

**Chief's verbal for OPSB meeting  
January 27, 2020**

Good evening/bon soir e et merci beaucoup.

Congratulations Sandy Smallwood on your re-appointment as Acting Chair and Vice Chair.

I know the challenges that you have encountered doing double duty as chair and vice chair – we are also aware of the extra effort from the Board to provide effective oversight as we await the full reformation of the Board. The OPS Executive and I appreciate your efforts.

I would also like to congratulate Councilor Diane Deans on her reappointment as Board Chair. We look forward to her return to full duties and will continue to hold her in

our thoughts and send her our best wishes. In the interim, my executive Command and I will continue to support you and the Board to deliver on the Board's strategic direction.

We have a busy agenda and a number of items to discuss so I'll try to keep my report concise, but I do need to provide an overview of some important initiatives and announcements that we have made since the last Board meeting in December.

First, we have announced the addition of three new Neighbourhood Resource Teams, that will start in the Byward Market in May, and in Centretown and Bayshore in the fall. This doubling of the NRTs significantly advances community policing in line with the Board's strategic direction. It will also significantly also improve

police service delivery, community safety, and community well-being in the three newly assigned neighbourhoods.

Second, we have reintroduced the Hate Crimes Section by allocating two new full-time detectives to the section to triple the current capacity of the OPS to meaningfully address hate-crime incidents in the nation's capital. The OPS was the first police agency in Canada to create a Hate Crimes Unit and it has always had officers who were trained and focused on hate-crime investigations. But this decision adds more significantly with new officers, better-quality service and resources, and a greater coordination with community stakeholders; including the communities who are most victimized and traumatized by hate crimes, hate incidents and violent extremism.

Last, but not least, we are realigning and reinvigorating our operations to prevent, suppress, respond to, investigate and successfully prosecute firearms crime and related violent street crime in our community.

These efforts have been underway over the course of 2019 in which we saw the first decrease in firearms-related crimes since 2013. We also saw an increase in proactive investigations by officers on the frontlines, traffic services, and specialized investigative squads, and we increased the number of crime guns our officers took off the city's streets. The violent and deadly start to 2020 is a sobering and tragic reminder of how much more the OPS, and all areas of a civil society, has to do to address this critically important public-safety issue. Despite the

deadly gun play in the first week of the new year, courageous work keeps happening from our officers who have to-date seized 14 crime guns in Ottawa, as well as an additional 4 that were seized in Quebec as part of OPS investigations. Those seizures took place while our officers were successfully investigating and arresting some of the most violent high-risk offenders in the city.

Yes..... it has been a busy few weeks for us since the last Board meeting but I can tell you that this leadership team is focused and committed to sound decision-making that improves policing in this community, builds morale, and shows an increased social and fiscal return on investment.

## **A Year in Review**

Since this is the first meeting of 2020, I wanted to take a moment to talk about some of the year-end statistics from 2019.

## **2019 Trends**

Police services nation-wide have been struggling to address an increase in criminality and social disorder in their cities.

Over 345,000 calls were entered into the OPS dispatch system last year, with 70% requiring a police officer to attend. The top five service requests were: Collisions; Disturbances; Disputes; Unwanted Persons; and Suspicious Incidents.

As part of our commitment to enhance the safety of the communities we serve and protect, 2019 saw our officers engage in over 90,000 calls for proactive work to address crimes in progress and community safety concerns. These are self-initiated acts by officers without a call from the community.

Additionally, the OPS worked on nearly 43,000 criminal offence files last year, which was an increase of 10% year over year. Despite this increase, we solved 35% of all these incidents, whether by charges laid, diversion techniques or referrals.

The volume of reported violent incidents grew by 11% in 2019, driven mostly by an increase in uttering threats complaints, common assaults and robberies.

Conversely, the number of homicides declined slightly to 15, with 13 cases already solved to-date.

I want to thank our Major Crime Investigators for their work. I also recognize, these cases require a great amount cooperation from officers across the service and the support of witnesses and our community.

Ottawa saw 73 shootings with 26 people injured, and five killed last year in gun violence. This showed a slight decline from the previous year and was the result of efforts made by officers and our community

partners. Those changes also saw the recovery of 70 crime guns.

The volume of non-violent crime reports also increased by 10%, with thefts under \$5,000 driving this result. This is attributed to increases in shoplifting at major retailers, which is on point with trends seen right across the province.

Our Alternative Response Unit has been very active in identifying trends and investigating leads. This includes working with retailers to prevent crime and improve clearance rates.

Our public opinion research has clearly identified that community perception around the level and fear of crime is rising.

Our members witness these trends first hand. I have heard from them and I know that we must and will do better, together.

## **Going Forward**



In the past few months, I have been meeting with and listening to people from across our community and within our own organization.

I value their comments and input.

It is time to pivot from listening and learning about the concerns and priorities of our members, community partners, academics, police leaders, and the Board to the actual announcements of our priority plans and the successful implementation of those plans. In fact we are presenting two of the most critically important action plans on this Board agenda today:

- 1. The Accelerated Hiring Plan:** This plan is based on feedback from community stakeholders from across the city and OPS members from

across the organization, that we need to make this immediate, critical investment in accelerating our hiring to improve the safety and morale of our members, while also improving the capacity of our members to better serve and protect the city. We expect that the Board will ask hard working questions to test the validity and veracity of the plan and we will do our best to provide responses that accurately represent the needs of our members and the community.

**2. The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan:** This plan will become the foundation that will address issues relating to bias, discrimination and racism in the OPS, and its service delivery for all communities. It will advance a more ethical, healthy and safe work environment for all OPS members.

## **Making a Difference**

What I've spoken with you all about here tonight is the nuts and bolts of what we do at the OPS.

But as you well know, it's interactions with the community that leave the most lasting impressions.

Our officers are out there, every day, trying to help those in need. We get letters from residents all the time letting us know they're making a difference.

Like this one that I'd like to share with you:

*"I called the Ottawa Police Service for assistance for a suspected assault. The victim was not entirely cooperative and was very scared. Constables Andrew Chronopoulos and*

*Philippe Charbonneau handled the situation with professionalism and compassion. They created a positive interaction with the victim and she has not had many positive interactions with police before. They helped to establish trust so in the future she may feel more safe reaching out.”*

I want to congratulate those officers for their compassion and sensitivity. They made a real difference in this survivor’s life.

**I WILL AD-LIB MORE HERE**

Thank you.