

"Policing and Aboriginal Women"

June 22, 1996, Winnipeg, Manitoba

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1. Preamble

The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) held its 22 Annual General Assembly on June 21 - 23, 1996, in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Saturday afternoon, June 22, was used to conduct workshops; one of which was entitled "Policing and Aboriginal Women". Funding to facilitate this workshop was provided by the Solicitor General of Canada - Aboriginal Policing Directorate.

Part of the agreement to receive funding was that a report on the workshop be made available to workshop participants and presenters, NWAC members, Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police - Policing with Aboriginal Peoples Committee, and of course, for general circulation in hope of achieving public awareness. The following describes the components of the workshop and provides an outline of the policing concerns raised by participants.

2. Opening and Introductions

The workshop started with an Opening Prayer and Smudging by the Elder Corrine Nabigon and Josephine Mandamin from Thunder Bay, Ontario. Participants and presenters proceeded by introducing themselves. (Appendix A)

3. Workshop Agenda

Due to the late start, it was suggested and agreed that the viewing of the video "Choosing the Guardians" be kept for the end of the workshop. (There was not enough time to view the video.) (Appendix B)

4. Solicitor General - Aboriginal Policing Directorate - Romola Trebilcock

(This part was written by the presenter Romola Trebilcock)

The First Nations Policing Policy was approved in 1991, and in April 1992, the Solicitor General assumed responsibility for the program. In essence, the policy provides for the development of professional, culturally responsive policing services in First Nations communities, through the negotiation of tripartite policing agreements (federal/provincial/First Nations) based on a 52% federal and 48% provincial cost share.

As of the end of May, 69 First Nations Policing Agreements had been signed. These include 31 self-administered agreements, 37 community tripartite agreements, 7 bilateral framework agreements (Royal Canadian Mounted Police/First Nations Community Police Services), and one tripartite framework agreement in Saskatchewan, involving the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. A further 37 agreements are presently under negotiation and 6 under renegotiation. Approximately 50% percent of eligible First Nations communities are now covered by agreements under the policy.

The Aboriginal Policing Directorate has also been involved in promoting more effective policing for Aboriginal peoples residing off-reserve, under the authority of the Aboriginal Justice Initiative. In Canada, primary responsibility for policing lies with provinces and territories. Nonetheless, the Solicitor General of Canada is responsible for exercising national leadership in the area of policing and law enforcement, and occupies a unique position to work in conjunction with Aboriginal communities, police and provinces to promote the development of partnerships, foster information sharing and coordinate efforts across the country.

The Aboriginal Policing Directorate commenced its work in off-reserve policing by reviewing the numerous justice inquiries and reports from across the country, and identified key areas to commence working on. While there have been an exhaustive number of recommendations on policing, in essence they fall under a fairly consistent range of categories:

- communications, liaison, community relations
- cross cultural and anti-racism training
- recruitment, affirmative action, employment equity, career development
- policing models/alternatives/crime prevention
- police boards and commissions, governing authorities, advisory bodies
- complaint mechanisms

Major urban centres with higher percentages of Aboriginal peoples in conflict with the law were identified to commence outreach to Aboriginal communities, and the off-reserve initiative developed pilot and demonstration projects reflective of local priorities, in collaboration with Aboriginal communities, police, provinces and other key interest groups.

It is interesting to note that for now, four years later, most major urban centres have some form of permanent program in place to serve Aboriginal peoples. These include the Vancouver Police Native Liaison Society storefront; the Aboriginal Peacekeeping Unit within the Metropolitan Toronto Police; native cultural liaison officers in Saskatoon, Regina and Edmonton; diversity management coordinators in Halifax, and an annual cross-cultural canoe trip program in Brantford. Other innovative activities and projects supported by the off-reserve initiative include the National Association of Friendship Centres' inventory of proactive policing strategies, the report on the Six Nations Police Native Liaison Society, the Youth Police mentoring program, Aboriginal youth career fairs, Aboriginal officer development workshops and promotion of Aboriginal policing through the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards.

In addition, the Aboriginal Policing Directorate has supported the First Nations Chiefs of Police Association, and the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police - Policing with Aboriginal Peoples Committee to promote more effective policing for Aboriginal peoples. The Native Women's Association of Canada is represented on this national committee.

