

## **Chief's Board Report – October 2020**

Chair and Members of the Board. Bonsoir à tous - good evening.

### **Councillor King & Mayor**

On behalf of all members of the Ottawa Police Service, I will start by welcoming Councillor Rawlson King to the Board. I have appreciated our conversations over the past year and I have seen your leadership in action on a number of important issues facing Ottawa. We are all looking forward to working with you to accomplish the Board's priorities and to improve the Ottawa Police Service's ability to serve and protect all the residents in the nation's capital.

I also want to recognize and thank the efforts of Mayor Jim Watson in his time as a member of the Board – he brought needed leadership and stability during the extended period of Chair Deans' absence. We are grateful for his stewardship along with his ability to enable the smooth transition with Councillor King

### **Trial Verdict**

We respect the court's decision last week. We know that no verdict can change the tragedy that happened four years ago when Mr. Abdirahman Abdi lost his life.

His death has weighed heavily on his family, the local Somali community and our entire city. It has also affected all members of the Ottawa Police Service, especially those directly involved in this incident like Dan Montsion and Dave Weir along with their families.

No one can ever accept the loss of life in a situation like this – especially of a vulnerable citizen experiencing a mental health crisis. None of us - citizen or police - ever want to find ourselves in a situation like the one that took place on July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

We recognize the environment in which we deliver service and we have heard the calls for change to the way we police. Those calls for change go beyond the events surrounding this trial.

As a police service, we will continue to address a range of systemic issues—mental health, gender, race etc. — issues that are not unique to policing.

We have also been seeking out better ways to help people who are in crisis. We are not doing this alone. We are working with community partners, academics and subject-matter experts to advance training, operations and culture. One of the goals of this work is to help ensure that all members of our Service are provided with the best support, training and resources to fulfill their duties. This will include addressing the intersectionality of the issues as it relates to our use of force and service delivery policies.

We are listening, learning and changing. We will support our Service members and our community through these changes.

We are delivering neighborhood policing that improves community safety and wellbeing while building relationships of trust. We want every community member and Service member to feel respected, supported and accepted, no matter their background, status or circumstances.

We will continue to move forward. Our community and members deserve no less.

## **SIU Section 11**

In accordance with the *Police Services Act*, we will be conducting an incident, service, equipment and policy review. This includes a review of the conduct of all OPS members involved in the July 24<sup>th</sup> 2016 incident. That process is already underway, and we will work to finalize the review as expeditiously as possible. The results will be made public through the Ottawa Police Services Board.

## **Facilitating Protest**

Over the past year, members of the Ottawa Police Service along with our public safety partners and community partners have facilitated a wide range of public protests in the nation capital. This includes three separate protests in the past week since the verdict. In all the peaceful marches/protest events there have been zero use of force and zero injuries – each event was concluded safely for all members of the community and for all Service members.

## **Changes Made Over Last 4 Years**

Over the past years the Ottawa Police Service has been focused on continuous improvement in the face of unprecedented challenges. We have meaningful successes while addressing past tragedies and ongoing community member and Service member frustrations:

Recruitment & Promotions: We've made major improvements in outreach recruitment, removing barriers to hiring of diverse candidates and improving our recruitment processes overall. This has resulted in a major increase in the quality and diversity of all applicants and new recruits. Since January 2020, the OPS has hired 79 recruits of which 26 were women (33% of hires) and 28 were racialized (35% of hires) and two were Indigenous. We have also promoted more female and racialized officers at all ranks. These results have occurred while maintaining the highest standards.

### Training:

Towards Authentic Inclusion training, focused on bias-neutral policing. This training was designed with the community. It assists our members to become more understanding and aware of the cultures that make up our community. We delivered Fair and Impartial Policing training to all members focusing on unconscious bias.

### Equipment:

We expanded the deployment of Conducted Energy Weapons (CEW's) to all front-line officers. CEWs are one of several less-than-lethal options available to police officers in Ontario. The goal of the expanded CEW deployment is to improve community and member safety.

#### Community Engagement:

We created the Community Equity Council (CEC), so we can have direct and timely discussions with key community leaders about the issues that are important to our Racialized, Indigenous and Faith Based communities. Although the CEC has only been established for 18 months, in this brief time they have already provided advice and guidance that has led to changes in our response to Hate incidents, changes to our outreach and recruitment, the development and oversight of our EDI action plan, work on our organizational culture and response to systemic racism, as well as our planning and response to the recent Montsion Trial verdict.

#### EDI Action Plan:

We released the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan – complete with ten priority action items for 2020. The plan, and this year's priorities, was built on many different sources including the recently released reports and significant inputs from both police and community members who contributed to the many meetings, interviews, forums and surveys over the last two years. We also worked closely with the Community Equity Council to design the plan.

#### NRT:

The OPS created and implemented a Neighborhood Policing Program to better work with local community stakeholders, not for profit organizations and city services to manage complex crime and socio-economic issues disproportionately impacting neighborhoods. The program launched with three Neighborhood Resource Teams (NRTs) in 2019 and then doubled to six NRTs in 2020. The NRTs include the following areas of the city; ByWard Market/Lowertown, Centretown, Bayshore, Vanier/Overbrook, Heron Gate/South Ottawa and Carlington/Caldwell. These six NRTs teams include almost 70 officers.

## **New OPS Organization Structure**

Today, we finalized a year long process to overhaul the Ottawa Police Service's organizational structure. The goals of new organization chart are:

### Internal

- Reduce redundancies and improve efficiencies;
- Increase information-sharing and improve internal collaboration;
- Reduce span of control while removing silos;
- Improve corporate risk management; and
- Demonstrate a better return on investment and manage within our budget envelope.

