



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Responding to Requests for Vulnerable Sector Screening Checks to Within a Two Week Timeline for Completion – Fees To Be Charged

Date:	April 11, 2014
To:	Executive Committee, City of Toronto
From:	Alok Mukherjee, Chair, Toronto Police Services Board

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to request that the Executive Committee approve the Toronto Police Services Board's recommendation to increase the fees that are currently charged by the Toronto Police Service for vulnerable sector screening checks and to establish new fees for expedited vulnerable sector screening checks performed by the Toronto Police Service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Executive Committee permit the Toronto Police Services Board to increase fees, and establish new fees, as outlined below:

- (1) effective September 1, 2014, the fee for vulnerable sector screenings will increase from \$50.00 to \$65.00 per request for the purposes of employment;
- (2) effective September 1, 2014, the fee for vulnerable sector screenings will increase from \$15.00 to \$20.00 per request for volunteers;
- (3) effective September 1, 2014, there will be a fee for an expedited service for vulnerable sector screenings within 72 hours at \$110.00 per request for the purpose of employment; and
- (4) effective September 1, 2014, there will be a fee for an expedited service for vulnerable sector screenings within 72 hours at \$65.00 per request for volunteers.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The recommended increase in fees, and the establishment of new fees, will enable the Toronto Police Service to complete vulnerable sector checks for volunteers and for the purposes of employment within a two week timeframe. There should be no overall impact on the Toronto Police Service's budget as the additional revenue that will be generated through the increase in fees will cover the increased costs required to meet the two week timeline.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

At its meeting held on April 10, 2014, the Board was in receipt of the following two reports:

- Report dated March 27, 2014 from William Blair, Chief of Police
Re: Options to Improve the Efficiency of Responding to Requests for Vulnerable Sector Screening Checks to Within a Two Week Timeline for Completion
- Report dated April 9, 2014 from William Blair, Chief of Police
Re: Supplementary Report – Options to Improve the Efficiency of Responding to Requests for Vulnerable Sector Screening Checks to Within a Two Week Timeline for Completion – Increase in fees

COMMENTS

The Board approved the reports dated March 27, 2014 and April 9, 2014 from Chief Blair.

The Board agreed to forward a recommendation, pursuant to the *City of Toronto Act, 2006*, to the Executive Committee seeking permission to increase the fees that are currently being charged, and to establish new fees, for vulnerable sector screening checks that are performed by the Toronto Police Service.

CONCLUSION

A copy of Board Minute No. P66/14, in the form attached as Appendix "A", regarding this matter is provided for information.

CONTACT

Chief of Police William Blair
Toronto Police Service
Telephone No. 416-808-8000
Fax No. 416-808-8002

SIGNATURE

Alok Mukherjee
Chair

ATTACHMENT

Appendix A – Board Minute No. P66/14

A: vulnerable sector screening.doc

APPENDIX “A”

THIS IS AN EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING OF THE TORONTO POLICE SERVICES BOARD HELD ON APRIL 10, 2014

#P66. OPTIONS TO IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY OF RESPONDING TO REQUESTS FOR VULNERABLE SECTOR SCREENING CHECKS TO WITHIN A TWO WEEK TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION

The Board was in receipt of the following report March 27, 2014 from William Blair, Chief of Police:

Subject: OPTIONS TO IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY OF RESPONDING TO
REQUESTS FOR VULNERABLE SECTOR SCREENING CHECKS TO
WITHIN A TWO WEEK TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) the Board approve an increase of 13 permanent positions to the Service’s civilian staffing establishment;
- (2) the Board approve an increase in the fee effective September 1, 2014 for vulnerable sector screenings from \$50.00 to \$65.00 per request for the purposes of employment;
- (3) the Board approve an increase in the fee effective September 1, 2014 for vulnerable sector screenings from \$15.00 to \$20.00 per request for volunteers;
- (4) the Board approve a fee for an expedited service for vulnerable sector screenings within 72 hours effective September 1, 2014 at \$110.00 per request for the purpose of employment; and
- (5) the Board approve a fee for an expedited service for vulnerable sector screenings within 72 hours effective September 1, 2014 at \$65.00 per request for volunteers.

