



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

GRANDE PRAIRIE POLICE COMMISSION

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We respectfully acknowledge the Beaver, Cree, Dene, and Métis people as the original caretakers of these Lands and surrounding areas. We are grateful to live, learn, work and play on Treaty 8 territory within Turtle Island and acknowledge these Lands have been home to diverse and sovereign First Nations and Inuit People since Time Immemorial.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

I am honored to address you as the Chair of the Grande Prairie Police Commission (Commission), and I am thrilled to participate in shaping the Grande Prairie Police Service (GPPS) which was launched in 2023. This marks a significant and historic period for the community as the first municipal police service formed in Alberta in over 50 years. Grande Prairie City Council made the decision to join the ranks of other cities with their own municipal police service including Edmonton, Calgary, Lacombe, Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, Camrose, and Taber.

Our Commission is comprised of a dedicated team of highly skilled community members who are committed to creating a police service with the highest standards of integrity and professionalism. To achieve success, we have received and continue to access training on the best practices in public safety governance across the country and around the world. Our Executive Director comes with years of governance and strategic expertise as well as first-hand experience serving on a police commission in Alberta.

As the service begins to grow, we are proud of the exceptional quality of individuals that have signed onto GPPS. Grande Prairie's first Chief of Police has decades of leadership experience in law enforcement and has assembled a team of senior staff whose qualifications are second to none. They understand the challenges that face policing in today's world and are building a service that utilizes modern approaches to respond to the ever-changing needs of society.

This past year, I was especially proud of the Commission's work in developing our vision, mission, and values, which will form the foundation on which the future of policing will be built in Grande Prairie. This was developed in cooperation with the GPPS Executive Team and in consultation with the public through our many stakeholder engagement sessions. We understand that effective and efficient policing requires collaboration between law enforcement, the justice system, social service agencies and the community. Together, we will improve public safety for all residents of Grande Prairie, regardless of their cultural background or socio-economic status, and create a world-class service that is representative of our diverse community.

Thank you for your support, and we look forward to working with each and every one of you to ensure a safer and more inclusive Grande Prairie.

Dan Wong
Chair

POLICE GOVERNANCE AND OVERSIGHT

In Alberta, the *Police Act*, RSA 2000, mandates the Government of Alberta to ensure that adequate and effective policing is maintained in Alberta, and mandates the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services to administer the act. According to [Section 27](#) of the *Police Act*, a municipality that has assumed responsibility for establishing a municipal police service shall establish and maintain an adequate and effective municipal police service under the general supervision of a municipal police commission.

On March 7, 2023, the City of Grande Prairie Council passed a resolution to transition the City of Grande Prairie from the RCMP to municipal policing. On March 20, 2023, Council passed [Bylaw C-1455](#) to create the Grande Prairie Police Commission, and on May 1, 2023, they appointed 5 public members and 2 City Councillors to the Commission. The Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services then appointed 2 Provincial members in November. Current members have been appointed for 3-year terms.

Role of a Police Commission

The Grande Prairie Police Commission provides civilian oversight and governance to the Grande Prairie Police Service, keeping the police service at arms-length from municipal council. The Commission is responsible for:

- ❖ Establishing policies for effective and efficient policing;
- ❖ As necessary, issuing instructions to the Police Chief in regards to policies;
- ❖ In consultation with the Police Chief, setting priorities and annual plans;
- ❖ Hiring and evaluating a Chief of Police;
- ❖ Designating a Public Complaints Director;
- ❖ Allocating funds provided by Council; and
- ❖ Ensuring sufficient staffing.

ABOUT THE POLICE COMMISSION

VISION

Leading the way in public safety.

We aspire to establish Grande Prairie Police Service as an innovative, best-practice public safety model contributing to a thriving Grande Prairie for everyone.

MISSION

Our mission is to provide strategic direction, innovative leadership, and excellent oversight in shaping and sustaining the Grande Prairie Police Service through effective, efficient, and equitable governance, with a commitment to collaboration and engagement with our diverse and growing community.

