

Chief's Verbal Report
Dec. 2, 2024

OPENING REMARKS

Membres de la Commission, bon après-midi.

I would also like to begin by welcoming Mr. Michael Polowin to the Board.

I've had a chance to speak with Mr. Polowin and the Command Team and I look forward to working with you in the days and months ahead.

WHITE RIBBON CAMPAIGN

As you can see, I am wearing my white ribbon today. We have also distributed them to members of the Board.

November 25th was the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (VAW), an annual day of significance that begins the "16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence". Our Service is committed to listening to and believing victims and survivors of gender-based violence while supporting the efforts of our community partners working to address this serious matter.

La violence entre partenaires intime continue d'être une épidémie

The number of reports continues to concerning. Last year, our IPV units received almost 6600 reports. So far, in 2024, about 6,000 reports of Intimate Partner Violence have been made.

The Ottawa Police Service is one of the first police services to use the term femicide to report on the death of a woman by her partner. Since then, we have reported another case of femicide, this one stemming from a familial connection.

Using the term ‘femicide’ is a significant step in recognizing the epidemic of violence against women in our community and our society.

DEMONSTRATIONS

One area that continues to require a great deal of police resources and attention are demonstrations.

The past two weeks have kept us busy with demonstrations involving corrections officers, pro-Palestinian groups and postal workers.

I want to give a big thank-you to all the officers and OPS members who have been working tirelessly during these demonstrations.

From our frontline officers and the Police Liaison Team to the Service Command Centre to Community Outreach, your hard work, professionalism, and patience have been essential. You’ve shown the dedication it takes to serve our community and keep things balanced.

As police we are neutral and our focus is on safety.

We know how important it is to balance people’s rights to assemble and speak out with keeping the community safe and ensuring the city keeps moving.

Some recent demonstrations have come with challenges—things like noise levels, blocked roads, and, in a few cases, non-cooperation that led to arrests.

But what stands out most is the dialogue we have had with demonstrators. Their willingness to engage in conversations has been key to ensuring things remain peaceful.

Sunday’s demonstration pro-Palestine demonstration, which saw about 250 participants, was a great example of how communication and collaboration can lead to a safe and respectful event, with no incidents or arrests.

We thank everyone one for their cooperation as we work to ensure demonstrations reflect our communal values of dialogue, respect of the law and peace.

We are committed to continuing with dialogue—not just with demonstrators, but with community leaders and organizers. Their input and cooperation have been invaluable in preventing problems and ensuring everyone’s voice is heard safely and respectfully. Thank you again to our officers, staff and community partners for working together to ensure these events are safe and law abiding.

Impaired Driving

Ok – now to the other side of the holiday season. I'd like to remind everyone in our community to plan ahead for a safe ride home and don't drive high.... or drink and drive. You can expect to see RIDE programs across the City.

Impaired driving in Ottawa continues to be a concern to all of us. Year to date, 738 drivers have been charged with Impaired driving related offences.

- 291 were charged following a 911 call.
- 234 were as a result of an officer initiated traffic stop.
- Incredibly, 191 people were arrested and charged with impaired offences following a collision. This particular stat really surprised me.

Hate Crime

Earlier this month, we responded to three separate calls for service...in a short time period.... regarding assaults in Centertown. All three victims, who are of Asian descent, reported similar suspect descriptions.

Two of the victims sustained minor injuries, while a third victim was seriously injured and remains hospitalized.

A man in Ottawa was initially arrested and charged with two counts of assault, aggravated assault, and mischief. As the investigation progressed, additional victims were identified, and further evidence was gathered, leading to more charges, including attempted murder and assault causing bodily harm.

These were targeted, hate-motivated incidents. One victim remains hospitalized with significant injuries.

I want to stress how important it is for anyone who witnesses or experiences hate-motivated incidents to report them to the police. Reporting such incidents is crucial in stopping cycles of hatred and ensuring accountability.

NEW RECRUITS

This month, we had the privilege of welcoming 29 new recruits at a Badge Ceremony.

Joined by Chair Fakirani, we had the honor of joining them with their family and friends as they officially began their journey in policing. The new recruits bring with them a wide range of experiences and backgrounds.

This group also reflects the diversity of our city and beyond. They come from Ottawa and Gatineau as well as other parts of Canada, and internationally from countries such as India, Venezuela, and Egypt. With advanced education and the ability to communicate in multiple languages including Arabic, Hindi, Spanish, and Portuguese, this class is well-equipped to support Ottawa's diverse communities.

On a bien hâte de voir ce que vont contribuer ces recrues. Encore une fois, je leur souhaite bien du succès en ce début de leur carrière policière.

