

STRATFORD POLICE SERVICE BOARD

A meeting of the Stratford Police Service Board was held on May 20, 2026 at 4:30 p.m., Stratford Rotary Complex – Mansbridge Rm., 353 McCarthy Road W., Stratford ON

PRESENT: Martin Ritsma – Chair, Councillor Harjinder Nijjar, Dan Mathieson (virtual), Lisa Wilde, Travis Blum, Chief Paul Landers, Acting Deputy Chief Jason Clarke, Inspector Mark Taylor, Acting Inspector Mike Robinson, Sergeant Rob MacMillan – Association President, Councillor Rob Edney – Town of St. Marys, Members of the Public, Casey Riehl – Administrative Assistant

MINUTES

1. Call to order

Martin Ritsma, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

2. Reading of the Land Acknowledgement and Moment of Silent Reflection

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

3. Reading of the Respectful Conduct Statement

Martin Ritsma read the Respectful Conduct Statement.

4. Adoption of the May 20, 2026 Agenda and Addition of Agenda Items

Motion by Harjinder Nijjar | Travis Blum

THAT the agenda for the regular meeting of May 20, 2026, be adopted as presented, with the addition of a general update from the Chief under New Business. Carried

5. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

None declared.

6. Adoption of the Previous Minutes

Motion by Lisa Wilde | Harjinder Nijjar

THAT the minutes of the regular meeting from April 15, 2026 be adopted as printed. Carried

7. Presentations/Delegations

None noted.

8. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

8.1 Police Station Update

Acting Deputy Chief Clarke stated that the City of Stratford CAO, Andre Morin, with Council approval on May 11, 2026, has moved forward into a (60) day agreement for Wright Boulevard. The SPS building committee will commence meetings next week with the CAO and RPL Architects to determine how and when they can move into that space based on feasibility.

Martin Ritsma stated that the additional (60) days will give them time to have a better understanding of the costs associated with the headquarters being at that location and is a step in the right direction.

9. Correspondence Received

None noted.

10. Chairs Report

None noted.

11. Governance Report

11.1 Inspector General of Policing – Province-wide Inspection Focused on Policy Integrity and Anti-Corruption Practices Across Ontario

The Board has received a letter from the Inspector General of Policing stating that they have begun the process of inspections. They have appointed an inspector under the Community Safety and Policing Act who will be heading the inspections.

12. Receipt of Monthly Statistical Reports (April 2026)

12.1 Statistical Reports for Stratford, St. Marys and Perth South (April 2026)

Board Members have been provided the April 2026 statistical reports for Stratford, St. Marys and Perth South. Inspector Taylor provided the following summary and review:

- 1725 Calls for service, representing a slight decrease from March 2026, while remaining higher than April 2025 levels;
- 659 Charges were laid, marking an increase compared to March 2026 and the previous year. This rise is largely attributed to enhanced Stratford enforcement initiatives;

- Mental health calls continue to trend at higher levels, with 78 occurrences in April, bringing the year-to-date total to 328, exceeding the 2025 average. A significant portion of these calls are related to a small number of individuals. The Service's Community Resource Unit, Mobile Crisis Rapid Response Team, local Social Service partners have worked collaboratively to provide support to those in need;
- Theft of motor vehicles has also increased relative to 2025. There have been 64 reported incidents so far in 2026, compared to 94 total in 2025. This increase may be partially attributed to the increased use of online reporting, making it easier for residents to report minor thefts. SPS reminds the community to take preventative measures, including locking vehicles when unattended, avoiding leaving articles inside their vehicles and installing security cameras where possible to enhance safety and assist police in identifying suspects;
- Enhanced traffic enforcement initiatives resulted in 163 charges in April 2026, a notable increase from 100 charges in April 2025. Year to date, SPS has issued 625 tickets, representing 74% of the total number issued in all of 2025. Similar upward trends are being observed in surrounding areas, with St. Marys reaching 67% of their total and Perth South reaching 49% of their 2025 total;
- The top two offences continue to be speeding and failing to have currently validated permits. SPS reminds residents to slow down and obey posted speed limits and ensure license plates are properly renewed. While renewal is currently free of charge, drivers are still required to complete the process.

Martin Ritsma stated that when he does receive calls from concerned residents, the response has been exceptional. Thanks to the Service for their exemplary work and the public have acknowledged it as well.

