

Chief's verbal for Police Services Board Meeting –
May 31, 2021

Good afternoon everyone, bon après midi tous.

Gun & Gang Violence

This been a very tragic and difficult period for Ottawa and the Ottawa Police Service.

Too many young lives have been needlessly lost.

Too many families are grieving and suffering.

Too many people are fighting for their lives in hospital,

Too many community members in too many neighborhoods are fearful for their safety.

Too many paramedics and hospital staff were involved in heroic medical efforts to manage the flood of victims as well as to provide support for their families all the while still battling COVID.

Too many OPS members have had to manage the significant stress and troubling trauma related to these shooting events - from dispatching the 911 calls, to responding to actual in-progress violent crimes, to managing multiple horrific crime scenes, to investigating complex multi-jurisdictional cases, to providing immediate and ongoing victim services, to providing ongoing community supports in the days after the actual events.

There were several instances when our officers arrived at these shootings in time to attempt first aid and CPR for the victims – some of those efforts by our officers were successful and others, tragically, were not. All of those efforts took a huge toll on our members.

This type of violence is simply unacceptable. We all know that this level of violence is not the result of a simple set of circumstances nor will it be solved with simple solutions. It is the result of a number of societal failures which ultimately leads to violence.

The members of the OPS remain committed to being part of a larger “whole of city effort” improve the social determinants of health...to address the root causes of crime...to improve community safety and wellbeing especially for those places and people who are most affected by the crimes...ultimately we must all work together to find new solutions to reduce and prevent the type of violence that we have just experienced.

That said, the Ottawa Police Service knows that we must take lead in responding to this major spike in gun related violent crime.

This is why the OPS has escalated our response to this public safety threat – we are in the process of finalizing a major operational plan to address the current wave of gun violence. This includes deep analysis into the criminal elements behind the crimes as well as plans for violence suppression, crime prevention and integrated investigations. We will also be vigorously pursuing prosecutions and incarceration for all those persons responsible for these violent crimes.

I have full confidence that our Homicide Unit, Guns & Gangs Unit and Drug Unit will work in coordination to solve these crimes. In fact, we have already, Canada Wide Warrants for the three suspects in Friday evening's triple shooting/double homicide. There will be more announcements and arrests to follow.

Immediately following my update, the Board will receive a full presentation from Inspector Carl Cartright with additional details on the crime analysis and the operational plan.

We have much more to do as a Service, as a city and as a society to truly address gun related violence. While the police will always play a major role in assessing and addressing this and other complex crime problems, we know that there must be an expanded role for civil society, community stakeholders, academia and not for profit organizations in developing new solutions to this old problem. We will be at the table to help support such efforts. Only through our combined committed coordinated efforts we will be able to make any real and sustainable progress.

MARK FORD

IMAGE: MARK FORD RETIREMENT PARTY

This month, a member who exemplifies those qualities is leaving our Service.

I want to take a moment to congratulate and celebrate Acting Deputy Chief Mark Ford who will be leaving us at the end of June. He will be greatly missed. Mark started his career as a constable with the Ottawa Police Service in October 1987. Since then, he made a strong and lasting impact on our community and our membership.

He has been a leader in emergency planning and tactical operations. He has mentored many officers, he has been a catalyst for change and he has formed a host of police/community partnerships.

His father, Retired Chief Brian Ford, was a pioneer developing diversity within our Service, and his son, rightly followed in his father's footsteps, spending countless years working with the community to develop a broader, and more inclusive approach to policing.

Mark believes in respecting everyone, regardless of position in society or rank in the Service. In return, he was well respected by community leaders, peers and

subordinates alike. His contributions to the well-being of our members were immense and his collaborative leadership style will be missed.

Thank you, Mark, for your service.

NEW EXECUTIVE TEAM

PHOTO OF STEVE/JAMIE/JOAN

With Mark's departure, we have made some changes on the Command team and Senior Leadership Team that I want to share with the Board.

My Command Team now consists of team of leaders with a wide range of professional and personal lived experiences.

Replacing Mark will be Jamie Dunlop – as Acting Deputy Chief, Jamie will lead the Community Policing Command... *Jamie has been engaged with the community for much of his career, particularly the Indigenous community where he has fostered relationships and programs in relation to VAW issues and youth and continues today with being co-chair on our Indigenous Sub-Committee of the CEC.*

Joan McKenna will continue in the role of Acting Deputy Chief in charge of the Intelligence, Info & Investigations Command.

And Deputy Chief Steve Bell will continue in the role as Acting Chief Administrative Officer.

This Command team will remain in place until the Board completes its search for a new CAO.

Mark's retirement also created a permanent vacancy at the rank of Superintendent. I would also like to announce today that I have promoted Superintendent Trish Ferguson to Superintendent in charge of Frontline Policing. Trish has a strong operational background, she has a long history in investigations, she is an EDI champion who co-founded the women's employee resource group. Perhaps most importantly she has great empathy and compassion.

One of my commitments as Chief was that the OPS would recruit, develop and promote a qualified, diverse and effective workforce.

As you know, our last recruit class included the highest quantity, quality and diversity of any previous class - 48 new officers, with 40% identifying as female, 50% self-identifying as racialized, and 6% Indigenous.

We are also seeing similar levels of diversity and quality in our most senior ranks. The Command Team and Senior Leadership Team is now the most diverse in OPS history, with women representing 26.3% of Executive Command and SLT roles combined, and

5.3% of the roles filled by Indigenous members. Additionally, members of visible minorities currently represent 21.1% of Executive Command and SLT positions. These statistics are perceived and include acting positions and members on leave or absent for other reasons.

