

**Be Prepared. Be Very
Prepared: Developing a
Strategic Approach to Risk
for the Hope City Police
Service**

By Andrew Graham

The Context

Like most police services, the Hope City Police Service is a busy place. There is no end of activity. Chief Karl Paulson has been in the job for ten months now and feels that he is getting a handle on the culture and way things are done around Hope City. He came in from another service and this is his first job as Chief. He finds working in a growing community of 500,000 like this one interesting. However, at the end of the day, while he fits in fine, he still does not feel in control of things. Being a good police leader and being used to rapidly changing time and resource priorities, he can certainly fit into the 'what's next' approach to management. He feels he and his organization are adept at responding and adapting to both operational challenges and changing situations. But, is that what it is all about? He is also seeing some changes happening that he is not sure the Service is ready for. He wants to be.

Hope City is indeed a growing and changing place. It is situated not far from a larger metropolitan area, one that gives a lot of employment to Hope City residents. In fact, about 20% of those working among the Hope City population commute the 50-75 kms every day by way of the multi-lane highway that passes just west of town, the commuter rail link into downtown Benville, or the commuter bus systems. The remainder works in the large service sector or the many secondary manufacturing plants on the west side of Hope City. There is also a community college with extensive programming that employs about 500 people. Right now, as this community grows and changes,

there is a lot to be optimistic about for the future. On the other hand, the more the community changes, the more that future changes. Having been a small city with a homogeneous population and relatively isolated for a long time, it is now becoming part of the growing conurbation around Benville. The rumblings of social upheavals are just beginning, although there are persistent problems of school bullying and emerging gangs.

The Chief has also just emerged from a series of public meetings on the fiscal challenges facing Hope City. While he has experience in fending off budget raids, he sense that the times are changing. He feels that the current policing model may not be sustainable in the future. He also knows that the pressure from local politicians to reign in what one of them called the police's "double double" annual budget hikes are certainly going to increase. (See attached news article).

Working with the notion that it is always best to get ahead of issues before they get ahead of you, Chief Paulson decided to pull together his top managers for a planning session and a bit of a look forward. He is allergic to flip charts, consultants and detailed reports that do not get used. On the other hand, after two years, he wanted to not just be a good day-to-day Chief, but to set the future direction of the Service as well. He also had an uneasy feeling that the Service needed to get a handle on the risks that it was facing, develop a better understanding of the communities it was serving and to get a bit savvier on the political developments in the area. All this was also part of his

desire to bring along a number of top-notch operational commanders and broaden their perspective so they could take on more senior roles.

The Chief decided to get some help on an environmental scan. He was able to get the help of an old colleague who had retired from a senior police job (not in Hope City) and was known for her ability to talk to people. He asked her to do some interviews in preparation for the senior staff retreat. Her mandate was to gather information and impressions that would help the senior management team identify its challenges and risks.

The Chief made it clear to the consultant that he needed enough information and variety so that his team could really scope the risks the service was facing. He was also looking for input on what solutions the interviewees were looking for.

Some Background on the Hope City Police Services.....

The **Police Services Board** is responsible for the overall management and oversight of the police service. It is made up of 7 people who meet regularly with the Chief. Board members are appointed under the provincial legislation as a mix of provincial and municipal appointees. Two Hope City Council members sit on the Board. Membership varies, but tends to turn over every four years with some continuing membership. It is this current Board that hired Chief Paulson after an executive search process.

The Hope City Police Service deployed 790 police officers and 267 civilian members and responded to over 85,000 calls for service. Its operating budget for 2012 was \$129,600,000. The area covered is 1382 square kilometers, serving a population of 388,600. They also have an active volunteer program with 250 volunteers, plus 64 Auxiliary officers.

What follows is a narrative report from the consultant.

The following groups of people were interviewed:

- Chief and all direct reports
- Association President
- Chair, Police Service Board
- CAO, Hope City
- Chair, Hope City Chamber of Commerce
- Citizens Against Racism Community Group
- President, East End Residents Association
- Hope City Citizens for Responsible Government

Taken at first blush, Hope City seems to be doing well. There is growth in residential and commercial construction as the result of an influx of new workers into the high tech industries that are growing here. Many of these new workers are new Canadians, often well educated, who come through family sponsorships. They have settled primarily in four neighbourhoods in Hope City, often forming fairly closed communities. New services are arising to meet their needs, although schools, churches and social organizations are stressed.

