

## **Chief Verbal Report September 29, 2025 OPSB Public Meeting**

### **OPENING REMARKS**

Good afternoon. *Bonjour à tous.*

Thank you Grandmother Irene Compton for opening today's meeting in such a meaningful way. I'm very pleased the Board invited her on the eve of National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. The word Reconciliation is different for everyone. Here at the OPS, a key part of our definition is working in collaboration with the Algonquin Anishanabee. It's working in collaboration with the Indigenous Communities here in Ottawa. We value the partnerships we have built and we are dedicated to strengthening those relationships through respect, trust and collaboration.

### **MEMORIAL**

Yesterday, marked the 48th Canadian Police and Peace Officers' Memorial on Parliament Hill. We had a great turnout of OPS members both marching and those that worked to keep the event secure and manage the traffic. I also want to thank all the Board members who were able to join us. And Member Desrouches for coming to the event on Saturday to welcome the riders and runners who arrived on the Hill after a grueling week of travelling north from the GTA to Ottawa. As Deputy Mayor, he made some comments to the group assembled and I appreciate you taking the time in your day to do so.

The memorial honours officers who gave their lives in the line of duty, a tradition that began after the tragic shooting of Ottawa Police Cst. David Kirkwood in 1977.

It was a blessing this year that no officers we're killed in the line of duty in 2024. However, three historical names were be added: Constable Craig Town, Lance Corporal John Baker, and Acting Sergeant George Cook. Their sacrifice is never forgotten.

It's always an important reminder of the risks our officers take every day, and the memorial is a chance to pay our respects.

### **FALL**

Summer is always a busy operational time but it was also full of teamwork and impact from our members in the community. *Cela nous a rappelé les liens communautaires qui unissent nos membres.*

We celebrated the opening of St. Luke's basketball court and joined the Caring and Sharing Exchange to pack thousands of backpacks for kids.

We had a Fill the Boat Food Drive, where our East District team and partners collected nearly 2,000 food items and donations to support local families. We welcomed Sachin on his cross-Canada mental health run, a powerful reminder that none of us should face struggles alone.

Following that, the OPS were hosts for the The North American Police Soccer Tournament, bringing together over 600 athletes and 32 teams to Ottawa from across Canada and the U.S.

Our Men's Masters team won their division. We raised over \$25,000 for at-risk youth here in Ottawa.

We had another successful KUTZ for KIDS event that saw black youth in the city get a free haircut before school and play in a basketball tournament.

Our members joined local law enforcement partners, Special Olympians, and community members for this year's Torch Run. The run started at our headquarters and made it's way through downtown.

The highlight was running alongside Special Olympians, whose determination inspires us all.

I want to mention, it was great to see members of the Board at many of these events.

### **DEMONSTRATIONS AND EVENTS**

This summer has been busy, with demonstrations, protests, and large gatherings happening across the city. From Canada Day, to IronMan, to the Pride Parade, to the Labour Day March, to the Army Run to the past weekend's Memorial...just to name a few. Our team got it done. There were many, many protests as well. From when Parliament sat on Sept 15<sup>th</sup> and ...for the next 8 days we had 14 protests to manage. It's our job to keep people safe, while also respecting their right to gather and be heard.

Looking ahead, the team is already preparing for several high-profile events this fall, including the Panda Game.

I want to take a moment to recognize the officers and everyone involved in planning and organizing these events. Your work doesn't just happen on the day. It takes hours of preparation, coordination, and teamwork to make sure these events are safe and orderly. *Merci.*

### **GALA**

The tickets for the 14th Annual Ottawa Police Gala are now available! It is taking place on Saturday, November 8th, at the Rogers Centre.

The Gala is always a great night with dinner, dancing, and a chance to connect with the community.

This year, we're supporting two amazing organizations: the Dave Smith Youth Treatment Centre and the Capital Prosperity Foundation. The Dave Smith Centre does incredible work helping young people who are facing substance use challenges. The Capital Prosperity Foundation creates opportunities for vulnerable and marginalized groups.

The goal is to raise funds to support both of these important causes. Every dollar raised will go toward these organizations making a real difference here in Ottawa.

It will sell out quickly, so make sure to grab your tickets soon! Thanks for your support, *Merci pour votre soutien*, and I'm looking forward to seeing you all there for a great night.

### **CHARGES IN MERIVALE EXPLOSION**

I want to make a comment on the 2022 Merivale Road explosion. After a thorough, two-and-a-half-year investigation, charges have now been laid. Neil Greene has been charged with six counts of criminal negligence causing death and one count of criminal negligence causing bodily harm.

This was a tragic event that took 6 lives and seriously injured another. Our thoughts remain with the families, friends, and colleagues of those affected. The work of our dedicated investigators over the past years has been meticulous and focused. I want to acknowledge their dedication to uncovering the facts.

