



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

Meeting #: 31
Date: April 7, 2025
Time: 1:00 pm
Location: Electronic Participation

Present: D. Donaldson, C. Curry, S. Desroches

Others: S. Fakirani, M. Carr, Chief E. Stubbs, Deputy Chief P. Burnett, Deputy Chief T. Ferguson, Deputy Chief S. Bell, H. Sayah, R. Ben Guedria, S. Yasseen, M. Anderson, J. Steinbachs, J. Sweet, B. Merklinger, C. Hopgood, C. Huneault, R. Drummond, T. Bitanga-Almaden, G. Calugay-Casuga, I Pedersen, L. Fraser

1. Confirmation of Agenda

That the Ottawa Police Service Board's Finance and Audit Committee confirm the agenda of the 7 April 2025 meeting.

Carried

2. Confirmation of Minutes

2.1 Minutes #30 of 10 February 2025

That the Ottawa Police Service Board's Finance and Audit Committee confirm Minutes #30 of the 10 February 2025 meeting.

Carried

3. Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were filed.

4. Items of Business

4.1 Update on 2026 budget process

Presentation

The Committee discussed the Board's role in terms of public consultations. It was noted that the Board is required to consult the public on the strategic plan, and it is expected that the Service consults the public on its budget. However, it is a collaborative effort in which the Board's strategic plan should align with the budget's priorities. The Service confirmed that they will consult with the public on the budget until it is officially tabled to the Board in November 2025. After it is tabled, the Board has about 30 days to gather feedback before approving the budget. It was highlighted that during the one-month period, public consultations will take place, with the Board leading it in collaboration with the Service as they conduct surveys and meetings with various groups.

ACTION: The Committee stressed that during the consultation it is important to highlight that the budget is based off the strategic plan and the projects under the strategic plan. It was noted that when communicating with the public during the consultations, the 10.6% increase should be broken down to show how it aligns with the 4 pillars of the strategic plan as this will help the public understand where the funds

are going. It should also be clarified that the police budget increase does not mean that the residents' taxes will increase by 10.6% as this has caused confusion in the past.

The Committee considered the usefulness of OPS members' input into budget development through a member engagement survey. The Committee suggested that instead of creating a complex survey, the Service could use a simpler version from another organization to quickly gather member feedback on the budget. The Service advised that internal surveys are possible but lack the accuracy and expertise of professional firms, especially for complex issues like morale. A quick summer pulse check could be done, but it is recommended that a full professional survey be conducted.

The Committee discussed the need for clear communication around red light camera revenue, stressing that, to maintain public trust, this revenue must be used strictly for road safety initiatives, not diverted elsewhere. The Service confirmed that the revenue will be allocated towards various road safety initiatives, and this will be clearly relayed to the public.

The Committee asked for clarification on the 1.5% assessment growth estimates. The Service explained that it is typically a median average used for planning, with a few instances where it was higher or lower. It serves as a starting assumption and will be adjusted based on guidance from Council when it becomes available.

The Committee asked about the extent to which the federal and provincial funding provides significant financial relief or whether it will be allocated towards directed activities. The Service advised that while the government funding provides new money for specific programs, it is already factored into the budget.

It was noted that a significant portion of the budget increase is due to collective bargaining agreements (6.2%) and the staff stabilization plan (9%), which are critical to achieving the strategic objectives.

The additional funding will help reduce frontline workload in certain areas but does not provide additional financial relief beyond what is already included in the forecast. The Service advised that federal and provincial funding covers personnel but only for new programs and services. These personnel are assigned to defined roles and cannot be redirected to other

duties. The goal is for these officers to help reduce call volumes in their designated areas. The Service advised that they could send over an information package about the funding and its various streams.

The Committee asked about the deferred body-worn camera (BWC) program, seeking clarification on which strategic priority they support and what specific value they offer beyond meeting the audit recommendation. The Service advised that the BWC program helps build trust, particularly in communities with low confidence in policing, and is supported by both the public and police members. Although it has been delayed for years, it remains part of the budget plan and it was noted that unlike other large Canadian police services, OPS is yet to implement a BWC program, but the aim is to launch a pilot in 2026.

The Committee asked if there will be any potential savings on fuel costs due to changes like the gas tax relief or carbon tax holiday. The Service advised that there will be moderate savings from the gas or carbon tax relief, and this will be calculated when planning. In past years, fuel costs were underestimated in the budget which caused budget pressures.

The Committee asked what the tax increase in the last few years was. The Service advised that they have consistently followed the Board's directions, which align with Council's recommendations and noted that tax increases have been around 2.5% to 2.9%, plus 1.5% from assessment growth.

The Committee inquired how the tariffs will affect fleet and equipment purchases as this issue could significantly impact the budget. The Service advised that they are tracking the impact of tariffs, especially on fleet purchases, and are expecting a potential \$2 million budget pressure from tariffs this year depending on how long the tariffs last.

