

Chief Bell's Verbal Report for OPSB Meeting June 27, 2022

Good evening Members of the Board.

I want to start my verbal report by talking a little bit about Constable Vijay (Muddyallagan) 'Mathiyalaghan'.

He joined us in 2020 as part of our December new recruit class, and in the short time he was with our Service he left a lasting impact.

Vijay served our country with pride in the Canadian Armed Forces as a combat engineer.

He was an equally proud member of the Ottawa Police Service.

The loss of this young and talented officer has been exceptionally difficult for those closest to him, including those in his graduating class.

On behalf of the Ottawa Police Service, I want to express our deepest condolences to his family.

I would ask that we have a moment of silence in his memory.

National Indigenous Peoples Day

I also want to recognize National Indigenous History Month.

This month is an opportunity for everyone to honour the history, contributions, and resiliency of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis Peoples.

Last week was National Indigenous Peoples Day – a day where we can all recommit to working to build trust as we move forward towards reconciliation.

The Ottawa Police is working to build relationships with all of our Indigenous communities.

We are committed to pursuing greater understanding, cooperation, and respect.

We are committed to improving service, interactions, and outcomes for indigenous people.

As we celebrate our diversity, it's vital to recognize Indigenous communities and celebrate their diverse cultures and unique heritage.

Constables Christian Lamarche and Lisa Beaucage volunteered at the Madahoki farm, which hosted the Summer Solstice Indigenous Festival that ran from June 21 to 26.

They both are actively involved in leading positive relationships with our Indigenous community.

They bring a wealth of experience, including lived experience, to their important roles.

Annual Report

I am pleased to be presenting the 2021 Annual Report at tonight's Board meeting.

I would encourage you to review it to learn about the important initiatives we have implemented as a Service and the progress we have made.

It also provides Ottawa residents with an overview of:

- the number of calls for service,
- our response times,
- things we have done to support victims of crime,
- as well as other data that offers a snapshot of policing across the city.

Last year we saw a 7 percent increase in the demand for service, which is in line with the province's easing of COVID 19 restrictions.

We are already seeing an increase in Crime which exceed pre-pandemic levels. This includes Violent crime and property crimes, which have both increased.

You can review the full report attached to this evening's Board agenda or visit our website at ottawapolice.ca.

Gun Violence

I want to highlight some great work by our Guns and Gangs and investigative units recently.

Since the start of the year we have seized 44 guns. We have seen 25 shootings in 2022 which is down 39% from 39 at this time last year.

In early June our Guns and Gangs Unit targeted firearm and drug trafficking in Ottawa with Project Street Sweeper.

That investigation resulted in 6 crime guns, several arrests, and the seizure of narcotics.

We continue to focus on gun violence through prevention and investigation

Fake firearms

Our officers are also seeing an increase in the number of people using replica handguns in the commission of a crime.

These guns can look very real and can have the same intimidation factor as real firearms.

They are also very hard for our officers to determine by initial visual verification if they are real or fake.

Some of these replicas have been purposefully made to look like the real thing.

It's important for the public to know that those found possessing these replica guns will be charged under the Criminal Code of Canada.

We have raised this issue with the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, and we know that we will likely need legislative changes to deal with this issue.

Diversity Celebration

We were pleased to host our annual Diversity Celebration last Wednesday, the first time we were able to do so in person since the start of the pandemic.

It is held in recognition of Canada's Multiculturalism Day on June 27 and is a chance to also acknowledge National Indigenous Peoples Day on June 21.

Ottawa is growing in its diversity and celebrations like these help us to be more inclusive and aware of the many cultures that call this city home.

Compassion and professionalism

Before I end this report, I want to highlight one letter that we received this month that shows the caring of our officers.

“I have a severe disability because I have lost a significant amount of my brain as a result of surgery to remove a brain tumour.

Last week, I got lost. I was going to visit a friend.

They were not home, and I could not figure out how to get back to my home.

Trying to find my way home, I asked a very nice lady for help.

I do not know if she called 911 or if she called the police directly.

About 10 minutes later a police car pulled up.

I cannot tell you what he asked me, but nothing was unkind.

Constable (Ralph Kojotoevitz) ‘Zdzislaw Kogutowicz’ just wanted to try and figure out what was wrong.

I told him I had a hard time talking and that I had lots of medical problems.

The problem was, I was probably almost incoherent.

All I knew was that I wanted to go home.

Cst. (Kojotoevitz) ‘Kogutowicz’ made some calls and then said that he would take me home, after finding my home address on his computer.

He was very kind during the ride, reassuring me that all would be ok.

When we got to my home, he made certain that I was ok.

I cannot thank this man enough for what he did.

Cst. (Kojootoevitz) 'Kogutowicz' is an extraordinary officer.

Please thank him for the great job he did to help me.”

These are only a glimpse into what our members do each and every day to keep our city safe.

I am proud of the work they are doing in their duty of care to enhance our community's safety and well-being.

I want to wish you all a Happy Canada Day!

We have a presentation on our Canada Day operational plan later in this meeting.