

# **STRATFORD POLICE SERVICE BOARD**

A meeting of the Stratford Police Service Board was held on the 21st day of May 2025, Stratford Rotary Complex – Mansbridge Room, 353 McCarthy Road W., Stratford ON

**PRESENT:** Steve Cousins – Chair, Martin Ritsma, Harjinder Nijjar, Deputy Chief Gerry Foster, Chief Greg Skinner, Inspector Jason Clarke, Inspector Mark Taylor, Hank Zehr – Zone 5 Police Service Advisor, Councillor Rob Edney – Town of St. Marys, Adam Betteridge – Interim CAO, Todd Ferguson, 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 May 21, 2025 Agenda and Addition of Agenda Items**

**Motion by** Harjinder Nijjar | Martin Ritsma

**THAT the agenda for the regular meeting of May 21, 2025 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 April 23, 2025.**

**Motion by** Martin Ritsma | Harjinder Nijjar

**THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of April 23, 2025 be adopted as amended. Carried**

### **5. Hearings of Deputations and Presentations**

#### **5.1 Presentation of Retirement Plaque to Staff Sergeant Todd Ferguson**

Chief Skinner presented Todd Ferguson with a plaque in honour of his retirement from the Stratford Police Service. Staff Sergeant Ferguson started his career with the SPS on April 5, 1995 and officially retired on April 30, 2025. Chief Skinner, Deputy Chief Foster and the Police Service Board wished Staff Sergeant Ferguson all the best in his retirement and thanked him for his 30 years of dedicated service to the community.

On behalf of the Stratford Police Service Board, Steve Cousins thanked Staff Sergeant Ferguson for his professionalism and his service.

Chief Skinner also presented Staff Sergeant Ferguson with his 30 year bar for police exemplary service medal in recognition of 30 years of loyal and exemplary service to the public from the Governor General.

Todd Ferguson thanked everyone and stated that he has had a rewarding career in Stratford and will continue to recommend the Stratford Police Service to anyone looking to start their career in policing.

Todd Ferguson is no longer present at the meeting at 4:37 p.m.

## **6. Business Arising from Previous Minutes**

### **6.1 Police Station Update**

Inspector Clarke updated members that the new accessibility ramp is now installed and operational. An opening ceremony was held with the Mayor and Chief last week to officially open the ramp and the newly renovated entrance area.

Inspector Clarke and Chief Skinner have met with the Director of Corporate Service and the Interim CAO to discuss the options of the Service relocating to a new or existing facility and the next steps of a potential feasibility study.

After meeting with staff, Chief Skinner stated that it would be best for the Service to have a document that can be presented to Council, allowing Council to make an informed decision as to how to move forward with the location of the future Police Service. Chief Skinner stated that once the feasibility study was complete, it would be given to the Board to review prior to being presented to Council. Martin Ritsma inquired if the Board should motion separately regarding the previous preference for the Service to remain in the downtown location. Chief Skinner noted that the previous motion has not been abandoned, it would be a significant part of the study and the feasibility of rehabilitating the current downtown location or options of providing a downtown presence that may be beyond a headquarters location.

**Motion by** Martin Ritsma | Harjinder Nijjar

**That the Stratford Police Service Board directs the Stratford Police Service to have a feasibility study prepared that provides a complete operational needs evaluation, a comprehensive space needs assessment, strategic accommodation options including expansion/renovation, new build, adaptative re-use and a cost estimate of each. Carried**

## **7. Receipt of Monthly Statistical Reports (April 2025)**

Board members received the statistical reports for March 2025. Inspector Taylor reviewed the reports with the Board with respect to Stratford, St. Marys and Perth South and was available for questions.

**7.1 Perth South – April 2025**

- (152) calls for service
- (118) charges laid

**7.2 St. Marys – April 2025**

- (220) calls for service
- (51) charges laid
- (9) M/H related calls, down from (12) last month

**7.3 Stratford – April 2025**

- (1533) calls for service
- (432) charges laid
- (11) thefts from M/V, up from (4) last month – 9 of the 11 thefts reported were for vehicles that were left unlocked, the other 2 vehicles had their windows smashed as items to steal inside the vehicle were visible.
- (9) drug offences, up slightly from last month – an officer on routine patrol pulled over a vehicle which resulted in the arrest of three parties and laid several charges. Officers seized 79 grams of methamphetamine, 1.5 grams of fentanyl and 17 pills.

