

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK
POLICE SERVICES BOARD

REPORT OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

25 FEBRUARY 2009

Status of Rewards

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Board renew the reward of \$20,000 pursuant to Board Policy No. 03/00 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person(s) responsible for a series of hate crimes committed on March 15, 2004, in the City of Vaughan, and
2. That the Board renew the reward of \$100,000 pursuant to Board Policy No. 03/00 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person(s) responsible for the murders of Zhu LIN, Yan LIU and Xiao ZHAN on February 8, 2004, in the Town of Markham.

SYNOPSIS

At the February 27, 2008 Board meeting, the reward for \$20,000 posted in 2004 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person(s) responsible for a series of hate crimes in Vaughan was renewed. There have been no claims for the \$20,000 since it was posted, and we are asking that the reward be renewed for another year.

The Board also renewed the reward of \$100,000 for a period of one year at the February 27, 2008 Board meeting for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person(s) responsible for a triple homicide that occurred at the Mirage Spa in Markham in February 2004. We are asking that this reward be renewed for another year as well.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The funds to cover claims made in relation to a posted reward come from the York Regional Police Investigative account. If the Board approves an additional one year period for the \$20,000 reward leading to information on the Vaughan hate crimes and the \$100,000 reward for the triple homicide, there are sufficient funds available in the Investigative account to cover any claims. It should be noted that a condition of successfully claiming the reward is arrest and

conviction of the person(s) responsible for these crimes and, given the complexity of the cases and the time it takes to move matters through the Criminal Courts, it is highly unlikely that these funds would be required in 2009.

BACKGROUND

The Regional Municipality of York Police Services Board instituted a Rewards Policy on October 25, 2000. This policy number 03/00 was amended on March 27, 2002. The Rewards Policy states:

“It is the policy of the Regional Municipality of York Police Services Board (“the Board”) to encourage the participation of citizens in assisting the York Regional Police to solve crimes through the offering, from time to time, of rewards.

And further, it is the policy of the Board that all sums related to the offering and payment of rewards be made within the limits of the York Regional Police budget or are posted by a third party.

Policy requirements set out in this document shall form part of the Police Services Board Policy Manual and the Chief of Police shall comply with these requirements in directing the York Regional Police.”

Within the guidelines of the Rewards Policy, paragraph 9 states:

“The Chief of Police shall provide the Board with annual status reports on rewards posted.”

There are two rewards currently authorized by the Regional Municipality of York Police Services Board. The first deals with a rash of hate crime incidents that occurred in the City of Vaughan during the evening hours of March 14, 2004. At that time, 13 residences were randomly vandalized with anti-Semitic writings and symbols in a predominantly Jewish neighbourhood in the Beverly Glenn Drive area. At its meeting on March 24, 2004, the Police Services Board approved a \$10,000 reward.

Appeals through the media failed to generate any productive leads to further this investigation. The Board agreed at both its March 30, 2005 and March 29, 2006 meetings to renew the \$10,000 reward for a period of one year each. At the March 28, 2007 meeting, a recommendation to renew the reward for another year was approved and the Board and increased the reward to \$20,000. At its February 27, 2008 meeting, a recommendation to renew the reward for another year was approved.

Following the Board meeting, a media release was prepared and released advising the public that York Regional Police is still seeking the public’s assistance in identifying the person(s) responsible for these incidents. This release advised the public that the reward for information leading to the arrest of these individuals had been increased to \$20,000. York Region Crime Stoppers hosted a press conference in January 2009 where this case was profiled and numerous media agencies attended. Investigators have followed up on numerous leads into this case, however, we have been unable to identify the suspects involved. A renewal of this reward is requested for another year in hopes that the public can assist investigators with information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person(s) responsible for this hate crime.

The second reward relates to an incident that occurred on February 8, 2004, involving the discovery of the bodies of 42 year old Zhu LIN, 36 year old Yan LIU and 41 year old Xiao Zhang in a red, 1999 Ford Explorer parked in the parking lot of the Victoria Square United Church in the Town of Markham. The victims had previously been reported missing from the Mirage Spa, located at 7170 Warden Avenue in Markham. The two female victims, Zhu LIN and Yan LIU, were employees of the Spa. The third victim was a professional engineer who was identified as a friend of Yan LIU. The victims all died as a result of multiple gun shot wounds and were all believed to have been murdered within the Spa. To date, in excess of 250 persons have been interviewed.

Numerous warrants were executed and several persons of interest were identified, however, we were unable to determine the identity of the person(s) responsible for these murders. At its March 30, 2005 meeting, the Police Services Board approved the issuing of a \$50,000 reward. Posters were distributed across the Greater Toronto Area in English and Chinese. Tips were received, however, they did not provide any concrete information as to the identity of the authors of this crime.

At its March 29, 2006 meeting, the Board renewed the reward for a period of one year. Throughout the following year, no further tips were received even though there were occasional media enquiries and a profile of the investigation was presented on Rogers Cable TV's "The GTA's Most Wanted".

At its March 28, 2007 meeting, the Board approved an additional one year renewal of the reward and recommended that the reward be increased to \$100,000. A media release was issued to advise the public that the reward for information leading to the arrest of the individuals had been increased to \$100,000. Shortly after the reward was renewed and increased in 2007, a media blitz was conducted. This included a special Fairchild TV interview with the lead investigator and an information session at the Pacific Mall and Market Village. The announcement of the \$100,000 reward was well publicized throughout the media outlets covering radio, television and print media.

At its February 27, 2008 meeting, the Board approved an additional one year renewal of the reward and a press release was sent to media outlets. There were immediate inquiries and subsequent interviews done with 680 News, CFRB and York Region news outlets. In March 2008, the Toronto Star did a feature article on the homicide after an interview with the Officer in Charge and members of the Zhang family. In August 2008, the Officer in Charge was interviewed by Fairchild TV at the body recovery site. York Region Crime Stoppers hosted a press conference in January 2009 where this case was profiled and numerous media agencies attended.

A renewal of this reward is requested for another year in hopes that the public can assist investigators in positively identifying the individuals responsible for this crime.

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

APL:pw