

STRATFORD POLICE SERVICES BOARD

A meeting of the Stratford Police Services Board was held on the 15th day of February 2023, at the Stratford Rotary Complex – Mansbridge Room

PRESENT: Tim Doherty (Chair), Steve Cousins, Dave Gaffney, Mayor Martin Ritsma, Councillor Harjinder Nijjar, Chief Greg Skinner, Deputy Chief Gerry Foster, Inspector Mark Taylor, Inspector Jason Clarke, Staff Sergeant Jamie Taylor, Councillor Rob Edney (St. Marys), Oonagh Vaucrosson (CEAT), Katia Maxwell (CEAT), Phil Psutka, Casey Riehl (Executive Assistant), Galen Simmons (Media), Casey Kenny (Media)

MINUTES

1. Call to order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

2. Addition of Agenda Items – Business Arising and New Business

None noted.

3. Election of 2023 Chair and Vice-Chair

The Executive Assistant assumed the role of the Chair for the purposes of an election and stated that pursuant to the *Police Services Act*, the Board is required to elect a Chair at its first meeting in each year. The Board deferred the election to the February meeting in order to have full attendance for voting. The Board chose to vote by a show of hands.

Motion by Steve Cousins | Martin Ritsma

That Tim Doherty be nominated as Chair of the Stratford Police Services Board for the year 2023. Carried

No further nominations were received.

Motion by Dave Gaffney | Martin Ritsma

That nominations be closed. Carried

Tim Doherty agreed to let his name stand.

After a show of hands, Tim Doherty was elected as Chair of the Stratford Police Services Board for the year 2023.

The Executive Assistant stated that pursuant to the *Police Services Act*, the Board may elect a Vice-chair at its first meeting in each year. The Board chose to elect a Vice-chair by a show of hands.

Motion by Tim Doherty | Martin Ritsma

That Steve Cousins be nominated as Vice-chair of the Stratford Police Services Board for the year 2023.

No further nominations were received.

Steve Cousins agreed to let his name stand.

After a show of hands, Steve Cousins was elected as Vice-Chair of the Stratford Police Services Board for the year 2023.

The meeting was turned over to the recently re-elected Chair, Tim Doherty.

4. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

None declared.

5. Adoption of Minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 18, 2023

MOTION by Dave Gaffney | Harjinder Nijjar

That the minutes of the regular meeting of January 18, 2023 be adopted as presented. Carried.

6. Hearings of Deputations and Presentations

6.1 Community Equity Action Team (Oonagh Vaucrosson/Katia Maxwell)

Oonagh Vaucrosson addressed the Board and discussed the constitution of the Board and that there is no female representation. With the goal of the Stratford Police Service to have 30% of the members women by 2030, she feels that in furtherance of that, and with the Board behind that initiative, the Board also needs to represent this. If the Board wishes to meet its goals in the future, the Board must take an honest look at itself and ask what obstacles we need to overcome to move forward.

Katia Maxwell stated how the make-up of the Board has affected CEAT and herself. Initially, once she learned of the lack of diversity on the Board, she was confused and disappointed on how this happens. With diversity of the utmost importance, it is disappointing to see the lack of it on the Board. It is her opinion that if the Police Services Board is diverse, then the Police Service will eventually follow. Diversity creates stronger communities.

Oonagh Vaucrosson posed the question of what obstacles needed to be overcome to affect change. Diverse groups have the innate capacity to be more creative in their approaches. She felt it was important to discuss with the Board to offer the very existence of CEAT as a means to resolve this and other challenges the Board will inevitably face. A constant working relationship between CEAT and Board is essential. To have CEAT included in the training for the Police Association was an important step this year and they desire a similar relationship with the Board. It is their hope for the Board to consider CEAT as a necessary consultative body to be engaged for any or all decisions the Board is called upon to render. In order to bring about the change the Board endeavors to, would require radical change on the part of its members and the rigidity of the Police Board process. CEAT members would like to work with the Police Board for the collective good of all.

Martin Ritsma noted that there have been discussions regarding the diversity of the make-up of the Board and how moving forward that can be addressed.

Steve Cousins stated that their message is very important and it is a time of awareness and change.

Tim Doherty thanked Oonagh Vaucrosson and Katia Maxwell for their presentation.

Oonagh Vaucrosson and Katia Maxwell no longer present at the meeting at 4:50 p.m.

7. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

None noted.

8. Receipt of Monthly Statistical Reports – January 2023

Board members received the statistical reports for January 2023. Inspector Clarke reviewed the reports with the Board with respect to Stratford, St. Marys and Perth South and answered questions.

