

# Chief's Verbal Report to the OPSB for the September 23, 2024, meeting

## **Opening Remarks**

Good evening,

I hope everyone had a great summer and managed to enjoy some downtime.

The summer was a very busy operational period for the members of this service. I want to thank them all for the work they did ensuring community safety during the warmer months.

Cet été a été une période opérationnelle très occupé pour les membres de ce service. Je tiens à les remercier pour tous le travail qu'ils ont accompli afin d'assurer la sécurité de la communauté pendant les mois les plus chauds.

## **MEMORIAL**

I want to begin by mentioning that this Sunday we will be gathering on the Parliament Hill for the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Canadian Police and Peace Officers' Memorial.

It is a day to honour officers who have been killed in the line of duty.

This year we will honour the life of RCMP Constable Rick O-Brien who was killed September last year while serving his community.

The memorial began after the shooting death of Ottawa Police Cst. David Kirkwood in 1977.

The Board is invited to attend. I hope to see you all there!

## **MARK HAYES**

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Sgt. Mark Hayes, a highly respected retired member of the Ottawa Police Service (OPS), who dedicated over three decades of his life serving his community.

Even during his battle with ALS, Mark continued to inspire us with his strength and commitment. My condolences to his family during this time.

He was instrumental in establishing the Ottawa Police Veterans Association and played a pivotal role in the development of the OPS Wellness Strategy, particularly the Peer Support Program and the Real You Program.

Mark passed away surrounded by his family on August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024 , leaving behind a legacy of leadership, dedication, and unwavering commitment to the well-being of others.

The Board will recall in July we submitted a rushed request to have our gymnasium at 474 Elgin St. renamed in his honor. That event occurred prior to his death and I want to thank the board and Interim Executive Director Sayah for rushing that request through the process.

## **HOMICIDE INVESTIGATIONS AND GUNS**

Sadly, our Homicide Unit was called in to investigate three homicides in just one week.

Our thoughts goes out to the families and friends dealing with these tragic incidents and the loss of their loved ones.

This violence is senseless.

I want to again recognize the Homicide Unit for their dedication and teamwork.

These cases are incredibly complex and heartbreaking, and they've been handling them with such professionalism. I also want to thank all the other units that support them for their tireless efforts. It's truly appreciated.

Investigators do not give up on their cases and their solvency record shows their dedication to the victims and their loved ones.

As an example, on September 14th, the Homicide Unit charged a man with second-degree murder and failing to provide the necessities of life. This is in connection with the tragic death of a four-month-old infant girl that occurred in the spring of 2023.

This was a very tough case for our members to investigate, especially given the young age of the victim. The sixteen-month investigation was incredibly challenging, but the team's hard work has brought us to this point.

So far this year, 20 people have died by homicide. There have been 41 shootings to date, which is fewer than last year's 51. Out of these 40 shootings, 6 people have died and 15 have been injured. Our officers have seized 84 crime guns this year.

Jusqu'à présent, vingt personnes ont été tuées par homicide. Il y a eu quarante-et-une fusillades cette année, ce qui est moins que les cinquante-et-une de l'année dernière.

Dans le cadre de cette quarantaine de fusillades, six personnes ont perdu la vie et quinze ont été blessées. Jusqu'à date nos agents ont saisi quatre-vingt-quatre armes à feu liées au crime.

Anyone with information about these or any homicides are urged to contact the Ottawa Police Service Homicide Unit at 613-236-1222 ext. 5493. Anonymous tips can be submitted by calling Crime Stoppers toll-free at 1-800-222-8477 or by visiting [crimestoppers.ca](http://crimestoppers.ca).

## **SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL**

I want to acknowledge some great investigative work that has resulted in the return to Canada of a Canadian treasure.

Last week, two of our investigators travelled to Rome, Italy, to retrieve the Yousuf Karsh portrait of Sir Winston Churchill, known as the 'Roaring Lion.' The portrait was stolen from the Fairmont Château Laurier in Ottawa in late 2021 and was later sold to a buyer in Italy through an auction house.

Thanks to public tips, forensic analysis, and international cooperation, we were able to track down the portrait and lay charges against an individual.

The portrait is being returned to Canada with the help of the Carabinieri.

We are grateful to everyone who helped with this investigation and I want to thank lead investigator Cst. Akiva Geller for all of his work.

The portrait will be displayed again at the Fairmont Château Laurier as per the wishes of Mr. Karsh...this time with higher security

## **PANDA**

I wanted to provide you with a quick update on what we are doing to ensure a safe Panda Game this coming month.

This year will mark the 55th game held at uOttawa. As the Panda Game festivities approach, the Ottawa Police Service will be working closely with Ottawa By-law, as well as the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario.

We'll have a significant presence in the ByWard Market, Sandy Hill and Old Ottawa South areas.

Public safety is our top priority.

In the past, disruptive parties after the Panda Game have led to criminal activity and charges.

We want to remind everyone to celebrate responsibly. There will be strict enforcement of laws and by-laws, including noise regulations. Violations can result in fines of up to \$1,000. Property owners can also give police Agent Status in advance to help manage any issues on their property.

