

**Chief's Verbal Report**  
**Ottawa Police Services Board - June 28, 2021**

Thank you Chair and thank you all for the moment of silence at the beginning of the meeting.

**RABBI BULKA**

I wish to extend our condolences to the family, friends and congregation of Rabbi Bulka. We are all saddened by his passing. He was an interfaith leader, a bridge builder, a diversity champion and a beloved family member - a person who sought to make this city, this society and the world a better place.

Rabbi Bulka was always available to the OPS for wise counsel and practical support. He had a special gift to be able to focus on and find the commonality in all humanity. He will be missed.

**INDIGENOUS CHILDREN**

This morning, the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition held a sunrise ceremony at City Hall to honour the children found at residential schools in British Columbia and Saskatchewan.

I attended the sunrise event along with my full command team and many of our front-line officers and civilian members – we were joined by several hundred people from across the community.

The sacred fire ceremony, the smudge ceremony and all the other ceremonies provided me and all attendees with a place to share grief, regenerate hope and recommit to a better future.

On behalf of the OPS, last week I formally extended our condolences and support to the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition as well as to all Indigenous peoples across Canada.

All of us share in the grief over this discovery and our hearts go out to the families whose children were taken and who were left without answers for generations.

This latest discovery further reveals the terrible historical treatment of Indigenous people in Canada and exposes the role that many of Canada's institutions played in this still unfolding tragedy. It is a reality that no Canadian should turn away from.

While we mourn the loss of these children, our Service is committed to playing our role in helping to improve the lives of all Indigenous people in Canada.

That is why we have been working with the OAC and our Indigenous community partners on the following initiatives as laid out in the 2020 budget:

1. Implementing an Indigenous Women's Safety Advisor Position within our specialized investigations section – this new position will help ensure the full implementation of the recommendations for the Truth & Reconciliation Commission and the Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls Inquiry.
2. Developing a new Anti-Indigenous Racism Training & Cultural Awareness strategy to improve our members' understanding of the historical and current Indigenous experience in Canada so they provide improved services to and form better partnerships with the Indigenous community. This important work is also supported by the Community Equity Council.
3. Implementing the OPS' Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan to provide all OPS members with skills-based training in implicit bias, diversity and inclusion, intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism, equity and social justice. In addition to the Anti-Indigenous Racism training the OPS will also develop and deliver Anti-Black, anti-Muslim, anti-Asian racism modules.

## **HATE CRIMES**

We continue to see a rise in hate related incidents and crimes in Ottawa. The targets of hate are as varied as the nature of the incidents. We are increasing our efforts to encourage the reporting of any form of hate crime or hate incident.

Becoming an anti-racist Service, city and society will not happen with anti-racism training programs, cultural awareness strategies – there is no simple or quick fix for these generational human failings. It requires a life-long individual commitment to inclusion and coordinated leadership from across civil society.

## **EPMO PROJECTS**

One of the reports on the agenda this evening is the strategic planning report that outlines the OPS' enterprise level priority projects that resulted from our 2020 Budget approval. These critically important strategic investments are designed to improve our organization, our culture and our service to all people in Ottawa. They are intended to better enable all OPS members to demonstrate improved Duty of Care, Public Trust, and Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB).

We are not doing this alone. In each of the enterprise level projects we are working in partnership with community stakeholders – this ensures we receive meaningful community input into the design, implementation and evaluation phases of each project.

## **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

One of the key projects is focused on violence against women. It's an area that we know needs more investment, both in terms of partners in the community and investigators.

This month, Ms. Hanadi Mohammed, was stabbed and killed – her daughter was seriously wounded. With the direct assistance of the public, our officers were able to quickly locate and arrest the suspect, Ms Mohammed's former spouse. Our Homicide Unit has laid criminal charges and the case is before the courts.

That said, last week we convened a special meeting with our VAW strategy partners to improve our capacity as a Service and as a city to better prevent and respond to such tragedies. The VAW community groups presented us a list of "asks" to improve our VAW related services. We have committed to implementing every one of the items as soon as possible. We also discussed additional areas of improvement beyond the initial community list.

Preventing violence against women is a priority for our service.

Our Partner Assault Unit investigated almost 2,100 cases in 2020 and has already been assigned almost 1,100 this year.

The PAU members are committed to the safety of persons in the city who are at risk to domestic related violence.

As a Service, we are listening to and working closely with the VAW community to make continuous improvements in all aspects of our service delivery.

## **OPERATIONS**

This has also been a very active month in terms of operations.

## **PROTESTS**

Our members have been successfully and safely managing a number of protests in the city – protests that relate to local, national and world events. The OPS will continue to work with our National Capital Region partners to help ensure that people can fully exercise the democratic rights to lawful protest and free speech while managing the need to ensure public safety.