EXCELLENT WORK BY MEMBERS

Our efforts to advance equity, diversity and inclusion in the OPS is also helping to improve our ability to improve community policing. It's about the work that happens every day by our members working in our neighbourhoods and with our community.

In the past month alone our members have been called to:

- Managed 42 demonstrations and protests
- Revived eight people in overdose using Naloxone
- Managed 56,000 numbers of people travelling on the interprovincial bridges
- Investigated 36 robberies and laid charges in 7

We are not superheroes, but the work we do every day matters. We are there at your worst moment, to help you, help your family and to make things right.

There are many good days and some tragic weekends like we just experienced. Yet, every now and then we hit it out of the park and every day our members are out there in the community doing their best to help to make this city safer.

ATTEMPTED ABDUCTION – CHILD RESCUED

One of the calls that made headlines and gained a lot of media attention was the abduction of a newborn from an Ottawa family in May.

This was a terrifying moment for the mother and family involved.

A woman had previously contacted the new mother over Facebook. She arrived at the home and grabbed the newborn, using bear spray to fend off the mother, and fled.

Officers arrived to find neighbours had located the woman and held her until our officers could detain and arrest her.

HISTORICAL SEXUAL ASSAULTS – TEACHERS ARRESTED

In another difficult and disturbing case involving, more than 50 sex related charges were laid against an Orleans area teacher.

I want to thank all of the young people who came forward to investigators to report these crimes. It took a lot of courage and we take their trust in us seriously.

I also want to thank the entire investigative team and lead investigator Renee Stewart. A complex case like this takes experience, professionalism, team work and compassion.

Charges against a second teacher were also laid.

CHILD IN NEED OF PROTECTION - POTENTIAL SEX OFFENDER

Last week, our 911 Centre received a call from a concerned person about a young teenager in an apartment with a man.

A Detective, Admir Minarolli, took the call and attended the address.

He was met at the door by a naked resident, and found the boy, clothed and unconscious on a couch.

The man was arrested and charged, and the child taken to CHEO where they discovered he had been given by marijuana and an unknown drug.

Our investigation into this case continues.

WATER SAFETY – MARINE RIDE

Our Marine Unit has a tough job. We call upon them to keep our waterways safe through enforcement, rescue and education.

In early May they launched a drowning awareness campaign because sadly each year we hear stories of those who have lost their lives due to unsafe conditions or unheeded safety precautions.

On May 22, the MDT team conducted a water RIDE campaign, aimed at raising public awareness around safe boating practices, and reminding boaters not to drink and boat or do any water activities after consuming alcohol.

But even as these campaigns were underway they were called on for the search of a young man who fell into the rapids of Hog's Back Falls.

The team spent days searching the Rideau River.

If you are swimming, boating, paddle boarding or kayaking in open waters, please Be Safe.

TRAFFIC SAFETY - PROJECT NOISEMAKER

This past week an unaccompanied G1 driver in his mother's car was spotted by our Traffic Team on Fisher Ave driving more than double the speed limit. The car was impounded and their license was suspended.

This is just an example of what our officers and residents are reporting on our roads.

The team has relaunched the Project Noisemaker campaign focused on aggressive drivers, speeding and noisy mufflers. Already this spring, in conjunction with Canada Road Safety Week, they have issued hundreds of charges, including more than 1270 Highway Traffic Act offences and 35 for stunt driving. This past weekend along our officers laid 9 stunt driving charges.

The Noisemaker campaign has been very successful, with residents writing to us to let us know how much they appreciate this important work being done. Here is an example of one letter we received.

Other safety campaigns for cycling and eScooters have also been launched.

YOUTH OUTREACH - SOCCER BALL INITIATIVE

As a young kid, soccer was a big part of my life. It taught me a lot. How to work hard, how to have discipline and it made me feel like I was part of a community.

For 17 years, A/Staff Sgt. Vieira has been coordinating an 8-week soccer camp, teaching children in underserved neighbourhoods how to play the sport. This program is run by OPS volunteers from all across the Service who work with the kids to help them learn not just about soccer, but teamwork as well.

This year, A/Staff Sgt. Vieira reached out to the Ottawa South United Soccer Club to see if they could gather up supplies to help kids city-wide have the tools to play.

Ottawa South United Soccer Club reached out to their community and purchased 250 soccer balls and 200 pairs of sports cleats. A/Staff Sgt. Vieira then connected with partners at the Ottawa Catholic Centre for Immigration to identify families that could use some cleats and a new soccer ball.

Over the course of May, frontline patrol officers, Neighbourhood Resources Officers, School Resource Officers and Community Police Officers helped A/Staff Sgt. Vieira deliver these items to excited for kids in some of our high potential but high needs communities.

COMMUNITY COMMENDATIONS

Every month, we include Board report with a list of community commendation letters from the community outlining some of the good work of our done by our members. I usually read some of them out or point out the report in the agenda.

Our Visual Operations Section has been asking some of the letter writers to lend their voice to their written appreciation of our members. I think it's a great project that shows the impact our members have on people's lives.

PLAY

These are just a few examples of the type of work we do every day. These hardly every make the news but they are all trust building and some are, in fact, life-changing. They represent the myriad of daily actions by OPS members which show their compassion, caring and, occasionally, heroic qualities.

Thank you – merci beaucoup.