

STRATFORD POLICE SERVICE BOARD

A meeting of the Stratford Police Service Board was held on April 15, 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, Constable Andrew Maguire, Hank Zehr – Zone 5 Police Service Advisor, Councillor Rob Edney – Town of St. Marys, members of the public, members of the media, Casey Riehl – Administrative Assistant

MINUTES

1. Call to order

Martin Ritsma, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:32 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 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 Previous Minutes

Motion by Lisa Wilde | Harjinder Nijjar

THAT the minutes of the regular meetings from March 18, 2026 and March 27, 2026 be adopted as printed. Carried

7. Presentations/Delegations

7.1 Introduction of new Stratford Police Service Constable Andrew Maguire
Acting Deputy Chief Jason Clarke introduced Constable Maguire to the Board and welcomed him to the SPS. Constable Maguire was born and raised in

Stratford and will be working on D Platoon with Coach Officer Nathan Koenig. Martin Ritsma welcomed Constable Maguire to the SPS.

Constable Maguire is no longer present at the meeting at 4:11 p.m.

8. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

8.1 Police Station Update

Acting Deputy Chief Clarke stated there were no new updates to report.

Martin Ritsma stated that the report outlining the three options for the Police headquarters is now with the CAO and has been provided to Council for review and a decision on next steps.

Chief Landers stated that the Staff Sergeants have now moved back into the front office at 17 George Street. They will monitor the front kiosk and also the communications centre. The moves in the building are almost complete and the last move will be when the Acting Inspector moves to that location shortly.

9. Correspondence Received

None noted.

10. Chairs Report

10.1 Update on Strategic Plan

Martin Ritsma reported that the Board has met with the consultants and they presented the draft strategic plan so members could provide feedback. Board members have received the final revised draft copy of the plan to review. The consultants have estimated that they will have a final copy for Board approval by mid-May.

11. Governance Report

None noted.

12. Receipt of Monthly Statistical Reports (March 2026)

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

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

March 2026 policing activity remained focused on road visibility, proactive

traffic enforcement, and community safety across Stratford, St. Marys, and Perth South. This continued focus resulted in a further increase in proactive enforcement, with members issuing 312 Top 5 traffic tickets in March, compared to 277 in February and 155 in January.

Across all three communities, members responded to 2,134 calls for service and laid 768 charges during the month. Mental health, domestic-related calls, traffic enforcement, and community engagement continued to be notable components of service delivery.

Key Monthly Highlights - Traffic Enforcement

Top 5 ticket categories:

- Speeding
- Driving under suspension
- Careless driving
- Failing to surrender driver's licence
- No valid permit

Top 5 ticket totals:

- January: 155
- February: 277
- March: 312

This reflects a sustained increase in proactive traffic enforcement activity.

STRATFORD

- 1,743 calls for service
- 599 charges laid
- 90 mental health calls
- 4 overdoses
- 38 domestic-related occurrences
- Assaults increased from 5 to 10
- 1 sexual offence reported
- Thefts from vehicles decreased from 15 to 9
- Shoplifting decreased from 21 to 12
- 41 motor vehicle collisions, down from 56

- Highest tickets issued:
- Speeding: 97
- No currently validated permit: 70
- 1 RIDE program conducted

ST. MARYS

- 209 calls for service
- 44 charges laid
- 12 mental health calls
- 8 domestic-related occurrences
- No significant violent or property crime trends reported
- 10 motor vehicle collisions
- Highest tickets issued:
- Speeding: 14
- No currently validated permit: 4
- 2 RIDE programs conducted

PERTH SOUTH

- 182 calls for service
- 125 charges laid
- 4 mental health calls
- 0 overdoses
- 0 domestic-related occurrences
- 2 impaired by alcohol occurrences
- 8 motor vehicle collisions
- Highest tickets issued:
- Speeding: 66
- Fail to surrender driver's licence: 9
- No RIDE program conducted

Community Resource Unit Activity

The Community Resource Unit remained active in prevention, outreach, and community engagement initiatives, including:

- Elder Abuse Conference and Elder Abuse Course

- Media Officer Course
- Easter food drives in Stratford and St. Marys
- Stuff a Cruiser food drive at Giant Tiger
- Encampment visits
- 6 events with Dusty
- 12 community meetings

Year-to-Date Outlook

Based on first quarter 2026 results, the Service is currently on pace to exceed 2025 totals in both calls for service and charges laid.

