

STRATFORD POLICE SERVICE BOARD

A meeting of the Stratford Police Service Board was held on the 21st day of January 2026 at 4:30 p.m., Stratford Rotary Complex – Mansbridge Rm., 353 McCarthy Road W., Stratford ON

PRESENT: Martin Ritsma, Harjinder Nijjar, Dan Mathieson, Lisa Wilde, Travis Blum, Chief Greg Skinner, Acting Deputy Chief Mark Taylor, Inspector Jason Clarke, Sergeant Rob McMillan – Police Association, members of the public, members of the media, Casey Riehl – Executive Assistant

MINUTES

1. Call to order

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

2. Welcome and Affirmations for New Appointees – Lisa Wilde & Travis Blum

New members, Lisa Wilde and Travis Blum, read and signed the Ontario Regulation 416/23: Oaths and Affirmations under the Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019 (CSPA)

3. Election of 2026 Chair and Vice-Chair

The Executive Assistant assumed the role of the Chair for the purposes of an election as the Board is required to elect a Chair and Vice-Chair at its first meeting each year.

Motion by Harjinder Nijjar | Dan Mathieson

That Martin Ritsma be nominated as Chair of the Stratford Police Service Board for the year 2026.

No further nominations were received.

Motion by Harjinder Nijjar | Lisa Wilde

THAT nominations for the 2026 Stratford Police Service Board Chair be closed.

Carried

Martin Ritsma agreed to let his name stand.

Motion by Lisa Wilde | Dan Mathieson

That Martin Ritsma be elected as Chair of the Stratford Police Service Board for the year 2026.

Carried

Motion by Dan Mathieson | Lisa Wilde

That Harjinder Nijjar be nominated as Vice-Chair of the Stratford Police Service Board for the year 2026.

Carried.

No further nominations were received.

Motion by Lisa Wilde | Dan Mathieson

THAT nominations for the 2026 Stratford Police Service Board Vice-Chair be closed.

Carried

Harjinder Nijjar agreed to let his name stand.

Motion by Dan Mathieson | Lisa Wilde

That Harjinder Nijjar be elected as Vice-chair of the Stratford Police Service Board for the year 2026.

Carried

The meeting was turned over to recently elected Chair, Martin Ritsma.

4. Reading of the Land Acknowledgement

Martin Ritsma read the Land Acknowledgement and asked for a moment of silent reflection.

5. Adoption of the January 21, 2026 Agenda and Addition of Agenda Items

Motion by Lisa Wilde | Harjinder Nijjar

THAT the agenda for the regular meeting of January 21, 2026, be adopted as presented.

Carried

6. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

None declared.

7. Adoption of the Minutes from the Regular Meeting of December 10, 2025.

Motion by Dan Mathieson | Harjinder Nijjar

THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of December 10, 2025, be adopted as printed.

Carried

8. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

8.1 Police Station Update

Inspector Clarke reported they are currently completing some upgrades in the men's locker room at 17 George Street. There is new flooring being installed and new lockers have been ordered to accommodate new staff.

The building consultant has been reviewing the spacial needs at 17 George Street and Inspector Clarke has a meeting with them later this week.

Martin Ritsma added that the Attorney General was in Stratford to review and look at the courts located on the second floor of 17 George Street. He certainly cited some concerns regarding safety, accessibility and space. He will follow up with another staff member at the Attorney General's office to also visit and review the space.

8.2 Stratford Mall Visibility & Crime Prevention Strategy - Chief Skinner

Chief Skinner reported that Martin Ritsma and himself have met with representatives from the Stratford Mall regarding the safety and security of the mall regarding the criminal activity that has occurred in the past 18 months. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss what could be done to support the stores and patrons of the mall.

There is a provincial task force that looked at the number of jewelry store robberies across the province and what various intelligence services were finding. Project Wrangler is one in particular that was successful across the province. At the meeting, they discussed some strategies that stores in the mall could use to be on guard. They also discussed increased patrol and presence at the mall inside and outside, which has been happening since the last robbery.

They also discussed processes that could be undertaken such as CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) strategies that could be put in place. The SPS CPTED trained members are going to visit the mall to do some work with them and the jewelry store specifically.

There is also the potential for a SPS kiosk to be placed in the public section of the mall. The mall is very interested in this option and is willing to assist with building the kiosk. The Service will need to discuss what the visibility expectations are and what they can provide on an ongoing basis. This option is still under review and Chief Skinner can provide further updates to the Board once more decisions have been made.

