



June 20, 2022

FRIEDA MARTSELOS
MLA, THEBACHA**Oral Question 1113-19(2): Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Fort Smith**

This letter is in response to the Oral Question you raised on May 31, 2022 with respect to staffing levels at the Fort Smith Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Detachment.

As of June 06, 2022 the Fort Smith Detachment has four vacancies, two of which are for members on temporary leaves of absence (meaning the positions are still filled, the members are currently not working) and two as a result of members transferring out of Fort Smith. Temporary vacancies because of leaves and staffing processes are normal occurrences that the RCMP must manage on a regular basis. The RCMP utilizes a combination of tools available to cover vacancies in the interim, including backfilling with reservists, relief members and redeploying staff from other detachments or areas and the use of overtime as required. It is important to note that even if there are vacancies, the RCMP ensures staffing levels are maintained to effectively respond to incidents while prioritizing community and officer safety.

The RCMP is actively in the staffing process for the vacant positions at the Fort Smith Detachment. There are many factors that must be considered when staffing RCMP member positions within the Northwest Territories, such as the resourcing needs of detachments, housing availability for incoming members, timing of release from other jurisdictions and suitability. Recruitment and retention of police officers is a considerable challenge for many police agencies in Canada, and the issue is not isolated to the RCMP in Fort Smith or the NWT. It is difficult to put a timeline on when a position will be filled because of these intertwined complexities. In addition, staffing is extremely fluid with regular changes and is impacted by the personal situations of members transferring. Generally, once a vacancy is anticipated, the RCMP work to fill it as soon as possible, this can take between six and twelve months.

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The Department assures me that "G" Division's senior leadership is actively engaged to fill position vacancies in the most efficient and effective way possible.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R.J. Simpson', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

R.J. Simpson
Minister, Justice

- c. Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Deputy Minister, Justice
Legislative Coordinator, Executive and Indigenous Affairs