

---

# Justice

---

Meeting with Minister Matt Wiebe

March 19, 2026



Association of  
Manitoba Municipalities

## Summary of Municipal Priorities

The AMM appreciates the opportunity to meet with Minister Matt Wiebe and representatives of Manitoba Justice. The AMM encourages the provincial government to consider municipal concerns as well as the effects of funding decisions on local communities throughout the budget process. This document outlines the AMM's position and recommendations on a number of important municipal issues relevant to Minister Wiebe's portfolio. The AMM looks forward to working with the Province to strengthen provincial-municipal growth and partnership opportunities.

### 1. Modernizing Police Funding

#### Recommendation:

- ✓ *Expedite consultations with the AMM and municipalities on the distribution of policing costs and grant funding to promote a more transparent, fair, and sustainable policing model.*

### 2. RCMP Service Delivery

#### Recommendation:

- ✓ *Address rising crime rates by strengthening support for law enforcement and enhance advocacy to reduce RCMP vacancies to ensure officers can focus on frontline community safety.*

### 3. Strengthening Public Safety and Bail Reform

#### Recommendations:

- ✓ *Accelerate implementation of the Public Safety Strategy in partnership with municipalities, backed by adequate resources and dedicated funding to ensure measures are delivered effectively; and*
- ✓ *Promptly implement corresponding provincial measures to strengthen community safety once federal bail reform legislation is enacted.*

### 4. By-Law Efficiency and Standardization

#### Recommendations:

- ✓ *Collaborate with the AMM and municipalities to streamline by-law enforcement and expedite the roll-out of an informational toolkit; and*
- ✓ *Identify a standardized set of court-vetted by-laws with modernized fines to reduce administrative and financial burdens on municipalities.*

### 5. Next Generation 911

#### Recommendation:

- ✓ *Lead and resource a coordinated, province-wide approach to GIS data collection and aggregation for Next Generation 911 to alleviate costs on municipalities.*

## Modernizing Police Funding

### Recommendation:

- ✓ ***Consult with the AMM and municipalities on the distribution of policing costs and grant funding to promote a more transparent, fair, and sustainable policing model.***

The AMM has long called on the Province to review the distribution of policing costs and grant funding in Manitoba as the current model is antiquated and unsustainable. Amalgamation of several “urban” and “rural” municipalities has intensified financial and administrative pressures related to policing, reinforcing the need to address structural inequities.

While the Province’s **2%** annual escalator for municipal law enforcement funding is a positive step, municipalities continue to face rising costs alongside declining police visibility. In 2020, the Province engaged MNP to review the municipal police funding structure. Although that review has been complete for several years, modernization of the police funding model has not advanced. The AMM values updates received through its collaborative working group with the Department through the Provincial-Municipal Justice Advisory Committee (PMJAC) and ongoing discussions on potential funding approaches. However, since options were last presented in May 2025, progress toward implementation has remained limited.

Policing is one of the largest municipal expenditures. The City of Winnipeg reports that the average household contributes approximately **27%** of its annual property tax bill toward police services. Municipalities also report costs nearly tripling for comparable service levels while residents experience reduced police presence. We recognize that modernizing Manitoba’s policing funding framework is complex and will require significant coordination, but maintaining the status quo is no longer sustainable. Municipalities need a system that reflects today’s policing realities, evolving municipal structures, and the diverse needs of communities across the province.

The AMM urges the Province to expedite modernization of the municipal policing funding model to ensure predictable, equitable, and sustainable funding. A fair and transparent framework must reflect municipal fiscal capacity and the Province’s role in supporting community safety and addressing root causes of crime. We look forward to continued collaboration with the Province aimed at modernizing a framework that protects residents and supports effective policing across Manitoba.

## RCMP Service Delivery

### Recommendation:

- ✓ ***Address rising crime rates by strengthening support for law enforcement and enhance advocacy to reduce RCMP vacancies to ensure officers can focus on frontline community safety.***

Manitoba currently faces the highest RCMP provincial vacancy rate in Canada, compounding local safety challenges and placing significant strain on frontline resources. Persistent vacancies are contributing to staff burnout, reduced police visibility, and increased reliance on temporary redeployments from other provinces – underscoring the urgent need to strengthen recruitment and retention.