The Chief Administrative Officer of the City

Right from the start of the interview, the CAO makes it clear that he understands that the Chief reports to the Police Service Board. He gets the need for police independence – up to a point. Since the City is the majority funder of the Service and since policing is a municipal responsibility, he feels strongly that the Chief in fact is part of the municipalities administrative group. “He doesn’t report to me formally, but there are a good number of lines of accountability that he ignores at his peril.” That being said, he said he gets on fine with the Chief. They just need to build better strategic relationships (undefined).

The CAO notes that the demographic shift in the City has only just begun. In spite of the lack of some services for recent arrivals, they still keep coming. He sees the four increasingly branded communities as growing and developing their own infrastructure and identity. Housing starts, especially for

townhouses and apartments – read starter homes – are growing. There has also been an increase in the number of youth in these communities. Birth rates in these ethnic communities are generally higher and there is evidence of that already. In some of the schools in those areas, the majority are now from these recently arrived families.

When asked about City plans that might affect police, the CAO noted that several new major subdivisions were in the works or already approved. Police Services will have to expand to provide adequate policing to those expansion areas. He recognizes that this will stress police resources to adequately serve these areas and was not certain if the development charges would cover the cost of the increase need for public services. His concerns extended to question whether the emergency services communications infrastructure was going to be sufficient.

The stress on highway infrastructure will mean construction on both the two main north-south routes over the next two years. There will also be work on downtown main streets, including a long-term restoration of the main city square through which most of the downtown traffic now is routed. The CAO was concerned if police were up to speed on the implications. This involves works by both the City and the Province.¹

It was hard to keep the CAO off the issue of money in general. He feels the Police Service takes up a major portion

¹ To date, no formal notification of next year's street construction plans have been received in the Service.

of the municipal budget and that Council does not feel there is adequate control either at the budget time or as the budget is managed over the year. Of course, Council has ultimate control over the budget, but it often feels it is being handed a *fait accompli* and that neither the Police Service Board nor the Chief are really team players, willing to take their hit along with the others. Whether it is the Police Board or the Chief he does not know, but he feels left out of the loop and often surprised at budget time. He feels it would be easy to say that the budget is too high and that Police get theirs while other services suffer, but he is more annoyed at the process than opposed to good policing. There is burr under that saddle. One example he cited was the number of years that overtime budgets had been exceeded, forcing a return for funding to Council. He could see one or two years and for exceptional circumstances, but he sees a pattern of poor management here – his words. He also notes that this precedes the current Chief, but has not changed much.

The CAO also noted that while there were Provincial Adequacy Standards for police, Hope City did not appear to be following all of them. For instance, he noted that the Police Service did not have a business plan. He thought that would go a long way to making it more credible. He also had a few figures at hand, based on a comparison of most of the cities in the Province:

- While the provincial clearance rate on violent crime was about 74%, Hope City's was only 63%,
- He pointed out that while the provincial median for total crime

rate was 5,900 per 100,000, in Hope City it was only 5,300.

The CAO was concerned that the increase in cross-jurisdictional police teams would lead to problems of financial control. The CAO notes that Hope City had been a big player in the recent regional efforts on biker gangs that the province led. He noted, however, that there seemed to be a disproportionate number of resources devoted to this and very little compensation from the regional funding that was available from the Province. He worried that there was not good costing and an aggressive effort to re-coop funds to pay the bills. He also wondered about tracing costs and responsibilities for such horizontal-type work. He noted that he was no expert on these issues.

The Chair of the Police Service Board

The Chair of the Police Service Board expressed strong confidence in the Chief and management team. She felt there was a good working relationship, at least at the level of meetings and sharing information. She reported on what she sees happening in the City and the police role in it. Like the CAO, she sees the City changing. While she sees the rise in ethnic groups, she also sees parts of the City being nothing more than commuter subdivisions. The ones closest to the arterial roads seem to be deserted or ignored as far as active community policing goes. She also notes how there is a lack of community resources and activities to keep youth out of trouble.

She feels that the issues of rising youth crime, vandalism and drug use are not getting the attention they deserve. She even disputes a lot of the public opinion poll results (see Box), saying that these numbers are general and not community based.

The Chair is worried about succession planning for the Service. She sees an aging Service with a lot of senior people ready to retire. More importantly, as far as she is concerned, she also sees a lot of seasoned street-wise officers are leaving. She sees this as two issues, not one. In fact, she thinks the loss of street experience is more of a concern than the loss of managers. She also cites the Inspector ranks with long experience in areas such as homicide that will be leaving soon.