Steve Cousins suggested that moving forward the reports could reflect trends to better analyze qualitative and quantitative data, specifically regarding youth. In the short term, the Board needs to look at violent crime, property crime and youth crime. Run rates or trends year after year, clearance rates and composite data will be important to look at for the areas they are serving. Steve Cousins will put this request in an e-mail for the senior officers. It is the role of the Board to support the Service and have these discussions, including performance and strategy.

Chief Skinner noted that Inspector Clarke and Inspector Taylor attended a predictive analysis session in Barrie a few months ago, and some of the principles from this session could be incorporated into how the SPS runs and reports.

**Motion by** Martin Ritsma | Harjinder Nijjar

**THAT the Monthly Statistical Reports for April 2025 be received as presented. Carried**

**8. Approval of Monthly Accounts (As of April 30, 2025)**

Chief Skinner reported that as of the end of April 2025, the Service would expect to have spent approximately 33% of their annual budget. Currently, the Service is looking at an actual expenditure of only 27.13%. By the end of April 2025, the

Service has spent on average approximately \$1,100,000.00 per month, approximately \$240,000.00 less than has been budgeted. They are currently sitting at a year-to-date total surplus of just under \$1,000,000.00. In the statement of operations on line 2200-1130, some of the grant money that is accounted for in the first quarter of this year will be reconciled to last year's budget. Therefore, there may be some modest changes to the 2025 numbers through this reconciliation process. If the Service continues their spending trend for the balance of the year, they will be on course, showing a significant excess of funds which will allow them to replenish their reserve accounts that have been depleted and set them up for a better budget situation for 2026. In addition, the Service has put forward two significant grant requests. If they are approved for the 2025/26 budget years, it will allow them to provide further support to their members, other City departments and the community at large with more mental health supports. It will also allow them to expand their special constable complement to enable them to provide more visibility in the downtown core, support their recruitment initiatives and leverage legislative changes in the Community Safety in Policing Act that have expanded the duties of special constables.

Chief Skinner also advised the Board that they are in the process of re-energizing their 10-member auxiliary constable program. They are in the process of accepting applications and preparing for interviews with the goal of having their members in place and out supporting communities before the end of the summer.

The Park Patrol program has once again started this week with five members, who are currently in training, and will be out in the communities the beginning of next week. Three Park Patrollers are in Stratford and two are in St. Marys.

Steve Cousins stated that it appears that a lot of smaller communities served by the OPP are receiving extra grants, due to the cost of policing in those areas. Is there any opportunity for the municipality to secure funding? Chief Skinner noted that the Government made a decision to provide \$77,000,000.00 to support OPP policed municipalities that were struggling with the salary increases as part of the collective bargaining agreement process in OPP policed municipalities. This additional money has not been extended to non-OPP policed municipalities. The Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the OAPSB have been requesting the Government level the playing field financially for all municipalities and requesting consideration for funds to be forwarded through a grant process to support the increased costs that the 43 municipal police services in the province are fighting their way through. So far there have not been any updates and Chief Skinner does not expect there will be funds afforded to the 43 municipal police services in the province. However, there are a number of grants that have come out and it is his hope that SPS continues to be successful with their applications.

**MOTION by** Harjinder Nijjar | Martin Ritsma

**That the monthly accounts for April 2025 be approved as presented. Carried**

**9. Police Association Business –** None noted.

**10. Public Complaints**

Chief Skinner reported that for the first quarter of 2025 LECA received a total of (9) new public complaints for the SPS. Of the (9) complaints, LECA screened out (8), meaning that they did not require referral to investigation as they were not in the public interest to do so. The remaining (1) complaint was referred for investigation. That investigation has been completed and the complaint was unsubstantiated with no misconduct on the part of the Stratford police officers. In the month of April there were (2) new complaints received by LECA. (1) Complaint was screened out as it was determined it was not in the public interest to proceed, the other complaint alleged that officers neglected their duty. This complaint has been investigated and the allegations were again unsubstantiated. The complainant has been advised and the Chief is waiting the 30 day period to see if the complainant requests a review of that decision by LECA.

**11. Correspondence –** None noted.

**12. Consent Items**

**12.1 Motion by** Martin Ritsma | Harjinder Nijjar

**THAT on the recommendation of the Chief of Police, Pavan Patel (Aunt Gail's Taxi) be approved for a taxi license. Carried.**

**13. New Business –** None noted.

**14. Adjournment to In-Camera Meeting**

**Motion by** Harjinder Nijjar | 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 5:00 p.m.

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Steve Cousins, Chair