Aboriginal women have a very complex relationship with policing. Historically, their struggles have been connected to the deprivation of rights, breakdown of traditional community and family structures, diminishment of the women's voice, violence, substance abuse and poverty. Often they are the victims of crime, and sometimes the perpetrators, and this further complicates the relationship with police. Aboriginal Women are presently engaged in the process of transforming their lives, and actualizing themselves, and this in turn creates conflicts in power balances in families, communities and political structures. One of our objectives in this workshop is to give Aboriginal women the opportunity to engage in dialogue on policing, as we collectively seek ways of facilitating the provision of more effective policing, and safety and security to Aboriginal communities.

The Aboriginal Policing Directorate also wishes to point to opportunities for Aboriginal women to pursue careers in policing. There are now approximately 100 Aboriginal women police officers in Canada. They believe that they bring a new, problem-solving approach to policing, and often appear to feel more comfortable in the policing environment, and even potentially volatile situations, than their male Aboriginal counterparts. Both on and off-reserve police services are now actively engaged in recruiting Aboriginal women.

7. Anishinabek Police Service, On- Administrator - Jean Sayers

Jean Sayers was invited to the workshop to provide an administrative overview of First Nations Policing and the Anishinabek Police Service.

Prior to the Solicitor General becoming responsible for First Nations Policing, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) appointed, administered and supervised officers assigned to police over 80 First Nations territories (since 1975). Although this appeared to be a suitable venue, the cultural differences and the lack of understanding soon became apparent. Native officers were caught between OPP guidelines and commitment to their people.

First Nations across Ontario came to realize it was time to take policing matters into their own hands. Community meetings and negotiations with the Province and the OPP took place to address policing concerns of First Nations communities. The result was the creation of self-managed First Nations policing authorities with equal status to other police agencies in Ontario. In March 1992, a province wide 5 year agreement was signed for First Nations Policing. (Negotiations are now underway for an additional 5 year agreement which will possibly include additional First Nations.) (Appendix C)

In 1994 a separate 2 year agreement called the "Anishinabek Police Service - APS" was endorsed by the Chiefs of Curve Lake, Garden River, Sagamok and Saugeen First Nations along with the Federal and Provincial governments. The APS started from scratch in Garden River with the expertise and dedication of Police Chief Glen Bannon, Staff Sergeant William Sayers and Administrator Jean Sayers. Today the fully

operational APS has equipped offices, cruisers, weapons, uniforms, flags and logo. The APS Mission Statement is *"To provide a community based Peacekeeping Service in the Spirit of Partnership with all Nations, honouring each one's uniqueness and the Creator's Gifts with Dignity and Respect."*

The primary goal of the APS is to provide an effective and efficient policing service that is culturally sensitive and appropriate for First Nations communities. Community-based policing is a form of peacekeeping that is holistic in nature. It is different than the strict law enforcement policing model historically used in North America.

The APS is a non-profit incorporated body comprised of 8 Board of Directors (2 per First Nations) and Federal and Provincial government representatives in advisory capacities. The Board of Directors is responsible to; hire; set objectives of the APS; develop policies and procedures for operations, finances and administration; evaluate the Police Chief and operations; and to consider recommendations from the 3 police committees (operations, finance and disciplinary issues).

The Board of Directors meet at least once quarterly and proceed with conference calls on urgent matters. They are not involved in the day to day administration, it is the Chief of Police who oversees the policing operations. His duties include developing, directing, managing and coordinating administrative and operational activities of the APS. The Administrator, Jean Sayers, is responsible for financial transactions (preparing budgets, expenditure accounts and reports, financial policies) and she supervises the headquarters civilian staff. The Administrator reports to the Chief of Police.

In addition to the Board of Directors, there is the Anishinabek Police Council comprised of First Nations Chiefs and one representative per Nation. This Council meets once a year to identify policing goals, aspirations and the Nations' needs. They share their findings with the Board of Directors and they oversee the Board's functions to ensure that it remains in line with the signed agreement.

At the community level, local police committees were established to identify policing needs, develop community-based policing strategies and to make recommendations to the Board of Directors.

