

MINUTES

OTTAWA-CARLETON POLICE SERVICES BOARD

TOWNSHIP OF RIDEAU COUNCIL CHAMBERS

11 SEPTEMBER 2000 - 7:00 P.M.

PRESENT

Chair: Councillor H. Kreling
Vice Chair: Mr. G. Baskerville
Members: Mr. D. Adam, Ms. E. Buckingham, Councillor J. Legendre,
Mr. J. McCombie

REGRETS

Regional Chair B. Chiarelli

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. STAFF PRESENTATION ON POLICING
SERVICES IN THE TOWNSHIP OF RIDEAU

Chair Kreling called the meeting to order and invited Mayor G. Brooks to make a few opening remarks.

Mayor Brooks began by thanking all those in attendance and by expressing his pleasure in welcoming the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Police Service and the Board to Rideau Township. He recalled the last time the Board held a meeting in Rideau Township was just prior to amalgamation and a number of commitments were made at that time which he hoped to discussed over the course of the evening. He stated he and the community have enjoyed a good relationship with the Staff Sergeant assigned to the area and he expressed a willingness to work with the Board and the Police Service.

Chair Kreling noted Regional Councillor B. Hill's presence and welcomed her to the meeting. He explained the purpose of the meeting is to hear a staff presentation on policing services in Rideau Township and to hear comments, questions and concerns from residents.

Chief Bevan indicated he was pleased to be in Rideau Township and thankful for the opportunity to make a presentation and hear comments from residents. He introduced staff members in attendance and re-iterated the purpose of the meeting. He then invited Acting Superintendent B. Caron, who took over responsibilities for West Division when L. Hill was

promoted to Deputy Chief, to begin the presentation.

Acting Superintendent B. Caron indicated the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Police Service currently serves a population of 763,000, spread over a geographical area of 2,952 square kilometers, with an annual budget of \$132M and a Capital budget of \$5.2M. He noted the first area to be amalgamated was Rockcliffe Park in December 1996, followed by the Township of Cumberland in January 1998, the Townships of Rideau and Osgoode in July 1998 and the City of Kanata and the Townships of Goulbourn and West Carleton in July 1999. The benefits of amalgamation have included: the elimination of 15 senior management positions; the amalgamation of 9 collective agreements into 3; a seamless changeover of the radio system; new technological advances such as in-car laptop computers and new digital radios; better access to specialized units; and standardized training through the Professional Development Centre in partnership with Algonquin College.

He explained that the district policing model promotes problem-oriented policing, makes better use of technology, makes the distinction between emergency response versus differential response, allows for crime analysis, community consultation and accountability, and more effective use of resources, and leads to de-centralized service delivery.

Inspector R. Lamothe, the Inspector in charge of District 13, explained that the OCRPS's West Division includes all areas of the City of Ottawa west of the Rideau Canal, the cities of Nepean and Kanata, and the townships of West Carleton, Goulbourn and Rideau. The division is staffed by one Superintendent, four Inspectors, seven Staff Sergeants, 330 sworn officers and eight civilians. More specifically, the complement is comprised of 211 patrol officers, 35 neighbourhood officers, 13 traffic enforcement officers, 14 general investigators and six break and enter investigators.

District 13 is comprised of the townships of Rideau and Goulbourn (with the exception of the Village of Stittsville). In addition to his and Staff Sergeant S. Hall's leadership, the district benefits from the services of three Sergeants, 16 patrol officers, one neighbourhood officer, one school resource officer, one traffic enforcement officer, one criminal investigator, and one break and enter investigator. Also available and always on stand-by are the following centralized services: Victim Assistance Unit, Marine Unit, Collision Investigation, Partner Assault, Sexual Assault / Child Abuse, Bias Crime, Forensic Identification, Crime Analyst Unit, Proceeds of Crime, Surveillance, Tactical and Canine, Youth Investigations, Major Crime, Auto Theft, High Tech Crime Unit, Diversity and Race Relations, Drug Unit, Arson Investigations, Intelligence, and Fraud.