Generally, the Board feels that the Chief tries to provide the information that is needed for the Board to function well. She feels that he is overly protective of his operational role, insisting, for instance, on being the only senior officer to appear before the Board. She feels that is a lost opportunity to use the Board to profile senior staff accomplishments.

The Budget is a concern of the Board. They support the need for better resourcing, but feel that the lack of a long-term perspective, especially for big-ticket items like computer systems and vehicle replacement, always puts them in opposition to City Council. The Board is responsible for setting the budget, but worries if the Service knows what it will need in the longer-term to be sustainable. No matter what anyone says about who is responsible for what,

the Board needs the Chief's advice in these areas. The Board is concerned about the level of good professional advice on the financial and administrative side. She has also taken the heat on budget requests and often found herself now well backed up. "You can only say we believe in public safety so many times."

She feels the police are responsive and professional. However, they are not as active in pursuing preventive measures generally associated with community-based problem solving as there might be. To date, she sees only token efforts, even with the community liaison officers who are appointed, it would seem, as a break from car and street duty, and not with a strong mandate. She also points out the growing ethnic communities have little formal or informal contact with the Service. In fact, the gulf appears to be widening. She points to the number of comments that some ethnic community leaders make to the press about police insensitivity, even though she has no evidence of it. She wonders what the Service actually knows about these communities and what crime potential they pose, e.g. terrorism.

The Chair wondered how well some hot spot issues were being addressed. For instance, she noted that some neighboring communities had developed aggressive graffiti programs to increase community mobilization. She did not think that the Service had to do it on its own but should be open to partnerships.

The Chair felt that the Chief was open to the public, but that the Service as a whole was not as active in such matters as consultation and outreach as it could

be. She worried that the ethnic changes in Hope City had left the Service behind. Further, she often gets complaints from business groups that they are not being heard by the police, especially around issues of graffiti and youth in the downtown area who are intimidating seniors who shop there.

Finally, she cited the relatively poor performance of the Hope City Service in comparison with other services, based on the Province's Best Performance Standards program that uses performance data to compare Services. She notes deterioration in some response time issues and the number of uncleared major crime cases.

Interviews within the Service

A number of trends emerged from these interviews. First and foremost was the aging workforce challenge. It appears that recruitment is not keeping pace with departures. Further, the Service is losing some valuable organizational know-how without doing anything about it, either in terms of retention or knowledge transfer. The expressions "too damned busy" kept cropping up. The other factor, given that Hope City was in a cluster of urban development with similar services in near-by cities, was the theft of up-and-coming officers by other Services. It was felt that Hope City had a good reputation for training new officers but then lost them to other Services. There have been a lot of successes too, in terms of transfers in and promotions. It just seemed to be taking a lot more time staying on top of things.

Several senior officers expressed concerns for emerging crime issues.

Some were evident already. Some may or may not be on the horizon. For instance, computer pornography seemed to be on the rise and there was some notion that some is based in Hope City – nothing to confirm and no resourced devoted to it. On the other hand, the potential for the development of terrorist-type activity in some of the newly opened Muslim schools was an issue. Senior staff was very worried about this in two ways. If they focused on it too much, they might accused of racial profiling and lose any hope of building the intelligence and confidence links they needed with emerging ethnic communities. If they did not take some reasonable steps to inform themselves of the kind of new policing challenges the world was bringing to their doorsteps, they would be negligent in active policing.

As a summary, the following crime rate trends were recorded:

- Generally following national and regional trends
- Overall decrease in the number of crimes, especially assaults on a person
- Decrease in homicide and related crime
- Slight increase, in isolated areas, of sexual assault
- Decrease in robberies
- Increase in car thefts but a shift from individual thefts to more systematic patterns suggesting a more organized approach
- Increase in credit card fraud
- A sharp increase in complaints or enquiries about ‘identity theft’ with no real pattern emerging in the statistics
- Youth-on-youth assaults up, especially in a number of ethnic

and non-ethnic housing projects that have police presence but little interaction with the community

- An increase in hate/bias crimes and complaints – full range from graffiti to personal threats.
- Sharp increase in illegal ATM bank entries with a strong suspicion of organized crime involvement.

