

Chief's Verbal Report to the OPSB, January 23, 2023

- I **have been in my role** as Chief of the Ottawa Police Service for just over two months now.
- If I could first offer some thanks to a few groups.
- First, I want to **thank the Board** for assisting me in getting settled into my new job.
- Many of you have **offered some very good advice and guidance** as I have begun to flatten my learning curve.
- Second, I want to thank the **team at the OPS who has gone out of their way to not only welcome me into the new role, but to guide me through some interesting ups and downs** in the first few months.
- And that support has come from the **senior leadership team, the Ottawa Police Association and the Senior Officers Association, as well as from members on the ground.**
- We have managed the **tragic death of a member, a senior officer being charged, and the important work we are doing for the budget process.**
- Finally, and most certainly not least, I want to **thank the Ottawa community** for welcoming me back to the city.
- I have received countless letters, emails, and phone calls, as well as many invitations to join groups across the city.
- It's been a very interesting and challenging 2 months, but I'm certainly enjoying working with the OPS Team, the Board and the Community. Thank you for the support.

- During my interview process, I stated that I would provide the Police Board with some of my initial observations after a few months of being in the role. So, **here are some comments grouped into 5 general themes:**

1) YOUR Ottawa Police Service TEAM:

- **To the Board and the community in Ottawa, you need to know one thing very clearly; you have a team of sworn and civilian employees at the Ottawa Police Service who are extremely passionate and dedicated in what they do.**
- I have seen it first-hand while working with our **Neighborhood Resource Team**, our **Dispatch Centre** and our **Frontline platoons**.
- I have seen it with our **Guns and Gangs** team seizing 105 guns last year, our **Homicide Unit** as they investigated a high number of homicides. 16 deaths with 6 being female victims of femicide . Too many. And our **Sexual Assault team** that successfully investigated and secured a conviction of a Dangerous Offender that targeted disabled youth victims. All these units enjoyed **significant successes in a number of investigations and projects**.
- Other units like our Tactical Team, attend and resolve our most high risk calls for service on a daily basis with true skill and professionalism.

- **I'm really quite impressed with the work** that was done these past three years with our **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion** plan.
- While the initial **3 year EDI Action Plan has concluded**, some of the progress it accomplished is truly ground-breaking and I look forward to working with the Board as we chart another three-year EDI strategy in the coming months.
- And finally.....As per the update earlier today, I have also seen our members working **hard to prepare for Convoy 2.0**, to make sure that we are ready. The work being completed is a daily effort for our team.
- **Despite a very difficult year in 2022, we have around 2,200 employees that will continue to work hard and keep our community safe. I'm proud of their work and dedication to their jobs.**

2) Trust In Policing.

- **I understand that trust in policing has eroded in the past year.**
- We have work to **do to earn back and restore that trust.**
- But there's **reason to believe that it is possible.**
- I mentioned the outpouring of emails and invitations earlier from various community groups within the NCR.

- I have had the **chance to speak with many leaders** from diverse groups right across the city, including key **Indigenous leaders**, members of the **Muslim, Sikh, Jewish and Congolese** communities.
- I have also met with the good people who work at places like the **Ottawa Mission**, leaders from the **city's BIAs**, our own **Community Equity Council** and the **Community Safety and Well Being Committee**.
- But I haven't got to everyone yet and in the coming months I plan on meeting with many more groups to hear their ideas on how we can enhance public safety together.
- The **overwhelming theme that I am hearing is that they are invested in working with us as a police service. Whether it's to tackle issues specific to their individual communities and our community as a whole.**
- I am hearing that they want to see our officers out in their neighbourhoods, and that they want to work directly with those officers to help make a difference.
- There is so much proactive and preventative work we can do as a police service, but we need to work hard to free up the resources to do this important work.

3) Increasing Demands for Service

- It hasn't taken me long to see that there are **high demands** for our services in **so many different areas** and our **chronic challenge to provide the adequate resources needed to satisfy that demand.**
- I'll outline a few of the areas that are a challenge:
 - a) This starts on **our platoons and our frontline officers. They responded to over 346,000 calls for service in 2022. An increase of 2.5% from 2021.**
 - With **this call surge**, we've seen the **spike** in some crimes in 2022. **Auto theft** has plagued much of the province has soared.
 - As we recently reported – Our Hate and Bias Crime unit saw **377 total incidents**, which marks an **increase in hate-motivated reporting of 13% over 2021.**
 - But, we first need to focus on increasing our frontline resources so members can **attend those calls in a timely manner** and still have time **for meaningful proactive work**. I can't emphasize the importance of front line officers having the time to be proactive and positively interact with the community.

b) **Road Safety** is important to the citizens of Ottawa and I'm hearing that we need to have more presence in our vast geographic areas. We have to find ways to **decrease the vacancy rate** in the Traffic Services Unit

c) Another areas of high demand relates to ongoing pressures surrounding **cyber crime**, which is not a new or emerging category of crime.

- It's everywhere and continually changing with technology.
- But we need to be smart about how we respond to this growing crime trend and make wise investments.

d) **An obvious area of increased demand on the OPS is related to protests, major events and head of state visits.**

We all know about the Convoy protest, but the daily grind to manage all of these events is real and intense.

