

Chief's Verbal Report – OPSB Meeting – Dec 20, 2021

Bon après midi à tous - good afternoon - kwey.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Ottawa is built on unceded Algonquin Anishinaabe territory.

The peoples of the Algonquin Anishinaabe Nation have lived on this territory for millennia. Their culture and presence have nurtured and continue to nurture this land.

The Ottawa Police Service honours the peoples and land of the Algonquin Anishinaabe Nation.

The OPS honours all First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and their valuable past and present contributions to this land.

BLAIR DUNKER

I'm pleased to formally introduce, our new CAO, Ms Blair Dunker who is here to participate in her first Board meeting.

In her short two weeks with the OPS, Blair has already made a positive impact.

She brings extensive experience and expertise along with a passion for public service. She has been meeting her new team, participating in strategic planning sessions and starting to manage her assigned enterprise priority projects. She literally hit the ground running at work while settling into her new Ottawa home. She is a very welcome addition to the OPS Command team and the Board should take great credit for its decision to hire her.

2021 IN REVIEW

Following the budget adoption, we have been updating our Strategic and Enterprise Operational Plans for 2022. We are also conducting a review of our organization's work to date in 2021.

We have accomplished a great deal over the course of the year, including our continued efforts to advance the Board's strategic priorities thru a renewed focus on;

1. Duty of Care
2. Public trust, as well as
3. Community safety and well-being

I will start by recognizing the tremendous efforts over the course of the year by our members from across the Service – from front line officers, call takers/dispatchers, special constables, IT Service Desk Operators and CID investigators – an amazing workforce who performed 24-7-365 in the second year of the global pandemic...members who demonstrated incredible commitment, service excellence and personal resilience during the most difficult and challenging year in policing.

The OPS has delivered on key 2021 budget commitments including;

- Deployed naloxone 81 times saving lives – delivered traffic/trail/water safety strategies to every Ward in the Ottawa in projects like Noisemaker to address stunt driving, speeding and noise – seized 74 crime guns while responding to a record number of shooting events in the city
- Partnered with the VAW community to hire the new Violence Against Women Coordinator and the new Sexual Violence Child Abuse Liaison,
- Worked with community partners to develop and deliver service wide Anti-racisms training – specifically anti-black racism training and Indigenous Cultural Awareness
- Developed the new suburban and rural Neighborhood Resource Teams who will be fully operational for 2022
- Partnered with the Canadian Institute for Conflict Resolution in the development and implementation engagement strategy for marginalized, racialized and victimized communities to improve relationships and co-create problem solving partnership
- Introduced the new Early Intervention System to support members at risk and to improve the overall health and wellness of our members
- Launched a new competency framework supported by the Degreed Learning Experience Platform providing all of our members with

improved knowledge, skills and abilities to provide better service to the community

- Concluded the joint OPS and the Board commitment to the Workplace Sexual Violence & Harassment Project with Rubin Thomlinson to address systemic lysogeny and discrimination in the workplace

POLICE OPERATIONS & COMMENDATIONS

Even though this is now the heart of the holiday season, our officers remain hard at work.

For instance, just last week, a male entered the Circle K store located on McArthur Ave. armed with a large knife. He robbed the clerk and fled the scene on foot taking cigarettes and cash. Responding FLD officers searched the area and located the suspect who then engaged in a foot pursuit through a residential area. He was successfully contained and arrested by officers with no injuries reported. The stolen items and knife recovered. Another recent incident took place at the Home Depot located on Bank Street. The suspect climbed over the fence to the gardening center and gained access to the building. He grabbed a garbage can and filled it with items from the store. One officer arrived as he was exiting the store. The suspect fled on foot but was located and taken safely into custody with full recovery of all the stolen items.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

December 2021, saw 40 impaired investigations resulting in criminal charges (32 impaired by alcohol, 3 impaired by drug and 5 refusals to comply with a demand). Additionally, there were seven 3-day Driver's Licence suspensions for driver being in the warn range. This past weekend alone, there were nine drivers charged with impaired related offences.

For 2021, we saw a major increase in 911 calls reporting impaired drivers and we have charged 740 people criminally for impaired driving offences.

Homicide Investigation

On December 6th, Ottawa had its 16th homicide of the year. It was a shooting incident where two 16 year old kids were the victims – one survived the early morning shooting but the second tragically did not. The family and friends of young John Ndayishimiye mourn his loss and our Homicide Investigators are working to arrest those responsible for his death on Elmira Avenue earlier this month. Thanks to community assistance we are making real progress in the homicide investigation.

We are also working tirelessly to support John's family which is part of a larger months long effort to build trusting relationships with the local Burundian community. Last month I reported on a very successful day of relationship building with the Burundi community where we had a community soccer game followed by an evening community meeting discussion to improve the safety and wellbeing. Another meeting is being scheduled thru the leadership of Mr. Juris Ndgondozi – the father of another homicide shooting victim, Tyson Ndgondozi.