More and more of the budget and management time are going to the information technology (IT) infrastructure. While direct entry from patrol vehicles has been in place for a couple of years now, it is mostly used by officers to download information that already on the system rather than for direct input from their cars and station points. Summary data on contacts is not regularly input. Further, the ability of Hope City to go anywhere on a COMSTAT²-type information management system is very low. Senior staff receives crime statistics on a weekly or monthly summary basis. The roll-ups are always questioned because of the amount of ‘dirty data’ they contain. This may also be why Hope City looks so bad in comparison with others. On the other hand, there was resentment of the amount of time that these ‘administrative’ matters took. Reports and paperwork seem to have precedence over face time and street presence.

² COMSTAT is a performance indicator tracking system using fast turn-around of information for senior manager review based on integrated computer technology. It is seen as being the most advanced accountability system in modern policing.

Senior Service personnel felt that they had real strengths in the area of joint task force work and collaboration with other police services. They pointed with pride to their major contribution on the recent biker initiatives which saw several chapters closed down. They felt that were not encumbered by a 'My turf or else' mentality.

President of the Police Association

The President had a lot of praise for the Chief and his personal openness. However, she felt that this was personal and that it was not being pushed into the senior ranks. She also felt that most consultation was a joke, usually more of an announcement than a real effort to consult, which involved, in her view, actually asking for and listening to the other party's opinion.

In general, working conditions were good for most of the officers. She noted that one recent survey of sworn officers indicated that 60% reported they had enough time to do their work. She was surprised at that.

The President felt that the Service was like all the rest – mostly white men – at a time when society was changing. However, she acknowledged that there were no ready answers and that she would speak for all her members, even the white men... However, the hiring practices should beef up recruitment of minorities – without sacrificing standards.

The Service just seems to be keeping up to the minimum of training requirements. It is always scrambling to meet standards without thinking about staff development. As such, there is a

rush for the mandatory and very little else. She feels the Service should be working harder on such issues as diversity awareness, use of technology and emerging crime issues. Often the younger staff is way ahead of the senior people on computer crime, but their capacities are never used.

The President doesn't feel that the Chief does enough to build up the image of front-line staff. He is too quiet with the media and seems to be responsive but not very active on issues. He seems cautious in defending officers when something goes wrong. He should be more aggressive.

While she has been with the Service for 12 years, the President says she feels like an old-timer. That's because she is. She is worried about the influx of younger, more inexperienced officers who lack experience. She is also seeing promotions much earlier in people's careers than in the past. She supports the members getting ahead. But, all this change can destabilize the Service. She sees management as responsible to make sure that these people succeed.

Chair of Hope City Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber feels that they too are noticing the changing face of Hope City and are concerned that Police Services are not intervening before things get out of hand. They know from their own surveys that many people are retiring here to get out of the big city and young families want a safe community in which to raise their families. The problem is that some of the harbingers of big city youth issues are just beginning to surface – things like graffiti and

increased vandalism and the Chamber feels that the police are not taking an aggressive enough approach to the problem.

In fact the Chamber is looking at increasing their use of private security firms and will ask the city to deduct some of these costs from the Police Service budget – they are that upset. They want a more visible presence and a more serious arrest policy – not just giving these young criminals a talking to and a ride home.

The Chamber invests a lot of energy into promoting the city as safe and encouraging folks to come downtown for shopping and other social activities. If people begin to feel threatened, business will suffer.

In addition, the Chamber is concerned about upcoming road construction and traffic diversion projects that will disrupt shopping patterns and the routine functions of businesses. At this point timelines for construction, both the “when” and “for how long”, have not been firmly set, or if set, not communicated to them. The Chamber wonders about the challenges of policing business areas that have closed or impeded roads: In particular, it is concerned about the increased likelihood of vandalism and other crimes in these areas; and the likelihood of longer response times by police to emergency calls from businesses in these areas. The Chamber feels that it has not been adequately consulted by the City nor adequately reassured by police as to what steps will be taken to mitigate potential problems arising from the major traffic disruptions that are anticipated.

Editor of the Hope City Telegraph

The editor expressed the view that overall the Police Services is run well but not too much in line with more modern views of community involvement – something for which the paper sees itself as a spokesperson. The Chief does not often volunteer to speak with them but waits to be asked, As a result, not too many of the key newspaper reporters and editors know him or his Deputies very well. In other cities, Chiefs and deputies have adopted a more proactive approach and are coming to the press with news and issues – not just the usual press release stuff designed to make them look good.

