

Chief's verbal

June 25, 2018

OPSB meeting

Good evening,

I want to begin this evening by mentioning the new timeline for cannabis legalization. The federal government announced last week the official date when cannabis will become legal to use in Canada on 17 October 2018.

That announcement was a major milestone but there is still a lot of work to do in developing and finalizing regulations.

Public education and awareness will be vital. Government needs to ensure all Canadians understand the new rules.

A key priority for police is the issue of impaired driving. We expect to see an increase and we have been working to ensure our officers have the training to identify impaired drivers.

As a police service, we are working hard to ensure that all of our officers are fully prepared to deal with safety issues surrounding this new legislation.

We have 16 officers trained as Drug Recognition Examiners and another 261 officers trained on our Standardized Field Sobriety Test. Another 10 will be trained as Drug Recognition Experts this fall. Unfortunately, the training is only available in the US.

We will be educating our members on the practical implementation of the new law in regards to policing. This means learning about penalties and offences under the new legislation. We are also part of a city-wide Integrated Cannabis Steering Committee and a working group.

While this new law brings with it many unknowns, our service is taking a pragmatic approach to dealing with whatever emerges after the implementation of this legislation.

Canada Day preparations

We will all be celebrating Canada Day in less than a week. Our service has been coordinating with our policing, security, Federal and municipal partners to prepare for the safety of all who attend the events.

We undertake these preparations with an understanding of the threats that exist in our world.

I want to thank the planning teams and all the members who have been actively engaged in the work so far. It's a difficult balance ensuring public safety and security measures don't impact the ability of the public to enjoy this holiday.

This year the Ottawa Police is again in charge of security off the Hill and throughout Ottawa. The lineups are managed by Heritage Canada and Parliamentary Protective Service and I know that a lot of work has gone into learning lessons from last year's experience.

Last year's Canada 150 events were a great primer for enhancing safety measures during popular events. Our Special Events team was recognized for its efforts in dealing with the complex logistics for deployment during Canada's birthday year with the 2018 City Manager's Award of Distinction for Collaboration and Relationship-Building. It's a well-deserved award.

HealthIM

Our Frontline officers were provided a new tool last week when responding to calls for people in mental health crisis.

The new HealthIM software system allows an officer the ability to quickly assess whether a patient is an acute risk, and seamlessly send that report to a nearby hospital. It will also assist us in tracking and reducing wait times at hospitals.

This tool will help us to provide appropriate assistance to those in mental crisis. We expect it will reduce our apprehension rates when it comes to interacting with those who have mental health issues.

Officers have already begun using the tool and we expect to have updates on how the new software is helping us help those most vulnerable in our city.

Police stop suicide

Helping people in mental health crisis puts the communications skills of our members to the test.

One evening earlier this month, our officers responded to a report of a suicidal young man on the Alexandria bridge.

Our officers responded and began speaking to the man. Ottawa Fire managed to get a boat beneath him in the water in case he did jump.

By working together, they managed to talk the man off the bridge and get him to hospital.

I want to thank all of those involved. It is calls like these that often go unnoticed but have a major impact on people in our community.

Road Safety

Our Traffic Services team was out in full force for our MegaRIDE initiative on June 15, looking to get impaired drivers off our roads and enhance the safety of all road users in the city.

Twenty-two officers screened 1,520 vehicles, which resulted in one impaired driving charge and two 3-day suspensions.

Additionally they issued 22 Provincial Offence Notices, helped by the Automatic Licence Plate Recognition (ALPR) device.

Gun Violence Suppression

I also want to focus on a few calls and investigations from the last few days that detail the prevalence of guns in our community and the high risk work our members do.

In early June, our K9 Unit assisted the Robbery investigators in locating a suspect after he fled on foot from a three car crash.

The suspect was quickly located and a loaded 9 mm handgun and stolen property were recovered from the vehicle. The firearm was later traced to a home in Michigan, where it had been reported stolen.

On June 13th, a Drug Unit investigation at a motel, which was the subject of a great amount of public complaints, resulted in the arrest a man for possession of crack cocaine. A body armour vest was also seized.

On June 16th, Frontline and DART officers arrested a man during a traffic stop after discovering a large quantity of marijuana and a loaded handgun.

On June 21st, our Drug Unit seized four handguns with extended magazines and hollow point ammunition. Six people were arrested and a large quantity of narcotics was seized.

Finally, this past weekend our Drug Unit conducted a search as part of a joint forces investigation with the OPP. Our officers seized drugs, stolen property and an assault rifle and a handgun.

Sadly, it has become more and more common for our officers to find handguns and illegal weapons during our investigations.

The influx of guns is being seen in every community in Canada. It's a reality that puts our officers and the public at risk.

Members from across our service continue to focus on gun violence suppression in our community.

We are seeing results but we need to ensure that effort can be sustained long term.

That's why the report on the agenda regarding 10 new officers directed at Guns and Gangs efforts is so important.

Thank you.