Inspector Lamothe stated that from July 1998 to June 2000, there were 3,717 calls for service in Rideau Township with the breakdown as follows: 826 calls from July to December 1998; 802 calls from January to June 1999; 1,047 calls from July to December 1999; and 1,042 calls from January to June 2000. He explained the increase of approximately 200 calls for service

since July 1999 is due to a change in the way statistics are recorded. Since July of last year, these numbers have included traffic stops.

Inspector Lamothe provided statistical data on calls for service by type for each six-month period since July 1998. He stated there were 44 calls for residential break and enters in the second half of 1998 compared to 15 in the first half of 1999, 35 from July to December of 1999 and 31 in the first half of 2000. Calls for commercial break and enters were 7, 5, 14 and 7 respectively for the same periods. Calls for service related to thefts numbered 28, 33, 27 and 43 respectively for the same periods. Police received 15 calls relating to stolen vehicles from July to December of 1998 compared to 12 for January to June of 1999, 12 for July to December of 1999 and 29 from January to June of this year. Damage to Property reports numbered 17, 17, 29 and 21 respectively for those same periods and motor vehicle accidents numbered 86, 115, 75 and 100 respectively.

He noted the sharp increase in residential break and enters between the first and the second half of 1999 and explained that surveillance targeting one group of criminals resulted in 10 break and enter cases being cleared. He felt this is a perfect example of how one active group can affect crime statistics. With regard to the increase in stolen vehicles in the first half of this year, Inspector Lamothe indicated many of the vehicles were recovered close to a school in Richmond and police suspect the vehicles were used for transportation to school.

Inspector Lamothe highlighted some District 13 initiatives. In particular he noted a new service delivery model will be introduced in the new year which will see dedicated rural generalist officers and supervisors assigned to rural areas. This will have a direct impact on the service delivery in the district. He explained that the same officers will be working in the district all the time, generating reports and conducting follow-ups.

In closing, Inspector Lamothe spoke about the impacts of the Provincial Adequacy Standards in terms of crime prevention programs and the role of volunteers in the organization. He indicated volunteers' roles will include the dissemination of crime prevention programs in their community. He also noted there is currently an internal review into the roles of volunteers in the organization.

That the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Police Services Board receive this presentation for information.

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2. PUBLIC DELEGATIONS

Mayor Brooks appreciated the assignment of rural generalists to the townships. He felt it is important to have officers who know the community and its residents.

He relayed concerns from residents about the difficulty in reaching a live person through the OCRPS telephone system. He stated he had occasion to call the Service recently and it took him 45 minutes to get the information he was seeking from a live person. He stressed, people want to hear a human voice when accessing police services and he felt something has to be done to improve communications.

Chair Kreling recognized that calls for service have peaked since amalgamation, though there is very good 9-1-1 response time. He invited Chief Bevan to respond to comments with regard to the OCRPS telephone system.

Mr. R. Shaw, a resident of Manotick, interjected that last Sunday, he tried to call-in a vandalism report and after 35 minutes of being bounced around, he gave up. He stated he finally spoke to Inspector Bordeleau about the incident on Thursday. Though he normally hates voicemail, Mr. Shaw suggested this is one instance when voice mail would have been satisfactory as he could have left a message with the details of the incident and been done with it.

Chief Bevan indicated he has heard of a number of instances where people have been frustrated by the phone system and noted Service members have also been frustrated by it. He stated the Service is aware of the problems and is evaluating options, while minimizing budgetary implications, to make improvements to the system and increase the quality of service it provides to the community and its members. Chief Bevan promised to follow-up on the specific incident referenced by Mr. Shaw.

Mr. W. Stephenson, a retired OCRPS officer and resident of Rideau Township, recalled the last time he was before council, the Service was promising there would be two cars on the road at all times in the District, which would be divided into two patrol zones. He also recalled that before amalgamation, break and enters were a terrible problem. The community was not getting adequate patrol services from the OPP. Therefore, residents were very impressed after the first year of OCRPS policing. Patrol cars were visible on the roads and break and enters were down. He noted that since this past spring, there has been a drastic decrease in police cars patrolling the roads and an increase in the number of stolen vehicles in the area, many of which are abandoned in Marlborough Forest.

