

STRATFORD POLICE SERVICES BOARD

A meeting of the Stratford Police Services Board was held on the 21st day of June 2023, at Stratford City Hall – Council Chamber, 1 Wellington Street, Stratford ON

PRESENT: Tim Doherty (Chair), Steve Cousins, Dave Gaffney, Mayor Martin Ritsma, Harjinder Nijjar, Chief Greg Skinner, Deputy Chief Gerry Foster, Inspector Mark Taylor, Constable Rob McMillan (Stratford Police Association), Councillor Rob Edney (St. Marys), Katia Maxwell (CEAT), Brad Rickert (Radio Cab), Gail Cossey (Aunt Gail's Taxi), Galen Simmons (Media), Casey Kenny (Media), Casey Riehl (Executive Assistant)

MINUTES

1. Call to order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:29 p.m.

2. Moment to Observe the Line of Duty Death of Detective Constable Steven Torangeau – Perth County OPP/Provincial Organized Crime Enforcement Bureau

Chief Skinner asked all present to take a moment of silence to observe the recent line of duty death of Constable Steven Torangeau.

3. Adoption of the June 21, 2023 Agenda and Addition of Agenda Items – Business Arising or New Business

Motion by Dave Gaffney | Steve Cousins

THAT the agenda for the regular meeting of June 21, 2023 be adopted as presented with the addition of a discussion on noise and speed as it relates to vehicles in the downtown area. Carried.

4. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

None declared.

5. Presentation of Plaques – Chief Skinner

On behalf of the Stratford Police Service and the Stratford Police Services Board, Chief Greg Skinner presented former Police Services Board member, Rosemary Tanner, with a plaque to thank her for her years of service with the Board.

6. Adoption of the Minutes from the Regular Meeting of May 17, 2023

Motion by Martin Ritsma | Harjinder Nijjar

THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of May 17, 2023 be adopted as presented. Carried.

7. Hearings of Deputations and Presentations

7.1 Gail Cossey & Brad Rickert – Taxi Tariff Review Request

Brad Rickert addressed the Board to request their consideration to increase the current regular taxi fare from \$13.00 to \$15.00 and to increase the current senior taxi fare from \$12.00 to \$14.00. They are requesting that the fare increase take effect by August 1, 2023.

Motion by Dave Gaffney | Steve Cousins

THAT the Stratford Police Services Board receive the report from the taxi companies and requests staff prepare a follow-up report. Carried.

The Board will contact the taxi companies within a month to inform them of their decision.

Brad Rickert and Gail Cossey are no longer present at the meeting at 4:39 p.m.

8. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

None noted.

9. Receipt of Monthly Statistical Reports – May 2023

Board members received the statistical reports for May 2023. Inspector Taylor reviewed the reports with the Board with respect to Stratford, St. Marys and Perth South and answered questions.

9.1 Stratford

Calls for services rose by 450 compared to last month, with 2106 calls for service in May and 421 charges laid. There were 3 overdoses this month, all related to fentanyl. Mental health related occurrences were up significantly from 57 in April to 88 in May with 45 calls coming in from one individual and a second individual had 22 calls for service. Domestic related occurrences were high at 79, with 16 charges laid relating to these occurrences. There were 14 break & enter calls and can be contributed to the better weather and a few individuals already known to police. Motor vehicle accidents rose to 71 in May. There were 5 accidents at Huron/Forman, 4 hit & runs at the Festival Marketplace Mall, most of the other accidents were spread out across the city and occurred at busy intersections.

9.2 St Marys

There were 260 calls for service, with 40 charges laid. There were 14 domestic related occurrences, 3 couples were responsible for the majority of these calls. Call volume for all other calls remained relatively the same as the previous month.

9.3 Perth South

Calls for services were up compared to April with 218 calls received and 115 charges laid for the month of May. All other occurrences remained relatively the same as the previous month.

9.4 Crime Stoppers Report (May 2023)

Chief Skinner reported that Stratford received (15) new tips in May. The number one tip by type received was traffic with (10), followed by theft with (5) and drugs with (4).

Motion by Harjinder Nijjar | Martin Ritsma

THAT the Monthly Statistical Reports for May 2023 and the Crime Stoppers Report for May 2023 be received as presented. Carried.

10. Approval of Monthly Accounts (May 2023)

Chief Skinner provided members with a new financial document outside of the agenda package for additional review. It is a new layout showing a breakdown of the budget and expenses. At the end of May, it would be expected to see 41.67% of the budget spent to be on target. The Service is currently at 40.5%, which equates to a monthly average expenditure of \$1,023,000.00. Over the 12 months of the year, this would put the total budget at \$12,280,000.00 on an allocated budget of \$12,610,000.00. Salaries and benefits account for approximately 88% of the total budget. Based on the current actual projected expenditures in this area they should see a surplus due to civilian and uniform members off work on leave, parental/maternity leave, leave of absence without pay or salary capping resulting from members leaving the Service and not having an immediate replacement. The province's fiscal year is not consistent with the City's fiscal year, which can cause some reporting inconsistencies for grant money. The new document provided, is colour-coded and based on activity, rather than an individual budget line.

