

**I/Chief Bell's Verbal for OPSB meeting
September 26, 2022**

Good evening,

I want to begin my verbal report with a moment of silence for Constable Andrew Hong of the Toronto Police Service, who was killed in the line of duty on September 12th.

Memorial/Toronto Funeral

Last Wednesday, a significant presence of Ottawa Police Service members were in Toronto for Constable Hong's memorial.

We were honoured and proud to be there, along with police members from across the country, to offer our condolences and to share in the grief of the loss of this officer.

It is important that we grieve together both as police and community to recognize his service.

And yesterday, we once again marked the Canadian Police and Peace Officers' Memorial.

It is an important day for policing that gives police members, families and friends the chance to pay respect to those who have lost their lives in service to their communities.

The National Memorial began after the 1977 shooting of Ottawa Police Constable David Kirkwood, a 21-year-old rookie.

His daughter Trish still lives in Ottawa and continues to join us for this event.

This is one of our most important traditions and this year's memorial was the first time we could come together in person since the COVID-19 pandemic.

The National Memorial gives us a chance to grieve, remember, provide support, and offer comfort to the families of those fallen officers.

National Truth and Reconciliation Day

I also want to take a moment to recognize National Truth and Reconciliation Day - coming up on September 30th.

This observance is an opportunity for us all to reflect on the atrocities of the Residential School System, the lasting impacts on Indigenous peoples and our own relationships with the indigenous community.

It's an opportunity to think about what reconciliation means and what we can do to contribute.

Like many Canadians and Canadian institutions, the OPS is committed to continuing our learning journey and co-developing best practices to serve Indigenous residents better.

Femicides

Since January, six women have been taken from their loved ones through acts of violence in Ottawa.

While there are differences in terms of the individual circumstances of each loss, there is a commonality as well.

In each case, we have concluded that a man was responsible or men are facing charges.

This violence must stop.

Help is available. We encourage anyone aware of or experiencing abuse to call the police or community service providers.

Any act of gender-based violence is unacceptable and requires an all-of-community response to support potential victims.

Ending this violence will take new approaches, new ideas and renewed collaboration with the community.

Recognizing possible warning signs, and taking steps to help, can mean the difference between life and death for individuals at risk.

The Ottawa Police Service has begun introducing the term femicide in our communications to describe the murder of women when the reason for the death is suspected to be that the person is a woman, including intimate partner violence, misogyny, control or sexually motivated crimes.

Femicide is a term that currently has many definitions. While the term has true meaning, it is not in the Criminal Code and does not necessarily speak to motive.

Our service's use of this term is meant to bring a new dimension to the conversation about and advocacy to eliminate violence against women in our community.

We must advocate for an official definition, co-produced and accepted by the community, the justice system and the police.

This will lead to a better understanding of what it means, how to stop it and, finally, its entrenchment in law.

Pride Month in Ottawa

We were honoured and so excited to be a part of the Pride Parade last month. After two years of virtual celebrations, the Capital Pride Festival returned to streets and venues around Ottawa - and we were there to join the festivities.

Along with raising the Progress Pride Flag at our Police Headquarters with board members, we were happy to participate in the Parade that closed the week-long celebration.

The record numbers that came out to join the festivities were a reminder of just how far the LGBTQ2S+ community has come.

We have created a dedicated LGBTQ2S+ Liaison Officer position to support continued progress.

The Liaison Officer will be a direct point of contact to foster positive relationships and address unique safety concerns within the community.

Stats: Highlights (January 1 to September 20)

We continue to see a return to pre-pandemic levels of service. Between January 1st and September 20th, a total of 112,000 dispatched calls were received by members of the public. This marks a 7% increase in calls.

This year, Criminal Code offences have risen by 22%, including 9% for violent crimes and 31% for property crimes.

Specifically, the violent crimes that are on the rise include assaults (up 8%), sexual violations (up 14%), robberies (up 23%), uttering threats to persons (up 14%), and criminal harassment (up 10%).

We are also seeing a major increase in impaired driving cases. So far, this year 648 people have been charged with impaired driving, compared to 457 people at this time last year.

Of those cases 471 were impaired by alcohol and 52 by drugs.

Another 111 people were charged with Failing to or refusing to comply with an impairment test.

Shootings and gun seizures

As of September 20th, we have seen 48 shootings this year, which is a 25% decrease compared to this time last year.

Despite the decline in shootings, the number of people injured is on the rise. We have seen 27 people injured and 3 fatalities due to shootings.

In all of 2021, we investigated 33 non-fatal and 9 fatal shootings.

Our investigators remain very engaged in these files. 84 crime guns have been seized. 46 of these guns were seized following an OPS-led investigation with the support of the Canada Border Services Agency and the Ontario Provincial Police.

Panda Game

This weekend, uOttawa and Carleton will play in the annual Panda Game. While this is a fun community event, we are also aware of the disruptive behaviour associated with it.

Last week, we began communicating to the public that there will be zero tolerance for public disorder in relation to activities or parties surrounding the Panda Game on October 1st.

Together with Ottawa By-law and the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario, we will have a significant and sustained presence in the ByWard Market, Sandy Hill and Old Ottawa South areas for Panda Game festivities.

Officers will focus on *Criminal Code, Liquor Licence and Control Act* offences, and other general conduct issues.

Public safety and community impact are always our number one priority.

Police and By-law officers have been going door-to-door as they did before St. Patrick's Day to speak directly to residents and businesses.

We are aware of several addresses that previously raised concerns and will monitor them.

We continue to remind anyone planning to participate in Panda Game activities or parties that Police and By-law Officers will be enforcing the law.

So, please, celebrate responsibly.

We will not tolerate the types of activities that followed last year's Panda Game.

Recent homicide at St. Laurent

On September 16th, we saw a terrible homicide and multiple stabbing occur at St. Laurent Shopping Centre.

Police and emergency responders were called to the shopping centre at about 4:30 p.m. Friday after witnesses reported the incident. In total, three men were injured.

One of those victims, a 19-year-old, succumbed to his injuries and was pronounced deceased in hospital.

The Ottawa Police Service Homicide Unit charged an 18-year-old with 2nd-degree murder, two counts of aggravated assault and one count of breaching release conditions.

This type of violence between young men has a large impact on our community and is completely tragic and unnecessary.

We need to continue to work as a community to address street violence.

Recruitment numbers

The Outreach Recruiting Team is working hard to attract and hire top talent that is also diverse and reflective of the community we serve.

The team has been engaged in a number of efforts to attract women and candidates from diverse communities.

We have been engaging with the community to ensure community members can send us referrals.

We have seen a significant increase in the number of overall applicants and are impressed with the candidates' diverse talent.

Additionally, of our latest hiring class of 21 individuals hired last month, 33% were racialized, 5% were indigenous, and 24% were female.

Seventeen were multi-lingual, all had completed post-secondary education, and several had significant experience working with vulnerable individuals.

I want to thank the Board members, Council members and community members who have been referring individuals to us.

The partnerships we have built are making a difference.

I encourage you to please continue to send qualified candidates our way.

Commendation

Every month we have a commendations report to showcase the good work of our members.

I want to highlight one of them; the following commendation was shared about an interaction between one of our members and an individual in distress:

“I was driving when I witnessed a man running into traffic at an intersection.

An unmarked police car stopped and the officer who got out proceeded to act in the calmest, most gentle manner towards the man.

Instead of grabbing him, he took his arm and they walked together toward the sidewalk, where they continued to talk.

The conversation appeared to calm the man down.

I was extremely impressed with the way this was handled, and the police officer should be commended.”

Thank you.