He spoke about a recent incident where he found a truck cab abandoned in Marlborough Forest and since it had not been there the previous day, he assumed it came off a stolen vehicle. He called the Police Service to inquire about reports of stolen trucks in the area and was told an officer would be dispatched to the scene. After waiting 45 minutes, he called back and was

told the case had been referred to property and an officer would follow-up in two days. Since there were papers and documents around the scene, he conducted his own investigation. He discovered the cab was off a truck which had been stolen the previous night and contacted the owner to recover his truck cab.

Mr. Stephenson re-iterated there has been a drastic reduction in patrol vehicles in the area and he felt this creates an opportunity for a criminal element to move in and operate without interference. He stressed, the Service needs officers and cars patrolling this vast region and there desperately needs to be two cars in District 13. Living in a rural area, he did not expect a five-minute response time, but he maintained a reasonable response time is necessary. He believed the OCRPS is trying to do too much with too little in this growth period. Mr. Stephenson indicated friends and neighbours are coming to him to express their frustrations instead of coming to meetings. He also noted, rural residents don't call the police to report problems, they deal with things themselves.

Chief Bevan explained that when the Service rolled out its new service delivery model, it tried to make it fit all areas. He indicated that with the current service delivery model, non-urgent calls are handled by alternative measures such as differential response. It is now clear that the urban core and rural areas have very different needs. He believed the assignment of generalist officers to rural areas would lead to a significant improvement because they will respond to all calls, and follow-up on them.

Mr. Shaw recalled that at one time in the United Kingdom, police officers were taken off the beat and put into cars. They have now done a full turn and put officers back on the beat so that people know them. He indicated he had occasion to call police at 2:00 a.m. one summer night because of noise at a construction site on Bridge Street in Manotick and a police cruiser responded to the call at 7:45 a.m.. He noted the Niagara Parks Commission hires students to do traffic direction and monitoring during the summer months and he wondered why the OCRPS could not hire Law & Security students from Algonquin College as special constables. He believed their lower salaries would be a cost effective way to fill the gap when sworn officers take summer holidays.

Vice Chair Baskerville, chair of the Board's Human Resources Committee, explained that is a labour relations issue. The Ottawa-Carleton Regional Police Association, which represents rank and file officers, have expressed concerns with special constables taking over the duties of fully trained officers. They don't think auxiliary officers or volunteers should be doing the work of sworn officers. However, he believed Mr. Shaw's concerns are valid and agreed the Board needs to find a way to augment support to officers.

Chief Bevan indicated another aspect of the issue is that the Provincial Adequacy Standards dictates the level of training for all officers. He noted the Service had students working with marine patrol over the past summer.

Mr. A. Walton, a volunteer in District 13 and resident of Manotick, noted the large number of police officials and small number of residents present. He speculated that people are not interested in what the police have to say because of their view that the Police Service is inadequate in solving crime. He noted the presentation provided statistics on calls for service but it gave no indication of the number of incidents resolved.

In response to a question from Chair Kreling, Inspector Lamothe indicated that though he did not have data on hand with respect to clearance rates, it can be provided.

Mayor Brooks, recalled that when the OCRPS first took over policing in Rideau Township, Sergeant B. Duffy was in Manotick daily. However, after the OCRPS took over policing in Goulbourn Township, Sergeant Duffy was gone. Mayor Brooks stressed the need to have a senior officer in the township on a full-time basis and he wondered how Chief Bevan sees community policing developing.

Chief Bevan acknowledged the importance of having officers who know the community they serve and for residents to know the names of the officers who serve them. He appreciated the personal touch needed in rural areas and indicated the Service is working to do just that by assigning generalist officers to the townships.

Mr. Walton noted the lack of police volunteers in attendance and indicated that though the District's volunteers are very dedicated, their numbers are dwindling either because of the type of duties they expect to be doing in the future or because of delays in hearing about the on-going volunteer review.

Chair Kreling explained that because of the large number of volunteers working with the Service and the different programs being run with various levels of success, it was felt that a review was in order.

Chief Bevan indicated there will be a meeting held on September 20th to resolve a number of issues and he recently met with volunteers to explain the process and status of the review. He noted many volunteers now spend the majority of their time waiting for the phone to ring or for people to come through the door. The Service is focusing on developing a volunteer program that will make good use of technology and establish a network between the community and its volunteers.

