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COLUMBIA

VIA EMAIL

Ref: 674579

February 10, 2025

Her Worship Lilia Hansen  
Mayor of the City of Fort St. John  
10631 100 Street  
Fort St. John BC V1J 3Z5  
Email: [lhansen@fortstjohn.ca](mailto:lhansen@fortstjohn.ca)

Dear Mayor Hansen:

Thank you for your letter of January 6, 2025, regarding vacancy concerns at the North District General Investigation Service (ND GIS) office based at the Fort St. John RCMP Detachment (FSJ ND GIS). Thank you for your patience while ministry staff looked into this matter.

Under the *Police Act*, as the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, I must ensure that an adequate and effective level of policing and law enforcement is maintained throughout British Columbia. It is my responsibility to set the goals, objectives and priorities for policing and law enforcement in BC; however, I must reiterate that day-to-day operational matters and internal management of police services, such as managing human resources items like vacancies, falls to the police agency of jurisdiction.

As you are aware, while the Provincial Police Service's ND GIS Unit, including FSJ ND GIS, is responsible for providing support to provincial jurisdictions in the North District, ND GIS has also historically supported police service delivery within municipal boundaries, including at Fort St. John.

I acknowledge your concerns regarding the impact vacancies within provincial units, such as FSJ ND GIS, may have on public safety, the Fort St. John Detachment building and the workload of the Fort St. John Municipal RCMP Unit. The vacancy concerns regarding FSJ ND GIS are complex; however, I can assure you that there is currently no plan to move any of the three resources out of FSJ ND GIS and that the BC RCMP are making efforts to fill the unit's vacancies.

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While it is important to note that per the Police Service Agreements, internal and operational matters, such as recruitment and staffing actions, are the responsibility of the RCMP, ministry staff actively monitor vacancies within the Provincial Police Service. Staff have reviewed BC RCMP vacancy reports which show that the provincial unit has consistently had at least two of the three FSJ ND GIS positions staffed in the past three years, and that the unit's vacancy rates have improved over the past year.

Ministry staff also reached out to the BC RCMP for further information. The Acting Officer-in-Charge at the Fort St. John Detachment, Staff Sergeant Scott Watson, has advised that for FSJ ND GIS, efforts to restaff the Corporal position have not yet succeeded but remain ongoing. You may be pleased to know that a candidate has been selected and will be in place on March 1, 2025, to fill the recently vacated FSJ ND GIS Constable position. It is my understanding that Staff Sergeant Watson has already been in contact with you to discuss your concerns and to communicate this information.

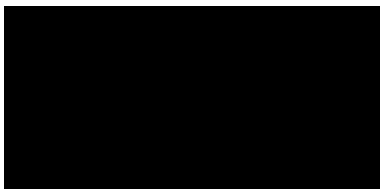
I appreciate that you have been in regular contact with your local detachment regarding your concerns and encourage you to continue to have these discussions. It is the Province's expectation that RCMP Detachment Commanders engage regularly with local communities to discuss detachment policing priorities and community concerns, which includes proactively communicating potential changes that are anticipated to impact local service delivery.

In addition, I have instructed ministry staff to contact you to set up a meeting with the City of Fort St. John, the BC RCMP, and other affected communities to discuss the concerns you have raised.

The Province will continue to work with the BC RCMP to monitor and address RCMP vacancy issues at FSJ ND GIS and throughout the province, through enhanced vacancy management reporting and other regular discussions.

Thank you again for taking the time to write to me regarding this matter.

