

# Peterborough-Lakefield Police Services Board has applied to Ontario Civilian Police Commission to have Mayor Daryl Bennett removed from five-member board

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City council's ongoing standoff with city police has led to an attempt to remove Mayor Daryl Bennett from the Peterborough-Lakefield Police Services Board, The Examiner has learned. A source has told The Examiner that the board has applied to the Ontario Civilian Police Commission to remove Bennett, one of five members on the board.

Board chairwoman Nancy Martin rejected a request for an interview. Niquel Pritchard Pataki, the board's administrative assistant, initially replied that Martin wouldn't comment then later sent an email with a response from Martin: "The mayor is a member of the Police Services board."

Asked what he knew about the attempt, Bennett said that he hasn't heard anything directly from the police board about an application to have him removed. He said he is aware the Ontario Civilian Police Commission has a process that allows boards to apply to the commission to deal with unruly members.

But Bennett rejected the idea that he has been unruly. "No I don't think so. I can be a little direct and I can be a little straightforward with some of my comments, but they're generally in everyone's best interest," the mayor said Tuesday.

City council appoints the mayor as its representative on the police board. Smith-Ennismore-Lakefield Mayor Mary Smith is the township's representative on the board for the amalgamated Peterborough-Lakefield police service. Smith couldn't be reached for comment.

Bennett said he would be very perturbed if the board tries to remove him. "It would be very, very, very inappropriate for the Police Services Board to attempt to censure me or attempt to censure city council's interest as it relates to the police services in the city," he said.

The police board had asked for a \$1.6-million or 8.4% increasing in funding from the city, which would have increased the city's spending on policing to \$20.7 million this year. Council

members argued that the police spending was unsustainable, especially after an average increase of 7% a year over the previous nine years.

Bennett and Chief Murray Rodd publicly debated council's call for the police force to rein in its spending, with the mayor pointing to dropping crime rates and arguing that unsustainable police spending increases were taking away money from some of the municipality's other needs and the chief pointing to rising crime severity and the legislated requirements for police.

Rodd argued the force needed every penny of the requested increase.

The debate over police spending stretched from the end of November until the middle of May when the board accepted the 5.7% or roughly \$1.1-million increase offered by the city.

In reality, the increase will be higher with hiring for new positions delayed until the end of the year, pushing the costs into 2013.

Bennett has publicly mused about the possibility of splitting up the police service between the city and Lakefield to give the city more control over police spending.

The move would give the city control over the appointment of three of the five members of the board. With the amalgamation of the force, Smith-Ennismore-Lakefield Township got one of the seats on the board. City council has a representative on the board and appoints a community representative. The other two members are provincial appointees.

City council asked for the township to voluntarily give up its seat on the board to give city council two representatives on the board.

Township council is to consider city council's request July 17.

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