

Chief's PSB Verbal Report
July 26, 2021

Good afternoon/bon après midi

New Governor General

I want to start off by congratulating Her Excellency the Right Honourable Mary Simon, our new Governor General, who was installed this afternoon just down the street in the Senate Chambers. Our OPS Traffic Escort team had the privilege to support Governor General Simon by helping to manage road closures and traffic disruptions during her ceremony.

Governor General Simon's appointment comes at an important time in Canada's history. Her background as a civil servant, negotiator, diplomat and broadcaster as well as her lived experience as an Inuit will serve us all well.

Her installation is also an important signal that all Canadians and all Canadian institutions need to re-evaluate and renew our relationships with and attitudes towards our Indigenous communities.

The Ottawa Police Service is working with the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition, along with the Indigenous Subcommittee of the Community Equity Council (CEC) with a firm commitment to rebuild relationships and moving forward together.

We are taking concrete actions through equal partnerships to focus on the needs of Indigenous communities, recruitment and delivering service that is respectful of Indigenous culture. We are striving to support Indigenous communities in and around Ottawa through increased awareness among the Service and reaffirmed commitments to support the necessary Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action.

Mentorship program

I wanted to take a moment to introduce you all to Waterloo Regional Police Deputy Chief Shirley Hilton, who is joining us here today to learn what it's like to be a Chief of Police. She has been shadowing me this week as part of an Executive Mentorship Program developed by the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, that is looking to provide support and guidance for Canada's future chiefs of police.

Deputy Chief Hilton is an excellent police leader who, I'm sure, will have a direct hand in developing and leading the future of policing – ensuring that Canadian police services from coast to coast are able to better serve and protect all of our communities. I

thank Chair Deans for her generous offer to also meet with and mentor Deputy Chief Hilton during her visit this week.

Tokyo Olympics

Like many Canadians, my wife and kids cheered ourselves hoarse yesterday as Woodstock, Ontario's Maggie MacNeil brought home Canada's first Olympic gold medal in the 100 metre butterfly event.

I join with all OPS members and Ottawans in support of Canadian Olympian Joanna Brown as she competes in the Women's Triathlon event this evening in Japan. Joanna is from Ottawa, starting her career with the Bytown Storm, and she is the daughter of retired Ottawa Police Inspector, Scott Brown. I know Scott and his family are proud of Joanna – as are we.

Order of Merit

On July 13, three OPS members were presented the Order of Merit for Police Forces Award in a virtual ceremony which is given to police service members who have exemplified excellence throughout their policing careers. This award is special because it specifically recognizes achievements and accomplishments that elate as much or more to public service and altruism as it does for acts of bravery.

1. Inspector Debbie Miller (MOM), was recognized for her dedication for creating a more inclusive environment at the OPS, as well as creating best-practices to help keep children safe online with her work with the RCMP to set up the International Youth Advisory Congress.
2. Ceremonial Sergeant Major Steve Boucher (MOM), was recognized for his relationship-building skills at a local, national and international level with his work at the Ottawa Police Association, where he introduced the police Benevolent Fund, and his work proudly representing the OPS in the Ceremonial Guard.
3. Retired Staff Sergeant Roy Lalonde (OOM), was recognized for his work not only helping to develop high-level security measures for visiting dignitaries and presidents to the Nation's Capital, but also for his work as a United Nations' Peacekeeper.

I am very proud of the accomplishments of each of these three OPS members – they have improved lives here in Ottawa and around the world.

Exceptional work

This is my favourite part of our Board meetings, where I get the chance to share with you some of the feedback I am receiving from both our members and the public.

1. Last month, three of our officers were called to a home by a female complainant who advised that there was a man in the apartment with her who was threatening to commit suicide by throwing himself off of an apartment balcony – before police arrived the man had already severely injured himself with a knife. Constables Rachel Robinson, Mark Talbot and Daniel Jessop entered the apartment just in time to pull the man back from the railing he had been straddling, rescuing him from his perilous perch. They brought the man to hospital where he was admitted and assessed by medical professionals.
2. Here is an unsolicited email that the OPS received, “I recently reached out to seek help in dealing with an encampment in a local park where tents had popped up and once I found needles. I had a great experience with Constable Sebastien Lemay on a prior occasion, so I contacted him again. He responded quickly to my emails, was professional, and thoroughly explained what could be done and what resources were available. True to his word, the following week when I returned to the park, the encampment was cleaned up and gone. The previous year it took several weeks to clear out several tents so for it to happen that quickly this year is a testament to the Service and Cst. Lemay. I wanted to extend my gratitude to both the OPS and specifically, Cst Lemay and the unsheltered task force. Keep up the good work, it is very much appreciated.”
3. And here is one more we received from a resident: “I wish to commend you for the community patrols on my street in Orleans. I had a chance to speak with two of your officers, namely Constables Andrew Worth and Caroline Despatis, who were patrolling on bicycles. Who would of thought!!?? They actually took time to chat with me and asked me if I had any concerns. Most professional officers that I have seen in quite some time with a genuine friendly interest in my street/community. Kudos to both of them and to the Ottawa Police Service.”

Budget

I want to spend a few moments to comment on the Budget Scenario Report we have on the agenda at the Board's request this evening.