These pressures are further intensified by a sharp rise in mental health-related calls. In November, several municipalities renewed calls for legislative changes to reduce the role police play in responding to crisis situations. While the AMM welcomes the Province’s commitment to hire 100 mental health workers to support law enforcement and community partners, communities continue to manage high volumes of crisis calls with limited capacity. Manitoba RCMP data shows that between 2022 and 2024, officers spent an average of **659 hours per month** waiting with or escorting individuals to hospitals and mental health facilities — time that removes officers from core policing duties.

We also welcome investment in a new crisis response unit in the City of Brandon; however, similar models must be expanded province wide. In smaller and more remote municipalities, limited police presence means that a single mental health call can remove an officer from service for **up to 10 hours**, significantly impacting emergency response capacity. To reduce pressure on law enforcement, we urge the Province to explore diversifying response agencies beyond the RCMP.

At the same time, municipalities continue to face escalating financial pressures related to RCMP collective bargaining increases, which rose by an average of **35%** between 2020 and 2023, with another round of bargaining currently underway. These federally negotiated increases are being negotiated with municipal wallets and without meaningful consultation. While we appreciate ongoing collaboration through the Provincial-Municipal Justice Advisory Committee (PMJAC) and joint advocacy at CMC meetings, municipalities cannot continue to be sidelined while receiving invoices.

Compounding this challenge is the continued uncertainty surrounding the future of RCMP contract policing beyond 2032. For many municipalities, policing is the single largest budget expenditure, and any changes to the Police Service Agreements (PSAs) could significantly impact governance, costs, service quality, and local capacity. The AMM urges the Province to continue advocating alongside municipalities by calling on the federal government to commit to cost-containment principles for RCMP contract partners and to expedite a clear plan for the future of RCMP contract policing. Predictability and sustainability are essential to ensuring stable and effective public safety services across Manitoba communities.

## Strengthening Public Safety and Bail Reform

### Recommendations:

- ✓ ***Accelerate implementation of the Public Safety Strategy in partnership with municipalities, backed by adequate resources and dedicated funding to ensure measures are delivered effectively; and***
- ✓ ***Promptly implement corresponding provincial measures to strengthen community safety once federal bail reform legislation is enacted.***

As Manitoba continues to experience among the highest rates of violent crime in Canada, the AMM and municipalities have consistently called for stronger bail reform to improve community safety. Police visibility is declining as officers are increasingly diverted to administrative duties, court appearances for repeat prolific offenders, and mental health calls, reducing capacity for frontline enforcement.

Public concern remains high, with nearly **9 in 10** residents supporting bail reform and Criminal Code changes to address repeat offending, and **69%** reporting they are personally worried about crime. The frequent release of repeat prolific offenders on bail continues to contribute to rising property crime, petty theft, and violent incidents, often involving the same individuals.

While the AMM welcomed the provincial government's Public Safety Strategy and five-point plan to strengthen the bail system, effective implementation requires adequate resources and dedicated funding aligned with local priorities. Further, the AMM supports the timely advancement of bail reform measures and is hopeful that federal reforms under Bill C-14 will proceed. We encourage the Province of Manitoba to be prepared to align and act quickly should this proposed federal legislation pass, ensuring provincial measures are in place to help address repeat offending and strengthen community safety.

Stronger, well-supported enforcement tools are also required, including expanded and clearly defined authority for community safety officers (CSOs). Municipalities that have implemented CSO programs report improvements in public safety alongside clear areas for refinement. Current training does not adequately reflect the risks associated with duties such as traffic enforcement and vehicle stops, and provincial standards for hiring, training, and oversight remain unclear and inconsistently applied.

To strengthen this layered approach to policing, the Province should modernize the CSO training curriculum to reflect operational realities and provide sustainable financial support. The AMM encourages the development of a modular, baseline training framework shared across enforcement roles, including CSOs and by-law officers, to promote consistency and coordination while allowing for specialized training streams. Delivering training closer to local communities would further reduce travel costs and improve accessibility for municipalities.