8.1 Stratford

There were 1643 calls for service, with 379 charges laid. There were 63 mental health related calls for the month, two suicides/attempts and one overdose. There were 29 domestic related occurrences, which is down from 33 last month. There was a spike in assaults this month with 17, compared to 6 last month. Frauds were high this month with 28 and most were internet fraud cases and theft from motor vehicle rose to 21. The thefts from motor vehicles occurred all over the City and were not specific to any areas. There were 73 MVC's in January, primarily property damage only. The highest E-ticket issued in January was for no currently validated permit, with 39 issued.

8.2 St Marys

There were 222 calls for service, with 69 charges laid. There were 3 mental health calls and no suicide or overdose occurrences. Domestic related occurrences dropped from 7 last month to 4 in January. Numbers reports for violent crime, property crime and drug/alcohol crime were all relatively low. There were 7 MVC's, 6 were property damage only. The top two E-tickets issued in St. Marys in January were for speeding (21) and No currently validated permit (17).

8.3 Perth South

There were 130 calls for service, with 45 charges laid for the month of January. There were 5 mental health related reports, which is up slightly. There were 4 domestic related occurrences. Violent crime, property crime and drug/alcohol crime were all very low, most with 0 occurrences. There was a total of 7 MVC's, all were property damage only. Speeding was the highest E-ticket issued in Perth South with 25.

Deputy Chief Foster reported that the SPS has applied for a provincial grant for ALPR funding to equip all frontline vehicles with license plate reading technology.

8.4 Crime Stoppers Report

Chief Skinner reviewed the Crime Stoppers Report for January 2023. There was a total of 45 calls received in January for Huron and Perth County. 19 new tips were from Huron County, 10 new tips from Perth County and 9 new tips directly related to the SPS, which were drug related and intelligence related.

The top Tips by Type in January were Other Criminal Code with 13, traffic with 9 and drugs and theft both with 7. There was one child pornography tip received.

Chief Skinner reported that SPS is taking on the liaison responsibilities for Crime Stoppers for Huron and Perth County. It is Stratford's turn to do the reporting for the next three years and Inspector Taylor is heading up this transition.

MOTION by Dave Gaffney | Steve Cousins
That the Monthly Statistical Reports and Crime Stoppers Report for January 2023 be received as presented. Carried.

9. Approval of Monthly Accounts (January 2023)

Chief Skinner reviewed the accounts for January. He noted that some of the budget numbers are not populated yet, as they are waiting on budget approvals from City Council for the capital and operational budgets.

In 2022, the Service spent 95.84% of its allocated budget, resulting in a surplus of approximately \$502,000.00. There is still some reconciliation required on the 2022 figures, but he anticipates this surplus amount to be an accurate estimate for the year-end.

MOTION by Steve Cousins | Dave Gaffney

That the monthly accounts for January 2023 be approved. Carried.

10. Police Association Business

None noted.

11. Public Complaints – Chief Skinner

Chief Skinner reported that there were two public complaints received this month. One was a new OIPRB that came forward and it was deemed by them not to be in the public interest to initiate an investigation and has been closed. The second was the closing of a complaint that had happened previously. That complaint had been investigated and reported back to the complainant and to the OIPRB Director. There has been no request for any review from the complainant, as a result as part of the process, this complaint is closed as well.

12. Correspondence

12.1 Stratford Police Service Policy Manual

Tim Doherty noted that there were two copies of the SPS Policy Manual included in the agenda package (one copy is the complete revision, the second copy is the original version that includes all the noted changes). The Policy was previously reviewed by Ron Shaw and he has provided the suggested updates noted. Mr. Doherty has asked members to review the document for further discussion and approval at the March PSB meeting.

Chief Skinner noted that the Board has approved the services of Dave Preston to review the Police Service policies. He recommended that once this is completed, the version that the Board has and the new version that the Police Service will have, can be reviewed together to ensure that they match with current/updated terminology and wording.

Steve Cousins suggested that having CEAT members review the policies would be beneficial. Tim Doherty will follow up with CEAT for feedback and provide an electronic copy to them. Chief Skinner noted that in the creation of CEAT, one of their roles and responsibilities would be to look at policy development. Chief Skinner stated that they will endeavor to have CEAT do the same for the Police Service policy.

13. Consent Items

- 13.1 **MOTION by Dave Gaffney | Harjinder Nijjar**
That on the recommendation of the Chief, Thomas Victor Levy (Radio Cab), be approved for a taxi license. Carried.

