

Report to / Rapport au:

**OTTAWA POLICE SERVICES BOARD
LA COMMISSION DE SERVICES POLICIERS D'OTTAWA**

31 May 2021 / 31 mai 2021

Submitted by / Soumis par:

**Chair, Ottawa Police Services Board / Présidente, Commission de services
policiers d'Ottawa**

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**SUBJECT: PROCUREMENT RELATED TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
PROCESS**

**OBJET: ACQUISITION LIÉE AU PROCESSUS D'ENGAGEMENT
COMMUNAUTAIRE**

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Ottawa Police Services Board approve the procurement of PACE Public Affairs & Community Engagement consulting firm to support the Board in its development of a community engagement process.

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Que la Commission de services policiers d'Ottawa approuve l'acquisition des services de la firme de consultants PACE Public Affairs & Community Engagement afin de la soutenir dans le cadre de l'élaboration d'un processus d'engagement communautaire.

BACKGROUND

Gaining and maintaining public trust continues to be an ongoing challenge for police services across the country and around the world. Ottawa is no different. A number of high-profile local incidents over the past few years, and months, have further widened an existing gap between police and the community, particularly those who identify as black, Indigenous, and people of colour (BIPOC). Trends suggesting racial bias in

policing, and in the overall criminal justice system, are also contributing to this environment of increased distrust towards policing institutions.

The Ottawa Police Services Board (OPSB) recognizes that in order to fulfill its duty of providing adequate and effective policing in the City of Ottawa, it must maintain an open and constructive dialogue with the community in order to understand their interests and concerns. The Board also understands that in order for communities to feel comfortable coming forward to the Board with their feedback, the Board must establish safe spaces for dialogue as well as relationships of trust, understanding, and mutual respect.

With the above in mind, the Board passed a motion in late November of 2020 related to leading a community mediation process, as a first step towards helping to build, and in some cases mend, relationships with the community, specifically those who identify as BIPOC. Upon further reflection, the Board has since repositioned its initiative as a community engagement, rather than a mediation, to better reflect the intent of developing an ongoing process, rather than an isolated engagement.

The Board is looking to hire a firm with expertise in public engagement to help support its efforts in not only developing a fair and accessible community engagement process, but also in learning how best to provide information, engage, and consult with those who identify as BIPOC, in light of the strained relationship between these populations and police.

DISCUSSION

In keeping with the Board's purchasing guidelines as outlined in its Financial Accountability Procedures Manual, the Board reviewed with the City of Ottawa Supply Branch the City's Standing Offer List for Communications and Marketing.

The Board has since had an opportunity to meet with some of the firms on the list to receive and review their proposals in terms of how they would approach the development of a community engagement process for the Board.

Based on the proposals received (*which are confidential and cannot be shared due to the fact they contain proprietary information*), it is recommended that the Board hire the bilingual consulting firm, PACE Public Affairs & Community Engagement, to assist with this initiative.

The engagement objectives would be as follows:

- To gain a better understanding of the interests and concerns of Ottawa's racialized communities and of the dynamics this creates in their relationship with

the OPSB, and to gauge their willingness to participate in future engagements with the Board;

- To look for approaches and solutions that can address issues of trust;
- To propose a process that would allow members of the racialized community to engage with the Board, now and in the future;
- To provide better clarity around the role of the OPSB.

The initial engagement that PACE will be assisting with will be a “pre-consultation phase”, using one-on-one interviews and small group meetings with internal stakeholders, community leaders, relevant community organizations, and interested individuals. The intent is to create the necessary “safe space” conditions to discuss issues of trust and relationship-building. Opportunities will be built-in to air concerns and to explore the barriers that might limit members of the BIPOC community from participating and making significant contributions to OPSB initiatives. These efforts will assist in contributing to the development of a more official engagement process that is co-created by the Board and the community.

Background on PACE

PACE Public Affairs & Community Engagement is a bilingual consulting firm that specializes in municipal affairs with an emphasis on the National Capital Region. Founded in 2002, PACE has established itself as leading experts in developing, planning, and implementing meaningful stakeholder and community engagement programs. Their focus lies in clarifying the issues, developing effective messaging, and bringing innovative approaches to creating two-way dialogue opportunities for targeted audiences, the general public and affected communities.

CONSULTATION

For this procurement process, Board staff consulted with the Supply Branch of the Finance Department at the City of Ottawa, in keeping with the purchasing guidelines outlined in the Board’s Financial Accountability Procedures Manual.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This initial pre-consultation phase is estimated to cost approximately \$48,850, with actual hours spent on the project to be tracked and invoiced accordingly. The estimate does not include HST or any third-party expenses, such as audio/visual, material production and printing, translating, advertising, web development, etc.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1 – Board Motion: Restorative Mediation

CONCLUSION

PACE Public Affairs & Community Engagement is being recommended as the preferred firm to assist the Board in preparing a strategy for the development of a community engagement process that would allow members of the racialized community, as well as the broader community, to engage with the Board on an ongoing basis.

Document 1

Ottawa Police Services Board

Motion

Restorative Mediation

Moved by: Member B. Johnson

Seconded by: Vice Chair S. Smallwood

WHEREAS the Ottawa Police Services Board (OPSB) heard from close to 100 delegates at their meeting of November 23rd; and

WHEREAS many of those who participated spoke to the broken relationship between the BIPOC community and the OPSB; and

WHEREAS the Board recognizes a need to strengthen their own relationship with the community, outside of that with the Ottawa Police Services; and

WHEREAS before taking on consultations with the community or approving policy on issues such as a new mental health response, the review of use of force policies, or the approval of an additional 30 service members, the Board must have a solid foundational relationship with these same communities; and

WHEREAS mediation is a practice that can help restore lines of communication and trust between two parties;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board seek to hire a third party to establish a mediation process with the Ottawa community, specifically those that identify as BIPOC.