



# Municipal Law Enforcement Q4 - 2020 & Q1 2021 - Report

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## Who we are

The Municipal Enforcement Dept. is staffed by two officers. Each brings a plethora of education and vocational experience to the service of Municipal Law Enforcement.

A rebranding of the department was implemented with the purpose of identifying with the province wide organization to which we belong, The Municipal Law Enforcement Officers Association of Ontario (MLEOA). As well, our intention is to present a distinct identity separation from the uniform of the Ontario Provincial Police.

The colour green was chosen in honour of military service and veterans; as are many of our citizens. Black is typically worn on Fridays in support of those currently involved in military conflict, and to mourn the loss of those dedicated to police service, civil service and in service of their country.

The choice, type and quality of uniform we don are purpose driven. The material is durable in favour of longevity, providing protection against weather and abrasion. The body armour is an industry standard applied across most of the country. It provides protection in the case of accident, slip and fall, and auto-collision. As well, it offers resistance to penetration from a firearm projectile, or an edged weapon of any kind. The equipment we employ was selected based on the needs of the community (e.g. Naloxone, etc.), and officer safety (e.g. Tourniquet, etc.).

There are many unknowns at each call that we attend. And the availability of such equipment ensures our health and safety to a certain degree. Due to the wide range of our responsibilities, the opportunities for potentially dangerous interactions are plentiful.

## What we do

Officers familiarize themselves with all applicable provincial and municipal laws in order to respond to calls for service. Some of our calls result in Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), as they are born of an ongoing feud between neighbours. We take care with such calls; keeping in mind that incident details provided may have been exaggerated for effect.

In accordance with our mandate, we perform proactive patrols to identify deficiencies that may contravene any applicable provincial or municipal law. Incidents are handled in order of priority placing those related to the safety of the populous ahead of others.

We routinely collaborate with protective service partners and other community service organizations. This collaboration ensures the safety of our citizens, the protection of their property, the protection of the environment and compliance with municipal laws.

Team meetings are held daily for the purpose of information sharing, call for service prioritizing, officer safety, and maintenance of morale. Of utmost importance is the maintenance of stable mental health in this field, especially during an emergency situation such as a pandemic.

Officer safety is paramount and as such, certain calls for service are classified as two officer calls where one officer takes point on the matter and is supported by the other.

Incidents are always handled with professionalism and compassion. After initial report information is collected, each case is duly investigated with objectivity.

### **Over view**

Fiscal 2020 brought changes to service levels, and reporting structure. As well, the protraction of the pandemic response, combined with more complex calls for service has resulted in a vastly increased workload.

The change in reporting structure has been the catalyst for much positive change in the department. As a result, productivity and efficiency have greatly improved.

Our prior status bound us to inactivity due to the lack of authority to act on infractions. This was directly associated with the deficiencies of certain by-laws. With leadership supporting the revision of the legislation, we have been able to increase the quality of service to the municipality.

Attached to this report is a spreadsheet of service calls entered in the departmental database. It is important to note that not all service calls may be entered into the MiLISA database; as, not all calls are associated with a municipal address. The effectiveness of MiLISA depends on an association to a municipal address for data entry. We are in the process of developing a solution for this matter.

Of note is, certain calls require extensive investigation and also include waiting periods set forth by various provincial Acts.

## **COVID-19 Response**

To meet the challenges of the pandemic response we educated ourselves by taking a course hosted through Coursera. The instruction was provided by Johns Hopkins University and the topic was COVID-19 Contact Tracing.

To provide supplemental coverage, we have taken to working six days a week on an intermittent basis, and included a stand-by component to ensure availability for EMCPA purposes.

A COVID specific Notice of Violation was developed to initiate contact with citizens whom we suspect may be in contravention of the Emergency Measures and Civil Protection Act. The purpose of the letter is to create awareness of the Act, its intricacies, potential charges, and to facilitate an opportunity to educate citizens on the known behaviour of the Coronavirus and contact tracing methods.

In aid of this effort, a city map was mounted in the bullpen. The map identified the addresses of those who received Notices of Violation; and, linked them to the location at which they were noticed. This was intended to assist in contact tracing should the need arise. Algoma Public Health had been made aware of the steps we took and were offered our assistance, if necessary.

Some opposition to the enforcement of the provincial order has been experienced. Some resistance was due to misunderstanding or lack of knowledge concerning the EMCPA and/or ROA. And others expressed opposition due to frustration and fear. Officers educated each individual or group and quelled fear as best as could be done.

Further, our current approach to handling typical calls for service has been one of remote resolution, if possible. If the matter can be resolved over the phone or by email, then it was handled as such. The goal is to limit contact with the public during a pandemic, unless contact is absolutely necessary (e.g. site inspection, etc.).

Overall, we have had more cooperation than not. However, we have been faced with numerous accounts of southern Ontarians seeking refuge in our lovely milieu. These individuals were kindly directed to adhere to the stay-at-home order, directing them back from whence they came.

## **Hoarding Coalition**

In a continued effort to address the occurrences of hoarding in Elliot Lake, we participate in regular meetings hosted by the Counselling Centre of East Algoma. Some other involved parties are: Ontario Provincial Police, Algoma District Services Administration Board, Children's Aid Society, and Algoma Public Health Unit. The group manages individual cases as well as the overall processes of hoarding response.

Municipal Enforcement is involved in hoarding matters as they relate to numerous sections of the property standards by-law. There are sections that address both the interior and exterior condition of buildings, ranging from clear paths of egress to general cleanliness. Many calls are received

reporting situations as hoarding. But not all incidents exhibit the conditions required to be considered hoarding.