Dan Mathieson inquired if there are statistics for the last few years on the number of calls for assistance at the mall and what the calls are for. Chief

Skinner stated that they have not done that analysis, but they could certainly put that report together and bring it back to the Board.

9. Presentations/Delegations

None noted.

10. Correspondence Received

None noted.

11. Chairs Report

11.1 Strategic Plan Initiative

Martin Ritsma reported that the public consultation process has begun. The consultants are currently organizing interviews with stakeholders and members of the SPS. Surveys are going out to all stakeholders and members of the SPS and will also be posted on the SPS and City of Stratford social media for residents to participate in.

12. Governance Report

None noted.

13. Receipt of Monthly Statistical Reports (December 2025)

13.1 Statistical Reports for Stratford, St. Marys and Perth South (December 2025)

Board Members have been provided the December 2025 statistical reports for Stratford, St. Marys and Perth South.

Inspector Clarke provided the following summary and review:

Calls for Service for December 2025:

- Stratford: 1,423
- St Marys: 165
- Perth South: 134

Annual Comparison:

- 2025 Total: 22,902
- 2024 Total: 23,388

Charges Laid for December 2025:

- Stratford: 271
- St Marys: 37
- Perth South: 16

Annual Comparison:

- 2025 Total: 6,456
- 2024 Total: 5,971

Youth Crime Statistics for December 2025:

- Stratford: 5 diverted, 3 charged
- St Marys and Perth South: 0 diverted, 0 charged

Annual Comparison:

- 2025 Total: 53 charged, 93 diverted
- 2024 Total: 74 charged, 66 diverted

Hate Crime Reports for December 2025:

- No reports

Annual Comparison:

- 2025 Total: 6
- 2024 Total: 17

Mental Health-Related Calls for December 2025:

- Stratford: 65
- St Marys: 2
- Perth South: 1

Annual Comparison:

- 2025 Total: 849
- 2024 Total: 900

Domestic-Related Incidents for December 2025:

- Stratford: 55
- St Marys: 5
- Perth South: 1

Annual Comparison:

- 2025 Total: 705
- 2024 Total: 655

Violent Crime - Annual Comparison:

- 2025 Total: 174
- 2024 Total: 205

Drug and Alcohol Offences – Annual Comparison:

Drug Offences:

- 2025: 71
- 2024: 79

Impaired by Alcohol:

- 2025: 56
- 2024: 65

Impaired by Drug:

- 2025: 7
- 2024: 7

Motor Vehicle Collisions – Annual Comparison:

- 2025: 916
- 2024: 899

Community Resource Unit - December 2025 Activities:

- 15 Community Contacts
- 6 Events or Presentations Attended

Implications and Observations

- Decrease in calls for service and reported hate crimes suggests improved community conditions.
- Increase in charges laid indicates proactive law enforcement efforts.
- Youth crime diversion suggests successful intervention strategies.
- Consistency in mental health-related calls highlights an ongoing community need.
- The Community Resource Unit's engagement reflects commitment to public engagement.

Chief Skinner noted that the SPS Crime Analyst will be working on modifying the

reporting for the Board to include reports that cover all the legislative responsibilities under the new CSPA. This will provide the Board with greater information on the impact of any programs or initiatives in place and what the key performance indicators are and how they are addressing some of these activities in the community.

Dan Mathieson suggested that this data would be informative to be posted on the SPS website for the public to view. Chief Skinner noted that they are working towards a presentation that can be shown digitally at the meetings and then subsequently this information can be posted online. Lisa Wilde noted that once the strategic plan is completed, it may indicate what some of those key performance indicators might be.

MOTION by Dan Mathieson | Harjinder Nijjar

That the monthly statistical reports for December 2025 be approved as presented.

Carried

14. Chief's Report

14.1 Financial Reports (December 2025)

Board members received the December 2025 financial reports, Chief Skinner reviewed the following information:

- Statement of operations represents the actual expenditures to the end of December, however there will be some unreconciled invoices and grant money that have not yet been included in the totals and do not expect those amounts to be substantial;
- On average, SPS is spending \$1.2 million per month, ending the year with a total expenditure of \$14.4 million and an approximate positive variance of \$1.54 million;
- SPS has spent just over 90% of the allocated budget, the positive variance amount will replenish the reserve accounts and support the funding of any future capital expenditures;
- Salaries and benefits account for approximately 88% of the total budget, the Service spent 94.35% of its full-time salaries allocation and 87.31% of its part-time salaries allocation. Further benefit expenditures for both full and part-time staff was 92% and 81% respectively. Salaries and benefits alone contributed \$963,000.00 to the positive variance for the year. A significant amount of this is attributable to the Deputy Chief position and Staff Sergeant position being vacant for a significant part of the year. The balance is attributable to hiring new recruits at

significantly lower annual salaries as experienced hires retire and gapping of positions;