Mr. Stephenson was encouraged to hear that police will be responding to all calls in rural areas. He expressed an interest in receiving statistics after the first year to compare to current statistics and he believed such data will be reassuring to the public.

Mr. Shaw recalled that Bridge Street in Manotick was frequently used by the OPP during its RIDE program. He wondered if the RIDE program is on-going and when the last one was conducted in his community.

Chief Bevan indicated the RIDE program is on-going though he did not have information on hand with regard to the last one in Manotick. He confirmed he could provide that information to Mr. Shaw.

Mayor Brooks noted the lack of public presence at the meeting and suggested this was due to the manner in which the meeting was advertised. He indicated not all residents receive the Manotick Messenger. The municipality maintains a list of all the community associations in the area and he suggested a notice could have been sent to the chairpersons of those associations to ensure people were aware of the meeting. He believed people are interested in policing and don't mind paying more if they know they will receive better service. Chief Bevan noted they hope to have that kind of network in place with the new delivery system.

Township of Rideau Councillor D. Stephenson echoed earlier comments with respect to police vehicles not having the same presence in the township as they had the first year after amalgamation. He maintained police visibility is not what it should be and he asked that the Service review it.

Chief Bevan explained that after reviewing operations in the rural townships, the Service found that during quiet times, police cars seemed to gravitate towards the city therefore, it was decided that in addition to having rural generalist officers, there will be rural generalist supervisors to ensure obligations are fulfilled.

Regional Councillor B. Hill indicated many of the complaints heard tonight can also be heard from residents in the townships of Goulbourn and West Carleton. She expressed her disappointment with the OCRPS. She stated, residents are lead to believe there are officers in their area but there are not. Furthermore, she indicated there have been cases where, in addition to not having police response in rural areas, residents have been unable to get through to 9-1-1.

Chair Kreling indicated he had never heard of cases where people could not get through to 9-1-1. He asked that Councillor Hill provide specific information to his or to Chief Bevan's office for follow-up. He noted from earlier comments that the Service is making changes to the way it provides services in the rural areas to ensure proper response and follow-up. There will also be changes to the telephone system so that callers can speak to a live person when accessing police services. He indicated the purpose of this meeting was to hear from the community with regards to their needs and find out how the Service can better serve them, and the Police Services Board will continue to hold such community meetings.

In response to questions from member Legendre, Mr. Walton re-iterated the reasons why he believed the number of volunteers is dwindling, and indicated the first sign of uncertainty for volunteers came in the Spring when the Service implemented a moratorium on new volunteers.

In response to further questions from member Legendre with respect to the volunteer review, Chief Bevan stated he met with volunteers on July 6th to provide them with a status on the process. He hoped to have some resolutions on the matter at a September 20th meeting. He indicated the Service has been communicating constantly with volunteers and any decisions reached at the upcoming meeting will be communicated to the Board and the volunteers.

In closing, Chief Bevan indicated he appreciated hearing from residents and promised to respond to specific questions and issues raised.

Chair Kreling thanked Mayor Brooks for hosting a meeting of the Police Services Board.

That the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Police Services Board receive these presentations for consideration.

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INQUIRIES

a) OCRPS Telephone Service

Member Legendre referenced earlier comments with regard to reaching a live person when calling the Police Service. He did not believe there are any situations where it would suffice to reach voice mail when calling the police. Furthermore, he noted the Service currently advertises three numbers for calling the police: 9-1-1 for crimes in progress and life threatening emergencies; a second number for other police emergencies; and a third number for non-emergencies. He believed it can be difficult for people to decide where their call fits in and to remember two different numbers, and suggested the Service should only have two numbers, one for emergencies, and one for non-emergencies.

Chief Bevan agreed with the importance of reaching a live person when calling the police. He referenced the Service's "Make the Right Call" campaign and the use of the red pages in the Bell Canada directory which provide the three numbers and explain the distinction between the various types of calls. However, he suggested the Service could perhaps do a better job communicating its numbers to the public.

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

W. Fedec
Executive Director

H. Kreling
Chair