

## **Chief's Verbal - January 25, 2021 - OPSB meeting**

Good evening et bon soir a tous,

Chair Deans and Vice-Chair Smallwood, congratulations to you both on your re-election. On behalf of the entire Service we look forward to your continued leadership.

As we go through this period of challenge and change, the members of the Command, the OPS and I welcome this continuity of leadership.

Your passion for progressive public service and your commitment to effective police oversight are critically important to our future success in building a police service that our community members and service members deserve.

### **Covid-19**

The OPS continues to support Dr. Vera Etches and the Ottawa Public Health team's lead efforts to manage the COVID pandemic. We work in trust-based partnerships composed of a wide variety of civil society agencies and actors to jointly achieve mutually desired public health and community resiliency outcomes.

I would like to thank all essential frontline workers -- healthcare workers, public health staff, first responders, city workers, community agencies, grocery, delivery people – quiet heroes from all walks of life (including OPS members), who work every day to provide vital services to our community. Your compassion, courage and commitment to a duty of care have served the community. Your example validates my own vision for the future of the OPS;

*“Delivering neighbourhood policing through trust-based community partnerships that co-produces improved community safety and well-being. Building a police service that allows every community member and every Service member to feel and be properly supported and respected.”*

### **Change**

To achieve such a vision the OPS must overcome significant challenges and implement major changes. We were faced with making a seismic shift

in how design and deliver police services – how we work in and with community.

While it may seem like a daunting task, this is precisely the reason why I applied to be the OPS Chief and why this Board hired me for the top cop job.

Since my first day on the job, my vision has been both validated and refined through difficult discussions and hard working conversations with OPSB members, OPS members, community members, City officials, subject matter experts, academics over Zoom meetings, at public protests, during Board meetings, Community Equity Council meetings, and our own Human Rights Forum.

While listening and learning we were also busy building more effective partnerships with community stakeholders from every part of this city – people invested in a wide variety of issues affecting this city.

Because of efforts like this, we were able to implement the following needed changes over the past year despite the fact that we faced seemingly endless series of crises over the past 12 months:

- Added three new Neighbourhood Resource Teams in the ByWard Market/Lowertown, Bayshore and Centretown neighbourhoods;
- Reduced homicides and shootings by 40% respectively;
- Seized a record number of crime guns (104);
- Issued over 40,000 tickets including 450 for Stunt Driving;
- Administered naloxone 115 times resulting in 103 lives saved;
- Received record number of police applications (2,700 up from 650);
- Hired 96 new police recruits (32 female, 31 self-identified racialized/Indigenous male) with a wide range of lived experiences from working in family services, homeless shelters, harm reduction programs, victim support services and mental health support;
- Created the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan;
- Implemented the Respect, Values and Inclusion (RVI) Directorate, which is comprised of two sections – a Respect, Ethics and Values (REV) section focused on supporting professional, ethical, values;
- Expanded the role of the Community Equity Council (CEC) to have direct and timely discussions with key community leaders about the issues that are important to racialized, Indigenous and faith-based communities; and

- Coordinated a major organizational restructuring that affected over 60% of the units and directorates to improve the OPS' ability to (re)build public trust, to demonstrate a greater duty of care in every interaction, and to co-produce community safety and well-being outcomes.

## **Good work being done**

I like to invite the Board, the media, and the public to review the complete content in agenda item #26 – letters of commendation for the members of the OPS.

Here are but a few examples of the work that the quiet heroes of the OPS did in the month of December 2020 and that they do on a daily basis in the service of this city:

*“There are some massive problems with drug housing in our neighbourhood, and Constable Tristan Bailey has helped by increasing patrols and keeping an eye on our street. His presence has been a real help in reducing drugs being sold and people using those drugs at the local school and around the street.”*

And

*“Since last March I have dealt with 16 police officers due to my son’s severe autism. I would like to thank them all. They were all amazing and I appreciate it so much. In a moment of crisis there were no other options but to call 911 to assist my son and I did so without hesitation. They were all so helpful. Thank you for being so understanding in such unique circumstances.”*

And

*“Hi I just wanted to say thank you to the 911 operator and the brave police officers who helped save my father today. He suffered a stroke this morning but was able to call 911, his speech was severely impaired and I'm sure that the operator was unable to understand a single word he was trying to say. The responding officers made the decision to break down his front door when they didn't get a response, and by making that decision they may just have saved his life.”*

