

Report to / Rapport au:

**OTTAWA POLICE SERVICES BOARD
LA COMMISSION DE SERVICES POLICIERS D'OTTAWA**

24 July 2023 / 24 juillet 2023

Submitted by / Soumis par:

Chief of Police, Ottawa Police Service / Chef de police, Service de police d'Ottawa

Contact Person / Personne ressource:

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SUBJECT: LETTERS OF COMMENDATION

OBJET: LETTRES DE MENTION ÉLOGIEUSE

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Ottawa Police Services Board receive this report for information.

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

**Que la Commission de services policiers d'Ottawa prenne connaissance du
présent rapport à titre d'information.**

BACKGROUND

Attached for the information of the Board are excerpts from letters of appreciation /
thanks received from the public since the last regular meeting for services rendered by
members of the Ottawa Police Service (OPS).

DISCUSSION

Date Received: 9 June 2023

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Isabelle Desforges

Excerpt from Letter: Yesterday our 16-year-old daughter was a passenger in a single-
vehicle accident. Her best friend, a very new driver, hit the soft shoulder, spun and hit a
tree and totalled the car. Thankfully no one was injured; the young driver and two
passengers were understandably very shaken. My daughter called 911 immediately.

The purpose of this email is to send a heartfelt thanks to all the emergency response personnel as they were exceptional! When Keira called 911, she said she was not sure what to ask for, but the agent was wonderful in calming and dispatched the required help. Police and Fire arrived promptly and were also wonderful. Please pass on our sincere appreciation to the police officer that responded as he was compassionate, empathetic, and educational to the teenage girls that were very emotional after the crash. We are extremely thankful that no serious injuries resulted and equally as appreciative for the emergency services that responded in such a caring and professional manner.

Date Received: 13 June 2023

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Constables Steven Dorken and Jonathan Kenney

Excerpt from Letter: I just wanted to say that the two officers who responded to my call and came to my house were the most amazing officers that I have ever dealt with. I cannot thank them enough for the help they gave me tonight. My daughter has mental health difficulties and tends to have huge outbursts. Constables Steven Dorken and Jonathan Kenney responded in a calm, empathetic, understanding way and were especially patient, I couldn't thank them enough. Starting life all over again after fleeing domestic violence with a 10-year-old is hard but for the first time in a long time I felt safe because of these officers, and I am glad that they are out there protecting our City. I am forever grateful for the OPS.

Date Received: 13 June 2023

From: Member of the public

Excerpt from Letter: Teachers are on the frontline in education. Police officers are on the frontline of the law. Last Wednesday June 7 was a troubling and stressful day for the staff and students of Holy Trinity. Please extend my gratitude to the officers who were deployed and handled the situation.

Date Received: 15 June 2023

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Sergeants Gavin Morris and Joseph Brownrigg

Excerpt from Letter: I am writing to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to the Ottawa Police Service for their invaluable support during CANSEC 2023. As a key security partner, your dedication and assistance were instrumental in ensuring the safety and security of all involved in this significant event. OPS' commitment to upholding Charter-guaranteed rights and freedoms for both the protesters and the participants of CANSEC 2023 was impressive. They skillfully balanced the delicate task of maintaining order while respecting the rights of all individuals. I would also like to

extend a special thanks to Sergeants Gavin Morris and Joe Brownrigg of the Special Events Unit. Their support and guidance during the planning process were invaluable to the CANSEC security team. Their expertise and assistance ensured a smooth and well-executed security operation. Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude for providing a Command Team to oversee the resources and for assigning members of the Special Events Unit and Paid Duty Officers to CANSEC. Their presence and dedication were crucial in managing the potential traffic challenges and maintaining a safe environment for everyone involved.

Date Received: 14 June 2023

From: Member of the public

Excerpt from Letter: I would like to compliment three members of the Ottawa Police Service who helped me after my car broke down. I was very distressed. I thought maybe it was not something I should take up police time with but I am so relieved I called. I am grateful to the dispatcher who understood the problem right away. She was kind, empathetic and professional. Two officers arrived very soon. I cannot praise them enough. They were past their shift; they did not say this, but I asked, and they said it was nothing and they would wait to drive me home if necessary.

Date Received: 15 June 2023

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Constables Edward Whitfield and Daniel Sinclair

Excerpt from Letter: Two very nice police officers dealt with a break-in at our church's daycare today. Terrific professionals deserve our thanks. Well done Ottawa Police!

Date Received: 16 June 2023

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Chantal Senechal and Melissa-Marie Kelly

Excerpt from Letter: We are writing to you to commend your actions and planning on coordinating paid duty officers for our construction activities, especially relating to night-time officers. We understand that this is never an easy task to perform on any given day. Your exemplary performance does not go unnoticed by our staff at our construction office. We would like to thank both Chantal Senechal and Melissa-Marie Kelly for all their efforts and the way they have communicated to our project coordinators as well as the officers to our field staff. They make our work sites and workers safe in a way they feel very comfortable completing the task at hand, whether it be asphalt paving, adjusting of iron, or grading.

