

STRATFORD POLICE SERVICES BOARD

A meeting of the Stratford Police Services Board was held on the 24th day of June, 2020 at 4:30 pm, by video conference (Zoom).

PRESENT: Dan Mathieson (Chair), Graham Bunting, Tim Doherty, Peter Hyde, Rosemary Tanner, Chief Greg Skinner, Deputy Chief Gerry Foster, Inspector Jason Clarke, Inspector Mark Taylor, Constable Rob McMillan (Police Association) and Pat Shantz – Executive Assistant.

MINUTES

1. Call to order

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

2. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

Peter Hyde declared a pecuniary interest in the May 2020 accounts for the rental of 154 Downie Street as his spouse owns the building.

3. Adoption of Minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 27th, 2020

MOTION by Graham Bunting | Tim Doherty

That the minutes of the regular meeting of May 27th, 2020, be adopted as presented. Carried.

4. Hearings of Deputations and Presentations

There were no hearings of deputations or presentations.

5. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

5.1 Light Armoured Vehicle

The Chief advised that the London Police Service was notified that the Service is interested in purchasing the light armoured vehicle discussed at the last meeting. As instructed by the Board, an insurance quote was obtained and the annual cost to insure the vehicle would be \$5,000. The start up cost including all expenses would be \$30,000. The Chief added that most of the expenses would be incurred with the purchase of any vehicle suitable for this purpose.

The Chief will continue to look into a reduced price for insurance and also a reduced cost of acquiring DZ licensing for two members.

6. Receipt of Monthly Statistical Reports – May 2020

Inspector Taylor reviewed the individual Statistical Reports for May 2020 with the Board and answered questions.

6.1 Stratford

There were 1291 calls for service, 73 e-tickets were issued and 64 warnings were given. Charges laid are beginning to ramp back up to a normal level.

Inspector Taylor explained to the Board why the number shown on the report for Mental Health Calls is not accurate as they may receive many calls from one person. Tim Doherty asked if it was still the practice to provide the Chief with an in-depth mental health report? He was advised that reports are received when an individual is taken to the hospital for an assessment in order to track officers' time at the hospital.

The Deputy Chief clarified that "reportable incidents", as shown on the Statistical Report, are more complex and require a significant amount of time. The Service attends a high volume of mental health calls and some may require very little time and resources and the officers and their supervisor can prepare a non-reportable incident report. The incident is recorded in the data base, but there isn't a report to go along with it. It is difficult to break out the number of reportable incidents and non-reportable incidents as some mental health calls are classified differently such as a check on well-being or disturbance call.

Upon being asked by Tim Doherty about the Mobile Crisis Rapid Response Team, the Chief reviewed the project with the Board and advised that it has been up and running since October 2019. A caseworker, Macgregor Austin-Olsen, was hired for a two-year term and he is a member of the Crisis Intervention Team in Stratford. He is well versed in mental health issues and is acquainted with individuals in the community who have mental health issues and police procedures. He has been riding along with officers 2 days a week and the other 3 days with the OPP. However, since the pandemic he has been riding solely in Stratford 5 days a week due to OPP social distancing measures. He has also been riding solely with one officer.

The Chief added that this program is now being funded on a full-time basis by the Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance and there is no necessity to apply for the grant at the end of two years.

Rosemary Tanner asked what happens after hours? The Chief advised that there is a crisis intervention team at the hospital and they have the ability to be mobile. However, generally officers apprehend the individuals and take them to the hospital.

Discussion followed regarding MacGregor's position, his work on the street, the protocol at the hospital and the advantages of the program.

Graham Bunting asked if it would be possible to have MacGregor make a presentation and the Chief will set up a Zoom presentation for a future Board meeting.

Returning to the Statistical Report, Tim Doherty advised that it would be beneficial to the Board if the amount of overtime paid in order to fill in for sick time was shown. The Chief agreed to report this information to the Board.

