

# THE WINDSOR STAR

## Chief, mayor mum on secret meeting

### *Closed-door session with senior cops*

By Doug Schmidt, The Windsor Star November 4, 2011



**Mayor Eddie Francis, left, and police chief Gary Smith talk while taking part in a training exercise along the Detroit River in Windsor, Ont. on Tuesday, Aug. 23, 2011.**

**Photograph by: Tyler Brownbridge, The Windsor Star**

WINDSOR, Ont. -- Mayor Eddie Francis won't say whether a multimillion-dollar police brutality lawsuit was the topic when the police chief and his two deputies were hauled into his city hall office for a closed-door meeting earlier this week.

"The discussion I had with them is private," said Francis. "I shared with them some of my thoughts ... (and) some of my concerns."

Chief Gary Smith also won't divulge details. His department has been under a cloud since allegations surfaced of officers conspiring to protect one of their own by pursuing trumped-up charges against an innocent man.

“I can’t tell you,” Smith told The Star when asked to disclose what was discussed Monday.

Francis, who also chairs the police board, said last week he shares public concerns over the integrity of the Windsor Police Service in the wake of allegations stemming from an April 22, 2010, confrontation between a local doctor out for a jog and a detective.

Det. David Van Buskirk has been criminally charged in the beating of Dr. Tyceer Abouhassan. Other senior officers face Police Act charges.

Abouhassan has filed a \$14.2-million lawsuit that names the police department and the city as defendants.

While it’s not unusual for the chief to meet with the police board chairman, observers said it’s rare for him to be called in to the mayor’s office, and rarer still for him to be joined there by his two deputies.

“I asked them to do a few things and get back to me,” said Francis, who provided no further specifics.

Smith would only say a “myriad of topics” was covered during the meeting that the mayor said lasted about 40 minutes. But the chief wouldn’t say whether the alleged coverup and charges his officers are facing were among those topics.

“People are reading a lot of things into these things,” said Smith.

“Have you heard the rumour of me retiring yet?” he said, listing four instances when acquaintances outside the department have approached him to say that’s what they’d heard from sources inside the organization.

Smith said his five-year contract doesn’t expire until Dec. 31, 2012, and that he’s “not sure” what his plans are after that date.

Asked whether he’s still enjoys being chief, Smith said: “Yeah, so far. It’s not fun every day... There have been some storms.”

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