

**Royal Canadian Mounted Police  
Veterans' Association**



**L'Association des anciens de la  
Gendarmerie royale du Canada**

July 24, 2017

Mr Frank McKenna  
c/o Ms Kathy Thompson  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Public Safety Canada  
269 Laurier Avenue West  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0P8

Dear Mr. McKenna,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Veterans' Association, I congratulate you on your appointment as the Chair of the Selection Committee responsible for developing and recommending a list of highly qualified candidates for the position of Commissioner for consideration by the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

The Public Safety Canada news release of June 29, 2017, noted the full list of Committee members and their Terms of Reference will be announced shortly. As neither has been released, and if the slate of members has not been finalized, I would ask you to consider, or suggest to the Minister to consider, appointing a Committee member(s) from the RCMP Veterans' Association to assist you in the selection process. If you concur, we stand ready to assist you in identifying a suitable candidate for Selection Committee membership.

The RCMP Veterans' Association has been in continuous existence since 1886. In 2014 it was registered under the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act. The Association also has a charitable fund registered with the Canada Revenue Agency since 1969 ("Maintiens le Droit Trust Fund"). The Association has 30 chapters (called "Divisions") in communities all across Canada as well as the Registered Office at the Canadian Police College in Ottawa. The Association currently has about 7,000 Active and Associate Members, comprising serving, former and retired Regular and Civilian Members; Reservists; Auxiliary and Community Constables; Public Service Employees; Temporary Contract Employees; and Municipal Employees of the Force, as well as their families.

Since our initial formation more than 130 years ago, our mission has included (as stated in our Articles of Continuance) the following: "to be of service to the Government of Canada when required and requested [and] to cooperate with and render assistance to the Police, especially the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, in all matters of common interest." It is in fulfillment of this part of our enduring mission that I am writing to you today.

In our view, the next Commissioner will be the most consequential Commissioner since Commissioner A. B. Perry who served a century ago (1900-1923). Commissioner Perry led the transformation of the North West Mounted Police, which in 1900 was a tiny frontier force in the Canadian Prairie West and the Yukon, into the national law enforcement agency known as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police that was created by a new Act of Parliament in 1920.

Like Commissioner Perry one hundred years ago, the next Commissioner will have to be a transformational leader in order to succeed. We agree with the Minister of Public Safety's message to all RCMP Members and Employees on June 29, 2017, when he stated the "new Commissioner will face big challenges and high expectations. While Canadians deeply respect the heritage and traditions of the RCMP, they also look to the new Commissioner to modernize the Force and to make it an institution of which we can be even more proud. This is in addition to the significant responsibility involved with overseeing the regular, day-to-day management of the RCMP, as it continues to adapt to the ever-evolving challenges of policing."

The Minister noted the "Government will be searching both within and outside the RCMP for the person with the strongest leadership skills."

The Appointment Opportunity message of July 7, 2017, noted that the only requirement, beyond relocation to the National Capital Region and willingness to travel throughout Canada and occasionally abroad, is that the person must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident.

Leaving aside the issue of a non-Canadian citizen becoming the Commissioner of the Force (which we do not agree with), we believe that an additional requirement be that the next Commissioner is serving or has served as a Member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

As Veterans of the Force we well know that to appoint a Commissioner from outside the RCMP would be a mistake, given the challenges that must be faced and the urgent need to repair the damage to morale and esprit de corps that has been sustained and to restore the trust of the rank and file Members and Employees in the senior leadership of the Force.

Without seeking to impinge on the prerogative of the Governor-in-Council, we believe there are legal and operational reasons to select a Commissioner from "within" the Force.

Legally-speaking, subsection 5(1) of the RCMP Act states that the "Governor-in-Council may appoint an officer, to be known as the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, to hold office during pleasure, who, under the direction of the Minister, has the control and management of the Force and all matters connected with the Force." Under Section 2 the term "officer" includes a "member" appointed under section 5, and "member" means "any person who has been appointed under section 5 or subsection 6(3) or (4) or 7(1) and who is employed with the Force."

To appoint a Commissioner whose first day of being a Member in, or an Employee of, the Force is the day that person assumes command would be contrary to the spirit and purpose of the RCMP Act and to the “heritage and traditions” of the Force. It would cause significant discord and dissatisfaction, resulting in a failure of leadership. Recent history bears out this unfortunate reality.

Operationally, given the nature of the Force as well as its unique regimental “heritage and traditions,” an outsider would be at a significant disadvantage to achieve the trust and acquire the support he or she will need from the Members and Employees to effect meaningful, sustainable and transformative change.

Yet it is still not enough that the next Commissioner be a serving or former Member of the Force. While we agree that consideration of bilingual proficiency and a preference for candidates of diversity (“women, Indigenous Canadians, persons with disabilities, and members of visible minorities”) would be ideal, these factors are of secondary importance.

Of primary importance are the abilities stated in the Appointment Opportunity message: “[a]bility to develop and implement a corporate vision, and to provide the leadership and strategic direction required for the organization to fulfill its mandate, while respecting the heritage and tradition of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police;” and “[a]bility to lead change in a complex accountability environment.”

These are the only “knowledge, skills, and abilities” which explicitly mention “leadership” which is exactly what the RCMP requires now. No academic report, management theory or corporate governance model can substitute for leadership in an organization as unique as the RCMP.

Under “Education and Experience” the Appointment Opportunity message notes that “experience as a leader in a complex, decentralized organization would be considered an asset.” We disagree. We consider this as a requirement, not an asset. As others have noted time and time again, there is no other “complex and decentralized organization” quite like the RCMP. This is why it is so important to select a proven leader from within the Force to assume the critical role of Commissioner.

In closing, Mr McKenna, allow me to emphasize that no-one wants the next Commissioner and the RCMP itself to succeed more than the members of the RCMP Veterans’ Association. We are collectively proud of the Force, and proud of our service. We wish that the serving members of the Force, once they become Veterans themselves, will feel the same level of pride as those who have gone before.

We stand ready to assist you and the Selection Committee if asked.

Sincerely,



Al Rivard  
President

cc. Hon Ralph Goodale, P.C., M.P., Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness  
cc. Deputy Commissioner Daniel Dubeau, Acting Commissioner  
cc. Assistant Commissioner Stephen White, Acting Chief Human Resources Officer