- 2025 total calls for service: 22,907
2026 projected pace: 23,512
Projected increase: +2.6%
- 2025 total charges laid: 7,407
2026 projected pace: 8,152
Projected increase: +10.1%

Summary

March reflected a strong level of operational activity across all service areas, with continued emphasis on proactive traffic enforcement, response to community safety concerns, and visible community engagement. Current year-to-date trends indicate that 2026 is on pace to exceed 2025 in both calls for service and charges laid.

Travis Blum inquired if this information could be shared more publicly to highlight the great work the service is doing in the community. Acting Deputy Chief Clarke stated that they do not currently do this, however, would like to possibly do a police blotter to share highlights or stats from their crime analyst. This is also an area identified in the strategic plan. Travis Blum offered to assist with this project.

Martin Ritsma inquired with Acting Deputy Clarke what bus drivers and residents can do to support the Police Service when they see drivers not stopping when the arm is out on school buses. The Acting Chief stated that a photo of the car and license plate is the most useful information for officers to follow up with the drivers. Chief Landers stated that he did receive the complaint this morning where a driver failed to stop and has assigned a Staff Sergeant to attend and monitor the situation.

MOTION by Travis Blum | Lisa Wilde

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

13. Chief's Report

13.1 Financial Reports – February 2026

Board members received the March 2026 financial reports, Chief Landers reviewed the following information:

- Actual to date the Service has spent \$2,584,302.98 or 21% of the operational budget at 25% of the year;
- They are working with the Director of Finance to ensure that expenses are being allocated to the correct budget item lines – vehicle repairs, materials, etc.
- The current report was actually printed April 9, 2026; therefore the benefits line and salaries line are high due to including an extra payroll;

MOTION by Harjinder Nijjar | Lisa Wilde

That the monthly accounts as of March 31, 2026, be approved as presented. Carried

13.2 Public Complaints

Chief Landers reported that in the month of March, there were (4) LECA complaints. (3) Of those complaints were determined by the Director of LECA not to be in the public interest to investigate. The fourth complaint was regarding a civilian member of SPS and LECA does not address these complaints, as they review sworn members only. There was an internal investigation conducted by SPS and it was determined the complaint was unfounded.

14. New Business

14.1 National Communicators Week

Chief Landers reported that this week is National Communicators Week and would like to thank their communicators for the critical role they play in the service every day. Their dedication, professionalism and composure displayed daily does not go unnoticed. Communicators work directly with members and contribute to their safety and the community's safety.

14.2 Recruitment

Chief Landers reported that recruitment efforts continue to be ongoing. They recently had Sergeant Matt Peck and Constable Darren Fisher attend the First Responders Expo hosted by the Windsor Police Service. They are promoting the SPS as being the employer of choice and what a great service they have and provide for the community.

14.3 Acting Inspector Position

Chief Landers reported that there is a Supervisors meeting tomorrow and they will be discussing the role of the Acting Inspector and filling that position shortly.

14.4 Portable Radios

Chief Landers reported that the service has received their new portable radios. There is a total of (45) replacement radios received to replace radios that were aging out. Once they are programmed, they will be distributed to their assigned member.

14.5 Park Patrol Program

Chief Landers stated that (5) officers have been selected and will begin work on May 20, 2026.

14.6 Youth in Policing Initiative (YIPI)

Chief Landers reported that they will be advertising the program for high school students and running a competition to have them join the service for July and August.

Chief Landers stated that at the 6-week mark, he feels that the service is operating well and remaining stable. He has been focused on observing, listening and assessing and has seen from both the civilian and sworn side that they are professional, dedicated members and they genuinely want to do a good job. Chief Landers will be starting up the ride along program again soon and will be riding with members to get to know more of the community and see how members interact with the public. Overall the Chief is very happy with the way everything is operating.

Chief Landers reported that Martin Ritsma and himself met with Mayor Orr and Mayor Strathdee for a roundtable discussion on what their communities are liking about the Police Service and if there was anything causing them frustrations. The Chief stated they are pleased with the service being provided, with little frustration. The open lines of communication that have been developed will continue and if there are any issues, they will be addressed immediately.

On behalf of the Board, Martin Ritsma thanked Chief Landers for his leadership and asked him to share the Boards thoughts and appreciation with the Association for their work.

15. Consent Items

15.1 Taxi License Approval

Motion by Dan Mathieson | Harjinder Nijjar

THAT on the recommendation of the Chief of Police, the Stratford Police Service Board approves Wendy HUBERTS (City Cab) for a taxi license. Carried.

16. Adjournment to Go into Closed Session

Motion by Travis Blum | Lisa Wilde

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

5:05 p.m.