## By-Law Efficiency and Standardization

### Recommendations:

- ✓ ***Collaborate with the AMM and municipalities to streamline by-law enforcement and expedite the roll-out of an informational toolkit; and***
- ✓ ***Identify a standardized set of court-vetted by-laws with modernized fines to reduce administrative and financial burdens on municipalities.***

Rising policing costs are placing increasing pressure on municipalities and expanding reliance on by-law enforcement to maintain public safety. While essential, by-law enforcement is constrained by unclear regulations, inconsistent training standards, and limited officer capacity. The framework is further weakened by an outdated maximum administrative penalty. Prosecution costs frequently exceed the \$1,000 allowable fine, leaving municipalities to absorb unrecovered expenses that are ultimately borne by local taxpayers.

Municipalities also incur significant and duplicative costs to draft, review, and defend individual by-laws. For example, when one municipality develops and legally vets a standard by-law such as noise control, neighbouring municipalities must often repeat the same legal review and drafting process even when only minor wording changes are required. This fragmented approach results in repeated legal expenses, staff time, and administrative burden across jurisdictions for substantially similar regulations. Establishing a standardized provincial resource, such as a library of vetted model by-laws supported by a common fine structure, would reduce duplication, improve consistency, and strengthen enforceability and court acceptance.

The AMM appreciates the establishment of a joint working group with the Department of Justice and the Department of Municipal and Northern Relations to improve by-law enforcement and develop a provincial toolkit. However, progress over the past year has been limited. With municipal elections approaching in October, it is timely to expedite the rollout of an informational toolkit, so municipalities have the resources needed to implement effective enforcement options.

Finally, this toolkit should be viewed as a foundational step. Further support is required to modernize municipal enforcement capacity, including a modular, baseline training framework shared across enforcement roles such as community safety officers and by-law officers. These measures would improve consistency, reduce costs, and better support communities across the Province of Manitoba.

## Transition to Next Generation 911

### Recommendations:

- ✓ ***Lead and resource a coordinated, province-wide approach to GIS data collection and aggregation for Next Generation 911 to alleviate costs on municipalities.***

Given the complexity of this transition to Next Generation 911 and its direct impact on municipalities, the AMM has been actively engaged with Bell MTS since 2022. While we have urged Bell MTS to provide greater clarity before issuing NG-911 Authority Service Agreements to municipalities, we remain concerned that municipalities continue to receive communications that appear to pressure them to sign agreements or risk losing access to 911 services once the new system is implemented. Although associated timeframe have been extended, significant uncertainties persist, preventing municipalities from signing these contracts.

Municipalities require clear assurances that this transition will not shift costs onto already fiscally constrained municipal budgets and that GIS mapping and coordinates will be properly integrated. Given that the Medical Transportation Coordination Centre (MTCC) hosts the most extensive mapping and road network data in Manitoba, duplicating parallel initiatives would create unnecessary costs. While the AMM recognizes that MTCC data may require updates, it provides a practical foundation to support Bell MTS in identifying and addressing outstanding GIS requirements before municipalities are asked to sign service agreements.

The AMM values its collaboration with the Department of Justice and appreciates ongoing efforts to support provincial GIS data sharing and the development of an informational toolkit in partnership with our organization and Bell MTS. Moreover, the AMM calls on the Province to advance a coordinated, province-led model for GIS data collection and aggregation on behalf of municipalities and encourages timely progress on this work to support successful NG-911 implementation.

The AMM strongly encourages the Province to adopt a collaborative working group model similar to the approach used during the transition to the Public Safety Communications Service (PSCS) system, which provided an effective forum to support implementation. Accordingly, we recommend establishing a working group that includes relevant provincial departments and agencies, Bell MTS, and the AMM to support a coordinated and seamless transition to NG-911.

## **Active AMM 2025 Resolutions**

### **AMM Resolution #24-2025: RCMP Staffing Shortages - Standing Policy**

#### **Sponsor(s)**

Harrison Park, Municipality (Midwestern)

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the AMM lobby the Provincial and Federal governments to fill the RCMP vacancies immediately to fully staff every detachment, including the positions vacant from retirements.

---