

**Chief's Verbal Report to PSB Meeting**  
**November 23, 2020**

Good evening Chair and Members of the Board. Bonsoir à toutes et à tous.

We have a busy and important agenda tonight, but before we get to that I want to take a moment to recognize what has been a very tragic month for the OPS and the broader policing community.

Here in Ottawa, our members are in mourning for the loss of two of our members.

**Constable Bruno Gendron**

On November 12 died in an off-duty medical event. Bruce was 47 years old and left behind his wife and two children. Constable Bruno Gendron was a valued member of our Collision Investigations team, who joined us after working as a paramedic for many years.

His loss has stunned all of us in the policing and paramedic community. I take some comfort knowing that he was with friends, biking in the forest, doing something he loved. Bruno was more than an officer; he was a husband, a father, a hockey coach, and a friend to so many here at our Service. He will be missed, and we in the OPS offer our sincere condolences to Bruno's friends and family.

**Former Youth Officer Guy Giroux**

On November 15, Retired OPS Constable Guy Giroux died in a tragic incident. He was 63 years old. We were equally saddened to learn of the passing of former OPS Youth Officer Guy Giroux. I have been told that even though Guy was large in stature, he was a gentle soul, a compassionate and caring officer, and someone who had a natural way of connecting with kids and earning their trust.

His death, just eight short years after a well-deserved retirement, is being investigated as a homicide and has shocked us all. Our thoughts and prayers are with Guy's family and friends during this difficult time.

*OPP Constable Marc Hovingh*

We were also shocked to learn of the on-duty death last week of OPP Constable Marc Hovingh on Manitoulin Island. By all accounts, Constable Hovingh was a respected and beloved member of the tight-knit Island community. We extend our sympathies to our brothers and sisters in the OPP and to Constable Hovingh's loved ones.

*Moment of silence*

Tragedies like these speak to the humanity of the people who do this work and the toll that it takes on them, and on their loved ones. With COVID, even coming together to mourn is much more difficult. But we've found ways to be there for each other, including by making sure supports are in place for those who need it, including the families of the members who we've lost.

I would like to invite the Board to take a moment of silence to recognize the sacrifices of Bruno, of Guy, and of OPP Constable Hovingh.

[silence]

Thank you.

***Guns and Gangs Successes***

I'll now update the Board on year to date core police operations.

We in Ottawa continue to buck national trends on shootings. The number of shootings city-wide continues to trend downward, with 41 to date in 2020, compared to 70 in 2019. In addition, officers have recovered 96 handguns

and rifles, including two crime handguns seized during a drug trafficking investigation on Friday morning. That's up from a total of 87 in 2019.

Our Guns and Gangs team credits the increased success to our community members, with a 39% boost in reporting by Ottawa residents to advise us of the presence of dangerous weapons. Proactive measures by our Neighbourhood Resource Teams and covert units are also having a net new positive impact.

Our Homicide Unit continues its successful solvency rate. After a stabbing death in Somerset Ward in November, officers were able to quickly arrest a man involved. I want to take a moment to recognize the exceptional work being done by that team in ensuring that those who commit heinous crimes are held accountable.

### ***Crime Trends and Statistics***

Despite this recent progress on weapons, we have seen an overall rise in crime in our City in the past five years, growing by more than 30%. This is similar to trends across Canada. The severity of crime is also on the rise, up by 23%. The prevalence of guns on our streets and the number of shootings, up by 60% from five years ago (despite recent decreases in the last year), is evidence of this fact.

We know that an enforcement-based approach to crime reduction will not work alone. A focus on prevention over enforcement while addressing the root causes of crime is the only path to improved public safety. We must use the CSWB process to deliver public value by establishing shared outputs and outcomes that address the social determinants of health. As we have reported, a significant portion of police work is non-criminal and we need to do more to help our members support the community.

With over 6,000 calls a year, mental health requests have risen over **+20%** since 2015.

On road safety, we are called to nearly 17,000 reportable collisions a year. Of those, more than **20** are fatal, another **3,000** involve injuries, and over **14,000** relate to property damage.

