

Chief's Verbal Report to the OPSB for the September 25, 2023 meeting

I wanted to start my verbal report by thanking our members, and all of the police professionals from services across Canada, who attended the National Police and Peace Officers memorial this past weekend. I also want to thank Chair Beck and Vice Chair Fakarani who attended on Sunday to pay their respects.

The past year has been particularly challenging for everyone after the tragic loss of so many officers. It got even more challenging last Friday. Cst. Rick O'Brien from the RCMP was killed in the line of Duty in Coquitlam BC while executing a Search Warrant. Two other officers were also injured. Of note, Cst. O'Brien was from Ottawa. . My thoughts are with family and my former colleagues in BC.

At Sunday's event we honoured the memories of 11 officers that have died in the line of duty since the last September.

That's a lot of names to reflect on within a year. That's a lot of families who are still mourning their loss.

Despite the incredible risk of being a police officer and the very difficult year that we've endured, I'm grateful for the men and women of the Ottawa Police Service, who are compassionate and dedicated in what they do, and they conduct themselves with honour, courage and service each and every day.

Wedding homicides HOLD UNTIL RECEIVE APPROVAL from HOMICIDE

I wanted to provide you with a brief update on the shooting at the wedding that saw six injured and two killed.

We continue to chase down investigative leads as they come in.

We are struggling with a lack of cooperation from some of the attendees and those present.

We urge anyone with information to help us solve the case to come forward to investigators.

We know that there are two families who are united by grief and left to mourn with only questions- We will continue to work to provide them with answers.

Shootings

Last week police responded to four separate shootings in our city within a 24-hour period.

In one incident on Ramsey Crescent we identified and arrested the shooter, and our Guns and Gangs Unit is continuing its investigation into a second incident in the same area.

In all of those shootings, no one was injured and we are thankful for that, but we need to identify those responsible so that we can remove those weapons from our streets.

A shooting over this past weekend on Bank St is also being investigated. The victim is in hospital with non-life threatening injuries.

2024 Budget

We are heavily involved in the development of the 2024 Draft budget. Deputy Chief Steve Bell will speak more to this during the Board Meeting.

Amongst our priorities, Stabilizing our Staffing at the Service is a priority. Our proposed three year hiring plan is a cornerstone of the strategy that forecasts a total of 435 Sworn members and 120 Civilians to be hired. Of course, not all of this is growth and accounts for attrition as well.

While the budget does remain in development, we know that we will be looking for efficiency opportunities, as we do every year. For 2024, we have set an efficiencies target of \$2.7 million to look at how we can do things more efficiently and effectively.

District Policing Model

One of the top priorities identified by residents, community groups and Councilors during our summer consultation process was the desire to see our officers more consistently engaged within a community and an ability for the police to address the specific issues and needs in the various Wards across the City.

Each Ward has different issues where different strategies need to be applied.

Establishing 4 Districts, East, West, South and Central with a strong communication plan will enhance the level of service to the 24 Wards.

A/Superintendent Kevin Maloney has been assigned to lead this project and we expect to provide you with ongoing updates as it progresses. This is a major change for us, it will take time and it's success does rely on input from our Board, Mayor and Council, our members and the community. It also will be crucial for us to ensure we are able action our proposed Staffing Plan to ensure proper resources are in place.

Event response and presidential visit

Last week, Ukrainian President Zelensky visted our Nation's Capital.

We became aware of the visit in late August, which is very little time to plan and organize an event of this magnitude. We worked very closely with the RCMP and stood up a centralized command hub at the National Capital Region Command Centre. We secured the assistance of other police agencies, of which, I'm grateful for their cooperation. Your OPS team worked incredibly hard with all our partners including various City Hall partners to ensure this visit occurred without incident. Again, all completed in a 31/2 week timeline.

The 1 Million Person March that occurred last week added to our work. Initially, 1,000 people, both in favour and opposed to the march, arrived at Wellington. We had our Police Liaison Team and our policing partners separate the two groups to ensure safety. That number quickly swelled to over 3,000 people within the hour. Three arrests were made, two hate related offences and one for Cause a Disturbance.

At the same time, Parliament Hill saw over 700 people converge on its grounds for a separate demonstration.

It was an extremely busy week. I'm proud of our OPS team and all our policing partners who helped keep the city safe.

Other events in August and September required our attention from various Pride Month events, to Rolling Thunder, to the Army Run to our Police Memorial yesterday. The team delivered and I'll leave it at that.

Panda

Speaking of planning for major events. I wanted to provide you with a quick update on what we are doing to ensure a safe Panda game on October 1.

Our Police Liaison Team and Neighbourhood Resource Team officers have been going door to door in impacted neighbourhoods to speak with residents and advise them on how to get in touch with us quickly if there is an incident that requires a police response. This includes speaking with students at off-campus housing and working with both Carleton and Ottawa university officials to help educate their student body.

To help provide key information, we have developed a robust and responsive social media campaign to ensure that all participants understand their responsibilities for the event.

We have plans in place to increase our presence in key areas like the Byward Market, Sandy Hill, and other neighbourhoods surrounding Carleton University, including adding additional officers at TD Place on the day of the event.

Impaired Driving

We are seeing a disturbing increase in the number of impaired drivers on our roads. Within a one-week period between September 10 to 17 we charged 23 drivers with impaired-related offences. Amongst the 23 drivers, one incident resulted in the death of two people and we believe alcohol was a contributing factor. Two separate drivers were involved in collisions that caused bodily harm to another person. In total, we attended 7 collisions during that time with drivers under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Another driver was stopped by our officers and found to be almost four times over the legal limit.

So far in 2023, 613 drivers have been charged with impaired driving-related offences which will likely surpass last years totals with the busy holiday season still to come.

Offenders need to realize how dangerous their behavior is and how they compromise not only their safety but also those in the community.

The police will be out there looking for impaired drivers.

Safe Exchange Program

In response to a motion brought forward by Councilor Kitts, we will be launching a new Safe Exchange Program at our three main police stations where people can exchange money and legal products that are bought online.

In parking lots near or at our police stations at Elgin, Huntmar, and St. Joseph Boulevard, we have painted bright blue parking spots where people can safely make exchanges for goods bought or sold online. While police will not be directly involved with these exchanges, it adds a layer of security to these types of transactions, knowing we are nearby if you need help.

We'll be launching the program this coming Friday, so look for it in the media and our Social Media posts.

Cutz for Kids

I would like to end my report by highlighting some exceptional work by two of our officers.

Constable Niloy Ahmed and Constable Tristan Bailey organized an event called Cutz for Kids which had the goal of providing free haircuts for primarily black youth just in time for the new school year.

Of note, Cst. Ahmed grew up in one of the tougher neighbourhoods in Ottawa and it was his goal to change hearts and minds about police in those communities when he joined our Service.

The officers worked with the Michele Heights Community Centre and recruited Peaky Barbers to offer free cuts to the kids as well as host a 3 versus 3 basketball competition. There were prizes won and the event was an incredible success. I went there myself, and couldn't believe the high number of people that attended the event. A number of our black officers were there and it was clear, that a very positive relationship and trust exists between them and the youth that attended the event. In total more than 200 kids attended the event to either get a slick new haircut for back to school or play a game of basketball. Thanks to Peaky Barbars for donating their time for this incredible event.

It really is a great example of how a simple idea can become such an amazing and positive event and I want to commend Cst. Ahmed and Bailey for thinking about how we can bridge that gap with youth and develop stronger relationships.

I'll now turn it over to Deputy Chief Burnett to relay to you a few more examples of excellent work by our team. Paul.....