



**Ottawa Police Service Board
Finance and Audit Committee
Minutes**

Meeting #: 29
Date: November 22, 2024
Time: 9:30 am
Location: Electronic Participation

Present: Councillor Cathy Curry, Dave Donaldson, Councillor Marty Carr

1. Confirmation of Agenda

With the consent of the Committee the agenda was amended to add a second item pertaining to the South Facility.

That the Ottawa Police Service Board's Finance and Audit Committee confirm the amended agenda of the 22 November 2024 meeting.

Carried as amended

2. Confirmation of Minutes

2.1 Minutes #28 of 18 October 2024

That the Ottawa Police Service Board's Finance and Audit Committee confirm Minutes #28 of the 18 October 2024 meeting.

Carried

3. Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were filed.

4. Items of Business

4.1 Draft Operating and Capital Budgets 2025: Delegations

Presentation

A presentation was provided from the Service on this item before the Board heard from the below delegates.

1. Laura Jackman
2. Sofia Chaudhry

A question was raised regarding the key to the success of the community policing model prior to 2016. Delegate Laura Jackman highlighted the importance of a strong connection with community policing, which fostered community participation in pilot projects. She noted that the neighborhood had previously faced significant challenges, including drug-related activity, prostitution, and gang operations. These issues were effectively countered proactive policing, involving an increased street presence and efforts to make the area less comfortable for criminal actors.

Delegate Sofia Chaudhry addressed comments from the Board about finding efficiencies at the City Council level, noting that any savings are reinvested into other programs in need. She referenced the Mayor's emphasis on achieving efficiencies across the board, including within the police budget, while recognizing that necessary increases are still required to maintain essential services.

A question was raised regarding the mounted police unit and whether it might be perceived as a more aggressive presence compared to officers on bicycles. Delegate Sophia Chaudhry suggested that mounted police could lead to more aggressive outcomes and potentially result in physical harm.

A question came up regarding the costs associated with adapting to the Act and whether provincial funding was available for this purpose. The Chief stated he was not aware of any requests by other services for provincial funding for the purposes of this adaptation. The Service elaborated that during the development of the Act, discussions with the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACCP) and the Ministry of the Solicitor General (SOLGEN) determined there would not be direct funding streams to support CSPA adaptation. The costs of implementing the Act remain uncertain but the Service is tracking these costs. The Chief added that specific known costs include required training for all members and the purchase of breaching tools. He also highlighted increased administrative time for handling temporary assistance requests, which may necessitate additional staffing.

A question was raised regarding fraud, particularly issues like phishing scams, and how the budget addresses public concerns in this area. The Chief noted the Service's focus on increasing investigative resources for fraud and other investigative teams, including Sexual Assault and Child Abuse (SACA) and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). The Service explained that while OPS has historically focused on victim support for IPV and related crimes, the rapid growth of fraud cases has created gaps in resource allocation. The Service emphasized the complexity of fraud investigations, often involving civil matters best handled by the banking system and highlighted the need for improved referral processes.

Regarding the budget's ability to address investigative needs, OPS mentioned plans to utilize special constables as "service magnifiers" in some investigative areas such as fraud to alleviate workload pressures and better address victim concerns.

The Chief added that the Service is enhancing on-street presence through Neighborhood Resource Teams (NRTs) and Community Police Officers (CPOs), with 16 additional members added in October and similar expansions planned for January.

In response to a question about outdated technology and its impact on operations, the Service outlined ongoing investments in modernization. These include increased subscriptions and strengthened partnerships with the City and other providers. While the scale of these investments is modest, the Service emphasized its commitment to technological advancements. The Chief highlighted progress in the cybersecurity program and incremental improvements introduced by the newly hired Chief Information Officer (CIO), aimed at enhancing accessibility of technological solutions and efficiency for members.

The Chief clarified that the new 50 FTE would include 22 sworn officers, 28 civilian roles including dispatchers and several special constables.

A question was raised about the potential budgetary impact of collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) exceeding estimations. The Chief acknowledged the risk of a 2025 deficit if CBA settlements surpass budgeted projections. The Service explained that unexpected overspending would first be managed internally before declaring a deficit, which the City might fund through tax reserves.

A comment was raised about the effectiveness of the mounted unit in supporting community safety. The Service outlined the unit's operational potential, highlighting its advantages, such as enhanced visibility, crowd control and proactive policing. Research and examples from other jurisdictions were cited, suggesting that mounted units serve as effective deterrents and valuable tools for community engagement. The unit is designed for use in both rural and urban settings, as well as in natural disaster response.

The Chief emphasized the overwhelmingly positive feedback from other police services with mounted units and noted their effectiveness in managing protests, particularly in separating groups and controlling crowd movements. Training for the unit is ongoing, with officers scheduled to receive specialized instruction in Toronto to maximize the unit's capabilities.

That the Ottawa Police Service Board's Finance and Audit Committee receive the presentation and delegations for information and consideration.

Received

4.2 South Facility Update

The Service provided an update on the South Facility, reaffirming its commitment to regularly report to the Finance and Audit Committee (FAC) and apologizing for the late addition to the agenda.

In response to a question about the upper floor, it was clarified that negotiations with the general contractor are ongoing to finalize the pricing. This component is scheduled to be integrated into the project timeline in January 2025. The facility's construction is expected to be completed by August 2026, with operational deployment planned for the first quarter of 2027.

That the Ottawa Police Service Board's Finance and Audit Committee receive the South Facility update for information.

Received

5. Other Business

6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:32 am.

7. Next meeting

To be determined.