

MINUTES OF THE RURAL FOOTHILLS POLICING COMMITTEE MEETING

January 14, 2025, 9:30 a.m.
FOOTHILLS COUNTY COUNCIL CHAMBER

- Present: Chair – Ted Mills, Foothills Rural Crime Watch
Dave Schroeder, High Country Rural Crime Watch Association
Paul Ariss, Okotoks Area Range Patrol and Crime Watch
Reeve Delilah Miller
Councillor R.D. McHugh
Councillor Suzanne Oel
Jen Magnus, Member
Dan Killam, Member
- Administration: Cpl. Tiffany McGregor, High River RCMP
S/Sgt. Mike Zinck, Okotoks RCMP
S/Sgt. Don Racette, Diamond Valley RCMP
Inspector Jason Delaney, Alberta Sheriffs Branch
Rick Saulnier, Director of Community and Emergency Services
Peter Stapley, Deputy Director of Community and Emergency Services
Krista Conrad, Legislative Services
- Guests: Sgt. Ryan Suffesick, Alberta Sheriffs Branch
Sgt. Jason Cann, High River RCMP
Sgt. John Klassen, Okotoks RCMP
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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Rural Foothills Policing Committee meeting was called to order at 9:33 a.m.

1.1 Election of Chair for 2025

P. Stapley called for nominations for chair of the Rural Foothills Policing Committee.

Suzanne Oel nominated Ted Mills. Ted Mills accepted the nomination for chair.

No further nominations were received.

Ted Mills was acclaimed as the chairperson of the Rural Foothills Policing Committee.

2. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

Resolution 01

Moved by: Jen Magnus

That Traffic Safety Plan and Alberta Sheriffs Branch be added to the Rural Foothills Policing Committee agenda for January 14, 2025, and that the Confidential Session and Round Table session be re-ordered for the January 14, 2025 and future agendas.

CARRIED

Resolution 02

Moved by: Jen Magnus

That the agenda for the January 14, 2025 Rural Foothills Policing Committee be adopted as amended.

CARRIED

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1 November 12, 2024

Resolution 03

Moved by: Paul Ariss

That the minutes of the November 12, 2024 meeting of the Rural Foothills Policing Committee be adopted as presented.

CARRIED

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1 High River RCMP Update

The following updates were presented by Cpl. McGregor:

- All positions are currently filled in the detachment
- Statistics from November 4, 2024 to January 13, 2025:
 - 259 investigations opened, 48 resulting in charges
 - 118 traffic investigations - moving offences, non-moving offences, and warnings
 - 1 impaired driving, 2 suspensions for use of alcohol
 - 4 vehicles stolen
 - 1 property damage file
 - 1 break-and-enter file
 - 12 well-being checks
- Trespassing took a spike in the fall, but since then it has come to a stop. The solar farm on Highway 2A was having difficulty due to a social media challenge, which resulted in youth trespassing on the land. High River RCMP issued 14 violation tickets, and trespassing has ceased
- Rural visits continue
- Overall in 2024 for Southern Alberta there was a 5.7% decrease in persons crimes, a 5.3% decrease in property crimes, and a 7% overall decrease in criminal code investigations
- In the last quarter, a search warrant was executed east of Aldersyde. An arrest was made, and charges are pending
- A young adult male was charged with possession of stolen property and is now under court monitoring conditions after an investigation discovered he was responsible for break-ins that occurred in Cayley

5.2 Diamond Valley RCMP Update

The following updates were presented by S/Sgt. Racette:

- The detachment has had two soft vacancies, but two individuals are returning within the week
- Statistics from September 2024 to December 2024:
 - 82 Provincial statutes written within Foothills County in the area Diamond Valley RCMP polices

- 1 break-and-enter where the house was empty on a rural property
- 6 thefts, including 1 vehicle theft
- 7 calls to 911
- In total there were 379 calls and 89 collisions
- The detachment is looking for feedback for the annual performance plan, to hear about initiatives the committee would like to see within the region
- The detachment is in process of transitioning from Turner Valley RCMP to Diamond Valley RCMP