MOTION by Lisa Wilde | Travis Blum

That the monthly statistical reports for April 2026 be approved as presented. Carried

13. Chief's Report

13.1 Financial Reports – April 2026

Board members received the April 2026 financial reports, Inspector Taylor reviewed the following information:

- Line 2200-2100 F.T. Salaries & Wages – Currently at 32.49%, with the May 6, 2026 payment already made on that line and reflected in this higher percentage;

- Line 2200-2500 F.T. Benefits – F.T. Benefits & Employer Costs – the May 6, 2026 payment has also been made from this line as well and impacted the figure. The actual amount should be \$1.161M for month end or 32.7%, this is showing an overage for this as well;
- Line 2200-2700 Other Payroll Expenses – this line is for fitness credits, sight tests and background checks and is currently at 48.6%. A process was run this spring for special constables and constables, which created an increase in these costs. The fitness credits have also been taken from this line, which most officers and civilians submit early on in the year. They do not anticipate running a process for special constables or constables until the fall and the numbers should fall back into line;
- Line 2200-3170 Uniforms – Uniforms and upgrades to uniforms have been purchased at the beginning of the year and should also balance out throughout the year;
- Line 2200-3190 Vehicle Repairs – this line has been higher than projected due to issues with some of the cars. Some have been damaged due to minor accidents, higher costs for repairs and there are still a few items that need to be removed from this line that were 2025 capital and mistakenly placed in this budget line;
- Due to the high increase of vehicle repairs, there is a line item in the capital for a new vehicle for \$60,000.00 that will not be purchased and instead will be transferred to the vehicle repair line to assist in covering costs;
- Line 2200-4095 Maintenance Contracts – part of this expenditure is \$120,000.00 for MCRT funding, which will be given back in funding. A \$74,000.00 feasibility study also went into this line and will be moved into another budget line;
- Line 2206-3050 Materials – Law Enforcement - \$11,000.00 was spent this year on armour plates for front-line officers that were mandated through the CSPA. This cost will go into the cruisers for the officers;
- Line 2208-3050 Materials – CISO Projects/Investigations – This line is currently at \$181,434.00 due to two projects that were run by the street crime unit this year. \$125,000.00 of this will be coming back into the budget as part of funding through CISO;

Lisa Wilde inquired about the overall condition of the current fleet. Inspector Taylor stated that they have a new vendor taking care of repairs and repairs are being done quicker and better. They have two brand new vehicles put into the fleet and a third one coming. The existing vehicles are also having new wraps put on them. Overall, the fleet is in good shape.

MOTION by Dan Mathieson | Travis Blum

That the monthly accounts as of April 30, 2026, be approved as presented. Carried

13.2 Public Complaints

Chief Landers reported that in the month of April, there were (2) LECA complaints. Both of those complaints were screened out and determined by the Director of LECA not to be in the public interest to proceed with investigations.

14. New Business

14.1 Updates from Chief Landers

- Last week was Police Week with a number of successful events taking place within the community. It was an excellent opportunity for officers to engage with community members;
- The Stratford Police were successful in defeating the Stratford Firefighters in a recent baseball game;
- The barbeque held last Saturday was a success with a large number of the membership showing up to support it;
- In Stratford for the month of April, there were 10 foot patrols done in the downtown core area and 8 out at the Stratford mall. In St. Marys there were 9 foot patrols in the main core. In May, to date, in the Stratford downtown core there have been 14, at the mall there have been 4 and in St. Marys there have been 9. This does not include officers also attending the arenas during hockey games and other events;
- Park patrol begins this week and will be on bikes around the community;
- Youth in Policing Initiative (YIPI) interviews are currently underway;
- At the 11th week of his interim position, Chief Landers feels the Service is moving in the right direction and continuing to do well. There is an ongoing focus of listening, assessing and evaluating the organizational needs amongst the leadership chain. Ride-a-longs and shift briefings will continue. Information is being shared with the membership as it occurs and cutting out any room for speculation. Members are informed what is occurring and why it is occurring;
- The Service has posted for another Sergeant's position, moving towards leadership goals in the strategic plan;
- The Service has also posted for a traffic officers as a first step to forming a traffic division;

- Now that the budget is complete, the senior executives have had the opportunity recently to meet with the Director of Corporate Services and review the budget again to discuss best practices to manage it more effectively, so that there are not any items in different budget lines skewing the numbers. They also met with the City's Asset Manager to review their asset management plan and how they will tackle this issue.

15. Consent Items

15.1 Taxi License Approval

Motion by Travis Blum | Dan Mathieson

THAT on the recommendation of the Chief of Police, the Stratford Police Service Board approves Abhay VARGHESE (Aunt Gail's Taxi) and Stephen ABRAM (Aunt Gail's Taxi) for taxi licenses.

Carried.

16. Adjournment to Go into Closed Session

Motion by Harjinder Nijjar | Travis Blum

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. Legal matters pertaining to the Board.**

Carried

4:56 p.m.