Date Received: 16 June 2023

From: Member of the public

OPS member: A/Sergeant Jenny Perreault, Sergeant Shane Lebeau and Constables James Gurgeon and Andrew Bowen

Excerpt from Letter: Ottawa Police Service officers tended to the death of a loved one. They conducted themselves with compassion, caring and professionalism. We would like to commend them for their interaction with us. In particular we wish to commend Constable James Gurgeon, who completed the final shift. Cst. Gurgeon displayed empathy, compassion and did so much to help the person's grieving spouse. He was able to connect with him and lift his spirits; he did an exemplary job. We wish to commend each of the attending officers and wish them well. We hope that the Ottawa Police Service lets each of the attending officers know of our appreciation during our difficult time.

Date Received: 19 June 2023

From: Member of the public

Excerpt from Letter: Je tien absolument a remercier les policier, qui venus a mon aide ayant fait preuve d'une gentillesse mais aussi d'une efficacité rapide et humaine a mon égard. Certes je fus fortement ébranlé. Seul moyen a Exprimer ma gratitude tardive: Vue que j'étais pas moi même ces derniers temps. Ils ont servit et protégé un citoyen et ca doit être mentionné et pris en note!

Date Received: 21 June 2023

From: Member of the public

Excerpt from Letter: I would like to pay tribute and commend the officers that responded to the bear sighting in Kanata. Well done! As a citizen safety team, you warned many residents that they needed to seek shelter in their homes, and you went around and got them out of their swimming pools and told them what the imminent danger was. I witnessed incredibly "polite" crowd control and an effective response to the bear wandering street to street. In short, no human creation is any match for Mother Nature. The OPS responders evened the odds. Good job!

Date Received: 24 June 2023

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Constable Martin Labelle

Excerpt from Letter: My husband and I would like to take a moment to thank and acknowledge Constable Martin Labelle who dealt with an incident involving our son. As the parents of a 16-year-old Indigenous youth who suffers from mental health and addiction, we worry constantly, knowing that our systems don't typically work in his favour. Our son was detained after an incident where he was confused and non-verbal with police. We really appreciate that the officers involved took the time to identify our son and then call us to get some background and clarifying information before making a

decision to press charges or not. Cst. Labelle was non-judgemental and he took a social justice approach, wanting to ensure our son had the support he needed rather than just charging him. We appreciate that Cst. Labelle took the time to gather information and speak to us and Youth Services Bureau and was able to understand that our son's actions were due to his mental health and not based on criminal intent. Although we mention Cst. Labelle, we also know that other officers were involved and we would like to acknowledge them, as well. Thank you for making a very difficult and stressful incident a little bit easier for our family as we continue to support our son in the hope that he can overcome his challenges.

Date Received: 25 June 2023

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Constables Bassam Issa, Rheanna Kendricks and Daniel Alary

Excerpt from Letter: I called the police today for help. I had a really horrible day, someone who lives in my area threatened me physically and verbally for the second time in three days in front of my neighbours, for no apparent reason. Three officers arrived and I met them outside my building. I must tell you all three officers were extremely helpful, patient, compassionate and informative -- beyond even my expectations. They made one of the worst days/week of my life more bearable with their professional and empathetic treatment of me as the victim of a crime, in a distressed state. The older gentlemen is naturally funny and his friendly joke put me at ease. He began to inform me of my options and then the younger male officer began to ask me for specifics in relation to the incident and previous encounters with this man. He was extremely empathetic and compassionate, he also managed to calm me down significantly simply with his demeanor and the way he asked questions. Finally, the female officer was honestly quite brilliant. I showed her the call on my phone, she immediately realized the date I provided was wrong then searched the proper day and time and found my first report immediately. She was also very kind and extremely informative, very much like the other two officers. She made me feel heard and responded very specifically to some of my concerns moving forward. By the time I was finished speaking with all three officers I really felt much, much better. I had a clearer understanding of what could and couldn't be done, and chose to complete a police report of the incident. Please make a note of how well these three officers did their job today, under difficult circumstances, late at night, with a highly agitated and rambling victim who provided confusing date information and video evidence. I'm also a person of colour and at no point did I feel anything other than an extreme desire to help, compassionate advice and the kindest possible communication of pertinent legal

options. I'm really glad you have officers like these representing your police force in the nation's capital.

