

Chief's Verbal Report

April 23, 2018

OPSB

Toronto Incident

Toronto is facing a critical incident this afternoon. A van has plowed through a sidewalk killing or injuring a number of individuals. The incident is still very much under investigation.

When the OPS attend planned events, demonstrations you will see new physical features with respect to security, whether it is officers with carbines, barricades or salt trucks that prevent these methods from being successful. The issue is when the day to day activities, what can the community do to prevent this? The reality is there are certain individuals using this method in order to cause death and injury, regardless of their cause. Officers continue to be vigilant and work with intelligence partners to order to identify any potential threats. We continue to ask members of the community to be vigilant and to be aware of their surrounding and to report anything suspicious.

Guns and Gangs.

We continue to see shootings in our city and our officers have been working very hard to hold offenders accountable through a series of initiatives.

Seventeen illegal guns have been seized, and to-date we have completed 290 compliance checks on people with court-ordered conditions. Several investigations are underway. As a result of a Guns and Gangs investigation, four male suspects were arrested at a West End Mall just over a week ago. These four males were in possession of two loaded handguns, over a kilo of cocaine and Canadian currency. In relation to this investigation, a fifth man was arrested and numerous warrants were executed leading to two more loaded handguns being seized along with Fentanyl and other drugs. One of the men was wanted for a shooting at the Algonquin Campus last summer, while another arrested was also facing numerous charges from Project Sabotage. These arrests were possible because of the strong investigative work done by our officers.

I want to thank a passerby Mr. Raposo who came to the aid of one of the officers who was injured during a foot chase to arrest some of the suspects. The officer underwent surgery and is healing but is expected to be off for some time.

We are also seeing how the community is working with us to help find a solution. The introduction of a new Neighbourhood Watch Program in Bells Corners at the beginning of April is an important step for community safety. The current province-wide Gun Amnesty is also seeing results. To-date over 200 firearms have been taken in. We know that a lot of the guns being used for criminal activity across the city have been stolen from area homes.

I would like to encourage residents to take advantage of this amnesty to get rid of any unwanted weapons they may have in their homes. Please do not bring them into a police station, call us and an officer will come and pick it up. You still have until next Monday to qualify for this amnesty.

Cannabis Readiness Update

In February, I committed to keeping the Board informed on the progress of the Cannabis Legislation Readiness Project. Based on the status of the legislation, we are aiming for a fall implementation timeline. Deputy Chief Skinner's team has been working collaboratively with the City as part of Integrated Cannabis Legislation Team. The Integrated Team is working through a number of issues such as enforcement and administration.

I know that a concern of the community and the Board is how we will be prepared to address impaired driving. I am happy to report that in terms of training, our organization is well positioned. We presently have 219 Standardized Field Sobriety Test trained officers on the frontline, and we anticipate having another 49 additional staff trained by July. We also have 10 active Drug Recognition trained officers on the frontline and we anticipate an additional 12 being trained by September. In the absence of federally approved screening devices, we anticipate the impaired driving enforcement regime will be similar to what we have in place today.

There are still a number of unknowns that will have to be addressed as a result of potential changes to the legislation. Our work plans are on track and within budget.

Recruitment Campaign

I want to briefly update the Board on some of our recruitment efforts. Superintendent Sterling Hartley has been assigned as the senior leader of our sworn officer recruitment strategy. As we have presented to the Board in the past, the work he and his team are doing is designed to streamline the recruitment process and build capacity in the outreach recruitment area and background-check area. This work is key to successfully recruiting up to 500 officers in the next five year period.

As part of those efforts we have developed a recruitment campaign to support the work of our recruiters. That campaign is being rolled out starting next weekend with new web content and includes ads in local movie theatres. The campaign will grow in the coming weeks and months with a new partnership with the Ottawa Sports Entertainment Group, social media content, highway-facing signage on our facility at Elgin Street, and printed materials in multiple languages.

For the Board's information 14 recruits just returned from Ontario Police College (OPC) and another 16 are prepping to go to there in two weeks.

Ask an Officer

Members of our Youth Section met with the Overbrook residents to discuss issues relating to their children and the law in the first Ask an Officer event held at the Rideau-Rockcliffe Community Resource Centre last week. Parents in attendance had an opportunity to connect with officers and have their personal family questions answered on issues ranging from human trafficking to how to help their youth deal with negative peers. The intimate setting gave parents the chance to have one-on-one dialogues with officers, not only getting advice and guidance on how to support their child, but also giving our team some valuable feedback and insight into their lives.

Downtown Fire

Our civilian and sworn members work together in serving and protecting our city. After receiving a garbled 911 call where the caller abruptly hung up, our comm centre agent sent police to a downtown address. Officers arrived to see a house engulfed in flames and bravely entered the dwelling to rescue the caller. The caller had mental health issues and refused to leave the residence. With the house in flames and the man refusing to leave, the officers deployed a CEW to take control of him and get him safely out and to hospital. Three officers were treated for smoke inhalation. I want to commend those officers for their heroic efforts.

Constable Blonde

Finally I want to end with an excerpt from a letter we received from a parent thanking Constable Jordan Blonde, earlier this month. It shows the impact our officers and our first responder colleagues have on the people we serve.

"You responded to a 911 call for a drug overdose. You were the first on the scene and immediately started first aid on a young lady. That lady is my daughter. I want to thank you for saving her life that day. I know it really is a team effort, there were many first responder's on site that morning ...please let them know I say "thank you" not only on

my behalf but on behalf of my wife, my son and daughter's son. An entire family is grateful for the actions taken that day. We rushed to the hospital when we found out what had happened. We were told that our daughter would probably not make it through the night and to prepare for the worse.....Her first words when she woke up were "I do not want to die," because of your efforts and the effort of others, she is alive."