## **RESIDENTS MATTER**

Traffic enforcement continues to be one of our top priorities. This summer we launched a new program called "Residents Matter" to tackle some of the major traffic issues we've been facing, especially late at night. The initiative ran from June to September.

We've had great results!

Over the course of **7 Residents Matter Enforcement Team (RMET)** deployments, our officers have combined a total of 383 Provincial Offence charges with a focus on Speeding, illegal vehicle modifications as well as unnecessary noise violations. In addition to this, 82 Part III's have been laid; predominantly for **Stunt Driving** charges.

The #ResidentsMatter enforcement initiative will continue until the end of the Fall season. We've received a lot of positive feedback from our efforts to curtail this culture amongst this group where driving recklessly is a sport! Currently, our Traffic resources are one of the areas we are hoping to increase to meet the demands of residents.

L'initiative d'application de la loi « **Les résidents comptent** » va continuer jusqu'à la fin de l'automne.

Nous avons reçu de nombreux retours positifs dans le cadre de nos efforts visant à réduire cette culture au sein de ce groupe où conduire de manière imprudente est considéré un sport.

En ce moment, nos ressources liées à la circulation comptent parmi celles que nous espérons augmenter pour répondre aux demandes des résidents.

## **GALA**

The tickets for the 13th Annual OPS Gala are now available! It is taking place on Saturday, November 2nd, at the Shaw Centre. It's going to be a great night with dinner, dancing, and a chance to connect with the community.

This year, we're supporting two amazing organizations: the Sexual Assault Support Center of Ottawa and the Multifaith Housing Initiative. The Sexual Assault Support Center does incredible work helping survivors with counseling and resources, and the Multifaith Housing Initiative has been tackling homelessness by providing affordable housing for people from all walks of life.

The goal is to raise funds to support both of these causes, and I think it's going to make a real impact. Tickets are \$200 each or \$2,000 for a table of 10, and if you go the corporate table route, two seats are donated to an OPS member.

It will sell out quickly, so make sure to grab your tickets soon! Thanks for your support, and I'm looking forward to seeing you all there for a great night.

## **TORCH RUN**

Earlier this month our members and other local law enforcement agencies participated in the Torch Run. This is a global event, helping to raise awareness and funds for Special Olympics. It was a fun day filled with community spirit and teamwork. The run started from our headquarters, went down Elgin Street, past Parliament Hill, and ended up on Bank Street.

Thanks to everyone who took part and made it a memorable day!

## **NEW RECRUITS**

At the end of August, we held a Badge Ceremony for 32 new police officers that have now hit the road.

Following that ceremony, I had the pleasure of attending the Ontario Police College where I watched 30 new recruits graduate at the march past.

We've just hired another 36 officers that have begun at our training center at Algonquin

I am so pleased to report that 98 recruits have been selected so far this year, and we still have another class to go. We are always constrained by spots available at OPC, but the recruitment team has shown an incredible ability to fill seats as they become available, even up to the very last minute.

## **BUDGET**

With that said, staffing is top of mind as we work through the 2025 Draft Budget, which will be tabled with the Board on November 13.

Ensuring that our 3 year staff stabilization plan is funded along with our District policing project is critical to the future of this organization and the Draft Budget will reflect these priorities. We are also cognizant of the pending negotiations the board will be entering in the coming weeks to negotiate both collective bargaining agreements.

The Budget is being designed to ensure we can deliver adequate and effective policing service and fill critical service gaps that exist within our Service.

We continue to be focused on ensuring our service delivery is tailored to the unique policing needs of the suburban, urban and rural areas of our City while ensuring we have the proper level of officers, civilians and S/Csts to get the job done.

Public expectations, crime rates, the number of people we serve, calls for service and frequency of protests and major events have all risen. This has led to increased overtime costs and a continued reliance on assistance from other police services. Major legislative changes via the Community Safety and Policing Act and other inflationary pressures including staffing costs are making the problem worse. We need to be clear that many of the new costs we are facing are beyond our control.

We are aware of the budget direction that has been issued by City Hall and with that, the financial constraints the city is under. We are working to



manage within the tax rate recommendation from Council by working with the City Treasurer to find solutions to our key strategic priorities.

We will be able to speak to those in more detail at the October Board meeting when we discuss Budget directions.

Lastly, we are hopeful for the confirmation of both Federal and Provincial funding to be approved, with numerous new programs that will be formally launched. More information on that in the coming weeks.

### **ARSON and RESCUE**

I want to end by highlighting the outstanding work of our officers who responded to a very challenging mental health call in the East end.

The officers were called to assist a man experiencing a manic episode with severe paranoia.

He barricaded himself in his bedroom with a large knife and set his apartment on fire. Officers had to breach the door to gain entry and pull him to safety.

After he was taken into custody, the room went up in flames. The fire caused significant damage and officers assisted other residents to evacuate the building. There is no doubt, they saved this person's life.

During this challenging call, the officers demonstrated remarkable bravery, communication and teamwork. They acted decisively to ensure the safety of a man in distress, risking their own lives to bring him to safety while also managing a dangerous fire.

Thank you.