Seeing his paper as a watchdog over municipal spending, the editor noted that the Telegraph frequently takes issue with growing municipal expenditures, of which police expenditures represent an ever-increasing portion. In particular, he notes that overtime expenditures appear to be out of control, and that the annual ritual of demanding extra money to cover these growing costs suggests that the police budget needs a major overhaul-i.e. better forecasting and more controls. He notes, as the article from his paper in the Appendix attests, that councillors are losing patience with the huge annual increases and the seeming intransigence of police to try to cut their budgets. “There’s lots of goodwill out there for the service, but that wears thin after a while. They’ve got to find a new tune to sing.”

The Citizens Against Racism Community Group

The informal leader of this group told us that she feels that the Police Service is often too quick to pick on visible minority youth and men; she does not feel the Police are in tune with modern Canadian society and wants to see a lot more visible minority officers, as well as mandatory diversity training for officers.

She stated that some of her members are getting very upset with this perceived racism and are ready to make this an issue for the courts. They are talking about civil suits and lots of medial interviews. She also admits that they have no real data on which to base their conclusions but they know racism when they see it – and it is clearly in the Hope City Police Services culture. She wants to see fewer arrests of young people and more diversion.

While complaining of police heavy-handedness and racism, Ms. X noted that some communities with large ethnic populations are seeing little or no police presence in spite of increased complaints from residents about growing youth problems including vandalism, noise and assault complaints. Presumably, she would like any increased police presence to occur in the person of visible minority officers.

Moreover, as an alternative to increased policing to deal with youth problems, Ms. X put forth her group's position that more of the city budget should be going to community-based groups to establish recreational and social programs for youth. She does not view the police as a potential partner in this process. In fact, she and her supporters are actively working with other community groups to make sure they

get a bigger piece of the pie and the police get less. They are also actively lobbying city councillors, many of whom she feels seem to be agreeing with them. She intends to make this case to the mayor and CAO before the next budget talks occur.

East End Residents Association

The president of the influential East End Residents Association stated that its members have been campaigning for the past two years for the police to address traffic problems arising from rapid growth in their part of the city. While the number of vehicles has increased dramatically road construction has not kept up. What were once rural roads are now used as arterial connectors leading to Benville, or to the expressway ramps to Benville. During commuting hours these roads are often totally gridlocked. Impatient and aggressive drivers add to the problem. And because these roads do not have sidewalks or large shoulder areas, pedestrians and bike riders are increasingly at risk.

Further, where there is road construction – and there has been lots of it this year – there seems to have been very little planning on how best to keep traffic moving safely and fluidly – i.e. to allow the movement of ambulances and fire trucks. The president maintained that when traffic completely bogs down, particularly at minor accident sites or intersections where lights are out of commission, there is rarely a police presence to sort it out.

The president complained that he and some of the Association's members have met with community police officers on these and other issues, including increased youth crime, but feel that these officers are not really committed to the exercise and/or have no real power. The President confided that his perception is that community policing officers seem to be "on sabbatical" – i.e. taking a break from "real" policing — rather than really working with the Association's members to address community policing issues. In closing, he expressed the view that policing in Hope Town appeared to be reactive rather than preventive, and committed to token consultation rather than real partnerships.

Hope Town Citizens for Responsible Government

Lowell Black, a local radio talk show host and leader of this group, expressed the view that it is high time that the City and Police Services got their finances in order. He noted that the Hope Town force seems to be trying to do more with less than other like-sized communities – i.e. answer more police calls with fewer officers and less annual money. In response, for years the Force has had to make emergency appeals to the City for millions to cover overtime. He says that Hope Town's citizens deserve a sufficiently funded police force, one that forecasts its future expenditures accurately and that does not waste millions of dollars annually on excessive overtime.

Mr. Black maintains that his group has sought meetings with the police chief and the Police Services Board to put

forth its views but has yet to get an audience.

Other Input

As part of her report, the consultant summarized some recent surveys that the City and Service had conducted. They are found in the tables that follow the text. She was not asked to draw any conclusions from these – that is the job of the senior Service managers.

On the legal front, the Police Service has also faced some challenges. A recent court case found that evidence in a case had been gathered improperly, leading to a Charter violation. The exclusion of the evidence led to a dismissal of the criminal charges. In dismissing the case, the judge expressed its concern that the Hope city police officers lacked proper knowledge and training in the area of search and preservation of evidence.

The Police Service is in the middle of a Human Rights Complaint from one of its employees (uniformed). She claims that she was not properly accommodated as the result of a medical condition that prevented her from riding in patrol vehicles. There is considerable resentment within the ranks of these special forms of accommodation.

