



A Newsletter from the Ottawa Police Services Board

The Ottawa Police Services Board:

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WHAT IS THE POLICE SERVICES BOARD, AND WHAT DOES IT DO?

There is a lot of confusion around what a police services board actually does, and to whom it reports.

In Ontario, every municipality with a municipal police service must have a civilian police services board to govern the police service. Police services boards are independent bodies set up by provincial legislation called the **Police Services Act**; the Act (section 31) also sets out the responsibilities boards must fulfill on behalf of the residents of their municipality. The boards are accountable to the community, the Ministry of Community Safety & Correctional Services, and the Ontario Civilian Commission on Police Services located in Toronto.

In Ottawa, there is a seven-member board comprised of three members of City Council, three citizens appointed by the Province as community representatives, and one citizen appointed by City Council as a community representative.

The primary role of the board is to establish, after consultation with the Chief of Police, the overall objectives and priorities for the provision of police services and the safety and security of citizens.

Welcome From The Board Chair

On behalf of the Ottawa Police Services Board, I would like to welcome you to the Board's first newsletter. The newsletter, which we aim to publish on a quarterly basis, is one component of a new community engagement strategy adopted by the Board in February 2008 to reach out to our many community stakeholders in the City, and to improve understanding about the Board and its work. We are excited about recent plans approved by the Board to enhance communications with the residents of Ottawa and to build better relationships with our partners in crime prevention and public safety. We hope you enjoy reading about our work and invite you to stay tuned as we roll out more of the new community outreach initiatives we have planned this year.

Henry Jensen, Chair

It is also responsible for:

- Approving annual operating and capital budgets for the Police Service;
- Establishing policies and by-laws for the effective management of the police service;
- Recruiting and appointing the Chief of Police and Deputy Chiefs of Police and annually assessing their performance;
- Establishing guidelines for the administration of the public complaints system and receiving quarterly reports on complaints;
- Negotiating collective agreements with the unions representing Police Service employees;
- Preparing a business plan for the Police Service every three years.

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Another important point to understand is how the role of the police board differs from that of the Chief of Police. Distinguishing an “operational” matter that falls outside the Board's jurisdiction from general management and policy matters that fall within the Board's jurisdiction lies at the heart of the relationship between the Board and the Service. The Chief of Police is responsible for administering the Police Service and overseeing its operation in accordance with the objectives, priorities and policies established by the Board. The **Police Services Act** prevents direct Board interference in the actual policing function, but does not prevent the Board from making decisions governing the structure and environment in which those policing functions occur.

The Board cannot direct the Chief with respect to specific operational decisions or with respect to day-to-day operations of the Service. It has the authority to give orders and direction to the Chief, but not to other members of the Service. The Chief reports to the Board as a whole and is not accountable to any one or group of Board members.

THE BOARD'S “PUBLIC INTEREST” AGENDA

As already mentioned, the Board has launched a Community Engagement Strategy to improve its relations with the public and build partnerships with community stakeholders.

The cornerstone of the Board's new Community Engagement initiative is the introduction of a Public Interest Agenda. The Public Interest Agenda is part of a unique model of governance created by the York Regional Police Services Board designed to make the Board more relevant to the public it serves by addressing the issues that matter most to the community. It also aims to maximize community engagement and dialogue: ***the Ottawa Police Services Board wants to know what you think about serious issues affecting public safety and the quality of life in our neighbourhoods, and to offer ideas on what citizens and community groups can do to improve their own safety and security.***

What the Public Interest Agenda means is that in addition to the Board's regular business meetings on the fourth Monday of each month at City Hall (which are open to the public), we will also be hosting a series of public interest meetings focused on topics of broad community concern and interest.

The first meeting on “Drugs in Our Community” is being held on Monday, April 21, 2008 at City Hall from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. We invite you to join the Board and members of the Ottawa Police Service in a dialogue about the impact of street drugs and marijuana grow ops in our neighbourhoods, and to learn how you can be part of the solution. The complete schedule of Public Interest Meetings for 2008, all from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., is:

TOPIC	DATE	LOCATION
Drugs	April 21	City Hall
Youth Issues	June 12	Ben Franklin Place
Emergency Preparedness	September 8	City Hall
Building Safe Communities	October 20	Orleans Theatre

We are excited about the potential for improving communication and understanding through these new meetings, and hope you will be able to join us for some of them.

For more information about the Board, its meetings and policies, please visit the Police Services Board section of the Ottawa Police website, at ottawapolice.ca.

INTERESTING FACT

At its meeting in February, the Board publicly reported on its 2007 activity, training and performance. In 2007 members of the Ottawa Police Services Board attended 54 Board and sub-committee meetings and 74 other events related to their duties as Board members. The total number of hours spent at Board-related activities: 280. That's the equivalent of 40 seven-hour workdays!