Financial Implications:

The recommendations contained within this report are expected to have a net zero impact on the operating budget. Based on an implementation date of September 1, 2014, the additional 13 civilian positions will have a cost of \$307,000 in 2014, which will annualize to \$921,000. However, based on the proposed fee changes and anticipated volume, this cost will be fully recovered through increased revenues.

Background/Purpose:

At its meeting on January 16, 2014, the Board passed the following motion:

THAT the Chief provide a report for the March 2014 meeting on options to improve the efficiency of responding to requests for background checks and, in order to ensure that the

public is well served, the strategies that will be implemented by the TPS to ensure that a background check is completed within two weeks or a timeline that is possible (Min. No. P14/14 refers).

In addition, the Board requested an update on the current backlog of VSS requests and the feasibility of offering an expedited service for a higher fee.

The following information is provided in response to that request.

Discussion:

Update of VSS Backlog

At its meeting of March 13, 2014, the Chief provided the Board with a report detailing the backlog of 2013 VSS requests totalling 16,947. There was no carry-over of Clearance Letter requests at that time.

The report included an interim solution to clear the backlog through the redeployment of Police Reference Check Program (PRCP) and Record Management Services (RMS) staff to VSS processing.

The redeployment of staff, in addition to the utilization of premium pay (overtime), has reduced the backlog to approximately 4,345 VSS applications (approximately a four week turnaround). However, while effectively reducing the VSS backlog, the PRCP has continued to receive a daily average of 200 new VSS requests in 2014.

As reported in the March 2014 report, the interim solution is not sustainable because the staff redeployment negatively affects other areas of RMS. The Board was advised that currently there are 22 vacancies in RMS and this has severely limited the unit's ability to reassign staff, even temporarily, to the VSS process.

VSS Processing – Two week Timeline

The Board has asked the Service to provide options to achieve a turn-around time of two weeks to complete a VSS check. Records Management Services (RMS) has carefully reviewed its processes and has concluded that with its current staffing levels, the PRCP cannot expedite its VSS processing times.

Consequently, in consultation with Budget and Financial Analysis, RMS has concluded that a two week timeline could be achieved with an increase in staff of 13 permanent civilian members solely dedicated to the VSS process. The associated costs would be recovered through an increase in fees charged to the applicant.

The goal of a two week timeline for VSS applications is based on the assumption that the applicant is not on-file with any federal, provincial or local database.

If the applicant is on-file, it will take longer than two weeks to process depending on the nature of the records found. For example, if the applicant is a possible match on the Pardoned Sex Offender Registry then fingerprints will need to be taken and forwarded to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) for comparison which can take more than 120 days for the results.

RMS determined that it needs 13 additional members based on the average intake of new applications, the average time required to process a new application if applicant is not on-file, the average time to complete an application if the applicant is on file and the average time spent speaking to the applicants on the telephone and responding to their inquiries and questions.

Suggested Increase in VSS Applicant Fees

To cover costs associated with achieving the two week turnaround, an increase in the fees is required. The recommended fee of \$20.00 for volunteers (an increase of \$5.00) and \$65.00 for purposes of employment (an increase of \$15.00) will be sufficient to fully fund the costs associated with the additional 13 civilian positions, including related overhead (e.g. computers, supplies, office space, etc.). The costs of the program will be monitored closely to ensure that the proposed fees continue to be appropriate and any future required fees changes will be brought the Board accordingly.

Expedited Service of VSS Processing for Higher Fee

The Service recommends that an expedited service can be implemented for those applicants who request a quicker turn around and are prepared to pay a premium rate. The turnaround time will be 72 hours, excluding weekends and holidays, if the applicant is not on file. If the applicant is on file, the expedited service cannot be completed within 72 hours, and there will be no refund.