K9 DOGS

I am also happy to share that we're welcoming two new canine teams to the Ottawa Police Service. At the end of next week, Constable Brett Price with K9, Bomber and Constable Mongeon-Duby with K9, Car will have successfully completed the rigorous 16-week Basic Canine Course.

Both handlers and K9s have worked hard to master skills in tracking, obedience, and apprehension and are ready to begin serving and protecting our city.

PROJECT CHAMPION

On November 14th, we held a press conference announcing the conclusion of Project Champion, an 18-month investigation into organized crime and narcotics that began after several warrants were executed in early November.

This operation was led by our Serious and Organized Crime Directorate, working closely with policing partners, and I couldn't be prouder of their efforts. The investigation resulted in 17 individuals being charged with approximately 150 charges laid, along with the seizure of five crime guns and 6.5 kilograms of cocaine.

- Thirteen of those charged face allegations of participating in or supporting a criminal organization.

The goal of Project Champion was to dismantle violent criminal networks and disrupt their narcotics distribution activities in the Ottawa area. Many of the individuals charged were already linked to investigations into violent crimes such as homicides and shootings.

Teams from our Homicide, Guns and Gangs, Street Crime, and Intelligence Units played a pivotal role in targeting this network, which was responsible for both cocaine trafficking and street-level gun violence—two critical public safety concerns in our community.

I'll also mention that our Drug Unit has just completed another major investigation in partnership with other police agencies and we'll be announcing those results in the coming days but you'll have to wait.

PURSE PROJECT

This season is a time for giving and one of the great projects our members organize is The Purse Project. This project aims to support those who may be struggling to afford basic hygiene items. Our Service, in partnership with Shoppers Drug Mart and Citron Hygiene, once again came together with the community to collect personal hygiene products for women in need.

The campaign ran until December 1st, and I'm proud to say that, thanks to the generosity of Ottawa residents, we received an incredible high number of donations.

Since the Purse Project began in 2016, it has collected over 8,000 purses filled with necessities. All items collected will be distributed to shelters like the Youville Centre, St. Joe's Women's Centre, and many others, helping women who need it most.

Merci de votre appui!

SHOP WITH A COP

Another great initiative that is taking place next Friday is Shop with a Cop.

This is one of our service's favourite events of the year! It is led by our members in partnership with Carlingwood Shopping Centre.

It is all about bringing some holiday joy to children who might not otherwise receive gifts.

On this day, 25 kids are paired with police officers for a fun shopping spree, each with a \$200 gift card.

The kids will be picked up in police cruisers, enjoy a pizza lunch and then get to pick out some gifts.

Both the kids and our officers have a great time.

GOOD WORK

I want to take a moment to share a message of gratitude I recently received that highlights the incredible work of our officers.

This email, sent by a father from the UK, speaks to the dedication and compassion shown by two of our investigators, Constables Guy Seguin and Jennifer McClinton, who worked tirelessly on the case of his daughter's murder.

The father wrote to commend the officers not only for their professionalism in securing a conviction but also for the emotional support they provided to him and his family throughout the entire process. The following is part of his message:

“ Since the day of the murder and the guilty verdict being delivered, I must commend the manner in which the investigating officers Guy Seguin and Jennifer McClinton have treated myself and my family. The police are quick to be bashed when something goes wrong, but it's only fair to praise them when they go above and beyond. Guy and Jen have become friends to my family, always knowing the right moment to support us when things were unbearable. Even the smallest of things like a comforting hand on your arm or shoulder, may seem little to them but always landed at exactly the right time. I cannot praise or thank the 2 of them for the manner in which they looked after us. Even writing this email, which seems so little in comparison to their actions, leaves me feeling emotional, Sir, they are a credit to your service and I hope my highlighting this will encourage you to be proud of them and acknowledge their amazing qualities” Incredible words from this family member.

CO-CHAIR OF THE CEC

Last but not least, I want to take this opportunity to thank Sahada Alolo for her leadership as she concludes her term in the Ottawa Police Community Equity Council. Sahada joined the Ottawa Police Community Equity Council in 2018. As the co-chair, she was a strong advocate for marginalized communities. She liaised between communities and the police, finding opportunities for community members to share their experiences and put forth recommendations for reform.

Alongside the council, she helped launch the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan, which includes first steps for addressing systemic racism in policing.

Her passion has always been “to be the change”. Her leadership, commitment and genuine care for the community have been extremely helpful and she will be missed in the role. I thank you Sahada but know we will continue to work with you in the future.

As this is our last meeting before the holidays, I want to begin by thanking you for all your work and support over the past months and I hope for a happy holiday season for everyone.