VALUES

Respect

Dignity and compassion for all
Consideration and understanding

Integrity

Accountable, ethical, and transparent
Trustworthy, reliable, and honest

Community

Relationships and collaboration
Communication, diversity, and inclusion

Excellence

In leadership, training, innovation, and best practices
In governance and oversight

2023 Commission Members



Dan Wong (May 1, 2023 – April 30, 2026) – Commission Chair

Career: Professional Engineer and business owner

Background Highlights: Dan has been a volunteer in the community for over 30 years. His family has a long history with the city starting with his great grandfather who immigrated to Canada and settled in Grande Prairie in 1918. Dan has served in many positions with organizations including Grande Prairie City Council, GP Chamber, Swan City Rotary, University of Alberta Senate, Chinese Association of Grande Prairie and other director positions for various non-profit boards. His engineering background provides expertise in project management, strategic planning, risk management, logical reasoning, and financial analysis.



Natalia Reiman (May 1, 2023 – April 30, 2026) – Commission Vice-Chair, Chair of Personnel Committee

Career: Lawyer

Background Highlights: Natalia is a lifelong resident of Peace Country, currently raising her two daughters with her husband in Grande Prairie. She has a strong commitment to the community whether providing legal counsel to children in court at Grande Peace Law or volunteering on Boards. Natalia is Past Chair and former Board member of Grande Prairie Regional College Board of Governors, was a Board Member on Alberta Health Services Board of Directors, Past Member and Volunteer with the Rainbow Society of Alberta, Grande Prairie Legal Guidance, and Grande Prairie Bar Association.



Timothy Burnham (May 1, 2023 – April 30, 2026) – Chair of Finance Committee

Career: Lawyer

Background Highlights: Tim is an experienced legal professional at Burnham Law Group with over 15 years of expertise in various legal and business sectors. He is dedicated to community engagement and now bring this wealth of knowledge to the Grande Prairie Police Commission. Tim's current legal practice specializes in commercial transactions, wills, estates, and conflict resolution. He extends his leadership beyond legal matters, contributing significantly to community and educational initiatives. Tim's service includes roles as a director of the GPPSD Education Foundation, past chair of the Grande Prairie Music Parents' Association, and the Canadian Mental Health Association (GP), among other organizations.



Lois Duke (June 15, 2023 – June 14, 2026)

Career: Entrepreneur and Community Advocate

Background Highlights: Lois is a Cree, Beaver, and Iroquois Iskwew from Kelly Lake, currently raising her three daughters with her husband in Grande Prairie while her son attends the University of Alberta. Alongside her husband, she has been part of creating several businesses. Lois advocates and supports several organizations in the area. She is President of Foothills First Nation, President of Kelly Lake Community Centre, Secretary of the Grande Prairie Friendship Centre, and Chair of the Grande Gathering Gala. Lois is an avid believer that lifelong learning and growth are important for continued success. She is proud to be appointed as a member of the Grande Prairie Police Commission.



Donna Koch (May 1, 2023 – April 30, 2026) – Chair of Policy and Governance Committee

Career: Health and Human Services Consultant

Background Highlights: Donna was born and raised in the Peace Country and believes you get out of your community what you put into it. A registered Nurse by profession, Health Care Consultant, Public School Board Trustee, partner in Design Works Engineering, Rotarian

and Volunteer with 35 years of leadership experience including strategic planning and operations across Alberta, Canada and Internationally. Donna also has 5 years experience in Alberta Gaming and over 20 years experience in business and fundraising including sales, public relations, marketing, land development and human resources. Her interests are love of family and animals, sports, fashion and travel.



Warren Travasso (November 15, 2023 – November 14, 2026)

Career: Commercial Banker

Background Highlights: Warren is a Business and Finance professional with over 18 years of experience in various industries including Banking, Oil & Gas, and the international Non-Profit Sector.

He currently works as a Commercial Banker and serves his community by teaching Financial Literacy at 2 local schools and as a Volunteer Firefighter with the County of Grande Prairie Fire Department. Warren has previously held numerous Director and Treasurer positions for local non-profit organizations. Outside of work and volunteering, Warren loves spending time with his wife, their 5 children and 2 grandchildren.



Councillor Dylan Bressey (May 1, 2023 – April 30, 2026)

Career: City Councillor

Background Highlights: Most of Dylan Bressey's career was spent in the non-profit sector directing youth programs. In 2017, he was elected to City Council. He also currently serves as a Vice President for Alberta Municipalities and is a co-owner of a small business providing construction and oilfield labour. His active volunteer work in Grande Prairie includes founding the Grande Prairie Disc Golf Club, being part of the startup Board of a neighbourhood association and serving on the Board for the United Way Alberta Northwest.



