



Altona Police Board

“The mission of the Altona Police Board is to provide civilian oversight and governance of the Altona Police Service in order to ensure a safe community.”

Minutes of the Altona Police Board public meeting held in the Town of Altona council chambers on Monday January 26th, 2026 at 5:00pm

Present: Chair Katie Saunders, Joanne Wiebe, Audrey Schmidt, Tammy Braun, Archie Heinrichs, Gord Sawatzky, Police Chief Dan Defer

1. Call to order at 5:01pm and approval of agenda

Motion: Archie Heinrichs – moved – Tammy Braun that the agenda be approved as presented.
CARRIED.

2. Approval of the minutes of December 18th, 2025

Motion: Gord Sawatzky – moved – Joanne Wiebe to approve the December 18th, 2025 minutes as circulated.
CARRIED.

3. Chair’s Report

3.1 Update on Community Survey

Chair thanked board members for assisting with survey distribution throughout the community. Posters and surveys were placed at MCC, the arena, Pembina Valley Pharmacy, Roadside Foods, Altona Mall, The Gardens, The Exchange, MCC, Katerina Courts, and Centre Courts. Additional posters will be placed at Buffalo Apartments, the Curling Rink, and the Altona Library.

As of last week, 99 responses had been received, primarily through social media prior to the wider poster distribution.

The survey closes February 10th, 2026. Results will be compiled and shared with the Board following closure.

Discussion occurred regarding potentially offering future surveys in additional languages to increase accessibility.



3.2 Community Safety Meeting Discussion

The Board discussed hosting a Community Safety Meeting following receipt of survey results, similar to a recent town hall event held in Morris.

Purpose would include:

- Presenting survey findings
- Outlining police initiatives
- Engaging the public in safety discussions

Discussion also included public education on mobility scooters, e-bikes, and other motorized devices, and clarifying regulations for their use on public roads and sidewalks.

The Board agreed this could be considered following survey analysis.

3.3 Board and Self Evaluations Reminder

Katie will circulate a fillable evaluation form to members. Paper copies are available upon request.

Evaluations are to be completed prior to the February 23rd, 2026 meeting.

The February meeting will include:

- Strategic Plan review
 - Survey results review
 - Board and self-evaluations
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4. Police Chief's Report

Budget:

Chief Defer reported the 2025 year-end budget shows an approximate \$24,000 overage, largely attributed to vehicle repairs and maintenance (approximately \$21,000), including transmission replacement and additional mechanical repairs.

Overtime is over budget by approximately \$14,000; however, MPI Road Watch funding offsets much of this amount.



Travel and meal expenses exceeded projections due to policy changes in Canadian Police College billing practices.

Dispatch fees and IT service contracts have increased.

Overall overages will be absorbed within the Town's overall budget; no deficit will carry forward.

For 2026 planning:

- Dispatch and IT budgets have been increased.
- \$20,000 has been budgeted for backroom wall repairs (insurance will cover wall replacement; underlying structural issues remain the Board's responsibility).
- Vehicle replacement schedule adjusted to a 7-year cycle to reduce high mileage and maintenance costs.
- Server/cloud storage options are under review.

Operations:

2025 closed with 1,581 files, approximately 50 fewer than 2024. Christmas period was unusually quiet.

As of meeting date, January 2026 has 64 files.

MPI granted \$15,000 for Road Watch overtime shifts (January–March 2026). Enforcement focus includes:

- Distracted driving
- Speeding
- Seatbelt compliance
- Driver's licence suspensions
- School zone enforcement

Constable Tristan Fournier-Jones was successful in his application to join the Regional Crisis Negotiation Unit. Altona now has two RCNU members. Training is pending approval of forfeiture funding.

Community engagement continues, including officers serving lunch at Plum Coulee School. Discussion occurred regarding school-based programming and engagement approaches.

Strategic Plan:

Board and Chief discussed reviewing and rewriting the Strategic Plan in clearer, more accessible language.



Survey results may inform revisions or adjustments to strategic priorities.

5. New Business

Discussion occurred regarding making future community surveys available in additional languages to improve accessibility.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:30pm.

Next meeting: February 23rd, 2026 at 5:00pm