



NNW ONTARIO COALITION FOR FAIR COST POLICING SERVICES

NNW municipalities to meet with Solicitor General in hope of solving high cost of police services

The leaders of Kenora, Sioux Lookout and Pickle Lake are meeting with Ontario's Solicitor General to discuss the Government of Ontario's proposed solutions to lower the cost of policing in the three municipalities.

KENORA, Ontario, January 17, 2023 --- Ten months after forming a coalition to address the very high cost of policing in the municipalities of Kenora, Sioux Lookout, and Pickle Lake, the mayors will be meeting with Solicitor General Michael Kerzner on January 23rd, 2023. The meeting will be held during the Rural Ontario Municipalities Association (ROMA) conference in Ontario where they hope to hear a solution to the police cost crisis in their communities.

Since the coalition was formed, the leaders have had meetings with OPP officials, Ministry staff, and the Minister, on the years-long cost crisis. They have also developed options and discussed possible funding solutions to bring policing costs in-line with the rest of Ontario's municipalities. Up until this time, the Government of Ontario has not proposed any firm resolution to the coalition's demands.

"We are cautiously optimistic that Minister Kerzner will be coming to the table with a solution", said Doug Lawrance, Mayor of Sioux Lookout. "This issue is not about the quality of OPP service, which has been excellent. This is about the financial burden on our local taxpayers which is unsustainable and has been so for many years. Our communities are relatively small, but our police costs are extraordinarily high."

Of approximately 330 Ontario municipalities that contract the OPP for police services, Pickle Lake, Sioux Lookout and Kenora are the three highest cost jurisdictions. While the median cost for policing for municipalities is about \$300 per property, without discounts, Sioux Lookout, Kenora and Pickle Lake are approximately three times that cost. The primary reason for these high policing costs is that the three communities are regional hubs for healthcare, pharmacy, education, commerce, legal, and transportation services for people living in a geographical area larger than Germany.

"Reducing the cost of policing so that we are in-line with other Ontario municipalities is a top priority for Kenora Council," said Andrew Poirier, Mayor of Kenora. "The current cost formula unfairly penalizes taxpayers for expenses that are out of our control."

Pickle Lake Mayor James Dalzell said, "We need a long-term solution from the provincial government. This is what I am expecting from our meeting with the Solicitor General."

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