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Ottawa Police Service

Lately, there have been a number of issues that have both questioned the judgement of the Police Chief and some members of City Council have taken a hard line on members of the OPS who have raised concerns publicly about issues affecting the morale of the force. Let me first state that in many situations, when most of us run away from danger, our women and men who work in emergency services are normally the first to run in. Their jobs are stressful and at times thankless but when they show up to assist us in our time of need, we understand how much we appreciate their dedication and service to our community. I have never questioned this and I know River Ward residents support our first responders.

The Ottawa Police Services Board is a seven-member civilian body that oversees the Ottawa Police Service. The Board is responsible for setting the overall objectives and priorities for the provision of police services. It is also responsible for hiring and monitoring the performance of the Chief, approving the annual police budget, and preparing a business plan for the Police Service every three years. Three City Councillors sit on the Board: Chair Eli El-Chantiry, Councillor Jan Harder and Councillor Tim Tierney. Performance issues regarding the Chief, go through this Board, not City Council. When residents of River Ward bring issues to my attention that involve the Police, I normally share them with Chair El-Chantiry and we develop a response. In 2015, when the lack of police attention and enforcement to speeding issues was paramount in the ward, I made a presentation to the Police Services Board, underlining the need in our community.

Members of the Ottawa Police Services, from constable to Chief, have an internal framework that exists to report issues/concerns, including the ability to file grievances through their union. Issues that impact morale are serious and need to be addressed immediately. I do not share the sentiment that OPS members should just keep their mouth closed or resign if they think morale is low, quite the contrary. I believe it is the responsibility of both the Police Chief and Police Services Board to study recent survey results and determine the root causes that impact morale and address them.

Policing is not an easy profession and the industry itself continues to evolve. The residents of Ottawa support their first responders, but first responders need to know that when they have issues in their place of work, they will be addressed.

Slow Down for Us-Lawn Signs

Residents who live in school zones or on streets with a fair number of children are encouraged to contact my office to have a Slow Down for Us lawn sign erected on your front grass. With school about to reconvene, the signs are part of a city-wide campaign to remind all motorists to slow down and keep a watchful eye on our youngest residents. The speed of traffic on our local, residential streets continues to be a main concern for me. Please respect posted speed limits and help keep our community safe.