

## **Chair Diane Deans' Verbal Report – 24 January 2022**

Good afternoon everyone and Happy New Year to those I have not spoken with this year.

I know I speak for the entire Police Services Board when I say that we are ready and eager to move forward with our workplan this year.

As those of you who closely follow the Board's proceedings are aware, 2021 was a busy and challenging year.

One area of focus was changing the way we engage with the various communities we serve, and in 2021 we hired PACE to support the Board in developing new processes for engaging with the community.

Today we are receiving the final report from PACE, including a number of recommendations that will address the community's increasing desire to engage in a more meaningful dialogue with the Board.

We hope to be able to implement recommendations from this report early this year, including the introduction of a Public Deliberative Roundtable intended to enhance the Board's ability to engage more deeply and meaningfully with community.

During the 2022 budget consultation process, we heard from a range of individual community members, community groups and stakeholders who told us that they want to see improvements in the way that police engage with diverse, marginalized and racialized communities. We also heard that there is a strong desire for new approaches for responding to social issues to bring about better outcomes.

Conversations about the future of policing within the context of community safety and wellbeing featured prominently throughout the 2022 budget process, and the insightful feedback shared by community will be incorporated into the Board's new Strategic Plan.

This will be a central focus for the Board over the next few months.

As the oversight body, we must hold the service accountable to a high standard. We must clearly set the direction, strategies and expectations that reflect the change we are seeking.

In 2022, the Board will also complete a review of our use of force policies, review the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions Calls to Action, and continue working with the OPS as the Safe Workplace Action Plan is rolled out.

The Board remains committed to an agenda of change and recognizes that it must be brought about swiftly and thoughtfully.

At this point, I would like to take some time to speak about the recently released report on the Joint Strategy on Workplace Sexual Violence and Harassment and associated Safe Workplace Action Plan, that incorporates all 18 recommendations outlined in Rubin Thomlinson's final report.

As the employer, we need to provide a safe and respectful workplace that values the women and men who contribute to the wellbeing of the community every day.

Various forms of gender-based violence have been normalized in our society for a long time, and this includes sexual harassment in our workplaces. Society at large has a lot of work to do, and so does the OPS.

From the time that this project was launched in 2020, the Board has been resolute in our commitment to work tirelessly to change the existing culture prevalent within the OPS that enables sexual violence and harassment to occur.

The Board is fully supportive of the Action Plan that will serve as a road map to facilitate the much-needed culture change that will enable the Service to better prevent and respond to sexual violence and harassment in the workplace.

I would like to acknowledge and thank all of the courageous members who came forward to share their stories. I know how difficult coming forward was. I also know how important your stories were in laying bare the issues that exist in the workplace. If we don't fully understand the issues at hand, we can't fix them. Your words and the hurt behind them have shaped this plan for combatting harassment and sexual violence and promoting a better workplace for all.

I would now like to take a moment to acknowledge Member Nirman's re-appointment to the Ottawa Police Services Board. Throughout his time serving on the Board, Member Nirman has shown passion and dedication to improving policing in Ottawa. Thank you for your valuable contributions. I am confident that you will make many more during your future tenure on the Board.

Finally, I would also like to give a hearty congratulations to Member Nirman on receiving the United Way's 2022 Community Builder Award. This is a wonderful recognition of the many ways that Member Nirman gives back to contribute to the creation of stronger and healthier community.