Tim Doherty enquired about motor vehicle stops and if data was collected during the practice of "carding" and if there were any statistics on how many certificates were handed out to individuals who were stopped. The Deputy Chief advised that they are required to track that data, but the Service does very few street checks (stopping an individual for no reason). Race-based data is collected in two forms – through the street check process if a street check receipt is issued; in late 2019 the province redid the mandated Use of Force Report and as of January 2020 that includes race identification sections on the form; and there is an opportunity in the records management system for an officer to indicate race or parent ethnicity on a form.

The Chief added that all of the incidents set out in the Use of Force Report for 2019, involved white individuals. Going forward, he will include race-based data in the year end report.

6.2 St Marys

There were 214 calls for service, 8 e-tickets were issued and 13 warnings were given. The five mischiefs that are noted were related to spray painting and were dealt with.

6.3 Perth South

There were 117 calls for service, 34 e-tickets were issued and 14 warnings were given.

MOTION by Peter Hyde | Rosemary Tanner

That the Monthly Statistic Reports for May 2020 be received. Carried.

7. Approval of Monthly Accounts – May 2020

The Chief reviewed the monthly accounts with the Board and advised that COVID-19 has impacted routine operations along with monthly and year-to-date expenditures and revenue.

Motion by Graham Bunting | Rosemary Tanner

That the monthly accounts for May 2020, with the exception of the accounts regarding the rent for 154 Downie Street, be approved for payment. Carried.

Motion by Tim Doherty | Rosemary Tanner

That the accounts for the rent for 154 Downie Street for May 2020, be approved for payment. Carried.

8. Police Association Business

There was no Police Association business for the Board.

9. Public Complaints

The Chief advised that two public complaints have been submitted to the OIRPD. One was regarding on-line harassment complaint and the OIRPD reviewed it and did not assign it for an investigation and it was subsequently closed.

The second complaint involved an officer on patrol and having an interaction with a suspicious individual. The individual claimed that the officer tried to hit him with her car and was harassing him. The complaint was investigated and it was determined that the officer acted reasonably and there was no misconduct.

10. Correspondence

Regarding Basic Constable Training, the Chief advised that two new constables, Jeremy Dechert and Zachary Goodhew, will be starting at the Ontario Police College today with a modified program due to COVID-19.

Regarding Promotional Exams, nine members are writing the exam this year. Approval was received from OPC to have the exam written in Stratford and will include social distancing. The exams are for a sergeant or staff sergeant level.

The RIDE Grant for 2021-2022 has been submitted.

11. Consent Items

11.1 Stratford Taxi – Licences for Drivers

The Chief advised that he had been contacted by Stratford Taxi who has had some difficulty getting drivers and they currently have 2-3 individuals needing new taxi licences. The Chief advised them that there are approximately 100 licensed drivers in Stratford most of whom are currently not working due to COVID-19 and 12 independent taxi operators have relinquished their vehicle taxi licenses due to the decrease in business.

The Service is working on making the application process electronic, and once in place, no one will have to come into the station. Until that is in place, is the Board willing to stand down the by-law provisions in order to allow taxi operators to have unlicensed drivers operate taxis in the City of Stratford? The Board agreed that due diligence is required for cab drivers including a background check and they are not in favour of waiving the current requirements.

MOTION BY Graham Bunting | Tim Doherty

To file the request of Stratford Taxi to waive the by-law provisions for taxi licenses. Carried.

12. New Business

12.1 Rotary Club Face Masks

The Chief advised that he was approached by the Rotary Club of Stratford to partner with them for their mask project. Their moto is "complete the task, wear the mask" and they are asking the Service to put this on the bottom of press releases.

MOTION BY Rosemary Tanner | Tim Doherty

That the Stratford Police Service include the Rotary Club's moto, "Complete the task, wear mask" on the bottom of their press releases. Carried.

12.2 United Way

The Chief recently met with the United Way and they have asked for some crime statistics to add to their website to support their research initiatives. The Chief is looking for the Board's permission to continue discussions with the Research Council of the United Way to provide them with statistics to support community based programs and supports in the community.

