

Report to / Rapport au:

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

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Submitted by / Soumis par:

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

Contact Person / Personne ressource:

**Deputy Chief Steve Bell, Chief Administrative Officer / agent administratif
principal**

BellS@ottawapolice.ca

**SUBJECT: UPDATING JUSTIFICATION FOR OTTAWA POLICE SERVICE
SPECIAL CONSTABLES – DISTRICT SPECIAL CONSTABLE PILOT
PROJECT**

**OBJET: MISE À JOUR DE LA JUSTIFICATION DES AGENTS SPÉCIAUX DU
SERVICE DE POLICE D'OTTAWA – PROJET PILOTE D'AGENTS
SPÉCIAUX DE DIVISION**

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Ottawa Police Services Board approve the attached Justification comprising of additional Special Constable authorities for the purpose of implementing the District Special Constable Pilot Program. The additional authorities include the following sections of the Highway Traffic Act:

Section 134(1) – authority to direct traffic;

Section 134(2) – authority to close a highway;

Section 134.1(1) – authority to remove vehicles from a highway.

The District Special Constables will also be provided duties requiring Mental Health Act powers previously contained within the Justification. These duties are related to transporting and maintaining custody of persons apprehended under the Mental Health Act taken to hospital or another medical facility.

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Que la Commission de services policiers d'Ottawa approuve la Justification ci-jointe comprenant des pouvoirs additionnels pour la mise en œuvre du programme pilote des agents spéciaux de division. Les pouvoirs additionnels portent sur les articles suivants du Code de la route:

Article 134(1) – pouvoir de gérer la circulation;

Article 134(2) – pouvoir de fermer une voie publique;

Article 134.1(1) – pouvoir d'enlever des véhicules d'une voie publique.

Les agents spéciaux de division recevront également des fonctions nécessitant des pouvoirs relatifs à la Loi sur la santé mentale figurant déjà au sein de la Justification. Ces fonctions ont rapport au transport et au maintien de la garde de personnes appréhendées en vertu de la Loi sur la santé mentale et conduites à l'hôpital ou autre institution médicale.

BACKGROUND

The Ottawa Police Service (OPS) is implementing a District Special Constable pilot project. This pilot project will deploy Special Constables to assist frontline patrol operations by taking on some of the operational duties performed by sworn officers. This will allow frontline police officers to be available for other emergency calls. This program is one area where the OPS is working to create efficiencies to increase availability of emergency response officers. The pilot program will employ four experienced OPS Special Constables, with four trained Special Constables to backfill if required. The pilot program will be conducted during a six-month period. It will then be assessed for an extension if required and/or a proposal for a full-time program.

The purpose of this report is to obtain approval to amend the justification of Special Constable powers to include Highway Traffic Act authorities and to describe further duties to be given to the District Special Constables under currently conferred Mental Health Act authorities. This approval is required for the District Special Constables to undertake the full scope of their assigned duties.

DISCUSSION

The District Special Constable program will require approval of the amended justification attached to undertake the full scope of their duties.

There are two primary areas in which the District Special Constables will be deployed. The first role will be to assist with custody of persons apprehended under the Mental Health Act. This is an area that is causing a strain on frontline resources while officers

maintain custody of detainees at hospitals. Currently, two sworn officers are required to maintain custody of a detainee at hospital. A Special Constable will relieve the secondary officer so they can return to patrol duties and respond to other emergencies.

The second area where Special Constables will be deployed is traffic control duties. They will assist sworn officers with traffic direction and road closures to alleviate this draw on front-line resources. This will include road closures at accident scenes, crime scenes, events, demonstrations, and any other incident that may require traffic control. They will also assist frontline officers with the towing or removal of vehicles from roadways. These are all duties that currently require sworn officers. The use of Special Constables for these duties will free-up emergency response officers to respond to emergency calls.

All Special Constables with the OPS receive de-escalation training and annual use of force training. The Special Constables who will participate in this pilot have also received instruction on traffic direction from our traffic enforcement supervisors, which is the same training received by sworn officers.

When not engaged in these primary duties, Special Constables will return to an operational facility to complete reports or perform other duties within their authority as determined by the duty Staff Sergeant or Duty Inspector. Any other duties would be assigned in the spirit of the program to reduce the use of emergency response officers for these types of tasks. It is anticipated their primary duties will comprise most of their duty hours.

The Special Constables will be deployed on two frontline platoons for the pilot project. They will report to an assigned platoon Staff Sergeant for operational purposes. Their duties will be assigned in ten-hour shifts on their assigned platoons which will equate to seventy hours of work during a two-week rotation. Efficiencies will be tracked with daily reporting to determine the number of hours of patrol emergency response time recovered. There will also be tracking of time-spent on specific duty types. This will provide a measure of the effectiveness of the program and contribute to the decision to propose a full-time program across all platoons.

The Special Constable Justification document currently provides for necessary powers exercised by Special Constables working in other areas of the service including courts, cellblock, and summons service. For ease of reference, the new powers added to the amended justification are highlighted in the document.

The additional powers include sections of the Highway Traffic Act required for the District Special Constables to conduct traffic control and remove vehicles from highways

within the City of Ottawa when assigned to these duties. These sections include section 134(1), 134(2), and 134.1(1) of the Highway Traffic Act.

The amended justification will apply to a group of eight (8) Special Constables. Four (4) will be District Special Constables assigned to the pilot on a full-time basis, and four (4) will be trained for backfill requirements. If the pilot proves successful, an additional request will be made to the Board for these powers to be granted to all Uniformed Special Constables to ensure flexibility between organizational units that employ Uniformed Special Constables.

Once the Board approves the amended Justification, it will be brought to the Ministry of the Solicitor General for approval. Once Ministry approval is received, the Service will re-appoint the eight (8) Special Constables as District Special Constables using an established selection process from within the current complement of Special Constables and pursuant to section 53 of the Police Services Act.

It is anticipated that the pilot project will begin during Q1 of 2024.

CONSULTATION

The OPS consulted with the Ministry of the Solicitor General and other Ontario municipal police services. District Special Constable programs have been approved by the Ministry of the Solicitor General for other police services including Peel Regional Police Service (PRPS) and York Regional Police Service (YRPS). The powers requested in the OPS pilot project are seen in these other District Special Constable programs.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this request for additional authorities to be conferred on the District Special Constables.

Backfill salary funding for the temporary positions required to implement the pilot has been secured from unused sworn member hiring funds. Vehicles purchased for the project have been included in the Fleet Capital budget.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION - SPECIAL CONSTABLES

CONCLUSION

The approval by the Ottawa Police Services Board of the amended Justification will facilitate the appointment of District Special Constables to frontline operations for the pilot project period. The appointments will ensure that District Special Constables have

the requisite authorities to perform the full scope of their duties. This program will assist in bringing sworn members back to the frontline faster from certain incidents and call types so that they can increase core service delivery to ensure the safety and security of our community.