Date Received: 26 June 2023

From: Member of the public

Excerpt from Letter: I know that the OPS does not get a lot of compliments - but yesterday, there was a guy standing at a busy intersection with a sign that said, "Homosexuality is a sin" on one side and "Woman must submit to man" on the other. My husband and I saw two officers speaking with the guy, his signs were down, it looked like he was being asked to go home. Thank you - we don't want that in our neighbourhood. And while not really directed at us (well, I guess in a way at me as a woman), it still makes us feel nervous. If you can figure out who those officers were, please thank them, from us.

Date Received: 3 July 2023

From: Member of the public

Excerpt from Letter: I just wanted to thank the police officer who assisted us when our tire gave out this afternoon on the Queensway, just west of the Parkdale exit. The officer was very patient, professional, and helpful to us. It was a very distressing situation, but his calm demeanour helped to keep the situation bearable. I had a car full of children and everyone stayed cool. I'm sorry that with all the anxiety I forgot to ask for a name or badge number, but I hope you can pass this on to him.

Date Received: 4 July 2023

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Julie Dube, Constables Matt Cook, Joel Shaver, Shelley Dang, Aiman Almoflehi, Edmundo Caizapanta, Christ Toneguzzi, Tyler Vanderheiden, Rebecca Lim, Matt Ringel, and Sergeants Pat Laflamme and Marco Dinardo

Excerpt from Letter: To the officers who responded to the incident at Willola Beach I just wanted to take the time to say thank you. Your response was quick and efficient, the patient was extricated and ready once we arrived on scene, and your efforts and CPR skills are what helped us get a pulse back on the individual. Your coordination with Ottawa Fire in arranging a landing zone for our colleagues at Ornge was a great help as well. Overall, it was an unexpected success and it would not have happened without your help. Unlike some of the other services, we greatly appreciate when we get assistance from Ottawa Fire and Police (as we do not have those arrangements in the valley). As a result of your efforts, the patient did not re-arrest, and made it successfully to the Ottawa Hospital Trauma Center. Once again, thank you for what you do and for your help on that call.

Date Received: 6 July 2023

From: Member of the public

Excerpt from Letter: We were very happy to see the Traffic Unit on Paul Anka Drive this morning!

Date Received: 5 July 2023

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Constable Paul Hart

Excerpt from Letter: I was cycling north on Prince of Wales when I encountered a mechanical issue. As a result, I was stuck walking my bike along the road, about 3 kilometres from home. An officer on his way to work downtown for Canada Day drove by in his personal vehicle, a black jeep, and when it was safe, turned back south to ask me if I needed help. Conveniently, he had a bike rack on his vehicle. When I said "yes, I can't ride the bike," he pulled around, and within a minute, my bike was loaded up, and he was only too happy to help me out with a drive home. My thanks to Constable Paul Hart whose consideration and good deed helped me out that day. He could have driven on, but chose to come back and ensure that I was okay.

Date Received: 7 July 2023

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Sergeant Trevor Woods

Excerpt from Letter: I would like to pass on my thank you and sincere gratitude for the efforts made by Constable Trevor Woods in assisting me after the Shania Twain concert last night. I had lost my group, my phone had quit working, and I could not find where my tour bus was parked. I live with PTSD and was experiencing a flood of triggers resulting in disorientation and impaired senses. When I had sought assistance from a couple of security personnel I was turned away. I tried to hail a taxi to drive around and find my bus – but they stated were not for hire – I may have presented too frenzied for them. When I approached Cst. Woods; I was not turned away, rather he listened to me and tried all the problem-solving tactics in his arsenal including attempts to get my cell phone back up and running; and questions to jog my memory of any other persons we could contact, which helped me to remember one address in Ottawa I could go to. You provided me with a safe place to wait it out. This, along with your confident calming nature, tidbits of humour and check ins; reassured me, balanced my anxiety and chased away some triggers. With the assistance of your team, you arranged for a ride to that address/contact in Ottawa. At the last minute, my friend showed up and got me back to the bus. As you said Cst. Woods, it will be a funny story for tomorrow – well I'm not laughing yet, but I'm sure it will come. And when it does, you will be named the hero of my story! Forever grateful!

Date Received: 7 July 2023

From: Member of the public

Excerpt from Letter: Compliments and congratulations to the smart officers who decided to move traffic direction up to Wellington and Lett last evening during the launch of Bluesfest! Lett Street has maybe 15 parking spots and cannot handle the constant flow of traffic for every event at Lebreton Flats. This gesture was greatly appreciated and would love to see it continue. Smart thinking!! Your bike police were great too! Very friendly! Hope to see more out when events are occurring!

Date Received: 7 July 2023

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Sergeant Sathiyenthira Balasundaram

Excerpt from Letter: I called in today to ask questions and I ended up reaching Sergeant Sathiyenthira Balasundaram in the Professional Standards Unit. He took the time to listen to me and provide guidance to the best of his ability as it was not within his purview to advise further. He was kind and generous with his time and listened to me. I wanted to take a quick moment to thank him personally for being so kind.