MOTION BY Peter Hyde | Graham Bunting

That the United Way have access to the public statistics of the Stratford Police Service to support their research initiatives. Carried.

12.3 El Fresco Initiative

Regarding the El Fresco initiative, Joani Gerber, CEO of InvestStratford, reached out to the Chief for a policing perspective and Inspector Taylor has been assigned to sit on the committee to discuss police related issues. The Chair added that if the City passes a by-law permitting alcohol between the hours of 11:00 am and 9:00 pm, the Alcohol and Gaming Commission would have no issues.

Graham Bunting asked if the police will be involved in enforcement such as social distancing? The Chair advised that there is funding available to allow volunteers to be on site to remind people of their obligations to social distance. The Chief added that the police enforcement will be a police responsibility and the province has continually made it clear that the approach is to be education

and awareness. Incidents are being tracked and no enforcement has been required to date as most people voluntarily comply.

12.4 Police Training

Tim Doherty advised that he has been looking into Police training and wondering if we are collectively doing as much as we can as a Board, a Service and a police college to train our officers and provide them with the skills they need and want to do their job effectively.

The Chief advised that there's a common misconception that the only training officers receive is the 12 weeks at OPC, when in fact, there is a much more fulsome training regiment that officers go through.

During the recruitment process, they go through psychological testing, extensive background investigations and they have behavioural interviews that focus on character traits such as integrity, honesty, commitment, ethics, professionalism, etc.

While at OPC, they receive de-escalation/verbal communication training which is prevalent throughout their entire training. There is also training with respect to diversity and professional practice, ethics, critical incident stress management, use of force officer safety defensive tactics, elder abuse, victim support, death notices, domestic violence, etc. At the base of all courses is effective communication.

Discussion followed regarding the OPC's curriculum and course training standards. The Chief will ask if OPC has information regarding their courses that can be shared with the Board.

Regarding use of force, Tim asked if choke holds and neck restraints are allowed municipally and/or provincially? The Deputy Chief advised that choke holds are not an approved use of force and training ended regarding them in the early 90's because of the risks. Discussion followed and the Chief advised that the Criminal Code states that you can use as much force as is necessary to respond to the level of force that is being applied to you. If it is blatantly excessive, then it would be required to be reported through the Chain of Command.

Tim also asked if the training at OPC is done by current police officers and are there outside experts who are brought in to teach various topics? The Deputy Chief advised that the vast majority are police officers and they also have a complement of non-police personnel who are team leaders and coordinate and oversee the programs who are academics, researchers, etc. Guest speakers are also brought in.

Tim feels that it would be beneficial to have some non-police experts deliver the training on some of the topics. The Chief advised that for the 40 hours of mandatory training required by officers each year, individuals from outside policing are invited to come in and talk about specific issues in the community that officers are facing. The speakers conduct 8-9 sessions to ensure that every officer attends.

Tim asked whether or not there has been a racialized member of the community speak to the officers regarding their feelings and interactions with the police? The Chief advised that he and the Deputy Chief have had discussions with the City's CAO, Director of Social Services and Councillor Burbach regarding the Community Equity Action Team initiative. The plan is to hire a consultant to coordinate community, council and police representation to meet six times per year to discuss community issues of interest and to make recommendations to help guide the police leadership regarding programs that could be put in place.

The Chair suggested that Tim work with Councillor Burbach to determine what the Community Equity Action Team could look like.

MOTION BY Graham Bunting | Rosemary Tanner

That Tim Doherty, on behalf of the Police Services Board, and Chief Greg Skinner work in cooperation with the City in the creation of the Terms of Reference for a Community Equity Action Team and that a report be provided to the Board within 60 days. Carried.

13. Next Meeting

There will be no meetings for the months of June and July. The next meeting will take place in September unless a meeting is required earlier.

14. Adjournment

Motion by Tim Doherty | Rosemary Tanner

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 meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm.

"Dan Mathieson"

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Dan Mathieson - Chair