



NNW ONTARIO COALITION FOR FAIR COST POLICING SERVICES

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Solicitor General provides some financial relief from policing costs to Kenora and Sioux Lookout. Councils still looking for more, pending review of Community Safety and Policing Act later this year.

KENORA, Ontario, February 21, 2023 --- After several meetings with the Ministry of the Solicitor General on a possible solution to the OPP police cost crisis facing their communities, Minister Michael Kerzner has responded to the leaders of NNW Fair Cost Policing Coalition with further discounts to the annual policing costs. While the additional discounts are much lower than the municipalities had requested, the coalition leaders are hopeful that a pending review of the Community Safety and Policing Act (CSPA) will result in more significant financial relief in the future.

“For many years, we have been trying to get the Solicitor General’s office to take the problem of policing costs in our municipalities more seriously,” said Doug Lawrance, Mayor of Sioux Lookout. “By working together as a coalition rather than individual municipalities, we have finally been able to get some traction on the issue.”

The new discounts will provide Kenora with an additional 10% discount, now 15%; and for Sioux Lookout, an additional 5% discount, now 40%. Pickle Lake’s current discount of 95% remains in place, at least until the CSPA process is complete. At this time, it is unclear when that process will begin.

“The discounts are a step in the right direction, but much more is needed,” said Andrew Poirier, Mayor of Kenora. “We do, however, appreciate the time and energy Minister Kerzner has put into addressing our concerns.”

Lawrance said, “We remain concerned that our policing costs are unsustainable. Our communities are regional centres for healthcare, pharmacy, education, commerce, legal, and transportation services for tens of thousands of people across the region. We serve a population much larger than our municipal population.”

While the coalition members are the highest cost jurisdictions in Ontario (according to 2022 data), there are over 30 municipalities across the north and other parts of the province that also have very high police costs compared to the provincial median of about \$320 per property.

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“We know that we are not alone when it comes to concerns regarding the provincial cost formula for policing, which continues to squeeze many northern communities, and others across the province”, said James Dalzell, Mayor of Pickle Lake. “One outcome of the CSPA review process must be a new funding model. The current model is not sustainable for many communities.”

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