

STRATFORD POLICE SERVICE BOARD

A meeting of the Stratford Police Service Board was held on the 20th day of November 2024, City Hall – Auditorium, 1 Wellington Street, Stratford ON

PRESENT: Tim Doherty (Chair), Martin Ritsma, Dave Gaffney, Chief Greg Skinner, Deputy Chief Gerry Foster, Inspector Mark Taylor, Inspector Jason Clarke, Constable Darren Fisher, Audrey Pascual – Deputy Clerk, Councillor Rob Edney (St. Marys), Phil Psutka, Connor Luczka (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 November 20, 2024 Agenda and Addition of Agenda Items

Motion by Dave Gaffney | Martin Ritsma

THAT the agenda for the regular meeting of November 20, 2024 be adopted as presented. Carried

3. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

None declared.

4. Adoption of the Minutes from the Regular Meeting of October 16, 2024

Motion by Martin Ritsma | Dave Gaffney

THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of October 16, 2024 be adopted as printed. Carried

5. Hearings of Deputations and Presentations

5.1 On-Street Parking Concerns and Plans in School Zones Before and After School – Discussion with Constable Darren Fisher and Audrey Pascual, Deputy Clerk

Audrey Pascual highlighted some of the statistics and current strategies that the City of Stratford is implementing to assist with the parking issues around schools:

- 140+ parking division complaints outside of the downtown core to date in 2024;
- Parking and speeding complaints on the rise;
- Parking enforcement is contracted to Commissionaires. Stratford currently has a full complement of (4) officers;
- Current strategies focusing on education and awareness, regular patrol and enforcement, issuing parking tickets;

- Enforcement strategies used by other cities/municipalities to address similar concerns – AMPS (Administrative Monetary Penalty System) and mailing tickets directly to drivers, decreasing the safety aspect of placing tickets on vehicles;
- Enforcement technology – AI LPR's now being used in Kitchener in (64) school zones, reduces safety issues and increases efficiency;
- Cost is the largest factor for Stratford not implementing technology options, the back end costs for staffing to run the program.

Martin Ritsma stated that an education blitz to parents/caregivers has a good uptick at the beginning, however, it is not long before it goes right back to the way it was.

Tim Doherty suggested that if all (4) parking enforcement officers could start their days at schools, either sending all (4) or pairs to two schools to do a blitz, that would be effective.

Constable Darren Fisher reviewed areas of concern for the Police:

- A re-assessment of signage around schools is necessary;
- Reducing the on-street parking on the streets surrounding the schools, permitting only parking on one side, in lieu of the current parking on both sides. This would reduce congestion and encourage parking on the side of the schools, allowing children to exit/enter vehicles without having to cross the street;
- Increase the distance of some of the current no parking zones. This would assist with congestion right at the schools and also allow for buses to enter and exit safely;
- Education with crossing guards and school bus drivers to encourage them to contact the police with issues to assist the police in improving safety;

Tim Doherty inquired what the next steps should be to help move some of the suggested changes ahead. Martin Ritsma suggested that Constable Fisher, staff from the Clerk's Office and Engineering Department could meet to discuss signage and parking. Audrey Pascual stated that the Clerk's Office would be the department to amend and adjust the traffic and parking by-laws and the Engineering team would take on the technical issues regarding signage. Mr. Doherty stated that the Board strongly encourages staff to work towards some of these changes to increase the safety for everyone in the schools zones.

Councillor Edney, Constable Fisher and Audrey Pascual no longer present at the meeting (5:17 p.m.)

6. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

6.1 Police Station Update

Inspector Jason Clarke updated members that there have been some grievances filed regarding the current state of 17 George Street. There have been three floods, ceiling tiles are falling down, exhaust systems have stopped working and electrical meter damages. Work has halted on the accessibility modifications at the front entrance. The alternate entrance during this work brings people to the side entrance at the elevator, however now the elevator is not working. Technicians have been working on it and are waiting on a new motor.

Tim Doherty stated that until the municipality supports this project and funding is secured, the update to this building is at a standstill. This type of environment affects employee morale and this struggle has gone on for a significant amount of time.

Martin Ritsma stated that the move to 789 Erie Street has been a good first step in the plan, allowing the Service to have some space once a fulsome renovation starts at 17 George Street. Chief Skinner stated that he has met with the CAO. The engineering report has been completed and confirmed that 17 George Street is suitable for a renovation and addition. Lot 39 on George Street beside the police station is also suitable for construction, if the position of the Board is to remain downtown, this vacant land could support the amount of square footage required by the Police Service and the Courts. Chief Skinner noted that if the current building is failing and is no longer available to use during demolition or a total rebuild, that is an expensive endeavour. Perhaps looking at empty, vacant lots for a rebuild may have to be an option to consider. Various financing options are available for funding these types of large projects that could all be considered. Unfortunately, every year that this project goes by, the cost to renovate or rebuild keeps rising. It is his estimate that this project, at minimum, will be in the \$25,000,000 - 30,000,000 range.

Chief Skinner stated that once a location is decided upon, and a visual site design is completed, this would be the time to bring the proposal to Council to see. They could also provide draft budget numbers for consideration at this time also.

Tim Doherty suggested Inspector Clarke could document and take pictures of the current problems at 17 George Street to assist in the proposed renovations.