Each First Nation has a Detachment Commander who reports to the Staff Sergeant. There are 21 police officers and 7 civilian staff for a total of 28 employees (5 are assigned to HQ). The organizational chart depicts a combination of the current and proposed structure of the APS. (Appendix D)

The APS has been asked to assist in situations involving First Nations such as Ipperwash and Batchewan (end Band office take-over). Both APS interventions had great results. The APS has good relationships with other police agencies. An analysis of present policing practices with a synopsis of the attitudes of police officers and community members was conducted. Conclusions encouraged the APS' cooperation with teachers, health, social and daycare workers in order to promote a more active role

for police officers in the community (training sessions, bike rodeos, council meetings, visits to Elders, taking kids for a ride and pizza). The APS has truly become a unique First Nations policing agency.

8. RCMP, Regina - Constable Eva Thomas

Eva Thomas, member of the Cree Nation from Saskatchewan, is a 45 year old RCMP Constable. Working in Regina, Eva processes applications for RCMP staffing. Constable Thomas joined the RCMP 14 years ago at the age of 31. Eva's family lived in different areas across Saskatchewan where Eva was transferred to work on patrol (4 Aboriginal communities and 1 French) - the moves were often difficult on her family. Constable Thomas would like to see more Aboriginal people employed by the RCMP; today there are 88 Aboriginal people working for the RCMP in Saskatchewan. She does a lot of presentations in schools and communities to promote recruitment. Being a non-traditional field of employment, women have to prove themselves on the job and sometimes the Aboriginal background requires additional proof of capabilities. Constable Eva Thomas enjoys her work and is aiming at completing her 20 years of service with the RCMP.

9. Sabaskong First Nation, Ontario - Constable Tara Kelly

Tara Kelly is a 23 year old First Nations Constable in Sabaskong (Ontario). She was raised on the Sabaskong reserve and was always active in the community. In her younger years, Constable Kelly witnessed vandalism, drug and alcohol abuse and violence in Sabaskong and as she got older she felt the urge to help. At the age of 14, Tara Kelly decided to become a police officer. Well aware that the justice system is foreign to First Nations, she knew that she had to work through it in order to make a difference. After high school, she registered in the Law and Security Administration program at the Thunder Bay Confederation College from which she graduated in May 1993. In December 1993, there was a job opening for a police officer in Sabaskong and Tara was hired. She completed her training at the Ontario Police College, in Aylmer, from April to August 1994.

Constable Tara Kelly related some difficult personal experiences; First Nations trainees at the Ontario Police College were not treated equally, family and friends saw her in a different light, her vehicle was vandalized, harassing phone calls and threats, discriminating remarks from the general public and sexist attitudes from fellow officers. Working in one's home community can make things even more difficult. Tara is the first and only female officer at her detachment. She says that "it is an honour and an awful reminder that more needs to be done". Constable Tara Kelly's message is "Never give up or give in. Never empower anyone by giving up yours. If you have a positive view of yourself, never let it go; because as Native Women, that is sometimes all we have."

10. Winnipeg Police Service, Manitoba - Constable Susan Swan

Susan Swan is an Aboriginal woman in her early thirties working as a Constable for the Winnipeg Police Service (municipal). She has been employed by the Winnipeg Police for the past 10 years. Susan was a single mother who wanted to provide her little one with a good life. She tried different jobs that were headed nowhere. One day she decided she wanted to do more so she went back to school and enrolled in Policing. Constable Swan's main focus on the job is to work with youth. She reaches out to them on the streets; teaches them to be proud of who they are; to stay away from crime, drugs and alcohol; and encourages them to do something positive with their lives. Susan's caring hand is well received by the youth; they know she is there for them and they can always count on her. Although there are quite a few women and Aboriginal people working for the Winnipeg Police, Constable Swan is one of the rare Aboriginal women in the Service. The Winnipeg Police Service recently received an award for their recruitment of Aboriginal staff (44 over the past 2 years - 12.8%). Constable Susan Swan is fortunate to be part of the Winnipeg Police Service.