### **CORE PROJECT**

**Review list of OPOT** I had the chance recently to take part in a good discussion at the Ottawa Board of Trade about the health of the Downtown Core. This area means a lot to Ottawa but we all know they are struggling. We're seeing the ongoing impacts of homelessness, crime and disorder. And these challenges aren't just in the Market anymore. They're spreading into other parts of the city too.

As a police service we're stepping up with new programs like our CamSafe and the CORE programs that's on today's agenda. Our Frontline members are making proactive foot patrols. We still have the Market Safe program to suppress violence during late night bar hours. We're also working closely with city partners and community groups to make sure our response is coordinated and focused.

We're also doing more work through Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design. We're working with business owners to ensure lighting, adjusting access and looking at how the built environment can help reduce crime and make people feel safer. This fall our Mounted Unit will be back. The horses are not just a strong deterrent to disorder and protests, they're also a great way for us to connect with residents, businesses and visitors.

The downtown core is very complex area and requires many agencies and the public to manage the various issues. I'm convinced that most are focused on improving the conditions in the downtown core. It's not all negative. There are improvements in some areas but the Ottawa Police are committed to doing everything we can to help both the vulnerable population and making the area safer.

### **HATE CRIME UPDATE**

Our City has faced some serious hate-motivated incidents recently. These attacks are shocking, unacceptable, and have no place in Ottawa. *Ces attaques sont choquantes, inacceptables et n'ont pas leur place à Ottawa.*

Earlier this summer, there was a stabbing at a grocery store on Baseline Road. A woman in her 70s was seriously injured.

The detectives worked quickly and arrested 71-year-old Joseph Rooke. He has been charged with aggravated assault and possession of a dangerous weapon. The victim and Rooke were not known to each other prior to the incident.

We also recently arrested a 30-year-old man connected to an assault of a Muslim woman on an OC Transpo bus in Kanata. Charges include criminal harassment, assault, uttering threats, and inciting hate.

These cases are deeply upsetting to our community. Our Hate and Bias Crime Unit, West Criminal Investigations Unit, and our partners, including OC Transpo, have come together to ensure the community is safer and that accountability is being pursued.

We are keeping in touch with leaders in affected communities, increasing our visible presence where it matters most, and encouraging anyone who experiences or witnesses a hate-motivated crime to report it. Your information can make a real difference.

### **Intimate Partner Violence and CIT Updates**

Our Intimate Partner Violence Unit continues to face a heavy caseload, with a 26% increase in files over last year and more than 500 resulting in charges. Their work spans from mischief to attempted murder, and though it often goes unseen, their relentless commitment to victims reflects our Service's deep compassion and dedication to ending gender-based violence.

This year we launched a new pilot, Victim Choice Reporting, to reduce wait times for survivors of crimes against women. Instead of waiting nearly two hours, victims can now make reports in about 30 minutes. Already, more than 300 calls have been handled, and 91% of participants want the program to become permanent. This innovation ensures victims are heard and supported when they choose to come forward.

Our Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) officers are also making an immediate impact. Through training in communication and de-escalation, they have already prevented harm and guided

vulnerable individuals toward care. In one case, officers safely de-escalated a dangerous situation involving a person in psychosis, bringing them to hospital without incident. These initiatives show our Service's priority: compassion in action, innovation in support, and an unwavering focus on preventing violence and keeping our community safe.

## **HOMICIDES**

We have issued a significant reward of \$75,000 for information that could lead to the arrest of those responsible for the fatal stabbing of 66-year-old Roger Dale Lusk.

This tragic incident happened last year in Metcalfe. Mr. Lusk was attacked after a brief interaction with a vehicle near his home and sadly passed away a few weeks later. Investigators believe there were at least two people in the suspect vehicle at the time.

We've already released surveillance footage and images to the public, and now we are increasing the reward to encourage anyone with information to come forward. Even the smallest detail could make a difference in bringing answers and accountability.

## **FEEL-GOOD STORY**

While we often talk about complex investigations and serious incidents, I want to highlight a different kind of call..one that shows the heart of policing. Our communications centre received a 9-1-1 call from an elderly woman who was in distress. Her personal support worker had cancelled for the day, and she was left without help. She was hungry, unable to get out of bed, and had no family nearby.

Cst. Hopkins and Cst. Chipman responded. When they arrived, they helped her into her wheelchair, prepared her breakfast, and even replaced light bulbs that hadn't been fixed despite repeated requests to her landlord. They made sure she was safe, comfortable, and had follow-up support arranged before leaving.

For these officers, it was just part of the job. But for the woman, it made a real difference. Policing isn't only about responding to crime. It's about being there for the community, helping people when they need it, and ensuring dignity and safety.

This call shows that sometimes the biggest impact comes from the smallest acts of service. It's a quiet reminder of the trust our community places in us and why every positive interaction matters.