

Ron Giofu · 3 days ago · 3 min read

Whether or not to reconsider Windsor police returns as an issue

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Despite council's previous decisions, an interest is being circulated by members of council to possibly reconsider the Windsor Police Service as an option for Amherstburg going forward.

The town's contract with Windsor expires at the end of 2028 and council's options have whittled down to re-establishing the Amherstburg Police Service or going with the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP). Councillor Linden Crain has floated the idea of circling back to Windsor and took to social media to try and gain traction on the idea.

"I fully respect the direction council is headed and how everything has happened to this point," Crain told the River Town Times.

Crain added he still believes residents should be receiving proposals about the Windsor Police Service as well "so we can have all options for the way policing is headed." He believes a lot of residents would want to see those numbers.

As for the point of local representation on the Windsor Police Services Board (WPSB), Crain believes there has been movement on that front.

"We do have a resident from Amherstburg on the board," he said.

Crain said he and Deputy Mayor Chris Gibb met with Windsor Mayor Drew Dilkens earlier this year. The feeling was that Windsor is interested in policing Amherstburg, but not on the terms of the original 2018 contract.

"They're just not comfortable with the way the contract is set up," Crain reported. "They are open to having a conversation."

Crain added he would be more comfortable voting on the matter if Windsor police costings were included, rather than just Amherstburg versus OPP.

Gibb referenced Mayor Michael Prue's earlier statements in the media that the majority of council had decided against sticking with Windsor police and that is "factually correct." Gibb also noted the Amherstburg resident now on the WPSB and believes that makes a debate worth happening.

"That makes it a bit of a different discussion," he said.

Gibb added the people of Amherstburg were told that council would explore all options and believes reconsideration of the Windsor option falls into that.

The deputy mayor confirmed he was part of the meeting with Dilkens earlier this year.

"Councillor Crain organized the meeting and brought me with him," said Gibb. "We're trying to get all the facts. We thought it would be a good idea to hear what Mayor Dilkens had to say."

Gibb acknowledged town council has already made a decision regarding the town's future with Windsor police and "I respect the will of council." He added he wants to "explore every option" and if council still wishes to go with a new policing option, so be it.

"I meet with all kinds of people. My job is to represent the people of Amherstburg," said Gibb, noting no decisions were made in the meeting with Dilkens. "Why the mayor (Prue) didn't talk with Mayor Dilkens, you'll have to ask him."

Gibb stated: "My issue is we told the people of Amherstburg were going to investigate every option."

"We'll wait and see what council decides," he added. "I'm looking forward to having the discussion publicly."

Prue said the Windsor policing option is only becoming an issue again because Crain is making it one.

"(Crain's) got people outraged on council because we have made the decision not once, but twice," said Prue, "but he continues to advocate for Windsor on behalf of Drew Dilkens."

Prue reiterated the position that town council has taken, stating "the majority of council wanted nothing more to do with them," he said.

The mayor said he was unaware that Crain and Gibb had a meeting with Dilkens. "Now the two of them are trying to push Windsor issues," he said. "I have to ask them who gave them the right to meet with Windsor on behalf of Amherstburg? I'm taken aback, really."

Prue said the issue remains bringing in the OPP or re-establishing the Amherstburg Police Service. He anticipates a decision being made this summer.

"We're waiting for the OPP," said Prue. "We've already got the figures to set up our own service. It's one or the other."

The issue of bringing back Windsor isn't as big as it seems, Prue believes.

"It's an election year. (Crain's) doing stuff," he said. "I don't know it remains a big issue unless council revisits its past decisions."

By Ron Giofu

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