11. Kahnawake Peacekeepers, Quebec - Corporal Maggie Mayo

Maggie Mayo, a Mohawk from Kahnawake (Quebec) in her late twenties, is a Corporal with the Kahnawake Peacekeepers. Of the 25 members employed by the Kahnawake Peacekeepers, an independent First Nations police organization, only 2 are women. Like other female officers, Maggie had to put up with sexist male attitudes and felt she always had to prove herself. Despite the difficulties, Maggie did not give up; she went on to complete an intensive 9 month training in British Columbia for First Nations officers and succeeded with flying colours. Corporal Mayo also received Top Officer recognition for her work back home. Her reputation in the community is one of fairness, she carries out the law equally for everyone. This has allowed her to gain much respect and to be looked upon as a role model for the youth.

12. Outline of Policing Concerns

Participants raised their concerns on policing throughout the workshop. The outline below provides a brief description of some of Aboriginal women's concerns related to policing (in no particular order):

- Protection for Aboriginal Women and Children: The situation in Kanehsatake (Quebec) was raised as an example of the lack of protection for Aboriginal women and children. This community has no internal policing and the Surete du Quebec (Provincial Police) is reluctant to answer calls in Kanehsatake due to the unresolved tensions remaining from the 1990 Oka crisis. In other communities, police services are located so far away that it takes a long time for help to arrive. Aboriginal women and children have a right to protection, something must be done to provide it to them.

- Murders of Aboriginal People and Missing Aboriginal Women: It has been said over and over again that cases of Aboriginal people being murdered are left unresolved, simply swept under the carpet. There is a very high number of Aboriginal women that are reported missing and nothing is done to help find them. Cases like these have to stop, they deserve equal treatment.
- Aboriginal People - Victims of the Canadian Justice System: Aboriginal people are victims of the Canadian Justice System, they are not treated fairly and equally. Too often Aboriginal people find themselves caught up with the law. Cultural differences cause shocking experiences and the lack of understanding of one another aggravates things. The Canadian Justice System revictimizes Aboriginal people who are victims of crime. This type of treatment is unacceptable and must change.
- Alternative Justice Systems: There exists different ways to resolve justice issues far less limiting to Aboriginal people than the Canadian Justice System. Alternative Justice, Real Justice - Family Group Conferencing and Healing Circles are some examples to consider. Relying on these processes as a remedy to conflicts is relatively new and requires additional research.
- Sensitization on Policing and Aboriginal People: Throughout the years, Aboriginal people have suffered racist treatment by the police in general. Cultural awareness courses have started in certain areas but there is still a long way to go. More teachings must take place with credible sources.
- Aboriginal Sensitization: A focus needs to be put on Aboriginal youth, too many of them, without having learned any better, find themselves caught up with the law. Aboriginal police members should reach out to the Aboriginal youth and guide them towards a path free of crime. Similar sensitization is required for Aboriginal adults.
- Data Collection: There are very few statistics on Aboriginal people. It would be interesting to know the number of Aboriginal people working in policing (female/male, types of police forces, ranks, etc.). It would also be important to have statistics on Aboriginal justice cases (incarcerations, conflicts with the law, murders, missing persons, etc.).
- Promote Aboriginal Employment: Government has established employment equity measures to promote the employment of women, Aboriginal people, visible minorities and people with disabilities. Unfortunately these measures are not always implemented as they should be. Aboriginal people remain underrepresented in the labour market. In the policing area, only a slim minority of Aboriginal people are employed. The employment of Aboriginal people in policing requires further promotion.

- Speaking the Language: When policing in Aboriginal communities, police organizations should try to include Aboriginal officers (or other people) who speak the language. Aboriginal people, especially Elders, often find it easier to communicate in their own language.

- Aboriginal Statutory Holidays: Aboriginal cultures and traditions vary between Nations and are different than the Canadian culture. Statutory holidays (Easter, Canada Day, Christmas, ...) are given to Canadian workers. Certain Aboriginal people still live the traditional way of life. It allows them to take care of themselves (mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually). Growing as a person transpires in the work environment as professional development. Time off for traditional purposes must be allowed and encouraged for Aboriginal people to practice their beliefs. June 21, National Aboriginal Day, should become a statutory holiday for everyone.