14. New Business

- 14.1 Tyre Nichols Statement

Chief Skinner read the following prepared statement:

As information on the death of Tyre Nichols at the hands of Memphis police officers continues to emerge, I want our communities to know that all members of the Police Service are saddened and horrified with the circumstances surrounding his death. As police officers, we have powers and authority beyond those of citizens, however police officers are not above the law. We must abide by the law and in order for the public to trust the police, the public needs to know we will be held accountable to the law. As police officers, we know that the actions of the minority impact on the legitimacy of the majority. The members of the Stratford Police Service are trained and equipped to perform their duties utilizing only the force necessary to protect members of the public and the officers themselves from the threat they are facing. Officers are trained to de-escalate situations, and even when faced with aggressive assaultive individuals, police officers are accountable for their response and application of force. Officers are lawfully able to apply force, but the force used must be in response to a threat or use of violence and must be proportionate to the threat. Meaning an officer can only use as much force as is necessary to stop the threat. The SPS Board has engaged members of the Black Indigenous People of Colour Communities and initiated the Community Equity Action Team to work with the Police Service to better understand policies, practices and processes within the system to address diversity, equity and inclusion. In addition, the Board has been proactive in its support for enhanced de-escalation training and truth scenario based training. The policing profession understands the value and trust that comes from a Police Service reflecting the community it serves. As Chief, I believe that gender, race, power, authority, recruitment, training, accountability and supervision are all integral to the delivery of effective, professional policing services for the community. Abuse of power or position will not be tolerated and our efforts to enhance accountability through the implementation of body-worn cameras, in-car cameras and expanding closed circuit television coverage in the community, will allow all investigators to have access to the best evidence to support their decision

making. The job of a police officer is difficult, and our officers rise to the challenges of their work each and every day by being professional, compassionate and responsive to the needs of our community. Each member of the SPS takes their responsibilities seriously and recognizes the inherent risk associated with their chosen profession. Those risks do not and will never justify any conduct of police officers that contravene the laws that govern the performance of our duties. As a profession, we have the responsibility to constantly review how we deliver our service and make sure we are not only meeting our legislative requirements, but also meeting the expectations of the public we serve. I want to assure the Board and the public, that our approach to the delivery of our service is to be in partnership with the community, not separate and apart from the community.

14.2 Annual Training Curriculum

Chief Skinner reported that members are required to prequalify to ensure that they can carry and demonstrate proficiency in the use of all of their use of force equipment. It is mandatory and legislated by the Province of Ontario. Stratford also provides officers with training that is specific to issues and trends that they are seeing in our community and feel it is important for officers to be up to date and aware of. In addition to the mandatory training, they are also having scenario based training, stop violence against women presentation, digital evidence management system update and presentation, presentation from Autism Canada, statement taking updates from the Criminal Investigation Division, CEAT presentations/group discussions, Forensic Identification Officer updates on capturing of evidence and proper security of property, resiliency training with the Mental Health, Wellness & Resiliency Coordinator. At the end they are all required to pass their exams to be requalified for all of the use of force items. Should an officer ever be engaged in the application of use of force, records need to demonstrate that they have been trained in the use of that force and the equipment that they used. This is annual training that officers receive.

14.3 Participation in the Ontario Police College Seconded Instructor Program Meeting with the Parliamentary Assistant to the Solicitor General

Chief Skinner reported that the SPS traditionally second two officers from SPS to be instructors at the Ontario Police College. The secondments are two-year secondments, with a one-year extension if the officers want to stay and the OPC has the capacity to continue to support that. Mike Van Gestel will be returning to SPS in April and in May Aaron Mountfield has been successful in his application to be seconded to the OPC for the next two years, possibly three years.

14.4 Records Manager Position

Deputy Chief Foster reported that the new Records Manager Position has been in pilot mode since January 2022. Heather Monden has filled the position for the pilot period and has been hired officially for the new position as of January 18, 2023 and will join the Senior Officer's Association.

14.5 Martin Ritsma thanked Chief Skinner for taking the time to meet with a local resident and taking a photo for the newspaper to visibly illustrate to her, our community, the Municipality and our Provincial Government the importance of inclusion and accessibility at the Stratford Police Station and to continue to move the issue forward.

14.6 Wellness Event - March 30, 2023 (10-3 p.m.) – Stratford Country Club

Chief Skinner noted that the SPS will be hosting a wellness event for frontline service workers and their spouses. This is funded through a grant and is being coordinated by McGregor Austin-Olsen. It will be featuring Pete Tucker, a 29-year veteran of the OPP. He and his wife Michelle will be speaking about perseverance and overcoming adversity in the workplace. Dr. Luis Cleto, Psychiatrist, will speak about the impacts of trauma and promote skills and techniques to manage those impacts. All Board members are invited. Chief Skinner will forward the registration form if anyone would like to attend the event.

15. Adjournment

Motion by Dave Gaffney | Harjinder Nijjar

That the meeting adjourn to an In Camera session to discuss personal matters about identifiable individuals, to reconvene in open session if required. Carried.

The open session meeting adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

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Tim Doherty - Chair