

Chair Fakirani Verbal Report

Public Meeting

March 24, 2025

Three-year review

- This month marks three years of service for Members Curry, Henschel and I. As we reflect on the past three years, I am reminded of the significance of the moment we find ourselves in today.
- Three years ago, the membership of the Ottawa Police Service Board was renewed – at a time of profound challenge for policing in our city. In the wake of the 2022 Convoy protest, both the Ottawa Police Service and this Board faced a crisis of confidence. Trust – in the Service, in governance structures, and in the systems designed to keep our community safe – was at its lowest. The challenges were significant, and the expectations of the public were high – and rightly so.
- It was in that context that this Board took shape, and from the outset, our focus has been singular: rebuilding.
- Rebuilding the Service. Rebuilding trust with our community. And strengthening the governance and oversight mechanisms that are the foundation of accountable and effective policing in a democratic society.
- This has been a period of profound transformation – made even more so by the implementation of the Community Safety and Policing Act, which came into effect on April 1, 2024, replacing the decades-old Police Services Act and modernizing the legal framework within which we operate.

- Our approach has been intentional. We knew we could not rebuild from the outside in. We began by laying strong internal foundations – renewing leadership, stabilizing staffing, improving governance – while steadily working toward building trust with our community.
- I would like to acknowledge some milestones achieved during this period:
- Leadership renewal at the Ottawa Police Service has been central. The hiring of Chief Eric Stubbs marked the beginning of a new chapter. Under his leadership, and with the appointment of a strong Executive Command team, the Service has regained the cohesion and direction it needed.
- Workforce stabilization has also been a key focus. Chief Stubbs' staff stabilization plan was designed to ensure we have the people needed to fulfill the Service's mission of delivering adequate and effective policing. This has included securing a greater number of training spots at the Ontario Police College – culminating in the historic hiring of 134 new constables in 2024. This is the kind of investment that ensures we remain equipped to serve a growing and dynamic city.
- In the wake of the 2022 events, we knew our approach to major events and demonstrations had to evolve. We've seen the development and implementation of a more robust operational plan, supported by clearer communication flows between the Service and the Board. This has allowed the Board to be more engaged, especially in what the Morden Report and the Public Order Emergency Commission identified as “critical points” – those high-risk moments that demand immediate attention and oversight.
- We've also worked to rebuild relationships with community stakeholders, ensuring the Service's approach to demonstrations respects not only public safety, but also the fundamental rights and freedoms at the heart of our democracy. Our work on a new Major

Events Policy, grounded in a human rights-based framework, reflects our commitment.

- Another proud achievement is the initiation of construction on the South Facility in Barrhaven – a project that, just three years ago, was under threat. This new facility is vital for sustaining adequate and effective policing in the years to come, as Ottawa’s population continues to grow.
- We’ve also focused on evolving how the Service responds to complex community challenges. Programs like ANCHOR, which supports those experiencing mental health crises and the opioid epidemic downtown, and CORE, which reshapes how OPS supports residents and businesses in the ByWard Market, exemplify a shift toward collaborative, community-centric safety responses.
- One of the Board’s most significant contributions was the launch of a new Strategic Plan for 2024–2027, spearheaded by Chair Beck in 2023. This plan is the result of unprecedented engagement with community groups representing racialized, Indigenous, LGBTQIA+, faith-based, and human rights communities. For the first time in years, OPS has a clear strategic direction – one shaped by the voices of Ottawa’s people.
- Internally, the Board Office itself has undergone renewal, in keeping with the recommendations of the Ottawa Auditor General. We have strengthened our policy capacity with the creation of a Senior Policy Advisor position, enhanced our administrative and research support, and will soon complete this phase by hiring a Communications and Stakeholder Relations Advisor. This role is essential as we enter the next chapter: deepening our connections with the public and ensuring our work is continuously informed by the voices of those we serve.
- Through all of this, one thing is clear: the Board chose to build.

- We have built capacity. We have built relationships. And we have laid the foundation for a new chapter.
- And yet, we know this work is not finished. In many ways, we are just getting started. The next phase of this journey will focus on strengthening our relationships with the community, broadening participation, and ensuring that everyone in Ottawa feels seen, heard, and protected.
- Before I close, I want to take a moment to extend my heartfelt thanks to my fellow Board members, to Chief Stubbs and the Executive Command Team, to dedicated OPS members – sworn and civilian – and to the many community leaders, advocates, and residents who engage with us – whether through delegations, events or consultations. Thank you. Your input is not only welcomed; it is essential. It grounds our decisions, challenges our assumptions, and helps us shape a safer, fairer, and more inclusive Ottawa.

Community Engagement

- The Members of the Board and I continue to take time to meet with various stakeholders to help inform the work of the Board.
- Board members are also involved in various engagement activities as well.
- On February 27, I, along with Vice Chair Carr, Members Desroches, Donaldson, and Polowin, and the Executive Director had an opportunity to attend a swearing-in for one of the largest cohorts of new officers in the history of the Ottawa Police Service. Thirty-six recruits received their badges. I was struck by the diversity of skills, languages, life experiences, and professional backgrounds these new officers bring to the Service. From engineering to social services, and from military to public service, their stories are inspiring. Our community is fortunate to have individuals of such caliber and commitment stepping forward to serve and protect. They are a

powerful reflection of the communities they now serve, and we welcome them with pride.

- On March 3rd, I had the privilege of joining Chief Stubbs at a cheque presentation event, where the proceeds from last year's Police Gala were distributed to three deserving organizations: the Sexual Assault Support Centre of Ottawa, the Multifaith Housing Initiative, and the Beechwood Cemetery Foundation. This annual event not only supports critical community work, but also highlights the OPS's commitment to partnership and giving back.
- That same day, Vice Chair Carr and Member Desroches represented the Board at the swearing-in ceremony for the newest members of the Ottawa Police Service Auxiliary Program. I want to take a moment to express my deep appreciation for our Auxiliary members. They are volunteers who generously give their time and energy to support the Service and contribute to the safety of our city. Their presence at community events, patrols, and public outreach is invaluable, and we are grateful for their continued dedication.
- On March 18th, I attended a meeting of the Community Equity Council. It was an occasion to listen to community leaders' perspectives on mental health, and the role of race and identity data in policing.
- *La Commission reconnaît l'importance de l'opinion publique, et ces réunions que nous avons avec le public et les leaders de la collectivité, moi et les autres membres de la Commission, nous aident beaucoup à exercer notre rôle de gouvernance et de surveillance.*

This concludes my verbal report.