

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 21 November 2020

### **STATEMENT FROM BOARD CHAIR DEANS REGARDING DOWNTOWN PROTESTS**

(Ottawa) – The Ottawa Police Services Board is aware of the protest which commenced on Thursday afternoon to address systemic racism surrounding policing, education, health, and housing. The demonstration which was located at the intersection of Laurier Avenue and Nicholas Street has since been removed by the Ottawa Police Service, following failed attempts to relocate the demonstrators to a safer location.

Board Chair Deans, and Board Members Councillor King and Member Nirman agreed to meet with members of the Justice for Abdirahman Coalition for the purposes of a constructive dialogue today at noon.

“I, along with my Board colleagues, agreed to meet with members of the Justice for Abdirahman Coalition understanding that dialogue is essential in resolving differences and finding a pathway forward. Regrettably, following the apprehension of demonstrators early this morning by the Ottawa Police Service, the community members have since declined to meet. We remain at City Hall willing and open to talk. While we understand the concern with the decision to remove the demonstrators, the Board cannot interfere in the operational decisions of the Service and was therefore not involved in this action. The police make operational decisions based on risk assessments and ensuring the safety of the public,” stated Board Chair Deans.

*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 City of Ottawa’s residents.*

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