Once an inspection is completed, a determination is made as to whether the matter is hoarding. If so, the issue is brought to the Coalition to involve the necessary community partners for a case conference. If the situation does not meet the criteria, then the matter is handled in house and prioritized accordingly.

Our approach in these matters is one of long-term resolution. Essentially those persons exhibiting hoarding tendencies are most often dealing with financial constraints as well. Connecting them with the appropriate services and potential access to funding facilitates recurring support and a long term solution.

### **Wildlife / Coyote Response Effort**

With increasing concern over the coyotes at large, we have assumed the responsibility of coordinating both a “trap and transport” (TNT), and field treatment operation to avail the seemingly unwell coyotes of some needed care.

Discussions with Coyote Watch Canada, Jim Johnson of the Bear Wise Program, and Gloria Morrisette of Turtle Pond Wildlife Centre, as well as other interested private citizens of Elliot Lake, have taken place. The goal was to solidify a sustainable plan for treatment in the field or TNT of the ailing coyotes, of which we believe there are at least three.

Attempts to medicate a coyote were successful and the animal has taken to fending for itself, which, of course, is a good sign. The medication was transported to a private citizen from Turtle Pond Wildlife. Municipal Enforcement oversaw the implementation and administration of the medication designed to treat mange.

Since the administration of the medication and the onset of mating season, the coyote has changed its pattern of travel and behaviour. Last seen, its fur had grown back, and the eyes were clear. And its behaviour was confident and alert.

Contact has been made with Coyote Watch Canada for the purposes of gaining wildlife training for the officers. The goal is to bolster our knowledge and ameliorate response to calls for service relating to wildlife. Jim Johnson of the Bear Wise program has also agreed to provide comprehensive wildlife training and we are scheduled to make contact for training dates in the near future.

Ultimately, the reason for our seeking wildlife training is due to a void that exists regarding the handling wildlife calls. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) maintains that municipalities are responsible for addressing wildlife matters, however, the Municipal Enforcement Dept. had been relieved of all applicable equipment and training. Should citizens contact the MNRF for support, they experience difficulty making a connection with someone at

the other end. We recognized this void and are making every attempt to ensure our service fills the gap.

Further, we have recognized the ecosystem that is Elliot Lake. In light of that reality, we have noticed a shift in type of nuisance wildlife and rodents. We believe this is a result of the removal of numerous feral cats from our environment. As such, we have become increasingly wary of what we do and how it may affect the ecology of Elliot Lake and its outlying areas.

## **By-Law Revision**

In accordance with the Strategic Plan of 2015, and our mandate to uphold certain laws, we have taken the initiative to review and revise Elliot Lake's enforceable municipal by-laws. The goal is to update the legislation through amendment or by repeal and replacement. Effective enforcement requires the legislation to meet the standards of the provincial Acts from which they are derived. Of equal importance is the need to meet the desires of council, and needs of the community in regard to safety. Priority is given to those by-laws that address safety hazards, and those of high profile concern. The by-laws that have been produced are:

- Snow and Ice
- Noise
- Nuisance
- Clean Yards
- Smoking
- Snowmobile
- Idling
- Signage
- Parking and Traffic, and
- Property Standards

There remain a few that will need revision, as well as short form wording development. It is our goal to address those early in Q2.

## **Service Calls**

Fielding typical service calls during the pandemic has proven to be challenging. Each matter is weighed by the nature of its gravity and the potential / actual effects to public safety. Charges may or may not have been laid.

During the past two quarters some of the types of service calls we have addressed and efforts we put forth were:

- towing of vehicles and abandoned sheds from municipal property and private property;
- safe securing of syringes at property standard calls and on beaches;
- enforce the clean-up of graffiti in certain areas of the community;
- matters related to potential hoarding;
- dumping on municipal property and Denison Mine Ltd. property;

- altered shift start times, during snowfalls, to address parking infractions on municipal roads and in municipal parking lots. This was done to assist Public Works by facilitating snow removal efforts;
- enforcement of apartment heating requirements as set out by the, Residential Tenancies Act, Building Code Act and Property Standards By-law;
- reports of property infestation of rodents or insects;
- obstruction of highway;
- obstruction of boulevard, traffic, or sidewalk;
- traffic sightline obstruction;
- illegal signage;
- felling trees on city property;
- zoning infractions associated with operating a homebased business as well as cottage lot buffer areas;
- increased patrols in cottage lot areas;
- noise related reports;
- aggressive dog and bite reports;
- domestic animals subjected to substandard conditions;
- illegal ownership of farm animals;
- illegal ownership of exotic animals;
- enforcement EMCPA restrictions as amended from time to time;
- as well as working other calls resulting from proactive patrol efforts.

## Summary

Of late, we have increasingly become the first point of contact for any and all types of matters of concern from the citizenry, and our service partners; including those within our municipal family. We welcome the opportunity to field all concerns, prioritizing them appropriately and/or promptly directing them to the suitable department or agency.

The role and standards of Municipal Law Enforcement is evolving nationally. Due to this actuality, and in order to meet those standards locally, we have developed a departmental Mission Statement and Vision Statement.

The focus of our mission and our vision is on professionalism, preparedness, and community service.

Under the auspice of these statements, as well as the oath and code of ethics of Municipal Law Enforcement, we are continually seeking to innovate and implement methods of effective and efficient operation in order to augment our level of service to the province and municipality.

Encl.:

- Mission Statement
- Vision Statement
- Oath and code of ethics of Municipal Law Enforcement

Respectfully submitted by Kyle Best