

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 23 March 2022

Message from Board Chair Eli El-Chantiry

(Ottawa) – This is an important time for policing in Ottawa and I want to ensure the community can have confidence in the path the Ottawa Police Services Board and the Ottawa Police Service (OPS) are taking moving forward.

I am honoured to, once again, serve as Chair of the Board. I am focused on fulfilling the oversight role of Board and providing forward thinking and stable governance for the Ottawa Police.

Policing serves a critical function in our society and oversight from the Board is vital to the proper and effective delivery of those services.

Working Cooperatively

I promise to always listen to the community and to work cooperatively with my fellow Board colleagues and our community partners to ensure Ottawa has the police services it wants and needs.

I want to thank previous members of the Board for their dedication and service. Any job can look easy if you are not the one doing it. They served in one of the most difficult times in policing history in Ottawa. I know their focus was always squarely set on public safety and it is important we recognize and value their service.

Challenging Times

These are challenging times for every public institution, perhaps none more so than policing. I ask for your support and patience as we move forward.

As Chair, my focus will be on:

- Building public trust and confidence and specifically reaching out to our Indigenous, racialized and marginalized communities. Our police service must respond to their needs and fully address the calls for change;
- Working with and supporting the police executive in rebuilding the morale of the OPS membership;
- Promoting equity, diversity and inclusion within the OPS, especially in areas such as outreach and recruitment;
- Ensuring strong fiscal oversight of the OPS;

- Ensuring the delivery of new alternative services (call referral) to respond to mental health crises;
- Supporting and participating in any and all efforts focused on advancing community healing following the recent illegal protest, in collaboration with the Ottawa Police Service, the City, and community partners;
- Seeking broad-based and inclusive input in defining what Ottawa's communities are looking for in the next Chief of Police and the strategic priorities of the Service;
- Stabilizing the OPS executive by starting the recruitment process and selection of a new Police Chief and Deputy Chief; and,
- Continuing the work with our City and community partners to advance the implementation of the Community Safety and Well Being Plan.

I look forward to working with and supporting the OPS Board and Ottawa Police Command over the coming months to successfully realize these priorities, as well as continuing to support the Ottawa Police members who keep the public safe.

Upcoming Meeting

In April of 2020, the Board moved its meetings to Zoom sessions until the lifting of the Provincial Emergency Orders. With the lifting of those orders, we will be returning to in-person meetings starting Monday, March 28, 2022.

The Board will resume its sessions in Andrew S. Haydon Hall (Council Chambers). To ensure ongoing public access, the meetings will continue to be streamed live on City Council's YouTube channel. The public viewing gallery will not be opened.

To assist in limiting the number of attendees present in Council Chambers, only Board members and staff, select Ottawa Police Service members, media who register their attendance in advance, public delegations, and any clerk and technical staff required to support the meeting, will participate in-person. Public delegations who do not wish to appear in-person will be invited to submit their comments in writing, for distribution to the Board.

We recognize the removal of provincial public health restrictions does not equate with COVID-19 risk having disappeared, but rather transfers responsibility for risk assessment to organizations and individuals. We therefore encourage those participating in person to get their third dose booster if they haven't already, as well as practice preventive measures such as screening for symptoms in advance of attending

the meeting, and masking and physical distancing as well as practicing proper hand hygiene while present in Council Chambers.

As with any change to process and technology, there may be some bumps in the road, so we appreciate your patience and feedback as we transition to this enhanced, in person model.

Thank you

You have my commitment that we will develop a Board that supports our communities, listens to what you have to say, and represents you as a city. I look forward to meeting with you and discussing your ideas.

The Ottawa Police Services Board is the civilian body responsible for governing the Ottawa Police Service. It is responsible for the provision of adequate and effective police services to the City of Ottawa's residents.

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