Councillor Kevin P. O'Toole (May 1, 2023 – April 30, 2026)

Career: City Councillor

Background Highlights: Kevin has been a resident of Grande Prairie since 1965 and is a Journeyman Red Seal Machinist by trade, designing and repairing hydraulic components. He has been serving as a City Councillor since 2010 and is extremely involved in the community. Kevin has competed in national and international gun shooting competitions, served as Vice President and President of the Alberta Handgun Association as well as the Wapiti Shooters club. He also was the Chair of the 2008 World's Masters Games Shooting Sport. Kevin has operated a Firearm and Gunsmithing business since 1991 and is a Firearm Instructor and Certified Range Officer.

2023 Commission Staff



Dwayne Lakusta, Chief of Police

Background Highlights: On August 28, 2023, Chief Lakusta became the first Police Chief for the Grande Prairie Police Service (GPPS). Mr. Lakusta came to Grande Prairie as an accomplished and influential leader in the field of public safety with close to 30 years of progressive law enforcement experience. Prior to his appointment with GPPS, he was serving as the Executive Director of Law Enforcement and Police Oversight for the Public Safety and Emergency Services Ministry. Chief Lakusta also spent over 26-years with the Edmonton Police Service, retiring at the rank of Superintendent, overseeing Alberta Law Enforcement Response Teams. Chief Lakusta likes to spend time at the gym, on the golf course, and cheering on the Edmonton Oilers.



Lorrie Sitler, Executive Director

Background Highlights: On April 17, 2023, Lorrie made her way from Calgary to Grande Prairie to begin preparations for onboarding and building capacity in the inaugural Grande Prairie Police Commission. Ms. Sitler came to the Commission with over 20 years of governance experience, including several years as a Commissioner and Public Complaint Director for the Camrose Police Commission. Lorrie is an advocate for individuals with disabilities and served as an Advisor to Chiefs of Police from across Alberta on their agency's involvement with Law Enforcement Torch Run during her time with Special Olympics. She likes to spend her free time taking part in culinary experiences and exploring new travel destinations.

2023 COMMISSION HIGHLIGHTS

As the inaugural year for the Grande Prairie Police Commission, a significant focus has been on building capacity and supporting the police transition. Significant milestones reached in 2023 include:

- ❖ Completed 2 days of orientation and onboarding
- ❖ Held our first organizational meeting where we:
 - Elected Chair of the Commission, Dan Wong
 - Elected Vice Chair of the Commission, Natalia Reiman
 - Implemented our first Policy and Procedure Manual
 - Created our Committees and appointed members to them:
 - Chief Search Committee – Chair Wong and all Commission members
 - Personnel Committee – Chair Reiman, Commissioner Wong and Councillor O’Toole
 - Policy & Governance Committee – Chair Koch, Commissioner Duke and Councillor Bressey
 - Finance Committee – Chair Burnham, Commissioner Wong and Commissioner Reiman
 - Appointed Executive Director Lorrie Sitler as the Public Complaint Director
- ❖ Received approval of our first budget from City Council.
- ❖ Hired the first Chief of Police for the Grande Prairie Police Service, Chief Dwayne Lakusta.
- ❖ Facilitated 8 Stakeholder Engagement Sessions with various groups and the public.
- ❖ Participated in a 2-day Strategic Planning Workshop.
- ❖ Created our Vision, Mission, and Values
- ❖ Approved our inaugural 3-Year Strategic Plan.
- ❖ Completed a Policy and Procedure Manual review.

Stakeholder Engagement

Engagement with the community was top of mind for all Commissioners when they accepted their appointments from Council, and when Chief Lakusta was sworn in one of his top priorities was to hear what the community wanted for the future of policing. Insights, perspectives, and experiences of the community are vital to the success of the police transition.

We developed a joint Stakeholder Engagement Plan with the Chief and were excited to invite the public and community organizations to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of policing in our community by participating in one of several Stakeholder Engagement Sessions. From October 23 until October 25, Commission members and the Chief held 8 in-person sessions and provided an opportunity for online participation throughout October. 143 individuals attended in-person sessions and 36 individuals provided input through the online survey. Common themes were heard, providing us with a strong understanding of what the community wants in a new police service. One of the questions asked was “What do you want the community to look like when Grande Prairie Police Service are the police of jurisdiction?” and the community responded loud and clear with:



Diverse & Culturally Sensitive
Reduced Crime Community Involved
 Community Pride **Respectful**
Innovative Visible Collaborative
 Responsive Proactive Innovative Appropriately Resourced
Safe Communicative Engaged
Accountable Educated & Well Trained