

Saskatoon Police Service

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Chief's Advisory Committee



The Chief's Advisory Committee is made up of local Indigenous and Métis Elders, the Chief of Police as well as numerous SPS officers from different levels of the service. The committee meets four times throughout the year, coinciding with the beginning of every new season, to connect and advise the police service on current issues relating to Indigenous and police relations within the community.

The advisory meetings are planned and facilitated by the Indigenous Relations Consultant and the Cultural Resource Unit. They are typically opened with a pipe ceremony followed by a sweat lodge ceremony directed by the Elders. All members of the SPS are welcome to attend.

The Committee was established shortly after the creation of the Indigenous Liaison Constable in the early 1990's. Originally, the Indigenous Liaison Constable would gather members of the SPS, FSIN, STC, and Métis Nation-Saskatchewan to discuss current issues and give recommendations and seek feedback to assist the SPS in working with the Indigenous population in a positive and respectful way.

Elders Walter and Maria Linklater were approached by the Indigenous Liaison Constable. They recognized the opportunity and impact that the Committee could make and became some of the first Elders to join. Over the years, many local, reputable Elders and Indigenous community leaders have joined the committee. To this day, some original members still attend the meetings and give respected recommendations to the SPS on how to continue the process of connecting and building bridges between Police and Indigenous and Métis communities in and around Saskatoon.

In 2015, the Elders were honoured by Police Chief Clive Weighill with ceremonial badges to signify the important role that the Elders have on advising the Chief on matters relating to the Indigenous community.

The connections that have been made, and continue to be forged, have greatly assisted the SPS in working with the Indigenous community through the good and bad times that can transpire in any community.



Exhibit: *National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*

Location/Phase: Part 2 Regina

Witness: Clive Weighill

Submitted by: Ashley Smith

Add'l info: P02P02P0301

Date: JUN 27 2018

Initials

I/D

Entered

63

70

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Youth Advisory Committee



The Saskatoon Police Service Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) was started in July of 2013, and is recognized as a group built by our city's young adults. There are approximately 15 members from various high schools, in YAC including RAP (Restorative Action Plan) workers. The group meets with Cultural Resource Officers every four to six weeks. Its purpose is to locate and target the barriers between police and youth. They are a group committed to bridging the gap between local law enforcement and young adults, through communication and raising awareness of issues that exist within this demographic.

In 2015, YAC conducted a survey between different high schools in Saskatoon, which asked students about their relationships with the police and how improvements could be developed. The sample questions in the survey looked into the current police interactions with youth, and the impact this leaves on young people's perception of the Saskatoon Police Service.

They presented their findings to the Board of Police Commissioners in June of 2015. Using this information, the goal of YAC is to increase the amount of youth awareness with police, in hopes that this will foster enhanced relationships between young adults and the police.

For more information on YAC, contact the Cultural Resource Unit at (306) 657-8625.



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News

Indigenous Women's Commission to advise P.A. Police

Chelsea Laskowski | August 24, 2017



Angie Bear, Police Elder Julie Pitzel, Kim Jonathan, Georgette Arcand, Elder Velma Buffalo, Ryan Levesque, Police Chief Try Cooper chat after the first meeting of the Indigenous Women's Commission of the Prince Albert Police Service.

Velma Buffalo knows where her distrust of police officers was formed.

She was a youth living on Wahpeton Dakota Nation when RCMP officers showed up at her home.

"They threatened my mother to take us away whether she wanted it or not. The school-aged children were going to be brought to residential school. The children under school age were going to be apprehended and put into homes. And they said that my mother was going to be incarcerated," Buffalo recalls.

That first impression was hard to shake, and it bred a distrust and fear of police that grew deeper later in life when she was stopped and ticketed by police in Saskatoon on two separate occasions for "no reason, because the judge tossed out the tickets that I received."

The many barriers to Indigenous women's trust of police in the province are documented in a June report released by the Human Rights Watch. The report contains allegations of police abuses from across the province, perpetrated against Indigenous women and girls.

Within Prince Albert specifically, Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations Vice-Chief Kim Jonathan points out "this is the prison city. People that may not have had positive experiences or things to say about the police – I mean that's who put them in the jails or the penitentiary."

However, both she and Buffalo, who is Jonathan's mother, have faith that city police are listening to their concerns and trying to improve relations. Both women, along with more than a dozen Indigenous female community leaders from the region, attended a late July meeting at Prince Albert's friendship centre to create an advisory board called the Indigenous Women's Commission of the Prince Albert Police Service.

Police Chief Troy Cooper initiated the meeting as part of his response to the Human Rights Watch report.

"In policing, every day when we come to work the issues we deal with on the forefront are all around Indigenous women. The Indigenous women missing and murdered, we talk about domestic violence, recruitment issues; there are so many things every day that involve that group and yet we haven't gone to them and asked their opinion on it and gotten their advice," he said.

Cooper calls the aftermath of the first meeting "overwhelmingly powerful."

"They shared their own experiences, both with police and with justice-related issues. It was an incredible day and I'm really glad that we started on this road. These are women telling you from their heart what their experiences have been."

Muskoday First Nation's Angie Bear and other women who attended the meeting said they appreciated how cultural protocol was followed. Not only was there a presentation of tobacco and sacred honouring, but women were also given the floor as the only two men present -- Cooper and one of his missing persons investigators -- listened to their stories.

"Traditionally our women were the matriarchs. We were the ones that when there was problems in our community, traditionally our women would come to the table and we would gather and we would discuss what needed to happen," Bear said.

"It's really good to go back to that way of doing things in that way. It's really important because then we can address all of the trauma people have been through, the reconciliation that needs to happen."

The importance of following Indigenous protocol to make meaningful changes between cultures has been in the spotlight lately. Early in June, Saskatoon-based Marilyn Poitras with the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls National Inquiry resigned from her position as commissioner, citing issues with what she considers a top-down approach that doesn't properly integrate Indigenous ways of knowing and healing.

With the initial meeting of the Indigenous Women's Commission now complete, the group is planning to get together in September to finalize their terms of reference and to officially declare an oath to the commission.