The Budget is entirely focused on improving community safety and well-being (CSWB) in the city, meeting the evolving policing needs of the community as well as addressing health, safety and wellness needs of our members.

It has very minimal "discretionary" funding that can be reduced without having significant impacts to staffing and/or capacity levels. This funding must be applied to a variety of priorities across the organization.

For example, traffic continues to be a topic concern of residents and Councillors and during the pandemic the issues of speeding and dangerous driving seem only to have gotten worse. We are responding to this.

This past weekend alone, the OPS' Project NoiseMaker laid 126 charges, including 11 charged with stunt driving. In total this year, the project has resulted in 1,533 charges and 110 stunt driving charges. On Friday night officers spotted a 17-year-old G2 driver on Heron Road going 110 km/h in a 60 zone. That same night a 39-year-old man was caught going almost 90 km/h in a 40 zone on King Edward Avenue.

We have been focused on finding efficiencies for the past decade in which we delivered \$20 million in budget savings by streamlining staff, reducing administrative positions, improving performance, etc.

Despite assertions to the contrary, the fact is that the OPS budget is a shrinking portion of the overall municipal budget and has been for several years.

I also need to caution that the forecasted potential impacts of the 3 scenarios outlined in this report requested by the Board, must be taken with the understanding that several undetermined factors could likely affect the assessments, such as the following three impact issues:

- A. The Board is still in the process of developing its new Strategic Priorities for the OPS,
- B. The Board and the OPS have yet to complete our respective budget community consultations, and
- C. The Board is still engaged in CBA negotiations with both the OPA and SOA

Community Consultation

With the Board's approval this evening, we will launch a comprehensive community consultation process with the residents, businesses and community stakeholders regarding their police service needs and expectations.

The plan includes in-person interviews, small focus groups and town hall style events. It also includes direct outreach methods to gather feedback and input.

The plan will involve the Board at every step along with the Board-contracted vendors, PACE and StrategyCorp. WE will also receive input from a diverse range of stakeholders, residents, community groups, etc.

A special focus will be made on reaching racialized and marginalized communities as well as community agencies that serve them. The surveys will be made available in French and English as well as Spanish, Arabic, Cantonese, Mandarin, Farsi and Somali.

RECRUITS

We have focused on diversity and reduced barriers on hiring with the most diverse hiring classes in this Service's history.

On Friday, I had the honour of swearing-in the newest class of 45 recruits who just returned from the Ontario Police College.

They represent the newest generation of officers who will help us to deliver on our new CSWB operating model for policing – one that will incorporate a whole-of-city, community-led approach to improving community safety and well-being for all residents.

I have been very impressed by the recruits' qualifications, their attitudes and their resilience - even as they took their classes at OPC they were part of a Covid outbreak.

They also represent the most highly qualified and diverse class in the history of our Service. They bring a wealth of prior lived experience and career experience to the OPS. There are recruits who were; social workers, youth workers and community outreach worker. 40% identify as female, 6% identify as an Indigenous person, and 50% identified as a member of a racialized group. The group is highly educated with university and/or college degrees and the candidates speak over 20 different languages with 46% speaking French. Members of this recruit class bring valuable community network connections through their volunteer work with a wide range of local organizations/services.

What struck me most was when I was about to administer the Oath of Office, the parade Sergeant called the recruits to attention and advised them that they could use the “affirmation” – OR – they could choose to be sworn-in using a Bible, a Koran or an Eagle Feather....clearly the OPS is changing and for the better!

Welcome Sessions for Recruits/Families

Another important change is that our Health, Safety & Wellness Unit is hosting welcome sessions for our recruits AND their families. This is an effort to help the recruits maintain their family values and intimate support systems that made them such outstanding applicants. We wanted to take the opportunity to recognize the important roles that their loved ones have played and will continue to play during their policing career. Their support has helped each recruit get where they are today.

This work is part of the Family Resource Group project that is in place to help all members navigate through all their career milestones and transitions. We want all members to know that throughout their career there are supports available to assist them and their loved ones along the way.

This change was purposeful, planned for and represents our future. It is the result of hard work, leadership and the strong commitment of our community, Outreach and Recruitment and our Board.

This recruit class will be fully deployed on August 2nd, 2021 when they will begin working with their field training officers. Each recruit will also be assigned to work in one of the NRT areas with local community stakeholders so they have a chance to get a true understanding of the needs and expectations of some of our most marginalized and racialized communities.

CONCLUSION

Our community has been calling for a renewal of policing service and the building of community capacity to deliver some of the social supports currently provided by the police – whether in a more integrated partnering approach and/or fully independent of the OPS.

We have heard such calls loud and clear. We welcome it. And with the Board and our community, we have been working to achieve it.

We want to assist community groups in working better with us to address these issues. We *want* to reduce calls for service to OPS while improving needed services to the

community. That said, such a transition/transformation cannot, and should not, happen in any way that causes increased health and safety risks to community members, service providers and/or OPS members.

The OPS cannot and should not do this alone. This fundamental reimagination and ecosystem integration of policing must be conducted under the new CSWB legislated requirements – it should be co-produced with our City of Ottawa and Ottawa community partners.

It must be conducted with maximum transparency, meaningful community input, real accountability, and sustainable resources for all community stakeholders, including the OPS.

Thank you/merci beaucoup!