Chief Skinner stated that investigators from the Ministry of Labour assessed the building last month, due to the complaints filed by the Association. Inspector Taylor has been the liaison for the committee and reporting back on the issues that are being rectified. Chief Skinner noted that there is an understandable degree of frustration from the Association regarding the building issues.

7. Receipt of Monthly Statistical Reports (October 2024)

Board members received the statistical reports for October 2024. Inspector Taylor reviewed the reports with the Board with respect to Stratford, St. Marys and Perth South and was available for questions.

7.1 Stratford

- (1568) calls for service
- (410) charges laid
- No hate/bias incidents
- (40) M/H related incidents, down significantly from this time last year
- (3) suicides/or attempts
- (1) overdose
- (55) domestic related occurrences, (12) charges laid
- (1) homicide
- (10) assaults
- (7) sexual offences
- (2) auto thefts
- (28) theft under
- (9) drug offences, (6) impaired by alcohol
- (59) MVC's
- Top tickets issued are for no currently validated permit (28)
- (2) Ride programs conducted and stopped 224 vehicles; no charges laid
- (2) vehicle pursuits/fail to stop

7.2 St. Marys

- (218) calls for service
- (54) charged laid
- (4) M/H related incidents
- (1) suicide/or attempts
- (10) domestic related occurrences, (1) charge laid
- (2) assaults
- (3) stolen vehicles
- (3) break & enter

- (2) drug offences
- (3) MVC's
- Top tickets issued in St. Marys were for speeding (3)

7.3 Perth South

- (196) calls for service
- (108) charges laid
- (1) break & enter
- (5) MVC's
- Top tickets issued in Perth-South were for speeding (60)

Two new cell guards have been recruited, which allows for full coverage over night.

Motion by Martin Ritsma | Dave Gaffney

THAT the Monthly Statistical Reports for October 2024 be received as presented. Carried

8. Approval of Monthly Accounts (As of October 31, 2024)

Chief Skinner reported that ten months into the fiscal year, they would expect to be at approximately 85% of their budget. The actual expenditure to date is \$12,257,014.00, which equates to 88% of their budget allocation. The one-time expenditures at 789 Erie Street have been absorbed into the budget and he expects to see some reconciliation closer to the end of the year. Further reconciliation from grants is also expected, which will offset some expenses, specifically high overtime costs. They expect to see an increase in the payroll premiums budget line as the overtime banks that officers are carrying are paid out in early December. The actual expenditure for payroll premiums currently sits at 90% spent, with two months left in the year. He fully anticipates the year end amount to exceed the budget. Legal expenses continue to climb, with a significant deficit in this budget line also. With the current numbers and projecting their expenditures to the end of the year, they may see the Service in a deficit position, prior to all the reconciliations. The grants and reserve accounts may be enough to bring them closer to a balanced budget. Staffing issues that the Service has been facing, which have contributed to the budget shortfall, have been taken into account for the 2025 budget.

MOTION by Dave Gaffney | Martin Ritsma

That the monthly accounts for October 2024 be approved as presented. Carried

9. Police Association Business

None noted.

10. Public Complaints

Chief Skinner updated the Board on the following complaints:

- Two complaints streamed out by LECA as either not being in the public interest to proceed with an investigation or that the complaint had been deemed to be frivolous;
- One complaint that LECA did not refer for investigation as their criminal charges are currently before the courts;
- One complaint referred back to Stratford Police Service for investigation;
- One complaint referred by LECA to the Waterloo Regional Police Service for investigation;
- A complaint investigated in August 2024 by Stratford Police Service was found to be unsubstantiated and it has reached the end of its request for review period with no response from the complainant. The investigation has been closed by LECA.

11. Correspondence

Tim Doherty has received correspondence from Graham McGregor, Associate Minister of Auto Theft and Bail Reform. Mr. McGregor is new to this position and is reaching out to Police Service Boards across the province, recognizing the significant impact that auto thefts and car jackings has had on communities. He looks forward to the opportunity to meet with any Boards and receiving any input on this matter.

12. Consent Items

12.1 Motion by Dave Gaffney | Martin Ritsma

THAT on the recommendation of the Chief of Police Lisa Marie HENRIQUES (Aunt Gail's Taxi) and Braden NIMMO (Aunt Gail's Taxi) be approved for taxi licenses. Carried.

13. New Business

13.1 Supervisory Staff Training

Chief Skinner reported that the Board arranged for supervisory staff of the Services to complete training through the OAPSB on November 12, 2024 at the CAS Building. Ten members were able to attend with the Solicitor General and the Mayor addressing the group. The session was facilitated by Lisa Darling, Executive Director of the OAPSB and also a retired OPP Superintendent and Tammy Frier from the Ontario Police College Leadership Unit and also a retired Windsor Police Service Inspector. Chief Skinner stated that there is room for more of this type of training to support Service Members as they lead in a very difficult environment.

Tim Doherty was in contact with Lisa Darling and she will be sending a summary report to Mr. Doherty in the next few weeks and he will share it with the Board.

Martin Ritsma stated it was a pleasure having the Solicitor General in Stratford and to meet with both the Association and Administration and lend support.

14. Adjournment to In-Camera Meeting

Motion by Dave Gaffney | Martin Ritsma

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 to In-Camera at 5:45 p.m.

cr

Tim Doherty - Chair