- Support between Aboriginal Women in Policing: Many different situations are experienced by Aboriginal women in policing. Some are good, some are bad and all of them deserve to be shared. Aboriginal women officers should be provided with the opportunity to share their personal working experiences and to support one another in difficult times. A possible structure to favour these relations would be an Aboriginal Women's Policing Association. Aboriginal women in policing should have more input and should be invited to do more presentations on their work.

- Aboriginal Women in Policing as Role Models: Aboriginal women, just by their nature, approach policing in a unique manner. The impact of their contributions is remarkable. Aboriginal women in policing play an important part in the communities. They should be given greater recognition and they should serve more as role models. Aboriginal women in policing should be considered for nominations to the Aboriginal Achievement Awards.

- Aboriginal Women in Higher Policing Ranks: There are very few Aboriginal women working in policing. The majority of them occupy entry level positions. Aboriginal women rarely get promoted to higher ranks; not only are they women, they are also Aboriginal. When given the opportunity, it has been said that Aboriginal women play an important role in policing. They should be given greater consideration to fulfill higher ranking positions.

- Sexual Harassment of Aboriginal Women in Policing: Aboriginal women in policing are victims of two types of harassment in their work place. They are harassed because they are Aboriginal and they are harassed because they are women. The general public turns to police organizations for help against harassment and yet the mentally within police organizations victimizes their own partners. This type of disrespectful treatment must stop, these attitudes have to change.

- Jurisdiction: Certain police organizations have overlapping territories to service. Jurisdictions must be clearly defined in order to avoid conflicts between police services operating in "common" grounds.
- Accountability Mechanisms: Often Aboriginal women approach services for help, and the only response they get is to go elsewhere. What happens when someone needs help and they do not get it? Who are Aboriginal women supposed to turn to for help? An accountability mechanism for the services should be developed and made available to the communities, identifying what type of help is offered, who is eligible to receive it and who delivers it (including rights and obligations).
- Politics and Policing: Politics play a major role in Aboriginal communities, to the point where they sometimes interfere with day to day business. Politics, political views and standings have their purpose, and they should be exercised accordingly. A true and honest police service is one that is fair and equitable to everyone. Politics must recognize and respect the philosophy of policing and should not interfere with police matters.

18. NWAC's Resolution on Policing

Aboriginal Women participating in the workshop decided to draft a resolution on policing issues to be presented in NWAC's general assembly on Sunday, June 23. The resolution was adopted. (Appendix E)

APPENDIX A

Workshop: Policing and Aboriginal Women

List of Participants

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APPENDIX B

Native Women's Association Of Canada

1996 AGA

Workshop: Policing and Aboriginal Women

Saturday, June 22, 1996

- | | |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1:00 - 1:15 | Introductions (N. Gelinias, NWAC) |
| 1:15 - 1:35 | Presentation on policing issues of potential interest to Aboriginal Women (R. Trebilcock) |
| 1:35 - 2:15 | Viewing of video " <i>Choosing the Guardians</i> " (17min.) Information on First Nations policing, police boards and other police governing bodies (J. Sayers) |
| 2:15 - 2:30 | Health Break (recruitment information on display) |
| 2:30 - 3:30 | Panel on Policing and Aboriginal Women (Cst. Thomas, Cst Kelly, Cst Swan, Cpl. Mayo and J. Sayers) |
| 3:30 - 4:00 | Questions and Answers |

Guest Speakers:

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Romola Trebilcock | Aboriginal Policing Directorate, Solicitor General of Canada |
| Jean Sayers | Administrator, Anishinabek Police Service (Ontario) |
| Eva Thomas | Constable, RCMP Recruitment, Regina (Saskatchewan) |
| Terra Kelly | Constable, Nestor Falls (Ontario) |
| Susan Swan | Constable, Winnipeg (Manitoba) |
| Maggie Mayo | Corporal, Kahnawake Peacekeepers (Quebec) |