### External

- Expand the Neighborhood Policing (NP) program as well as our Crime Prevention, Integrated Service Teams (IST), Neighborhood Engagement Safety Tables (NEST), and Mental Health Crisis Unit (MCU) programs;
- Overhaul the Intelligence-Led Policing model to including the ability to focus as much on reducing social disorder and improving traffic safety as we do on crime management; and
- Support the City's Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) plan to provide direct support to address the underlying causes of crime and social disorder.

Ultimately the goal of this re-alignment is to better serve the needs of community and OPS members.

## **New OPS Budget**

During our budget presentation This evening you are going to hear about several new initiatives in the 2021 Draft Budget that respond to the calls we have heard for change.

This includes investment in our financial commitment to participation in an enhanced mental health strategy for the city being designed, implemented, evaluated and led by the public health sector.

New training approaches that will include Anti-Black/ Indigenous Racism, enhanced mental health training and de-escalation training.

An increase in Neighborhood Response Teams and an expansion of Community Police Officers.

We will also be increasing our resources to SACA/Partner Assault which includes dedicated staffing for Violence Against Women along with Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

We will be increasing internal supports for our members through our wellness team as well as third party reporting for harassment.

We will begin the process of rebranding the Ottawa Police Service to better align with community expectations, the Services values (honor, courage, service) and our mandated requirement to deliver community policing.

### **Great Work by OPS Members in October**

The members of the Ottawa Police Service focus every day on serving the community.

They are dedicated and compassionate and their jobs are not easy

In my role as Chief, every day, I see and hear examples of how police members have positively touched the lives of residents. This month was no different as evidenced by the following acts;

Our tactical team and negotiators worked with community mental health workers to save a man who was threatening to jump from a ninth-floor balcony last week.

Our members raised thousands of dollars for a woman who had been the victim of a knife attack by her partner, and her children.

NRT members, Constables Eric Douglas and Wayne Clayton, were first to arrive on the scene of a motor vehicle collision, with one of the vehicles on fire. They spotted passengers in the SUV and immediately ran to the back of the vehicle to pry open the hatch, rescue an occupant and administer first aid. Cst. Douglas stayed with the other passenger trapped in the front seat, administering first aid, until Fire Services could arrive to extract her. The quick thinking of these constables, and the other officers who arrived, saved their lives, according to the City Coroner's office.

Our officers seized five guns in two separate investigations. This year, officers have seized 92 crime guns compared to 87 seized in 2019. This is part of an amazing overall year to date effort by OPS members and community partners that has resulted in:

1. Lowest number of shooting events in 5 years
2. Lowest number of homicides in 5 years
3. Highest number of crime guns seized in 5 years

Constable Andrew Bowen responded to a call about a teenager who had been reported to have overdosed. Once he arrived, he administered Naloxone, but the first dose failed to work, so he administered a two more doses, reviving the teenager, who was then transported to hospital. To date front line officers have saved over 70 lives thru the administration of Naloxone

Constable Vince Arlotta was commended for his compassion when responding to a young woman in mental health crisis. The constable ensure the woman's mother was updated and let her know she was safe, as well as provided her mom with resources to help the young lady. Cst. Arlotta managed to convince the young woman to attend the hospital for an assessment, which the mother said was astounding as her daughter

refused to leave her apartment. The mother credited Cst. Arlotta with saving her daughter's life.

Constable Chris Wilson and A/Sergeant Trevor Woods responded to a call from resident who spotted people trying to break into cars in her neighborhood. On arriving, the officers discovered three men attempting to steal a car with a high-tech programming device and other tools. The men fled but were arrested nearby.

While off duty, an officer intervened on an assault on a female by a man. During the interaction, the man bit him. The arrest was completed but the officer needed first aid.

These are just a few of the examples we hear. It's a reminder of why we all joined policing and why I am proud to work at the Ottawa Police Service alongside such great people.

## **Conclusion**

Two days (October 28<sup>th</sup>) from now will mark my first full year as the Chief of Police for the City of Ottawa.

It was a Board meeting on that day in 2019. I gave my first Chief's verbal report to the Board in which I stated:

*"The City, and citizens of Ottawa need our help; they want us in their neighborhoods, and they want to work with us, but they first want us to fix our own house before we come and try to fix theirs.*

*We need to create the conditions for a critical mass of progressive and inclusive leaders at the OPS to enable more transparent, consistent and equitable decision-making. We need to develop and promote a more collaborative and innovative culture that results in more effective strategy implementation, rigorous program evaluation, and continuous organizational improvement.*



*No person, family, organization or community is perfect; we all have strengths and weaknesses. The OPS is no different. But I am convinced that this police service has the people, the partnerships, and the potential to be the best in the country. I am increasingly impressed with the dedication, compassion and professionalism of the OPS membership.*

*I truly believe that the police are the most visible element of a functioning democracy, so the police service of jurisdiction in Canada's capital city can and should be the leader in modern, inclusive and effective policing in the country.*

*There is much work to be done to bring this vision and mission to fruition.*

*I know we can do this but only if we work together as a team; between the Board and the Service, between management and the frontline, and between our members and our community partners.”*

A year later, these points hold true for me.

This has been one of the most challenging years for the public and the police in living memory – certainly in was the most challenging year of my 3 decades in policing. Despite these challenges, we have made significant changes in the OPS.

I want to thank all Board members, all Service members and all community members for your ongoing support.

We have changed a great deal in the past year, and we will continue to change for the remainder of my tenure as Chief of the Ottawa Police Service.