

Chair D. Deans' Verbal Report, OPSB Meeting September 27, 2021

Good afternoon everyone.

I would like to begin by acknowledging the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation that will take place on September 30.

This is a day to remember the survivors of residential school and the children who never came home, their families, and their communities. It is a day for us to learn, reflect and take action.

There are several events taking place both in person and online on September 30, and I would encourage all Board members to participate and spend time reading, learning and reflecting about the history of residential schools and the ongoing, intergenerational trauma they have caused.

As a Board, we need to improve our collective awareness and understanding of these issues.

We are also exploring opportunities for the Board to participate in training to better inform ourselves to action the motion carried by the Board last November around advancing reconciliation both internally and externally.

I would now like to speak about the budget process, as this will be a significant focus for this Board over the coming months.

We find ourselves at a critical juncture where the future of policing in Ottawa and beyond is being reimagined and repositioned within the broader objectives of community safety and wellbeing.

As a Board, we share the same goals as the Service, members of the public, and community organizations. We want safer communities, we want to see an absence of crime, and we want people to be treated fairly in all interactions with Police.

We believe there is a role for police in advancing community safety and wellbeing.

However, police are only one part of a much larger ecosystem that shoulders that responsibility.

One of the challenges we are seeing is when other parts of that ecosystem are unable to meet community demands, police are often the last available option.

And over the last several months, we have seen an increase in gun violence in some communities in Ottawa.

Neighbourhood Resource Teams are active in several communities and were chosen based on the prevalence of crime in those areas where they operate. NRT officers have been doing good work to help both victims and communities after they experience violent crime.

But we also need to address the root causes of crime, such as poverty, inaccessibility to services, and limited meaningful work opportunities.

We can do a better job as a community in allocating more resources towards upstream, evidence-based interventions that will create more positive outcomes in our communities.

And much like those who have come to speak to us at our Board meetings, we also want to see the City increase funding for programs that support poverty reduction, address the housing and homelessness crisis, and support more integrated mental health support to members of our communities.

As the Board responsible for the police budget, we are committed to ensuring we put forward a budget ask that requests no more and no less than what we require for the provision of adequate and effective policing services in the city of Ottawa.

It is within this context that the Board is requesting a starting point of 0% for the 2022 budget, with a clearly articulated justification for additional resources the Service requires to meet new pressures.

Breaking the budget down so there is a clear picture of the proposed costs associated with inflation, service enhancements, and growth to support strategic

directions, will enable the Board to make decisions about where we should be investing, divesting, or maintaining resources more transparently.

These decisions will need to be carefully contemplated in combination with the results from the ongoing public consultation process being carried out around the budget.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind residents in Ottawa that there are still ways to engage around the 2022 budget, to have your voice heard. The online survey, available on the OPS website and OPSB website it available until September 30. There will also be additional opportunities to engage in the coming months.

I would now like to share an update about the work PACE has been doing for the Board.

PACE is currently drafting recommendations for the Board related to improving the way in which our Board engages with the community.

These recommendations are based on a series of interviews they have conducted with a variety of community organizations over the summer.

Once the draft report is released, a media release will be sent out, and the report will be posted on the Board's website. PACE will then solicit further input on the recommendations they have prepared from the public.

I am pleased to also share that our Board is the host Board for the 32nd Annual CAPG Conference, which runs from September 28-30.

This is the only national police governance conference in all of Canada.

The theme this year is Reimagining Community Safety and Inspiring Change. Chief Sloly, DC Bell, members of the CEC leadership and myself will be some of the speakers at the conference.

Finally, I am delighted to report that the OPSB has selected Blair Dunker as the new Chief Administrative Officer of the Ottawa Police Service.

Blair brings 28 years of experience with the Ontario Public Service to this role, and we are confident that her knowledge, skills, and experience will make her an immense asset to the Service.

Blair will take on her new role as of December 6, 2021.