

Black Organisations and the Ottawa Police Services Budget in a time of Covid19

A coalition of Black community organisations in Ottawa is seeking an urgent meeting with the Ottawa Police Services Board prior to its next meeting on July 27 with a view of averting the potential negative impact of Covid19 on the plan and budget that has been approved by the Board, the Police Chief, the City Council and the Community.

Covid19 has covered the globe with a contagion that is still bringing sickness and death to people everywhere. In response, Canada and the City of Ottawa continue to make the right decisions. But with the contagion still wreaking havoc worldwide the OPS budget is now in imminent danger.

That approved budget is aimed at creating a police service that reflects the diversity of the Ottawa community, and by so doing, at effecting a positive permanent change on police culture by engaging critical mass strategy. This plan has received a strong seal of approval from the Community because it is an objective that has been given lip service as a dire necessity at least since the police killing of Vincent Gardner in 1991.

But the word and not the deed confounds us. It has been clearly signalled that with the massive unforeseen expenditures that Covid-19 continues to create, there might have to be cuts to the City budget **and the police budget**. The position of Ottawa's Black organisations, which met on Sunday July 12 and Tuesday July 14 to discuss this, is that nothing should interfere with the plan to employ 100 new recruits to the OPS. In other words, **a way must be found immediately** to circumvent this and bring the employment plan into action.

It is in this context that we are seeking immediate action. We are proposing that one way out will be to initiate an **Accelerated Retirement Program** for 100 current OPS members who are near retirement in order to help fund the new hiring. We understand that there is precedent for this. We understand that there is precedent for this in similar action taken when the current City Manager Steve Kanellakos took over.

Grateful you agree to meet with a deputation from our organisations early next week.

Sincerely,

Ewart Walters, Order of Ottawa
Coordinator Black Agenda Noir