Sincerely,



Garry Begg  
Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General

pc: Glen Lewis, Assistant Deputy Minister and Director of Police Services  
Katherine St. Denis, A/Executive Director, Policing and Security Branch  
Ellen Frisch, Manager of Executive Services, City of Fort St. John  
S/Sgt Scott Watson, Acting Officer-in-Charge, Fort St. John RCMP Detachment  
Supt Ken Floyd, Acting North District Commander, BC RCMP  
Mayor Darcy Dober, City of Dawson Creek  
Mayor Rob Fraser, Northern Rockies Regional Municipality  
Mayor Darryl Krakowka, District of Tumbler Ridge  
Mayor Allen Courtoreille, District of Chetwynd  
Mayor Travous Quibell, District of Hudson's Hope  
Shawn Dahlen, CAO, Peace River Regional District

Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General  
PO Box 9010 Stn Prov Gov  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

January 6, 2025  
PSSG.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Garry Begg:

**RE: RCMP Service to the City of Fort St. John**

I am writing today to express my concern about the RCMP service to the City of Fort St. John as it relates to the Regional General Investigation Service Positions which are supposed to be staffed at the Fort St. John Detachment. These positions were introduced into the detachment nearly twenty years ago and have been an important component of the Provincial contribution to regional policing in our area. These positions have now been vacant for nearly three years. During this time, we have made numerous inquiries with the RCMP who have occasionally reassured us that efforts are being made to staff these positions. However, there has been a complete lack of results from these efforts leading us to believe they were neither genuine, nor effective. Recently, we have been given the impression that these efforts have stopped, and that the RCMP feel they can adequately serve our needs from Prince George. We are particularly suspicious of the sincerity of efforts to staff these positions since communications from the RCMP have repeatedly sought to reassure us and convince us of the absurd notion that our regional needs will be better served by resources based on the other side of the Pine Pass. I will not spend much time rebutting this clearly ridiculous notion.

We also want to talk about the chronology of the positions and the way in which they were removed from the local detachment without any consultation, and in a manner that has come across as deceitful. We learned of the intention to remove these positions from the Peace Region after being inadvertently copied on an email by the then district Commander, Warren Brown. When we challenged the decision and the lack of consultation, we were advised that the same quality service could be provided to the region from Prince George. It is absurd to suggest that these positions could provide the same support for our region remotely. These positions are a crucial support for serious investigations in the region and support a broad geographical area including Dawson Creek, Northern Rockies and many smaller communities in the Northeast such as Tumbler Ridge, Hudson's Hope and Chetwynd. They also take a role in managing a portion of the workload in serious and complex investigations that fall within the Fort St. John detachment. Ultimately, any removal of these resources creates pressure on the city funded plainclothes resources which then need to compensate and conduct investigations outside the municipal boundaries. Clearly, if the regional GIS resources were in place, this would be something that would be tolerable in an integrated detachment model. With those resources removed, it creates an unfair extra burden on our city budget, and our city funded resources.

The current state of affairs is particularly confounding given that during the construction of our new police detachment we built dedicated office space for the Regional GIS team at a cost of nearly two million dollars. As this space sits vacant, and our own municipal officers must compensate for the workload that is no longer being addressed, we have reached a high level of frustration.

Two years ago, we were reassured when our conversations with the then director of Police Services Wayne Rideout, agreed with us on all points. We were advised that the issue raised by the transfers out of our community, and the subsequent failure to re-establish the positions were unauthorized and that this would be reversed. It has been some time, and we have not been reassured by the token efforts to fill these positions. We want to take the time in this letter to stress the impacts on our community resources and also the impact it has had on public safety in the Peace Region. It will not be lost on you that serious crime in the region served by these dedicated resources has increased, this is no coincidence. As you are aware, the number of provincial resources in detachments is contentious and nearly all municipalities feel that the Provincial complement is inadequate. The removal of resources from our detachment without communications is particularly difficult to accept.

Our staff have been in regular contact with the new District Officer, C/Supt. Brian Edmonds and Supt. Pikola who have left us with the impression that efforts to recruit replacements into these positions have been unsuccessful due to lack of interest, and that they are no longer making efforts to restore these positions.

I would like to request that this issue be resolved through restoring the law enforcement resources our communities deserve, and have lost, to take action against our climbing crime rates.

Sincerely,



Lilia Hansen  
Mayor, City of Fort St. John

cc: City of Dawson Creek  
Northern Rockies Regional Municipality  
District of Tumbler Ridge  
District of Chetwynd  
District of Hudson's Hope  
Peace River Regional District  
C/Supt. Brian Edmonds North District Officer, Prince George BC