

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK
POLICE SERVICES BOARD

REPORT OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

26 NOVEMBER 2008

**Employment Opportunities for Persons
with Intellectual Disabilities**

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Board approve the establishment of a program to provide employment opportunities for persons with intellectual disabilities; and
2. That the Board delegate authority to the Chief of Police, or his designate, to take the necessary measures to fully implement the program, including executing employment agreements as well as a Letter of Understanding with the York Regional Police Association, subject to the approval of the Region's Legal Services as to form and content.

SYNOPSIS

York Regional Police has conducted a workplace review and has determined that it is feasible to implement a program to provide employment opportunities to persons with intellectual disabilities. In particular, two potential part-time positions have been identified. The York Regional Police Association has been approached about the initiative and is generally supportive of the idea. The program would be established in conjunction with a community partner, the Canadian Association for Community Living, and would provide employment opportunities for individuals who may not otherwise have access to the workforce. The program would also serve to strengthen our ties to the community and demonstrate our commitment to being an inclusive employer.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Two part-time employment opportunities are currently being considered. Each incumbent would be paid a fair wage in exchange for their work. These wages would be managed within the existing casual salaries account of the approved Operating Budget.

BACKGROUND

As the Board is aware, leadership, respect and community are three of our most important values. Like York Region, York Regional Police has been recognized as a leader all across Canada for our efforts to build an inclusive community and an inclusive workplace. At York Regional Police, “diversity includes”.

York Regional Police has conducted research and determined that it is feasible to implement a program to provide employment opportunities to persons with intellectual disabilities. Introducing such a program at York Regional Police would achieve the goal of offering particular individuals access to a workplace which they would not otherwise have, as well as further solidifying ties with community partners. At this stage, two potential part-time employment opportunities have been identified: one position at Headquarters consisting largely of assistance to our mail clerk and the second position at the Community Safety Village consisting of general maintenance.

It is anticipated that the incumbents would be hired on a part-time basis through written, fixed-term employment contracts. The Canadian Association for Community Living would assist in the recruitment process by identifying applicable government funding opportunities, pre-screening candidates and supplying pertinent employment practice advice to employers hiring persons with intellectual disabilities. This includes a job coach for the incumbents, which is an integral part of the program. The job coach provides intensive monitoring, training, assessment and support to the employee, and fosters a healthy working relationship between management and the employee by encouraging appropriate social interaction and maintaining open communications.

Awareness and sensitivity training for our existing employees will be key to ensuring a successful integration. Persons with intellectual disabilities and those who support their efforts to work in mainstream environments state that the largest single barrier they experience is not the disability itself, but attitudinal barriers and misperceptions about their skills and ability to add value in a workplace setting. Since managers and supervisors are ultimately responsible for supporting and driving diversity in their units, they too will need support and training to bolster their efforts to educate their staff. The Canadian Association of Community Living, in partnership with York Regional Police, will provide training to existing staff.

The York Regional Police Association has been approached about the program and are generally supportive of the concept. It is anticipated that the program would be structured outside the terms of the Working Agreement and the two new part-time staff would not be members of the Association. A Letter of Understanding setting out the terms of the program and the issues surrounding the incumbents’ employment will have to be executed with the Association obtaining their agreement to structure the program in this manner.

The development of this program will assist individuals in our community to integrate into the workforce and achieve a greater degree of independence. It is further anticipated that the Service will also benefit from the implementation of such a worthy program. Our Service has an

opportunity to provide meaningful employment, expand our existing relationships within our communities, demonstrate to other employers the benefits of hiring persons with intellectual disabilities, and further develop our commitment to an inclusive and diverse workplace.

Armand P. La Barge, O.O.M
Chief of Police