

## **Chair D. Deans' Verbal Report, OPSB Meeting May 31, 2021**

Good afternoon everyone.

I would like to begin by taking a moment to discuss the recent spike in gun violence over the last week in Ottawa.

I am saddened that four people have lost their lives in these senseless murders, and one person has been critically injured in an attempted murder. Many families are forever changed and anxiety in our community is understandably heightened.

I know that this increase in violence causes concern for residents in Ottawa who are worried about their safety and the safety of their families.

We need to do more to ensure community safety and wellbeing, and to prevent against future incidents like the ones that have occurred in the past week.

This needs to go beyond policing and should involve greater investments in the safety and wellbeing of our community, such as investing in greater levels of programming for youth to reduce risk factors associated with gun violence.

The City of Ottawa statistically remains one of the safest Cities per capita in Canada. A fact worth noting after the events of the past week.

As always, I encourage anyone in the public to contact the police with any information that they may have that could assist.

Generally speaking, if you see something, say something. You may just have a missing piece of the puzzle.

Chief Sloly and Inspector Carl Cartright from the Major Investigations Branch, will be providing an update about the shooting trends and the recent homicides this afternoon.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the women and men of the police service who work hard every day to keep our community safe.

I would now like to discuss the development of the Mental Health Response Strategy.

As some of you may be aware, last week I brought forward a motion to Ottawa City Council requesting that the General Manager of Emergency and Protective Services,

under the umbrella of the Community, Safety and Well-being Plan, take the lead to develop a Community Mental Health Strategy as soon as possible.

The motion emphasized that this strategy should be developed collaboratively with relevant stakeholders including the Ottawa Police Service and the Ottawa Mental Health Strategy Guiding Council, Ottawa Public Health, relevant City partners, health care and hospitals partners and social services community stakeholders.

My colleagues Councillor Luloff and Councillor Egli brought forward a referral motion, asking Council to refer this matter to the City Manager to review in consultation with relevant parties and report back to Council in Q3 of 2021 with a recommended path forward to coordinate the City's future efforts with those currently underway by the Ottawa Police Service.

I was pleased to support this motion of referral because it involves the City Manager taking a leadership role in developing a plan to ensure that, moving forward, there is greater coordination among stakeholders in the development of a mental health strategy.

This was the purpose of bringing the motion forward – to position the City as the lead coordinator in bringing together the relevant stakeholders to develop an integrated, comprehensive mental health response strategy. The City is well placed to play this role, as it has strong connections to many of the other stakeholders and can help to ensure that they are at the table and that their voices are heard.

As you all know, the development of a Mental Health Response Strategy is a key initiative under the Ottawa Police Service's change agenda. The Service and the Board are committed to advancing this work in a way that is coordinated and collaborative.

While the Ottawa Police Service needs to have a seat at the table in a coordinated response, let me be clear – they should not be seated at the head of the table, nor do they want to be.

For this strategy to be effective, it needs to involve all relevant players and must be developed in collaboration with members of the community with lived experience, as well as mental health experts and community organizations. Each of these perspectives is necessary to developing a strategy that will help us achieve our objectives of establishing a more integrated response that will provide the mental health supports that members of our communities, in all their diversity, need.

Many stakeholders across the City are already doing fantastic work on mental health response, including the Guiding Council.

This is all the more reason why we need to ensure that the work these groups are doing is coordinated, without a duplication of efforts.

We need a one-city response for an issue that impacts the city as a whole.

On another topic, the Ministry of the Solicitor General has requested stakeholder input on several proposed regulations under the Community Safety and Policing Act. These include Suspension without Pay and a review and revision period for community safety and well-being plans.

The Executive Director of this Board has brought forward a report with proposed recommendations for the Board to send to the Ministry.

I would take this opportunity to once again call on the Province of Ontario to declare in force the sections of the Community Safety and Policing Act that are necessary to provide Chiefs of Police or Police Services Boards with the discretion to suspend a member of the police service, without pay, who is charged with or convicted of a serious offence.

The Ministry has proposed four years as the time period for municipalities to review and revise, as needed, their Community Safety and Well Being Plans.

The feedback recommended to the Board on this proposed regulation is that a shorter review period is required to ensure the flexibility to respond and adjust to new and emerging issues, and to course-correct when needed.

I would also like to take a moment to acknowledge the Ontario Police Memorial and Police week.

At the start of the month, the Ontario Police Memorial Ceremony was held.

This ceremony honours those who lost their lives in the course of their duties as police officers.

It was also Police Week earlier this month, from May 9-15.

The theme this year was “Working Together to Keep Our Communities Safe”.

I want to take a moment in recognition of these events to thank all of the members of the Ottawa Police Service who continue to dedicate themselves to serving our community.

I also want to thank the leadership team who carries the Service through this ongoing period of change, challenge and opportunity.

I would now like to share an update on the CAO recruitment process.

The Board's recruitment for a new Chief Administrative Officer was officially launched on May 13.

We are accepting applications until June 10 through Odgers Berndtson, the search firm we retained to assist us with our search.

The Board anticipates conducting interviews in July.

We hope to have someone in the position as soon as possible, following the interviews and the Board's selection of a final candidate.

As we look to welcome a new leader to the Ottawa Police through our CAO search, we also must bid farewell to another.

Today is the last working day for Acting Deputy Chief Mark Ford after 33.5 years of service.

Mark, I want to thank you for all of your contributions at the OPS and in the wider community.

I wish you all the best in your retirement and your future endeavours.