Organizational Updates (CW)

Andrea McPherson has joined the Strategic Communications team, bringing extensive media experience and strengthening both internal and external communication efforts.

Board Chair Remarks

The Board Chair noted that the Staff Recognition Awards ceremony was highly impactful and reflective of the strong character and commitment of the organization. The continued contributions of retired members and the engagement of youth through programs such as the Air Cadets were highlighted as particularly inspiring and indicative of a positive future.

7. Standing Board Committee Reports

a) **Finance Committee**

There were no updates reported.

b) **Governance & Policy Committee**

There were no updates reported.

c) **Human Resources Committee Other Business**

There were no updates reported.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made and seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 9.24am.

"Original Signed"

Chair – Ross Siemens

"Original Signed"

Minute Recorder – Sangeeta Hussain