MOTION by Steve Cousins | Harjinder Nijjar

That the monthly accounts for May 2023 be approved as presented. Carried.

11. Police Association Business

None noted.

12. Public Complaints – Chief Skinner

Chief Skinner reported that there were two new complaints received since the May meeting. Both of the complaints were reviewed by the OIPRD and both were deemed not to be in the public interest to proceed to investigation and the OIPRD has closed both of the complaints.

Martin Ritsma reported that he has recently received two complaints regarding the noise and speed of vehicles downtown. One was directly related to motorcycles. In both instances installing camera's or radar were suggested by the individuals. He inquired if there was any way to deter noise in areas such as the downtown core?

Chief Skinner stated that there are sections of the Highway Traffic Act to allow police to enforce noise, such as equipment violations. For instance modified or missing mufflers. A vehicle can be stopped for this violation. The noise violations can be more subjective and anything can cause unnecessary noise, such as a loud stereo or muffler, squealing tires or revving an engine, etc. There has to be not only the subjectivity of the noise in relation to the officers, but also any other witnesses to the violation to assist in an investigation the offense.

There are municipalities that have initiated "blitzes" to be able to specifically address noise issues in their downtown. The reality is, to have a police officer in the right place at the right time downtown to witness the speed or noise violation and take a course of action is difficult. He noted that members of the public can always provide the police with a make, model and license plate of a driver that will allow police to follow-up and potentially lay a ticket or at least issue a warning.

Chief Skinner will share with the Board members for their information his e-mail response to a recent complaint received.

13. Correspondence

13.1 Indigenous Medical Marijuana Trading Post – Chief Skinner

Chief Skinner reviewed the letter that he and the Board recently received regarding a newly formed trading post that is selling medical marijuana at 279 Monteith Avenue in Stratford. There have been similar trading posts set up in other municipalities for medical marijuana sold by Indigenous peoples on unceded territories without proper business licensing. London, Ottawa, Toronto and Stratford are four that he is aware of that are operating. All have received a similar letter from Chief Del Riley who is in support of the Treaty Rights that allow this to take place.

Stratford Police are aware of this issue and have been working with By-law officers to research the presence of the trading post located in the City of Stratford. Police have also consulted with the Crown to gain a legal perspective and are awaiting a response.

Stratford Police have record of two complaints received so far for the trading post. They are being received from residents in the area who are concerned with increased traffic volume in the area, safety of children in and around the residential area, underaged people being allowed access to the trading post and they are concerned with people smoking in their vehicles outside the trading post. Some of the reported activity is illegal and require police attention. They are continuing to monitor the situation and document activity while they await direction from their legal support.

14. Consent Items

14.1 **Motion by** Dave Gaffney | Martin Ritsma

THAT on the recommendation of the Chief, Susan G. Pasquale (City Cab), Tanesha Mary-Anne Audet (Aunt Gail's Taxi) be approved for a taxi license. Carried.

15. New Business

15.1 2020-2022 Statistical Report – Chief Skinner

Chief Skinner provided Board members with a draft copy of the 2020-2022 Statistical report and would receive input from members on any changes. There have been a number of items put in place to modernize the service and address the community's needs.

The final document will be uploaded to the website by next month.

Steve Cousins suggested that the Board should consider as part of a strategic plan a "community experience survey" and an "employee engagement survey" to gain important feedback. Tim Doherty is aware of other municipalities that have engaged in similar planning and supports the value in doing a study such as this. Tim Doherty, Steve Cousins and Harjinder Nijjar will do some investigating over the summer and report back to the Board in the fall. Martin Ritsma suggested possibly utilizing Engage Stratford, the City's engagement platform.

MOTION by Martin Ritsma | Harjinder Nijjar

THAT the Stratford Police Services Board directs Tim Doherty (Chair), Steve Cousins (Vice-Chair) and Harjinder Nijjar to investigate various options for surveys and provide a recommendation based on their findings to the Board in the fall. Carried.

15.2 Suspension of the Covid Vaccination Policy – Chief Skinner

Chief Skinner reported that the City of Stratford's Covid vaccination policy was suspended as of May 1, 2023. The Stratford Police Service, in keeping in line with the City's policies and practices regarding Covid vaccinations that have been in place, is requesting from the Board that the SPS stay in step with the City's policy and also suspend their Covid 19 vaccination policy as well. By suspending, this does not eliminate the policy, it puts it on hiatus.

MOTION by Dave Gaffney | Steve Cousins

THAT the Stratford Police Services Board recommends the suspension of the Stratford Police Service Covid 19 Vaccination Policy. Carried.

16. Adjournment to In-Camera

Motion by Martin Ritsma | Dave Gaffney

THAT the meeting adjourn to an In Camera session to discuss personal matters about identifiable individuals, to reconvene in open session if required. Carried.

The meeting adjourned at 5:14 p.m.

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Tim Doherty - Chair