It was noted that all OPS data is stored within Canada, and they only sign contracts that include national data storage.

That the Ottawa Police Service Board's Finance and Audit Committee receive this item for information and discussion.

Received

4.2 Update on the implementation of the CSPA

The Committee asked if the Inspectorate of Policing (IoP) is suggesting that police boards adopt a Critical Points policy template already used by Toronto, as part of a broader move toward standardized policies. The Executive Director cautioned that adopting Toronto's policy template may not suit the Board's needs as the critical points threshold will likely differ. The Service is in ongoing discussions with Toronto Police to understand how their critical points policy works behind the scenes.

The Committee asked how much work goes into the benchmarking conducted by IoP. The Service advised that the IoP has done data pulls from all police services. The cost and burden of oversight under the CSPA such as annual data pulls is being tracked, and more details will be shared in the May report to the Board. The Service commented that while some oversight requirements are valuable, others seem overly burdensome which raises questions about their practicality. It was noted that the Service is struggling with some of these requirements and may need to expand the team to meet the requirements effectively.

That the Ottawa Police Service Board's Finance and Audit Committee receive this item for information and discussion.

Received

4.3 South Facility Project Update: First Quarter 2025

Chief's report and presentation

The Committee asked for clarification on the unexpected soil issues, questioning how such problems arose when soil testing is typically done well in advance of a project. The Service explained that soil tests were done in advance, with consultants providing their best estimates. However, unexpected soil conditions were still encountered during construction. This issue required significant remediation, particularly with the pilings, leading to increased costs. It was noted that the construction site is next to the river which is always challenging to build on. The original estimate was around \$10 million short, however, this issue has since been resolved and the project is progressing according to plan.

The Committee asked what is left in the contingency. The Service advised that initially the contingency was set at 7.5% (\$8 million) of the overall

budget and as of now \$14 million is committed to the contingency which includes both the cost of the piling and the indirect costs with delays that occurred. There is nothing left in the contingency.

The \$6 million relief from the City was originally allocated for land purchase on the south campus. During last year's budget process, the City agreed to forgive that amount, allowing the Service to reduce the project budget by \$6 million.

The Committee asked if there have been any complaints from the public regarding the construction. The Service advised that they are working with the local Councillor and they are managing the impacts of the piling on the immediate neighbours. Regular updates are also provided to Carleton Lodge and an open house is planned once the weather improves.

That the Ottawa Police Service Board's Finance and Audit Committee receive this report for information.

Received

4.4 Standing update on Quality Assurance

The Service advised that they completed a number of audit recommendations from a major review done over a year ago, but they are facing capacity issues as the team handling this work is small. It was noted that with multiple layers of oversight, it has been challenging to keep up, though it is still a key focus for them.

The Committee urged the auditors to work with the Service to develop realistic implementation plans, recognizing that some changes, especially involving procurement, can take years. It was stressed that recommendations need to consider the Service's operational demands and capacity, and for follow-up timelines to be reasonable and achievable.

T. Bitanga-Almaden confirmed that the Quality Assurance team does work with other Service stakeholders to develop action plans. She noted that when leadership changes occur in relevant units, recommendations are re-assessed to ensure that they are still relevant to the current environment. They are reviewed and new due dates may be determined. The Committee asked if performance agreements with management generally include an obligation to follow up on audit recommendations.

Chief Stubbs advised that there aren't specific references to quality assurance recommendations in management performance agreements and there is no formal obligation tied directly to the specific recommendations.

The Committee asked if adding two more staff members to the Quality Assurance section will be enough to carry out the annual audit plan effectively. The Service advised that they are increasing their capacity to support the audit plan, with one senior auditor joining next week and an additional vacant position remains. They also have consulting support to scale up capacity quickly as needed.

The Committee inquired about the threshold for critical findings which require the Board's immediate attention.

ACTION: The Executive Director confirmed that there is no defined threshold for critical findings in the policy and suggests that the Board and Service discuss this to establish one.

The Committee discussed the importance of realistic due dates for audits and stressed that if deadlines are not met, the Board will require a valid explanation.

The Committee asked if agile audits could be considered for future projects, such as the South facility. The Service advised that with the addition of more staff, they will have greater capacity to take on different types of audits and adopt more effective approaches.

The Committee encouraged the Service to present any findings they think deserve the Board's attention to them.

The Committee asked if there is a timeline for hiring the third person. The Service advised that the staffing is aligned with the staffing stabilization plan, and they are working closely with Human Resources to develop a timeline.

The Committee commended T. Bitanga-Almaden on the hard work spearheading the audit projects.

That the Ottawa Police Service Board's Finance and Audit Committee receive this item for information.

Received

5. Other Business

6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2: 44 pm.

7. Next Meeting

Friday, June 27, 2025 - 10:00 AM