5.3 Okotoks RCMP Update

The following updates were provided by S/Sgt. Zinck:

- The detachment has been filling hard vacancies, with seven of eight positions occupied and one member on special leave returning within a few months
- Equipment inventory has increased with a new taser implemented in Okotoks, which all officers carry. A commercial spike belt has been purchased due to the increasing number of calls for service on commercial vehicles and a training spike belt. Body worn cameras are due to arrive March 29, 2025 and the detachment has been prepared on the IT side.
- In Q3 there were 771 calls in Foothills County:
 - One of the most significant calls for service was an investigation in conjunction with Calgary Police Service in the Heritage Lake area involving an abduction, in which the victim was recovered safely
 - There were 242 traffic contacts, including violation tickets and written warnings. Of those, 28 were for impaired driving violations. A total of five traffic operations were held, including check stops and school zones.
 - 129 collisions were attended
 - The detachment made three school visits and participated in two community events. In the coming months the number of community event attended is expected to increase
 - There were eight break-and-enter calls
 - The detachment responded to 19 mental health-related calls
- The detachment launched the reorganization of GIS unit (plainclothes section) - now called the Community Action Unit
 - A Corporal is overseeing the unit, there a Crime Reduction Constable, and a Community Policing Officer has been selected
 - This has been adopted as a pilot project because public safety surveys identified a need to increase police visibility, road safety, and enforcement
 - There are three key initiatives: road safety, community engagement, and crime reduction
 - The detachment is optimistic it will give opportunity to meet needs within the Town and the County

5.4 Foothills Enforcement Services 4th Quarter Update

The following updates were provided by Manager Beaudette:

- Foothills Enforcement Services is currently developing its 2024 year-end report, which will be presented to the committee in March
- An experienced peace officer has been hired, and currently waiting for appointment from the assistant general's office
- Two Mount Royal University practicum students will begin January 15. They will be trained in the deployment of traffic data collection devices and will be deploying the educational speed trailers, and develop an educational pamphlet to have updated information for cyclists and traffic issues by summer

5.9 Traffic Safety Plan

D. Beaudette provided Committee members with the proposed Traffic Safety Plan for Foothills Enforcement Services, which covers priorities for the next three years.

The Traffic Safety Plan will be reviewed by the Committee and discussed at its special meeting on February 4, 2025 prior to forwarding to Foothills County Council for review.

5.5 Alberta Sheriffs Branch Update

The following update was provided by Inspector J. Delaney:

- There are three members of the Alberta Sheriffs Highway Patrol who work out of the Spitzee Building in High River
- The focus is on traffic enforcement on highways, collision investigation, and assisting with the local RCMP for crime scene containment or with enforcement at large events including the upcoming G7 Summit in Kananaskis
- Members of the Sheriff Highway Patrol are CVSA trained to conduct commercial vehicle enforcement
- The Patrol is required to provide a Traffic Safety Plan as a peace officer agency, which is developed internally
- All Sheriff vehicles are equipped with in-car video systems and officers wear body mics, with body cameras expected within the next two months
- The G7 Summit will involve approximately 120 Highway Patrol frontline members, but it is not anticipated to affect day-to-day operations
- Sheriff Highway Patrol is currently working on a joint project with the Calgary Police Service traffic unit, which entails joint enforcement work on Stoney Trail with a trade-off opportunity to share the CPS arrest processing unit services, which the Sheriffs branch does not have at its disposal.
 - The main purpose is to target aggressive and impaired driving behaviour on Stoney Trail
- The Criminal Interdiction Patrol has added 51 new positions with one team in Edmonton and one in Calgary, and work at the border. Criminal Interdiction Patrol will include roving units to focus on detecting and apprehending travelling criminals involved in human trafficking, drug trafficking, and contraband
 - This will also include four K9 units, which is new to Highway Patrol

5.6 Rural Crime Watch Updates

5.6.1 High Country Rural Crime Watch Association

The following updates were provided by D. Schroeder:

- There will be a board meeting at the end of the month
- The AGM is scheduled for mid-March

5.6.2 Okotoks Area Range Patrol and Crime Watch

The following updates were provided by P. Ariss:

- The Okotoks Crime Watch sent a letter in October 2024 to the Minister of Public Safety, Minister of Justice, MLA RJ Sigurdson, Foothills County Reeve Miller, Alberta NDP Leader Naheed Nenshi, Federal Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, and Foothills MP John Barlow
 - The letter dealt with concerns raised by the crime watch membership regarding the effectiveness of current laws; pressures that law enforcement agencies are facing with staffing, recruiting, and overtime; the effectiveness of the penal system; the efficiency of the court system; and the inability of the judicial system to satisfy concerns from the general public. There were a total of 13 points.
 - Three responses have been received from Reeve Miller, who offered to take these concerns to the next Rural Municipalities Association convention; the Prime Minister's officer, who offered to pass the letter on to the Attorney General, and a 10-page response from Alberta Justice that addressed all 13 points raised in the letter
 - A copy of the letter was sent to other crime watch associations in the County

5.6.3 Foothills Rural Crime Watch

The following updates were provided by T. Mills:

- S/Sgt Racette attended the last meeting of the Foothills Rural Crime Watch
- The next quarterly meeting will be February 18, 2025
- The AGM is scheduled for March 1, 2025 at 1:00 p.m.
- Many concerns have been related to cyber theft. The crime watch will be looking for a speaker on this topic for the AGM.

5.7 Special Meeting - February 4, 2025

P. Stapley informed the Committee the Alberta Association of Community Peace Officers has conducted a duty response study, which includes a number of conditions. The report is not public.

A special meeting is suggested for February 4, 2025, for the Committee to review and discuss the report in a Confidential Closed Session, and determine the action that should be recommended to Foothills County Council.

- The Foothills Enforcement Traffic Safety Plan will also be presented in open session
- Law enforcement agencies will not be in attendance other than Foothills Enforcement

Resolution 04

Moved by: R.D. McHugh

That the Committee hold a special meeting on February 4, 2025 at 9:30 a.m. to review the confidential report from the Alberta Association of Community Peace Officers.

CARRIED

5.8 Diamond Valley Shared Services Agreement

P. Stapley provided an update on the shared services agreement between Foothills County and Diamond Valley.

- Foothills County administration received direction from Council and reached out to Diamond Valley to provide Council's recommendations, including:
 - to provide 0.5 km coverage on primary highways outside Diamond Valley, as well as municipal roads such as Dunham Lane, which parallels the municipal boundary, a small portion of Seclusion Valley - Highway 22 between Diamond Valley east and Diamond Valley west, 402 Ave W up to and including Foothills Cemetery
 - in return, Diamond Valley allows Foothills County Enforcement to have authority throughout the Town to issue traffic violations.
- These agreements are common, so if one enforcement agency witnesses a violation they may handle the situation without having to request authorization
- Diamond Valley was in agreement with coverage on Dunham Lane, Seclusion Valley, 402 Ave W, and Highway 22, but advised the 0.5 km of primary highways outside of town be removed as they do not feel these portions of the road are safe to conduct traffic stops.

Resolution 05

Moved by: R.D. McHugh

That the Committee acknowledge the proposed Diamond Valley Shared Services Agreement and the recommendation from Diamond Valley to amend the agreement, and direct administration to bring the Shared Services Agreement to Foothills County Council for review and approval.

CARRIED

7. **ROUND TABLE**

Round table discussion occurred.

6. **CONFIDENTIAL CLOSED SESSION**

Resolution 06

Moved by: Jen Magnus

That, in accordance with Section 197 of the Municipal Government Act, the Rural Foothills Policing Committee move into Closed meeting at 11:37 a.m. to discuss advice from officials as per Section 17 of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act (FOIP).

CARRIED

6.1 Return to Open Session

Resolution 07

Moved by: Jen Magnus

That the Rural Foothills Policing Committee return to its open session at 11:56 a.m.

CARRIED

9. ADJOURNMENT

Resolution 08
Moved by: Jen Magnus

That the January 14, 2025 meeting of the Foothills County Rural Policing Committee be adjourned at 11:57 a.m.

CARRIED