

STRATFORD POLICE SERVICE BOARD

A meeting of the Stratford Police Service Board was held on March 18, 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, Inspector Mark Taylor, Acting Deputy Chief Jason Clarke, Sergeant Rob McMillan – Police Association, Hank Zehr – Zone 5 Police Service Advisor, Councillor Rob Edney – Town of St. Marys, members of the public, members of the media, Casey Riehl – Executive Assistant

MINUTES

1. Call to order

Martin Ritsma, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. and welcomed new Interim Police Chief, Paul Landers.

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 March 18, 2026 Agenda and Addition of Agenda Items

Motion by Lisa Wilde | Harjinder Nijjar

THAT the agenda for the regular meeting of March 18, 2026, be adopted as presented.

5. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

None declared.

6. Adoption of the Minutes from the Regular Meeting of February 18, 2026.

Motion by Travis Blum | Dan Mathieson

THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of February 18, 2026, be adopted as printed. Carried

7. Presentations/Delegations

7.1 Introduction of SPS Auxiliary Constables – *Deferred*

8. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

8.1 Police Station Update

Acting Deputy Chief Clarke reported that feasibility study by RPL Architects has been completed and presented to the City's CAO, André Morin. Mr. Morin will be presenting the study to Council.

8.2 Update on Stratford Mall Visibility & Crime Prevention Strategy

Martin Ritsma has had a conversation with one of the owners of the Festival Marketplace Mall and they are still exploring the feasibility of a kiosk at the mall.

Chief Landers also reported that he visited the mall and spoke with the jewelry store manager to hear any concerns they may have and how they can further the relationship with the SPS.

Acting Deputy Chief Clarke stated that they have constables stopping at the mall on an ongoing basis to do foot patrols, the auxiliary unit has also been deployed numerous times for a few hours at a time spent there at the mall to have a presence.

9. Correspondence Received

9.1 Concern about Cyclist Safety and Lack of Cycling Infrastructure in Stratford (e-mailed to Board members)

Martin Ritsma acknowledged receipt of the e-mail received from a concerned citizen regarding cyclist safety. He contacted the citizen to confirm it was received and had invited her to attend the Board meeting to discuss further if they would like to. Unfortunately, they were not present at this meeting.

10. Chairs Report

10.1 Update on Strategic Plan

Martin Ritsma reported that representatives from Consilium Consulting have presented their draft plan to the Board. It was noted that 91% of the Police Association participated in the survey, which was very valuable. The online survey was extended by one week to allow more residents to participate. It was good to see so many residents, businesses, agencies and the Association took up the challenge and provided great data.

As directed by the Board, Consilium Consulting is going to complete the draft with the feedback they received from the Board and provide the next steps.

11. Governance Report

11.1 Zone 5 Meeting Presentation (March 10, 2026) – Inspector General Decisions & Findings Report (IG Memo #8)

Martin Ritsma shared with Board members a power point presentation that Hank Zehr provided at the last Zone 5 meeting regarding I.G. decisions and findings. It was very informative and the IG will continue to communicate their findings and decisions to educate the public regarding policies.

Hank Zehr encouraged Board members to log onto the IoP website under contact us, to receive up to date releases.

12. Receipt of Monthly Statistical Reports (February 2026)

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

Board Members have been provided the February 2026 statistical reports for Stratford, St. Marys and Perth South. Deputy Chief Clarke provided the following summary and review:

Uniform Operations focused on traffic enforcement, specifically addressing speeding. Enforcement activity increased, with 277 “Top 5” tickets issued in February compared to 155 in January. Calls for service and charges laid remained substantial across all patrol areas. Motor vehicle collisions decreased in Stratford, St. Marys, and Perth South (likely due to improved road conditions); however, one fatal collision occurred in Perth South during the month. The Community Resource Unit maintained active engagement through meetings, events, community contacts, and self-initiated occurrences.

Stratford

- Calls for Service: 1,489
- Charges Laid: 528
- Mental health: 61 calls
- Overdoses: 2 occurrences
- Domestic-related: 41 occurrences
- Assaults: 5 (down from 9 in January)
- Sex offences: 2 reported
- Thefts from motor vehicles: 15 (down from 28 in January)
- Drug/alcohol occurrences: 5 drug and 4 alcohol
- Motor vehicle collisions: 56 (down from 105 in January)

- Highest ticket volumes: Speeding (84), currently validated permit (56)
- RIDE programs: 2 conducted

St. Marys

- Calls for Service: 172
- Charges Laid: 56
- Mental health: 5 calls
- Domestic-related: 3 occurrences
- Drug/alcohol occurrences: 1 drug occurrence
- Motor vehicle collisions: 10 (down from 15)
- Highest ticket volumes: speeding (12), no currently validated permit (5)
- RIDE programs: 2 conducted

Perth South

- Calls for Service: 167
- Charges Laid: 120
- Mental health: 0 calls
- Overdoses: 0 occurrences
- Domestic-related: 2 occurrences
- Motor vehicle collisions: 8 (down from 13)
- Notable incident: 1 fatal collision occurred during the reporting period
- Highest ticket volumes: speeding (60), no currently validated permit (9)
- RIDE programs: 1 conducted

Community Resource Unit (CRU) - Community Engagement and Prevention

- Meetings attended: 19
- Community contacts: 22
- Events attended: 3
- Self-initiated occurrences: 21

MOTION by Dan Mathieson | Travis Blum

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

13. Chief's Report

13.1 Financial Reports – February 2026

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

- Full-time salary line is currently at \$1,700,000.00 or 14%, which is under budget;
- Some lines currently indicating over budget are postage, printing, conference registrations and services - other (should all be re-allocated to correct line);
- The overall budget currently sits at 8%, which is under budget for the year.

MOTION by Harjinder Nijjar | Lisa Wilde

That the monthly accounts as of February 28, 2026, be approved as presented. Carried

13.2 Public Complaints

Chief Landers reported that there were no public complaints in the month of February received from the Law Enforcement Complaints Agency (LECA) against SPS officers and no other outstanding complaints.

14. New Business

14.1 Careers in Policing Session

Chief Landers reported that SPS recently held a public session for people who are interested in starting a career in policing. It was organized by Sergeant Peck, and the public were invited to attend a forum with the Chief, Deputy Chief and four officers in attendance from various ranges of experience for the Police Service. Each member spoke about their experiences with the Service and the positives they gained through policing. It was a good session and very well received. Service members stayed and talked to people one on one after the session and many people are interested in coming to Stratford.

Police Association President, Rob McMillan stated that it is good to hear people are interested in joining the Service and recognizing that Stratford is a great place to live and work. He is thankful that the Board and Admin are putting in a concerted effort to put resources towards this and encouraging people to choose Stratford.

15. Consent Items

None noted.

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.

Carried

4:52 p.m.