- Payroll premiums (O/T costs) were higher as they were required to cover long term absences with O/T to meet minimum staffing requirements. They have attempted to cover off some of the staffing shortfalls with the part-time policing program, but to date have only had one officer participating in that program. They will continue to try to attract former police officers to this program in 2026;
- Included in the Other Payroll line of the budget is the shift premium payments and acting pay. During 2025 there were two supervisors off on long term absences, which required the service to fill with qualified constables and sergeants on an acting basis. As a result, the Other Payroll line was 20% overspent, which represents a little over \$9,000.00;
- Fuel and vehicle repair lines continue to show a decrease since they have moved to a fully hybrid marked cruiser fleet and the lower cost of less fuel has also impacted positively on their expenditures. In 2025, they saved approximately \$25,000.00 on fuel and another \$25,000.00 on the repairs and maintenance budget for the fleet;
- Conferences and training related expenses continue to increase as they focus on their member development and succession planning.

MOTION by Lisa Wilde | Harjinder Nijjar

That the monthly accounts as of December 31, 2025, be approved as presented. Carried

14.2 Public Complaints

Chief Skinner reported that for the month of December there have been (3) new public complaints received by the Law Enforcement Complaints Agency involving SPS. After review, LECA made the decision that all (3) were not in the public interest to proceed to investigation and were closed by the Director.

For the entirety of 2025, there were a total of (26) public complaints received by LECA involving SPS officers. Of the (26), (5) resulted in an investigation, all which resulted in no finding of misconduct on the part of the officers. (6) Of the complaints were either resolved prior to investigation or withdrawn by the complainant prior to investigation. The complainants in (3) of the (5) investigated complaints requested a review by the Director, and in all three situations, the reviews conducted by LECA supported the findings of the investigation and the decision of the Chief that no conduct was substantiated in those files. The remaining (15) complaints did not

meet the threshold to proceed to investigation and were classified by the director of LECA as follows: (11) deemed not in the public interest to proceed to investigation, (1) of those was referred to another agency for review and then deemed not to be in the public interest to proceed. (4) others were deemed to be frivolous or vexatious.

15. New Business

15.1 Set Date for Grievance Meeting with Association

Martin Ritsma will have staff arrange for a date for himself and Vice-Chair Nijjar to meet with Sergeant Rob McMillan to discuss the grievance.

15.2 Approval of Applications for Appointment for Special Constable

Chief Skinner reported that the new Community in Safety Policing Act requires the Board to approve the appointment of all special constables. Arianna Catalan and Andrew Keleher are now members of the Stratford Police Service as a special constable and their applications for appointment were previously circulated to Board members for their review.

Motion by Dan Mathieson | Harjinder Nijjar

THAT the Stratford Police Service Board approve the appointment of Special Constables Arianna Catalan and Andrew Keleher.
Carried

15.3 Community Safety and Policing Act Section 19 – Requirements to report on requests for assistance from other police services

Chief Skinner has discussed with the Ministry representative, Hank Zehr, some new processes under the Community Safety and Policing Act, specifically section 19 – notifications to the Ministry and the Board whenever a police service requests SPS to provide service to them or SPS requesting services or support from another police service. This is a process that has recently been put in place as of 2024. Acting Deputy Chief Mark Taylor will put together a reporting process moving forward based on both these situations where Stratford may ask for support or Stratford may provide support to another service.

16. Consent Items

None noted.

17. Adjournment to Go into Closed Session

Motion by Harjinder Nijjar | Dan Mathieson

THAT the Board convene in closed session pursuant to subsection 44(2) of the Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019, for the purpose of considering the following matters:

- a. Personal matters about an identifiable individual;**
- b. Litigation affecting the Board;**
- c. Legal matters relating to property.**

Carried

The meeting adjourned to In-Camera at 5:15 p.m.

The Board reconvened in open session at 5:54 p.m.

18. Adoption of the Minutes from the Regular Meeting on December 18, 2025.

Motion by Dan Mathieson | Harjinder Nijjar

THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of December 18, 2025, be adopted as printed.

Carried

19. Adjournment

Motion by Harjinder Nijjar | Dan Mathieson

THAT the Police Service Board meeting adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

Martin Ritsma, Chair

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