APPENDIX C

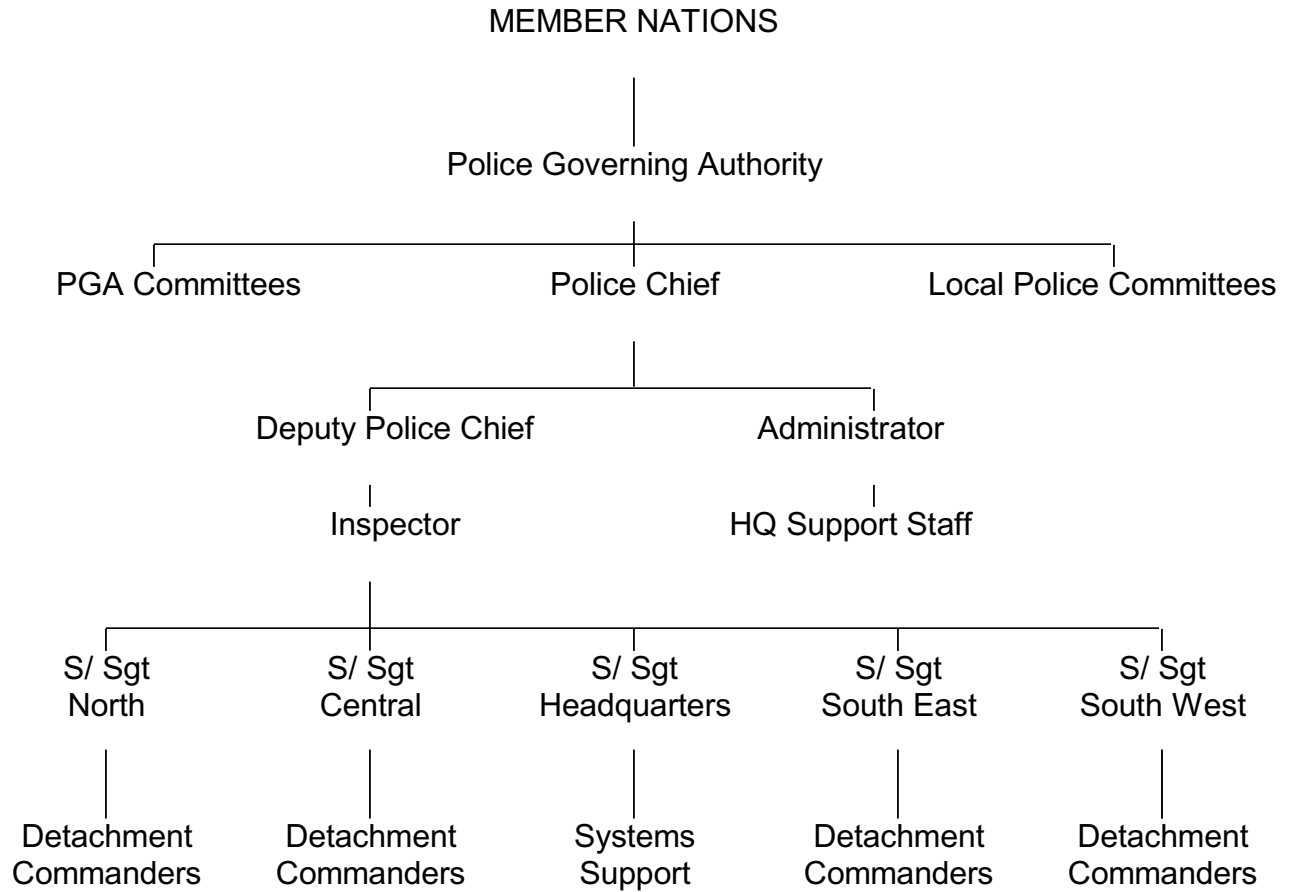
Anishinabek Police Service

APPENDIX D

Anishinabek Police Service – Organizational Chart



APS Organizational Chart



APPENDIX E

NWAC's Resolution on Policing

Resolution 8

Whereas Aboriginal women have special gifts to bring to policing, and

Whereas NWAC is supportive of female Aboriginal police, and

Whereas NWAC supports a harassment-free work environment for female Aboriginal police, and

Whereas NWAC supports non-discriminatory police services.

Be it resolved NWAC should actively and publicly support Aboriginal women in police uniforms, and

Further be it resolved that NWAC support the call for a public inquiry into the death of Dudley George by the Government of Ontario and or the Government of Canada.

Moved by: Teresa Nahannee

Seconded by: Joyce Courchene

Carried