Based on the work required, the Service recommends that the premium fee be fixed at \$45.00. This would mean the cost for an expedited VSS application for employment will be \$110.00 (\$65.00 + \$45.00) and \$65.00 (\$20.00 + \$45.00) for a volunteer.

Conclusion:

A review by RMS, in consultation with the Budget and Financial Analysis section, has concluded that the VSS application could ultimately achieve a two week turnaround with an increase in staff that would be solely dedicated to VSS processing. The review has determined that 13 additional permanent civilian members will ensure that an applicant (who is not on-file) may receive a completed VSS check within two weeks. The associated costs for the additional staff may be recovered through the proposed increase in fees for services provided.

The review has also recommended that an expedited service can be implemented at a premium rate of \$45.00 above the standard fee. As a result, applicants can receive the results of their VSS application within 72 hours providing they are not on-file.

Deputy Chief Mike Federico, Operational Support Command, will be in attendance to answer any questions that the Board may have regarding this report.

The Board was also in receipt of the following report April 9, 2014 from William Blair, Chief of Police:

Subject: SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT - OPTIONS TO IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY OF RESPONDING TO REQUESTS FOR VULNERABLE SECTOR SCREENING CHECKS TO WITHIN A TWO WEEK TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION – INCREASE IN FEES

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Board request the City's Executive Committee to approve the increase in fees for vulnerable sector screening checks recommended in the Chief's report on this matter.

Financial Implications:

The increase in fees being recommended by the Service will enable the Service to complete vulnerable sector checks for volunteers and for the purposes of employment within a two week timeframe. There should be no overall impact on the Service's budget as the additional revenue that will be generated through the increase in fees will cover the increased costs required to meet the two week timeline.

Background/Purpose:

At its meeting on April 10, 2014, the Board will consider a report on the increase in fees being recommended by the Service for vulnerable sector screening checks. The purpose of this supplementary report is to advise the Board of the additional approval required for the fee increase.

Discussion:

Prior to September 2011, local boards of the City of Toronto, which includes the Police Services Board, could approve increases to user fees for various services provided without the need for City Council approval. Under the fees and charges portion of the *City of Toronto Act, 2006* (COTA), City Council approval was not required unless the City had passed a by-law requiring such approval and no such by-law was in effect. In September 2011, pursuant to the authority contained in COTA, City Council passed such a by-law. As a result, any new user fee or increase in user fees, including those charged by local boards, requires the approval of City Council.

Conclusion:

If the Board supports the increase in vulnerable sector checks being recommended by the Service, it must request City Council's approval for the increase, through the City's Executive Committee.

Deputy Chief Mike Federico, Operational Support Command, will be in attendance to answer any questions from the Board.

Mr. John Sewell was in attendance and delivered a deputation to the Board about the foregoing matter.

In response to questions by the Board, Chief Blair said that all of the costs associated with the increase of 13 permanent civilian positions would be fully recovered through the proposed new fee structure for new vulnerable sector screening applications.

Chief Blair also said that the TPS had issued a Request for Information ("RFI") to determine whether there were any opportunities in the private sector to contract out some of the components of the vulnerable sector screening checks. The Board was advised that the TPS had not yet received any responses to the RFI.

Chief Blair assured the Board that the TPS will continue to monitor all of the costs associated with the work required to process the applications in order to ensure that the fees are appropriate and the costs are fully recovered.

The following Motions were presented to the Board:

- 1. THAT the Board receive Mr. Sewell's deputation; and**
- 2. THAT the Board approve the two reports from Chief Blair.**

A request for a recorded vote on the foregoing Motions was submitted in accordance with section 22 of the Board's Procedural By-Law No. 107.

The voting was recorded as follows:

<u>For</u>	<u>Opposed</u>
Chair Mukherjee Vice-Chair Thompson Ms. Moliner Dr. Noria Councillor Del Grande	nil

The foregoing Motions were approved.

Moved by: M. Thompson