Finally, she listed some developments that she was aware of in her other work in the police community:

- The Provincial Ministry of Public Safety, which supervises policing in the province, is conducting a study on the creation of regional police services, one for the four cities east of Benville and one for the three cities to the west and

north. This will be completed sometime in the next year. One of the currently favoured options is the creation of two mega-services.

- Police Board appointments are up for renewal this year. Many of the current Board have been around for a couple of terms and change can be expected.
- Vancouver has just launched an aggressive recruitment campaign in this part of the country – the packages offered for young officers are pretty good.
- Benville has launched a job search for two new Deputy Chiefs – all Chiefs in the adjacent area have been approached by the headhunter, including Chief Paulson. So have a number of Deputies.

Community Views on Police Issues

A Community Police Survey of Hope City was completed four months ago. Its objective was:

“to gather information from the adult residents in Hope City about their contact with the police; their attitudes regarding the quality of policing services provided by the police; their level of concern regarding neighborhood crime issues; their attitudes about personal safety; and their home security and protection measures.”

The target population for the survey consisted of people over the age of eighteen residing in dwellings within Hope City. It is attached in the Appendix.

Appendix

**Survey Results
Offence/Complaint Types**

Type	Very Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Not Concerned
Noise	10%	28%	62%
Suspicious Persons	35%	5%	40%
Speeding Traffic	39%	32%	28%
Break and Enter	18%	45%	37%
Theft of Property	18%	42%	36%
Car Theft	15%	40%	46%
Vandalism	25%	40%	35%
Being assaulted on the street	22%	25%	52%
Being verbally abused	19%	22%	58%
Domestic Disputes	5%	30%	65%

Views on the Police Service

Performance	Good	Adequate	Poor	No Opinion
Overall	62%	22%	15%	
Responding to Calls	45%	20%	25%	10%
Relating to Minority Groups	33%	22%	25%	20%
Present in my neighborhood	40%	21%	34%	5%
Follow-up on Complaints	44%	18%	18%	20%
Treat all citizens fairly	39%	11%	39%	11%
Being approachable	60%	20%	20%	
Enforce the laws	55%	15%	25%	5%
Do Good Crime Prevention	30%	18%	30%	22%
Provide Enough Police Officers in my Neighborhood	39%	14%	35%	12%
Catch the right criminals	45%	18%	33%	3%

From the Hope City Telegraph.....

Hope City coucillors urges police chief to ‘Wake up and smell the coffee’

Hope City Regional Police Chief Ken Paulson wanted to talk about cops and coffee. He got a jolt, all right. From miffed Hope City politicians mulling over a burgeoning police budget.

Paulson suggested maintaining Hope City’s three-year title as the safest regional community in Canada will cost each taxpayer \$20.26 more in 2013 – less than the cost of a large coffee each day for a month.

That was how the police chief justified a 6.9 per cent hike in his police budget to regional politicians Thursday. While a city committee approved the budget as proposed by the Police Board — it goes to Hope City Regional Council on Jan. 26 — Paulson’s “cops and coffee” reference earned him a rather arresting response: slap the cuffs on exorbitant budget hikes in the future.

Paulson was asked to return in the spring with a strategy for keeping future police budgets more in line with inflation.

Councillor John Taylor jumped all over Paulson’s coffee analogy, noting the budget’s been going up \$20 for the last five or 10 years. “That’s a problem. Everyone wants a double-double,” Taylor said.

The councillor said accounting for a 2.5 per cent inflationary increase and a 2.5 per cent increase in Hope City population, the police budget should be up five per cent — not 6.9 per cent.

Councillor Paul Sharman asked the chief to provide information on annual police pay increases over the past decade and how they compare to those of other regional staff and the private sector.

Hope City police have received a pay raise of more than nine per cent over the past three years, including the 3.1 per cent increase on Jan. 1. A first class constable earns \$83,274 a year.

Paulson said his officers are in the middle of the provincial pack in terms of their salaries.

“We want to make sure officers in Hope City remain comparable with other police services. I wouldn’t want our officers to earn significantly less. I think you get good value for the police budget. Our officers deserve no less (than those in other police services).”

Paulson said the 2010 year end projections indicate that criminal offences will be up slightly. Hope City police will focus on traffic enforcement, but the chief suggested shoplifting and thefts from autos have become a worrisome trend for his officers.

Councillor Jack Dennison called for the police to cease and desist with the big budget increases.

“People should be willing to accept a little less to live in the safest community in Canada. I think that should apply to policing as well.”