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NEW POLICE LEGISLATION NOW IN FORCE

Municipal Police Boards to be in Place by Dec. 1

Manitoba will see police governance and enhanced accountability with the proclamation of the next phase of the Police Services Act, Justice Minister Andrew Swan announced today.

"All Manitoba municipalities with their own police force are now required to establish a municipal police board that will ensure community input and oversight of their local police force," said Swan. "Police boards are a common, accepted method of modern police oversight right across the country."

Police boards will oversee the general operation of police services, establish priorities and objectives, hire police chiefs and submit estimates to and administer budgets set by council. Police boards will be made up primarily of members appointed by municipalities. The province will also appoint members to the boards.

Currently, the municipalities of Winnipeg, Brandon, Ste. Anne, Winkler, Morden, Altona, Victoria Beach, Whitehead, Cornwallis, Rivers and Springfield will be required to establish police boards by Dec. 1.

In addition to municipal police boards, new provisions now in force will allow for the creation of regional police services and create a framework for making regulations to deal with elements of police operations such as training standards and equipment.

The implementation of the new Police Services Act started in 2011 with the creation of the Manitoba Police Commission to provide advice on policing matters. Work is currently underway to establish the Independent Investigation Unit (IIU), the third and final step in phasing in the new Police Services Act. Once established, the IIU will investigate all incidents involving police, both on and off duty, when fatal force or serious injury incidents occur.

The new Police Services Act was drafted following the recommendations of the Taman Inquiry, an extensive review of best practices in other jurisdictions and consultations on key issues with the public, community groups, police chiefs, police associations, First Nations, Aboriginal and municipal leaders and organizations, and other stakeholders. It replaces legislation that goes back almost 80 years, Swan said.