

Chair D. Deans' Verbal Report, OPSB Meeting October 25, 2021

Good afternoon everyone.

Today my comments will focus on the budget process.

The Board received the consultation report prepared by the Service outlining the findings from their consultation efforts over the past several months. This report is one of the inputs that the Board will consider when making decisions about the 2022 budget, but it is not the only one.

The Board will be carrying out additional consultation between the time that the police budget is tabled on November 3 and considered on November 22 to fill remaining gaps in knowledge that the Board identifies.

As the Board is responsible for the police budget, I want to take this time to reaffirm our commitment to putting forward a budget that requests no more than what is needed to provide adequate and effective policing in Ottawa.

Last month, the Board gave the Service direction to build the 2022 budget from a starting point of 0%.

Any additional money required beyond that point must be accompanied by a clear and detailed justification for why it is needed.

Providing this level of detail will enable the Board to make informed decisions about the 2022 budget, in combination with the other inputs it receives, including consultations with members of the public.

This approach is critical for enhancing public accountability and demonstrating transparency in our decision-making.

I would also like to take this opportunity to emphasize that the Board knows that change is needed in how policing is done in the broader context of community safety and wellbeing. We have heard the delegates who have come to speak to us over the last year to share their experiences and advocate for change.

We have heard the community tell us that a police response is not always the right response, and we know that we can't police our way out of challenges we face in this city like homelessness, addiction, and mental health issues.

We also know that action is needed now. By the time police intervention is required, it's very late in the process.

We need to divert resources into upstream prevention measures, and we need to seriously contemplate where shifting responsibility away from a police response to a community response will have the best outcomes in our communities.

I would finally like to take this opportunity to share that after 8 years on the Board of Directors for the Canadian Association of Police Governance, Vice Chair Sandy Smallwood has stepped down from this position.

I would like to thank Sandy on behalf of the Ottawa Police Services Board for his many contributions to the Canadian Association of Police Governance.

At the CAPG 32nd Annual General Meeting on September 30, 4 new members were elected to the Board of Directors, including myself. I look forward to representing the Ottawa Police Services Board on the CAPG's Board of Directors.