

Chief's Verbal Report
Ottawa Police Services Board
February 27th, 2017

Good afternoon,

Our Robbery Unit has been tracking an above average number of retail robberies since mid-December: So far this year there have been 41 reported retail robberies, an increase of 17 over the same time last year.

In the past few weeks there have been a series of significant arrests with respect to these investigations:

- On February 13th, a man was arrested by OC Transpo security and Ottawa Police Service (OPS) frontline officers, after being spotted aboard a bus by the victim of one of the robberies. The suspect admitted to six other retail robberies.
- On February 17th, a man was arrested by OPS frontline following a retail robbery. The suspect has since been charged in relation to four additional retail robbery investigations.
- On February 21st, two suspects were arrested by OPS frontline, Canine and Special Operations officers following two retail robberies. Investigators believe these arrests may be connected to a series of west-end robberies that have occurred since December. We anticipate a significant number of additional charges to follow as the investigation now progresses.

These are significant arrests of prolific serial robbery suspects. I would like to thank all involved, sworn and civilian, in these arrests and the successful resolution of the related investigations to-date.

Guilty Murder Verdict

On February 17, Devontay Hackett was found guilty of 2nd degree murder for killing Brandon Volpi, in June of 2014. I would like to thank everyone involved in their detailed work on this complex file, including the lead investigators, Staff Sergeant D. Vinet and Sergeant D. Brennan. Our service conducted a thorough and exhaustive investigation.

Internal Case Review

In January, I informed the board that a case review had been ordered into the initial contact in 2011 by the OPS with a young boy, who was the target of severe abuse by his father. It is a case that disturbed our community and members of our service. That

report on that review is still being finalized. The review focused on the actions of responding officers and an assessment of the contacts between the boy and other people in authority including teachers, CAS workers and doctors.

We were preparing to release the findings of the report at the March board meeting. However, this past Friday, the Board received a letter from Gerry McNeilly, Director of the OIPRD, informing us that his office had received two complaints on the matter and is investigating. He also ordered that the OPS review not be released publicly until the OIPRD investigation was complete.

Front Line Deployment

As the Board is aware, in January we launched our new Frontline Deployment (FLD) model. We have witnessed a smooth and seamless transition to the new model. The integration of a centralized command has allowed us to efficiently move our resources to where they are needed most in the city.

This has increased awareness for everyone, from Platoon members to their Inspectors, about what's going on within the organization - and out in our neighbourhoods - on any given day.

This new fluidity of managing resources will help to ensure we maintains the same high level of service that residents have come to expect from us. It will help to support evidence-based decision making to help clear cases – enhancing a Service-wide approach to resolving incidents.

Throughout the deployment we have continued to be responsive to all calls. We have had no issues reaching our required staffing levels and early indications show that demand for overtime is down.

We will also be conducting a 12-week review to examine and assess identified issues and amend processes as needed. I want to again thank all members involved in this transition for their work and professionalism in seeing it through.

Medical Call

On Saturday our service received a 9-1-1 call from a mother who's severely disabled adult daughter was choking on an apple.

OPS frontline Constables G. Dhaliwal and C. Malurica were engaged on the call and arrived on scene to find the woman's father attempting the Heimlich maneuver. The officers took over and were able to clear the woman's airway before paramedics arrived.

I want to commend these officers for their quick action and calm manner in handling this situation and bringing relief to this woman and her family.

This is just one call that shows the difference the members of our service make on a daily basis.

Opioids

Last month, I updated the Board about coordinated local efforts that have been put into place to deal with the impacts of fentanyl and counterfeit pills. Our community is seeing the tragic consequences of these drugs.

If we have learned any lessons from British Columbia's experience with its fentanyl crisis it is this: the health sector, along with governments and police, must be very proactive in dealing with this crisis.

On February 16, our Drug Unit and the Ontario Provincial Police executed six warrants resulting in the largest seizure of fentanyl in Ottawa's history. About 8,000 pills and approximately 1kg of powder drugs including fentanyl, MDMA and cocaine were seized

A total of 12 people were arrested and charged. Cash and weapons were also seized, breaking up a distribution network of counterfeit pills.

This was excellent work by our drug investigators. But we know that enforcement is only part of the solution. Education about the dangers of these drugs, prevention, harm reduction and solid treatment programs are needed in order to tackle this issue in our community. An important public conversation has begun in Ottawa. Tonight there is a session in Kanata following the death of 14-year-old Chloe Kotval.

The reality is that we may see more deaths. This past weekend our officers were called to an overdose death of a male in his 20s. It's vital that this conversation continue so that everyone understands the deadly impacts of these drugs. We are focused on ensuring that our frontline officers have the information and tools they need to assist the public and protect themselves.

At the OPS, we are working to reinforce drug control and contamination procedures and the need for the use of personal protective equipment. We are also determining how to best deploy naloxone to frontline officers.

As president of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police I have called upon the provincial government to fund the distribution of naloxone to all frontline officers in the province.

Thank you