

STRATFORD POLICE SERVICES BOARD

A meeting of the Stratford Police Services Board was held on the 19th day of April 2023, at the Stratford Rotary Complex – Mansbridge Room

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

MINUTES

1. Call to order

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

2. Adoption of the April 19, 2023 Agenda and Addition of Agenda Items – Business Arising or New Business

MOTION by Steve Cousins | Dave Gaffney

That the agenda for the regular meeting of April 19, 2023 be adopted as presented. Carried.

3. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

None declared.

4. Adoption of Minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 15, 2023

MOTION by Harjinder Nijjar | Martin Ritsma

That the minutes of the regular meeting of March 15, 2023 be adopted as presented. Carried.

5. Hearings of Deputations and Presentations

None noted.

6. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

6.1 Police Services Board – Policy Review/Approval

Deputy Chief Foster reported that Dave Preston has started reviewing the Stratford Police Service policies. Tim Doherty reported that the CEAT Committee is currently reviewing the Stratford Police Board policies that have been amended by Ron Shaw recently. Chief Skinner noted that with the implementation of the Community Safety & Policing Act that will govern Police Services in the Province if there might be some benefit in waiting to pass the policy reviews until this piece of legislation is in force. Any language updates that need to be implemented, could be implemented at that point. This process will likely take place in early 2024. Steve Cousins stated that it would make sense to wait until the current information is received and make a determination at that point. Tim Doherty has proposed a coordinated review of both of these policies. The Board will revisit this at the December 2023 meeting.

7. Receipt of Monthly Statistical Reports – March 2023

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

7.1 Stratford

There were 1528 calls for service, with 241 charges laid. Mental health related calls rose from 45 in February to 64 in March. Many of these calls are related to specific individuals well known to the police. Police have contacted the City's Social Services and Canadian Mental Health to try and assist two individuals with housing and assisted supervision moving forward. Domestic related occurrences also went up from 31 to 44 this month. Several calls are being received for the same people, with one couple alone having 8 calls. Shoplifting calls are also in the rise with 14, 7 of which were with one individual.

Steve Cousins noted that the number of suicide attempts has also risen. Inspector Taylor stated that many of these calls are all related. Chief Skinner explained that in situations that have elevated risk or frequency of police contact, are referred to the situation table. This allows all of the organizations represented at the situation table to inject their subject matter expertise in a collaborative solution to deal with some of the issues. Inspector Taylor noted that many of the mental health calls they receive are related to substance abuse issues that the individual is dealing with or has dealt with at some point in their life. Steve Cousins stated that this can become a safety issue for officers. Chief Skinner noted that with the line of duty deaths that have occurred over the last eight months, mental health and addiction were a significant part of that.

Tim Doherty inquired if phone and internet scams are increasing. Inspector Taylor noted that yes, they are on the rise and unfortunately, elderly residents seem to fall victim most often to the scams. It is concerning that, even with additional public education and information, these kinds of scams are on the rise.

7.2 St Marys

There were 226 calls for service, with 51 charges laid. Mental health related calls were down, with 6 calls this month, compared to 11 in February.

7.3 Perth South

There were 136 calls for service, with 52 charges laid for the month of March. All other occurrences remained relatively low.

MOTION by Harjinder Nijjar | Steve Cousins

That the Monthly Statistical Reports for March 2023 be received as presented. Carried.

Martin Ritsma reported that he had met with the Solicitor General and he wanted to share his compliments with the Board regarding the Chief and the Stratford Police Service and local agencies on their wholistic approach to social and criminal activities and issues in Stratford, Perth South and St. Marys.

8. Approval of Monthly Accounts (March 2023)

Chief Skinner reviewed the accounts for March. After three full months of activity, the Police Services has expended 24% of its' allocated budget, which is on track with where they would expect to be to date. Specifically, 21% on salaries and benefits, which is lower than previous years, mainly due to a younger and lower pay classification scale that impacts salary lines. Final budget numbers from 2022 are not yet available, however it is projected to be a surplus.

MOTION by Martin Ritsma | Steve Cousins

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

9. Police Association Business

None noted.

10. Public Complaints – Chief Skinner

Chief Skinner reported that the Service received one new public complaint in March that the OIPRD Review Director reviewed and deemed to be frivolous and did not go to investigation and was closed immediately. As second complaint investigation was completed during the month, with a finding that there was no misconduct by officers. The complainant had alleged that officers had used insulting language and unnecessary force while dealing with the complainant and her boyfriend while at the hospital emergency department. The evidence, including body-worn camera footage, was reviewed as part of the investigation and it was deemed that the officers committed no misconduct. The complainant has been notified of the investigative outcome and has the right to request a review of the Chief's final decision. To date there has been no request by the complainant to the OIPRD for a review of this decision.

11. Correspondence

Chief Skinner noted that with respect to the In-Force Aid for the Community Safety and Policing Act. The Ministry of the Solicitor General will be conducting inspections of the Municipal Police Services and the OPP through the Office of the Inspector of Policing. Those inspections will be taking place throughout 2023 and 2024.

The extension of the Mobile Crisis Response Team Enhancement Grant will be coming out shortly. The Stratford Police Service was a recipient of a grant under this program through the 2021-2023 Provincial fiscal years in the amount of \$150,000.00 to support the enhancement of MCRT staff in partnership with the Huron Perth Health Alliance. Chief Skinner is happy to report that the Ministry will be continuing this funding and hopeful that Stratford will receive enough funding to support the current complement of mental health crisis workers that are on the street with officers responding in support of people and families struggling with mental health.

12. Consent Items

12.1 **MOTION by** Dave Gaffney | Harjinder Nijjar

That on the recommendation of the Chief, Mary J. Schwartzentruber (Aunt Gail's Taxi), Jeffery W. Hutchison (Aunt Gail's Taxi) and Joshua Morrison (Aunt Gail's Taxi), be approved for a taxi license. Carried.

13. New Business

None noted.

14. Adjournment to In-Camera

Motion by Martin Ritsma | 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 meeting adjourned at 4:53 p.m.

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Tim Doherty - Chair