RECORD NUMBER OF SHOOTINGS

As I referenced earlier, year to date in 2021 Ottawa has experienced 80 shooting incidents which is the highest we have ever recorded. This violent crime trend in 2021 mirrors the violent crime that has been taking place for the past 2 years in most big city police services across Canada and the US. Preventing and solving these shooting incidents will continue to be a major public safety focus of the OPS in 2022.

In addition to our interdiction, intelligence, and investigation operations we are building new internal capacity to form new and better problem-solving partnerships.

That said, the underlying factors for this violent crime trend requires much more than a police response – it requires a whole of city/society response to address the systemic, criminogenic, and socially determined factors that underpin these violent crimes.

Everyone in Ottawa needs to be involved in building resilience in our communities that are at the greatest risk for criminal violence as well as supporting the efforts of the OPS to bring to justice those who commit such violent crimes.

Threats to OCDSB High Schools

We have been investigating various school shooting threats to Ottawa-area schools, including the high-profile threat to Gloucester High School. We have been working actively with the schools and school boards to investigate. We have identified some of the sources of the threats and, in those cases, appropriate investigative actions have been taken to deal with the individuals responsible and address any threats. In other cases, though no credible threat has been identified, we have increased police presence.

We continue to assess the level of risk to any school population and the community at large. We are focused on ensuring a safe school environment and take this matter seriously.

Our efforts resulted in some positive feedback from Brett Reynolds, the Associate Director of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, who said:

“I am writing to express our sincere appreciation for the level of support provided to Gloucester HS yesterday and today. I cannot express enough the reassuring impact that presence had, particularly for parents and staff, who are greatly concerned. [...] I do believe some of these incidents are making clear the loss to the system resulting from the discontinuing of the SRO program.”

Purse Project

The past month has also seen many examples of our never-ending efforts to serve the community. The Ottawa Police Service’s annual “Purse Project” wrapped up in the past month. This is an annual initiative by OPS members that is designed to provide women living in local shelters with sanitary and hygiene products.

This year's iteration of the Project ran from the end of November until December 12th. The project organizer, Const. Dawn Neilly, estimated that 50 thousand packages of pads and tampons were donated by the community to be given to shelters in Ottawa in time for the holidays. This Project is just one of many examples of how the OPS serves the most marginalized and vulnerable community members in partnership with a wide variety of community-based organizations.

As always, I invite the Board, the media and the public to read the complete content of agenda item #9 – the letters of commendation for the OPS which is a constant reminder of the invaluable public service that the OPS provides in Ottawa as well as validation of the incredible acts of courage and compassion that our members demonstrate every day of the year.

Here is a sample of the content from the many public messages of gratitude that we have received since the November Board meeting:

“As a parent of a child with serious mental health issues I am always reluctant to involve police for fear they don't know how to deal with these circumstances differently than they would the general public. Last night I was in a position where I felt I didn't have any other choice, so I called to report my suicidal son. From the lady who initially took my call to the police constables who responded to my home I couldn't have asked for more. They were exceptional. They were respectful and sympathetic of my son and our situation which as a Mom I appreciated greatly, they were concerned about his well-being and had me updated with 15 minutes of leaving my home as to where my son's phone was traced too. I just want to thank Cst Ethier for being compassionate and kind in a crazy call.”

With the Board's indulgence I will share a previously reported on public letter of commendation that the OPS received in January 2021:

“While nobody likes to be stopped by the police, I was stopped due to frozen ice on the top of my car that I couldn't reach. Thank you very much to both officers for their help, I really appreciate that it was a safety stop. Good job!”

NOTE – This letter is a very timely and relevant reminder that cops count”! The Board may recall that two weeks an innocent Ottawa motorist was almost killed when a large sheet of ice flew off the roof of a vehicle driving in front of her – the ice nearly decapitated the driver and the resulting accident shut down the 417 in the core of the city for the entire evening rush hour period.

SEASON’S GREETINGS

I will close by expressing my deep personal and professional appreciation to our community partners who stood by our side every day of this difficult and dynamic year – working with us to assess and address a wide variety of community safety and wellbeing challenges while also helping the OPS to be the best at getting better.

Special recognitions for the invaluable role of the Community Equity Council for the intensity and integrity of their efforts.

I also want to again recognize the hard work, dedication and commitment shown by OPS members throughout the year. I thought nothing could top 2020 but 2021 proved to be an even more chaotic and challenging year for the OPS. Regardless, the OPS members demonstrated an unbelievable level of individual resiliency and collective commitment to positive change. They work tirelessly every hour of every day to serve and protect the community – they will continue to do so to the last hour of the last day in 2021.

I want to thank my members from the bottom of my heart for every act of selfless sacrifice made on behalf of the one million Ottawa residents.

Finally, I wish all community members, Board members and OPS members a very best for the holiday season and blessings for a happy, healthy, and peaceful New Year. However, you choose to celebrate, do so within public health COVID guidelines.

Thank you – merci beaucoup - miigwetch.