



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

Meeting #: 32 - Special Finance & Audit Committee Meeting / Réunion
extraordinaire du Comité des finances et de la vérification

Date: August 8, 2025

Time: 9:30 am

Location: Electronic Participation

Present: Dave Donaldson, Steve Desroches, Cathy Curry

Others: S. Fakirani, P. Henschel, M. Carr, H. Sayah, S. Yasseen, R.
Ben Guedria, S. Badaravada, Chief E. Stubbs, Deputy Chief
P. Burnett, Auditor General N. Gougeon, J. Gorenstein, A.
Arora, R. Weiss, H. Lachine, H. Ogilvie, C. Huneault, J.
Steinbachs, T. Bitanga-Almaden, A. Bond, S. Sharma

1. Confirmation of Agenda

That the Ottawa Police Service Board's Finance and Audit Committee confirm the agenda of the 8th August 2025 meeting.

Carried

2. Confirmation of Minutes

2.1 Minutes #31 of 7th April 2025

That the Ottawa Police Service Board's Finance and Audit Committee confirm Minutes #31 of the 7th April 2025 meeting.

Carried

3. Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were filed.

4. Items of Business

4.1 Office of the Auditor General (OAG): Ottawa Police Service-Audit of Staffing

Office of the Auditor General's Report

The Committee asked the Auditor General to comment on the Ottawa Police Service's (OPS) internal audit team. N. Gougeon, Auditor General, commented that OPS has a very small internal audit team and that this was the reason why, over the past few years, she has reached out to various Board chairs to offer the OAG's services. She noted her team collaborates with the OPS audit team, especially during risk assessments that shape their three-year audit plan, and that there is ongoing collaboration to ensure coordination and avoid duplication of effort.

The Committee asked the Auditor General if she found the term 'adequate and effective policing' challenging when conducting the audit. N. Gougeon advised that the mission and mandate are defined by provincial legislation. As auditors, they establish internal definitions to create a baseline for assessment. In this case, they are evaluating whether the Service's goals and objectives are clearly defined and whether the Service is structured to achieve them.

The Committee asked whether the audit examined officers who perform investigative duties, not just frontline patrol, since investigative work is a significant area of concern. The Auditor General reported that the audit on recruitment and retention covered both sworn and civilian members. While there was a greater focus on frontline staff deployment due to their large numbers, the scope included all parts of OPS. The audit's data analysis, staffing discussions, and tools considered both frontline and investigative officers. Therefore, the recommendations apply to both frontline and other sworn officers.

The Committee asked if there were any geographic findings related to the number of frontline officers when compared to other similar sized cities. The Auditor General reported that they consulted with OPS to select appropriate comparators, primarily from the Big 12 that are similar in geography and size. Rather than comparing exact numbers of frontline officers, the audit emphasized reviewing processes and whether police services regularly assess their staffing needs. The report notes that some police services conduct these assessments more clearly and regularly.

The Committee discussed the term 'adequate and effective policing' noting that this is a legislative term referenced in the Act. They noted the difficulty the Board has in relaying their mandate to Council to approve the yearly budget in order to ensure adequate and effective policing. The Auditor General emphasized the importance of conducting an assessment to determine the appropriate level of policing needed in communities. Without this assessment, it's impossible to know if current resources can meet the demand.

The Committee commented on the Audit's findings stating that OPS' recruitment process is too lengthy however, it is also considered one of the strongest with higher retention rates and robust training. The Auditor General advised that the intent is not to cut corners, but to address significant delays in assigning investigators for background checks, which can take anywhere from three weeks to seven months. Due to these delays, there is a risk losing potential recruits.

The Committee asked if there are other areas where the Auditor General would recommend further audits. The Auditor General explained that their risk assessment process involves creating a prioritized list of risks where they can add the most value.

The Committee addressed concerns about a clause in the collective agreement requiring a certain number of officers on frontline patrol which may be outdated. The Committee asked for clarification on the clause and how it might overlook the broader range of important activities that OPS undertakes to provide effective policing throughout the city. The clause remained in the agreement at the request of the Ottawa Police Association (OPA). It was noted that Section 11 of the CSPA outlines the requirement for adequate and effective policing, supported by general standards that help define those terms. However, the legislation does not specify the number of officers required. It was discussed that the Service must present evidence to the Board to justify the need for additional resources for effective policing. It was noted that the staffing benchmark of 42 has not been reassessed since around the 2000 amalgamation, despite population growth. As part of a new district model, the Service is reevaluating that number but the current number is outdated and needs to be revised.