## **NOISEMAKER**

Our Traffic Unit continues to focus on traffic safety with our project NoiseMaker efforts. Project NoiseMaker has resulted in more than 1100 charges since May 1<sup>st</sup> relating to stunt driving, speeding, noise and distracted driving. Speeding has accounted for 40% of the charges. The project is focused on addressing community complaints, reducing the number of collisions, injuries and deaths on our city streets.

## **CHILD ABDUCTIONS**

In the past two months, our Service has responded to the abduction of three children, two of those are considered stranger abductions.

On June 3<sup>rd</sup>, we launched a massive search operation after a young infant who was visiting Ottawa with their mother from Nunavut was abducted. At approximately 8:30am, an ESU officer who was part of the search located a potential witness police were seeking in the area. Further investigation led officers to an apartment in the 800 block of Pinecrest Road. When officers arrived at the unit, they heard a baby crying inside. The officers entered the apartment and located the missing girl.

## **AMBER ALERT**

With any Amber Alert issued overnight, we often get complaints from the public of their sleep being disturbed however, we wanted to share with you one comment that stood out.

“As I’m sure many others were, I was jolted awake at approximately three in the morning. I was a little confused until I realized it was an Amber Alert. I went back to sleep thinking to myself how lucky I was to live in a country where child safety is a much higher priority than a good night sleep. Thank you for always being there.”

## **MANSLAUGHTER CHARGE**

In May of 2020 our Homicide Unit began investigating the death of Chloe Guan-Branch, a five year old. Following a year of investigation, which included significant forensic analysis, the Homicide Unit charged a man with manslaughter and a woman with criminal negligence causing death and failing to provide the necessities of life.

## **NARCAN**

Over the past month, OPS officers deployed Narcan eight times after responding to overdose calls. Our officers are making their contribution to the efforts of many persons and agencies in Ottawa who also proactively respond to and intervene in overdose cases to help save lives.

## **DROWNING**

Sadly, Our Marine Unit was again tasked with searching the Ottawa River for the victim of drowning. This time a young man entered the water near Lemieux Island and didn’t resurface. Our divers recovered his body. We continue to call on people to practice water and boat safety.

## **BUDGET**

On the administrative side, we have begun the development of the 2022 Budget six months early this year. Deputy Chief Bell has been leading initial discussions with City Councillors and stakeholders joined by Members Smallwood and Johnson.

We are also drafting a budget options report for a July FAC and July Board meeting of the Board followed by a full public consultation.

This will be an important discussion and we are focused on ensuring everyone is able to be heard and that the process for developing the budget is maximally transparent.

## **SERGEANT MAHAMUD ELMI**

I also would like to recognize the career of Sgt. Mahamud Elmi who is leaving our service after 17 years. After being appointed as a Justice of the Peace. It is a well-deserved appointment to a great person.

Mo is dedicated to his work, his family and the community, here in Canada and abroad.

He has always been an important link between our service and the Somali community. He and his wife Amoune Omer were born in Somalia and arrived in Canada as refugees.

They know first-hand the power of education, community, and hope. They are determined to share the transformative opportunity of education with youth in Somalia and around the world. In 2008 they launched the Somali Hope Academy Community in rural Somalia providing education to 700 students every year.

Congratulations Mo. You have always made a difference in your career and life and we know that you will continue to do so in the years ahead.

## **CONSTABLES CHARGED**

Finally, I want to end this verbal by discussing some difficult news for our Service. Last week, two Ottawa Police Constables were criminally charged by the RCMP.

We asked the RCMP to investigate after information about the activities of one of our officers was reported to us.

These two officers were charged criminally and immediately suspended.

They will be provided due process as any member of the public would and as a member of the Ottawa Police Service, they will also be provided the full extent of the supports we have available.

I am not going to comment further on this case because it is ongoing with criminal matters before the courts.

It's important we talk about the good work we do but it's important to talk about police misconduct as well. I am never going to be the one to say all police officers are good and right all the time. Police officers are people and like people they are vulnerable to poor behaviour, bad choices and misconduct.

It's our job as an organization to recruit, train, support, supervise and deploy the most professional, ethical and equitable Service members.

We also must make it safe for people – whether they are OPS members or community members – to come forward and raise concerns. When they raise concerns about the conduct of an OPS members, we will act.

During my tenure we have improved all of our risk management processes as well as our capacity to prevent, intervene and investigate conduct issues.

When we are dealing with sensitive, complex and/or high-risk cases, we have gone so far as to bring in outside agencies to assist us. We have brought in third party, independent investigator such as the Rubin Tomlinson and the RCMP Anti-Corruption Unit.

We will continue to take these actions when necessary.

We are focused on improving the culture of this organization. It will take time and it will take work but be confident that we are focused.

Illegal or inappropriate behaviours are not tolerated and we are serious and focused on identifying, investigating and prosecuting it whenever it occurs.

That said, the vast majority of OPS members are hardworking, dedicated, professional, compassionate people. They make a difference in the lives of community members every day and I am very proud of them.

Thank you. Merci beaucoup.