

RCMP brass field questions at committee

Northern News Services

Despite concerns raised by community members following the arrest of a sexual assault victim last year, the Commanding Officer for the RCMP G Division says Mounties have a positive relationship with women and women's groups in Yellowknife and throughout the territory.

Chief Superintendent Jamie Zettler, joined by Superintendent Amanda Jones, the criminal operations officer at G Division, addressed the Standing Committee on Social Development at the legislative assembly Tuesday, presenting to members on a wide range of topics, from small community policing to sexual assault investigation training.

Yellowknife Centre MLA Julie Green, who has been outspoken about her concern over the victim's May 2017 arrest, zeroed in on the incident when addressing Zettler.

"I've asked lots of questions in the assembly to the justice minister about the relationship between the RCMP and women, which wasn't great," said Green. "And then the woman was taken to the cells. I think at that point, the trust between women and the RCMP may have declined even further."

Green asked Zettler what's being done on the RCMP's end to "rebuild that relationship of trust." "I don't necessarily agree we have a poor relationship with women ...," Zettler responded.

"Our members are engaged with many of the women's groups

in the territory, not only in Yellowknife, but throughout NWT. The feedback I've received from the various communities I visit and talk to talk about a positive relationship."

"We continue to work with them, reviewing our policies to make sure people feel comfortable coming to us," he added.

But Zettler did identify areas where the force must "continue to move the bar forward."

"We are committed as an organization ... to be open to criticism, to take a look at our policies and procedures and to make improvements where we can," said Zettler.

After a 2017 Globe and Mail article revealed that police forces across the country were closing a quarter of all sexual assault complaints as 'unfounded,' Zettler said G Division has moved to thoroughly examine new 'unfounded' sexual assault cases.

Zettler added that NWT-wide policies have been introduced, such as the "process of taking statements, including trauma impacted statements courses."

All G Division members are required to complete a common sexual assault course. In recent years, Zettler said more than 20 officers have completed more advanced sexual assault investigation training.

He said other concerns raised by Green are being explored, including whether G Division will be implementing third party reviews and third party reporting – when someone other than the victim reports. Zettler stressed those options need to mesh well

FROM the docket

with Brendan Burke

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with NWT's unique justification.

"For us and the community to have trust in those processes, it needs to work here," said Zettler.

Trial set for man accused of sexually assaulting two women while on bail

A Ndilo man accused of sexually assaulting two women while out on bail for another since-stayed sexual assault charge will head to trial in May of next year.

Peter Tsetta, who previously elected to be tried by judge and jury, will now be tried by judge alone after changing his mode of trial in NWT Supreme Court, Monday.

Tsetta, 49, has pleaded not guilty to four charges stemming from two incidents alleged to have taken place last year.

In May 2017, Tsetta is alleged to have sexually assaulted and forcibly confined a woman in Yellowknife.

A month later, Tsetta was accused of doing the same thing to another woman.

He now faces two sets of sexual assault and forcible confinement charges.

Both of the incidents are alleged to have occurred while Tsetta was on bail for another sexual assault charge laid in March 2017 – a charge that has since been stayed by the Crown.

On April 3, 2017, after being charged with the now-stayed charge, Tsetta was granted release by a justice of the peace, only to be charged with two more sexual assaults months later.

The allegations sparked outrage from prominent women's advocates in the city who questioned why Tsetta, already facing a serious sexual assault charge, was granted bail and allowed back into the community.

Tsetta's judge-alone trial will begin in NWT's Supreme Court on May 27, 2019.



Chief Supt. Jamie Zettler, right, joined by Supt. Amanda Jones, addressing the Standing Committee on Social Development at the legislative assembly Tuesday.

Brendan Burke/NNSI photo

Yellowknife

École Allain St-Cyr

New facilities Grand Opening
November 6, 2018 @ 4 pm

Ribbon cutting
Free Hotdogs
Volley-Ball games
48 Taylor Rd

L'Association des parents
ayants droit de Yellowknife

CSFTNO



Northland Utilities crews work to replace streetlights along a median on Franklin Avenue. Re-lighting the street is one of the final steps of a two-year construction project.

James O'Connor/NNSI photo

Finishing Franklin

Major construction project nearly done

by Dylan Short
Northern News Services

After a summer that saw major detours and changing lane closures through the center of the city, the \$7.5-million construction project on Franklin Avenue is coming to a close.

"Overall it was a large success," said Chris Greencorn, director of public works. "I know it may have seemed like it was kind of dragging out at times but it was quite a complex project and a lot of different moving parts but no major hiccups."

The project spanned across the summers of 2017 and 2018 and included work to replace major water and sewer lines, asphalt resurfacing, replacement of curbs and gutters and

improvements to street lighting.

The majority of the project is now in the books with Northland Utilities currently erecting street lights along the Franklin median. In 2019, the project will finish with landscaping and design work being completed.

"We've got some small clean-up work to do behind curbs and stuff to make sure everything looks good. That will typically happen the year after cause in most projects we're always in this time of year so we go back the next spring and kind of clean up," said Greencorn.

The project closed Franklin Avenue between Forrest Drive and Gitzel Road for a portion of the summer, traffic

was diverted from the major road and onto residential roads during that time

Upon re-opening, Franklin had a number of lane closures throughout the rest of the summer months.

Over the two summers, the project ran a price tag of \$7.5 million, 75 per cent of which came from a federal grant through the Clean Water and Wastewater Fund (CWWF).

"I'd like to throw a shout out to the residents of Yellowknife, we know it's been an intense couple years of construction due to the influx of that CWWF, so that's why we really had multiple construction zones all over town and it really helped out the Yellowknife Capital Planning program," said Greencorn.