The Service recognizes that many new recruits lack a full understanding of the job, leading to some surprises despite strong retention rates. To address this, OPS is creating a "realistic job profile" to set clear expectations about the challenges and rewards of policing and highlight available wellness supports. They are also exploring virtual ride-alongs to offer candidates a behind-the-scenes view before joining.

The Committee asked about the costs and challenges of tracking officer training. It was noted that if officers are missing required training or if more have been trained than recorded, this impacts resources. The Service explained that mandatory training falls into two categories: legislative requirements and internal service requirements. Legislated training, like annual use-of-force recertification, is well-managed with automated reminders and processes to handle lapses. However, tracking all training across different service sections is more complex, and they are still working to find the right software solution to manage it effectively. The Service suggested using artificial intelligence to track and manage training requirements across various units, including both mandated and unit-specific training. The best-case scenario would be a system that automatically notifies personnel of upcoming training, similar to how the use-of-force training is currently managed.

The Committee asked why those in supervisory roles are not ensuring that their staff's training is current regardless of whether a tracking system exists. The Service explained that there is uncertainty over what is mandatory (legislatively, internally, or role-specific). The need to clarify and standardize this process is needed to ensure all necessary training is properly tracked, in line with the Auditor General's recommendations.

The Committee referred to the audit findings that some psychological assessments flagged concerns about certain candidates and asked whether there is an analysis of those flagged individuals and how it related to issues like retention problems or misconduct. The Service advised that once a candidate is marked "suitable with concerns," further investigation is done. If those concerns are resolved, the candidate can move forward. In cases where issues arise during or after training, the candidate's background may be reviewed during case conferences and all available information is considered when assessing a candidate's suitability to continue employment.

The Committee inquired about the platoon size in relation to the district policing model and asked when the Board can expect clarity on staffing needs and the structure required to support it. The Service advised that more information on platoon size and staffing needs is expected to be provided in May 2026.

The Committee asked what were the common themes that have emerged from recent discussions with City Councillors regarding frontline operations and district policing. The Service advised that the two main themes are requests for increased police presence and concerns about traffic issues.

The Committee asked whether follow-up on the Auditor General's recommendations will be included in the performance agreements of senior management. Chief Stubbs noted that most of the recommendations are directed at himself and the CHRO. He stressed that the audit is being taken seriously and that delivering on the response is a priority for the Service.

The Committee referred to the psychological testing audit findings and asked whether the two recruits deemed unsuitable and the two without proper follow-up were from separate staffing files in the sample of 15, or if they were part of the same cases. The Audit team advised that all findings

came from the same sample of 15 staffing files. Some recruits were marked unsuitable, while others were flagged with concerns, each requiring different follow-up steps based on the type of assessment result.

The Auditor General's office has a formal follow-up process for all issued recommendations. Each management response includes a timeline, and once that timeline passes, her team checks whether progress has been made. **ACTION:** The Service advised that they will report back on the progress to the Finance or the Human Resources Committee by January 2026. **ACTION:** It will be decided which Committee will review the progress at the September 2025 Board meeting when receiving the audit findings.

That the Ottawa Police Service Board's Finance and Audit Committee receive the audit report and recommend the Ottawa Police Service Board consider and approve the recommendations.

Received and Carried

4.2 Standing Update on Quality Assurance

Presentation

The Committee asked how many people are part of the internal audit team. The team consists of a manager and a recently hired senior internal audit specialist. Additionally, a quality assurance analyst will be onboarded shortly.

The Committee asked why the management action plans are overdue. It was noted that during the pandemic, the area and focus of the Service were reduced due to various challenges. Afterwards, in 2022–2023, a thorough review was conducted which initiated improvements and progress.

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 11:13 am.

7. Next Meeting

Friday, September 5, 2025 - 10:00 AM

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