- One example is the coming visit **by President Biden** in a few short months.

A heavy lift is required to ensure that we have the proper operational plan in place.

- Our Frontline, Traffic and Neighborhood Response Teams are often pulled from their jobs to assist.

- But, I have been **very open about my desire to properly fund not only the OPS but all the agencies responsible for managing these protests and major events here in Ottawa.** We need a permanent, well funded group of law enforcement agencies working together.
- The good news is that we are working very well with the RCMP, the OPP, the Parliamentary Protective Service and other partners in an integrated manner. A lot has changed in the past year but more work is needed.
- Related to this topic, I look forward to the Public Order Emergency Commission's report and its recommendations that will come next month.

4) Non Criminal Calls for Service.

Part of how we can better deploy our resources is to look at the amount of time being spent by our members responding to and managing non-criminal calls for service.

- This primarily deals with calls for service for those in **mental health crisis, experiencing homelessness, struggling with addictions, or other related issues.**

We need to work **in partnership with City Hall and the social services sector** to better-manage these issues and **shift some of these response roles to those that are more experienced in these areas and police aren't the primary responders.**

This is what the community is saying, and we agree with them.

We need to work with our **hospitals and mental health providers to avoid long waits for our members and for our clients prior to seeing a physician.**

5) Modernizing our administrative support units and facilities:

I see that some of our infrastructure is under great stress.

First our **Administrative Support Units** like Information Technology and Human Resources sections.

During **times of fiscal restraint** and in an effort to **realize budget savings**, these areas have suffered, and the results have been predictable.

We need to **return some of their resources** so we give them a **chance to succeed.**

We also have to address the next phase of **our IT Modernization Roadmap** after that project was halted three years ago. This should include investing in our capabilities to produce meaningful data for both the public, the police board and internally. As well, we need a **Digital Evidence Management System** that includes the use of **Body Worn Cameras**

Some of **our facilities** have reached the end of their **life cycle** and it's necessary to **refocus on work completed a number of years ago** that produced the **Facilities Strategic Plan** to ensure we have **modern workspaces** that supports our members.

This includes investments **in our South Facility project**, which will help us replace aging buildings like Leitrim and Greenbank that would cost more to repair than replace.

These 5 general themes **are broad in nature** and it's a **lot of information** and while a lot of work is ahead of us.....it will only make us better to serve the people of **Ottawa**.

OPS BUDGET

Of course, we are in budget season right now and that has **forced me into quickly learning** about the Service and City Hall. This is a good thing.

I look forward to **working with the Board, the Mayor, and City Council in the coming weeks as we present our proposed budget.**

I know there are some who have the perspective that investing in the police is not a good idea.

I respect their opinions, but I also respectfully disagree with that strategy.

As I've just described in the last 10 mins, **More than ever, the OPS needs continued investment to ensure we meet the demands of this great, and growing community.**

According to the City's Official Plan, Ottawa is expected to grow to **1.4 million residents in the next 25 years.**

That means it's important that we are laying a foundation that ensures the safety of our neighbourhoods and sets ourselves up for future success.

I look forward to working with the Board through the budget process, as well as **developing a new strategic plan** that will move us positively forward in the coming years.

OPTIONAL COMMENDATIONS TO ADD IN

I would like to take a moment to highlight some great work by our members.

Every month we submit a Commendation Report that includes emails and letters we receive from the public. Often these stories involve a member going above and beyond to help someone.

Or they tell us about a moment of compassion that made a difference in the life of someone struggling.

Here's one example of a letter we received when Neighbourhood Resource Team officers William Ridley, Tom De La Fosse, Sean McKenna and Yousseff Monsour encountered an elderly man lost out in a snowstorm:

“We encountered a confused elderly man out in a snowstorm and when we tried to help him, he became increasingly agitated to the point where we called the Ottawa Police for help and four officers arrived shortly thereafter. The officers joined our efforts to calmly convince this gentleman to go to the hospital, and they deserve recognition for their efforts. They were the perfect mix of calm, clear, and firm without a hint of aggression or escalation. They were patient and ultimately helped us succeed in getting the man to hospital. All four officers were friendly with us, professional with the patient, and were extremely effective as teammates.”

Or this one from residents in Pleasant Park after a visit by Constables Eric Douglas and Wayne Clayton:

“We at Pleasant Park would like to express our gratitude to Neighbourhood Resource Team Constables Eric Douglas and Wayne Clayton. For months we have had parcels stolen and property damaged by one individual, and your officers managed to resolve it. We have begun to rely on them heavily to combat theft, drugs, and answer any questions (and there were a lot) we had with respect to video surveillance, and what we could do as a team to stop these events from occurring. With their patience and their advice, we were able to identify the people involved and have them either arrested or trespassed from our property. It’s created a more tranquil environment for the families and people of Pleasant Park to live here without concern. Constables Eric Douglas and Wayne Clayton are greatly in need in our community and deserve our thanks and appreciation. We are very grateful for their continued work and support.”