Annually, the Ottawa Police responds to over **4,200** non-criminal domestic complaints or partner disputes, growing by **+10%** since 2015.

So far this year there have been over **400** overdoses reported to police (YTD) with naloxone administered nearly **100** times. We have directly saved a life in **90%** of these incidents (90). The number of overdoses is rising dramatically, **+33%** between 2018/2019. This only represents a fraction of the total picture that is reported to the Ottawa Police.

I know that's a lot of numbers, and numbers may seem very abstract. But know that each call for service involves a person, or multiple people, and their extended networks of loved ones. Every call has repercussions across our community. Any increase takes a toll on the well-being of our community members and OPS members.

## ***Budget***

Over the last year, we've received a great deal of feedback about policing and its role in our community. We've heard calls for more policing. Calls to defund policing. Calls for us to focus on one area or another.

We have been listening, learning, and changing. We're working to reflect what we've heard in the way that we work, down to the most fundamental level. This is what we're committing to through our budget.

Earlier this month, we presented our Draft 2021 budget. It is focused on ensuring that our community can see and experience its return on investment in policing including improved public safety, social change and community building.

This is a change budget. We've taken the feedback we've heard and put together a number of key proposals to address them. I'm going to outline some of them now.

**First, our Mental Health Response Strategy.** Through consultation and partnership with the community, the OPS will develop and implement a multi-year strategy focused on better coordination and access to community health mental health services, as well as improving our overall response to calls for service where mental health is an issue. This includes increasing training for all members, improving our initial response, building networks with community partners to ensure people get the appropriate help they need, and introducing and increasing mental health professional capacity on-site and in the 911 communications centre. We will work with community partners to develop this model and increase mental health training for all communication centre staff.

**The second initiative I want to mention is Neighbourhood Resource Teams.** We will continue to make investments in our community policing model to reach across the City of Ottawa. Additional Neighbourhood Resource Teams (NRTs) will be deployed in suburban neighbourhoods, and an investment in Community Policing Officers. Six NRTs currently exist in our urban areas. The 2021 Budget will include 20 new permanent officers for NRT's and five Community Police Officers. It will allow our service to continue to build better community partnerships and work with local residents to focus on solving crime and social disorder at a neighbourhood level.

**Training/Equity, Diversity and Inclusion is the third item I want to outline.** There will be an increased focus on organizational training and the roll out the EDI training tool kit that will focus on Mental Health, Intersectionality and Anti-Indigenous / Anti-Black Racism. By enhancing the awareness of all members, we will promote trust in policing and further develop an internal culture that actively promotes equity, diversity and inclusion.

**The fourth item relates to Violence Against Women.** Five new investigators will be added our Sexual Assault and Child Abuse Section and our Partner Assault Section. Two of these positions will be focused on improving coordination of violence against women services and initiatives with our community partners and a special focus on serving our Indigenous community.

**The fifth and final item I'll mention is Increased Member Supports.**

There will be a significant investment in our Wellness Section including four new positions focused on improving the overall health and wellness of our members. We have also developed a third-party process for all types of harassment including sexual harassment.

This budget also shows our commitment for change now and into the future.

### ***Planning and Building on Current Successes***

#### ***Long-term planning***

The Board wants to start looking at long-term strategic planning on three-year cycles. We in the Service welcome a longer-term view. We are a large organization and if we're going to make real, meaningful change, to best reflect and meet the needs of our City, we know this can't be done in a year. We will be looking very closely at our priorities and the community's needs, which will include policy reviews that may change some of the ways we work.

We will continue this conversation later in the meeting. But I will say that we in the Service already have ideas for new initiatives that will improve the way we work and the way we serve over the longer term.

## ***Conclusion***

This has been a year of change. Change isn't easy, but no one gets into policing because they want to do something easy. We know we have supporters and critics out there. You are all citizens of the city that we serve, and know that we are listening. Listening - and taking concrete action. That's what the 2021 Draft Budget is about. We have a long road ahead, but we are on the way.