And

*“I am a physician in the Emergency Room at the The Ottawa Hospital. There was a patient having a mental health crisis and two of your officers, Constables Eric Lepage and Feisel Bila Houssein were instrumental in the care of this patient. They conducted themselves in a truly exemplary manner, of the highest professional standard. They demonstrated an insightful understanding of what mental health patients need in a difficult crisis, and were effective not just at de-escalation, but indeed offering genuinely empathetic support and constructive ideas and positive reinforcement (on top of a ride home).”*

And

*“Our son has been struggling with mental health issues over the past several months and this has resulted in several calls to OPS regarding concerns for his safety. I received a follow-up call from Cst. Lauren Dupasquier and once again was shown nothing but extraordinary compassion, understanding, kindness and professionalism. She offered her expertise while providing suggestions and resources and all with a touch of humour. She has continued to provide support with a follow-up "check in" visits with our son and our family. I cannot express the heartfelt gratitude I have for all she has done.”*

## **2021 Change Budget**

As we enter 2021, I can assure the Board and the public that the OPS will not be taking our foot of gas pedal, or our focus off the vision that I articulated earlier. In fact, we established the 2021 Budget as a change-enabling budget based on an ongoing series of community consultations.

Through budget process the OPS has committed itself to the public, the Board, and the city to accomplish the following in partnership with the affected community stakeholders:

### **Mental Health Response Strategy:**

You will hear more about this later in agenda item #7 from Deputy Chief Steve Bell. Through a new approach to community consultation and co-production partnerships with mental healthcare and addictions professionals, community-based organizations, academics and those with

lived experience, to design and implement a whole-of-community approach to responding to those persons dealing with mental health and addictions issues.

### **Expanded Neighbourhood Policing strategy:**

Additional Neighbourhood Resource Teams (NRTs) will be deployed in suburban and rural neighbourhoods, in addition to the six NRTs currently deployed in our urban areas. The expansion will come from the 20 new permanent hires – this will be a combination of police officers and civilian members with backgrounds in areas such as mental health and addictions, social services and youth outreach to name but a few. These officers will serve our suburban and rural areas. The expanded NRT's will work with local residents to build trust, integrate services, prevent and solve crimes all the while working in and with community to improve community safety and well-being.

### **Training/Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:**

There will be a greater focus on organizational training and the roll out an EDI training toolkit, anti-Indigenous/anti-black racism and de-escalation training – this will include conducting an efficacy review for all OPS-related training. The OPS will begin the process of co-production of training with community – from design to implementation to evaluation.

### **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 “Coordinators” – one to provide direct support to the VAW community and the other to provide direct support to the Indigenous community in order to advance the recommendations re “Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls”.

### **Members Health, Safety and Wellness:**

There will be further significant investments in member health, safety and wellness by adding four new positions to provide full time supports to our members. We will also complete and evaluate the pilot project involving Ruben Thomlinson (a third-party provided for intake and investigations for all types of harassment, including sexual harassment). This pilot evaluation will be part of the larger report and recommendations stemming

from the Board/Service project to address “Workplace Sexual Violence & Harassment.”

### **Mindset Shift**

Please know that there is a growing recognition across policing in Canada and within the OPS that the traditional model of policing needs to change and evolve.

We hear that from our community, the Board, and our own members.

Change is needed, change is happening, and more change is coming.

It’s becoming clear that in order to achieve that change we need to shift how we think, act and work as an organization. We must continually strive to better-understand and personally identify with the issues our communities face – to better-partner with those same communities to help co-produce the solutions to the local problems.

Today and every day, going forward, we will relentlessly focus on three things:

1. Public Trust - to ensure our thinking, actions and systems will improve member trust and public trust.
2. Duty of Care – to demonstrate for the community and one another that we truly care for each other.
3. Community Safety and Well-Being – to work in partnership with community to co-produce improved community safety and well-being.

We need to ensure that our approach to policing avoids exposing people (community members and our OPS members alike) to additional risks through our policies, systems and/or actions. We must seek the lowest possible police intervention and the most optimal social intervention(s) to achieve the best outcomes for the community and the Service.

Of course, all of these efforts must be achieved using the principles and best practices around equity, diversity and inclusion.

### **Community collaboration & co-production**

This change involves every Service member. But I also hope – the Service hopes that this change will involve every Board member and every

community member. We can only do this when we work together as **one service and one team**. Regardless, all members must recognize that change starts at an individual level — that we must challenge ourselves in how we think and perform our duties – we must challenge our policies, systems and programs - with a greater focus on duty of care, public trust, and Community Safety and Well-Being.

All new OPS strategies, policies and practices will be community informed and involved – with community co-production through consultation with community stakeholders and evidence-based best practices.

This is just the beginning of a discussion that has already started within our Service and with our community. I look forward to continuing it in the months and years ahead.

Thank you/merci beaucoup!