

Chief's Verbal to the Police Services Board Meeting
May 29, 2023

I want to start my verbal report by speaking about the tragic death of Ontario Provincial Police Sergeant Eric Mueller.

It's clear that Sgt. Mueller was an outstanding officer and a dedicated family man leaving behind a wife and two children under two years old. This was a devastating event for the OPP and the police industry across Canada. We are also thinking about the other two officers that were shot and the one Constable who is still in serious condition.

I was proud of the almost 300 serving and retired Ottawa Police Service members who marched in the parade at the Canadian Tire Centre prior to the funeral. As well, we worked very closely with the OPP to provide security for the event and I again, want to thank our planning and logistics team for the many extra hours worked to ensure this funeral was safe for everyone.

The team at OPS really stepped up to assist the OPP that included being involved in the initial response after the shooting, maintaining the scene for numerous days, and assisting with the Criminal investigation of this homicide.

Since September of last year, we have lost ten officers, half of those in Ontario alone. Each officer leaves behind family, colleagues, and friends who loved them. And just today, we are learning of a Detective from the OPP that was driving an unmarked police vehicle outside of Woodstock Ont has been killed in a car accident involved a school bus, and I'm told with no children inside the bus but unfortunately the driver is also deceased.

I was dismayed to read a national media article that had local academics cite that some police leader's comments that the level of officers being killed is in fact NOT unprecedented. The article pointed out that it was worse in 1962, and in addition, there were less officers working during this time which makes the per capita of police killings even higher during the 60s.

These deaths are not just statistics. These are real people, with real families, who put themselves in danger every day they go to work.

The citizens of Ottawa need to know that have hundreds of dedicated police officers that are working day and night in this community keeping you safe. That they are, despite what's occurred since September, continuing to respond to call after call with the unknown of what might occur when they arrive at a scene.

It's why it's very difficult to accept... anyone's attempt... to minimize what's occurred since September within the police industry across Canada. It is an unprecedented loss of police

officers in the careers of anyone....who is... a serving officer today.

xPolice in Schools

I would like to take a moment to discuss the ongoing debate of police in uniforms in our city's schools.

During my career, I have both participated and have seen the positive benefits of police officers' presence in schools and the valuable relationships that we can build with both the youth and the school administrators. Simply, managing any policing issues within a school will have a higher probability of a successful outcome if relationships are already established.

I appreciated the letter from Education Minister to the chairs of Ontario's school boards outlining the fact that police are welcome in our schools to participate in their child's education and school experience.

But, I'm also looking forward to continued discussions with the Ottawa Carlton District School Board to build a positive relationship not only with the Board but also the hundreds of schools in our community.

xPolice Week

We celebrated another Police Week on May 14 to the 20th, and it was a great chance to reconnect with residents from the National Capital Region.

This year's theme was Building Bridges: Celebrating Police-Community Partnerships which recognizes the importance of citizens participating in the development of public safety measures.

There is more emphasis this year on public partnerships as we work with the Police Board to develop a refreshed Strategic Plan for the OPS. As we'll see later in the agenda, we will be launching a joint consultative plan to ensure we are hearing from the community.

At the various Police Week events, there was a great turnout, with many parents bringing their kids to the family-friendly events and watching them explore our police cars or play a game of basketball with our OPS Hoopstars.

I want to thank our Community Police Officers who organized many of the events and helped to share a bit about what we do as a police service. I hope you had a chance to attend, grab a bite to eat, and chat with our officers.

NOW – to a few operational issues.

xTamarack Race weekend

Congratulations to all the runners who participated in the Tamarack Race weekend – including Mayor Sutcliffe!

The Ottawa Police was pleased to be there to assist organizers with public safety preparations. Planning for this event started last fall and continued right up until race weekend. We had 60 members deployed on Saturday and a 100 on Sunday.

It's a great example of the level of advanced planning we need to do for any major public event in our city and I'm grateful for the expertise and teamwork of our Special Events unit.

We worked with race organizers, as well as our policing and City partners, including Traffic Management, to ensure the flow of traffic and the safety of everyone who attended the events.

The organizers and volunteers should also take a bow for a well run event that showcased our community.

xArsons

We are seeing a troubling trend surrounding an uptick in arsons in our city. Year over year, there has been a 50 percent increase in the number of calls for service related to a fire being set at residential or business buildings.

A number of these incidents are occurring in the Rideau-Vanier ward, with 21 fires set in 2023. We are working with Councillor Stephanie Plante to implement mediation measures and proactive patrols.

For reference, Rideau-Vanier had 33 arsons for all of 2021, 25 in 2020, and 10 in 2019, so we are on trend to exceed those numbers this year.

We are also seeing arsons in Rideau Rockliffe with seven incidents, and in the ****Kitchissippi and Osgoode wards, with five each. We continue to work with the councillors in those wards to provide support along with our investigations.

We have a small but mighty Arson Unit that are extremely busy and I want to acknowledge their incredible efforts managing these investigations. As well, we value the relationships we have with the Ottawa Fire Services, the Office of the Fire Marshall, the Office of the Chief Coroner, in advancing these complex investigations.

We are asking the public to come forward with any information they may have that will help to identify those responsible.

xParks/Beaches Disturbances.

I want to mention a few disturbances we've seen at local parks and beaches in the month of May. This is often a common occurrence in the summer and they can become unruly in some cases.

Earlier this month, at Britanna Beach, we responded to a large party and a "fight club".

And this past Saturday, our officers again responded to a call for service relating to a large and loud crowd. -- this time at Mooney's Bay.

The crowd began to disperse when officers arrived. Officers began to check the entire area and encountered two young men fighting.

They attempted to intervene and one of the men fled on foot. When our officers ran after him and arrested him, he kicked at them and was discovered **to be carrying a machete**. He is now facing criminal charges.

We are working with the local community, Councillors and the City to address this issue. If it continues, it's a matter of time where a more tragic result will occur.

xGun violence

We continue to receive reports of gun violence in our city.

To-date in 2023, there have been 21 shootings city-wide, with two people killed due to gun violence.

Our Guns and Gangs Unit continues to investigate and officers have seized 21 illegal firearms so far this year.

In 2022, our officers recovered 107 illegal guns and our Homicide Unit responded to five different deaths as a result of gun violence, with a 100 percent solvency rate.

xCommunity Food Drive

I would like to end my verbal report by talking about the massive food drive event in May that was organized by the good people at the Khalsa Aid and Ottawa Sikh Society.

About 20 of our members, including those from our Diversity Relations and Resource Section, were involved in gathering over 40,000 pounds of food and it was one of the biggest community-led single-day food drive campaigns in the city.

That's absolutely incredible, and it will help to reach so many people in need in our city.

Our 20 members were among the over 300 people volunteered during this event.

This is the true spirit of community and embraces the Sikh principle of Sayva – or giving selfless aid in service of others.

I want to thank everyone who was involved in this community event, which is a testament to the fact that when we work together we can accomplish some pretty amazing things.

Deputy Chief Burnett – Letter of Commendation
Thank you.

