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January 9, 2026

**Sent by email**

Councillor Riel,

On December 1, 2025, during a General Committee meeting, you addressed Council with a number of comments presented as fact and at one point stated, “correct me if I’m wrong”. This correspondence has been drafted in response to your comments and that invitation.

As Chief of Police for the Peterborough Police Service, I appreciate City Council’s investment in the police service with significant budget increases in 2024, 2025 and now, 2026. As I have said after almost a decade of the budget being held at an average of 3%, we are in an unenviable position of having to close the gap between what is required and what was not maintained in regard to policing, through past budgets. We know this will not happen in one or two or even three budget cycles and I have been clear in that message.

The budget submissions and investments are important to ensure the safety of the community.

As Chief of Police, I have serious concerns with the comments you made when you presented your motion during the General Committee meeting on December 1, 2025. I will not speak at length to your comment in which you said “... they [Police Services Board] held a 20-minute virtual meeting and basically gave City Council, and tax payers of the City of Peterborough a proverbial middle finger...” as that is a matter for the Police Service Board to pursue, if they choose to do so, but I will offer comment, that your language and contemptuous characterization of their decision is dishonourable, misinformed and does a discredit to the time, effort and work that was undertaken over a six month period of time creating a budget. From a City Councillor who has declared his desire to be Mayor and intention to seek that position in the 2026 Municipal election, this tone and obvious contempt is concerning.

The information below is a detailed correction to the misinformation you provided in the December 1<sup>st</sup> public session of Council, many of which comments you repeated on December 8, 2026. I am sure you would agree that it is crucial that the information presented by Councillors is factually accurate, and where a Councillor presents information that is not factually accurate, they ought to make an equally public correction.

In your statement:

**You said the current (2026) budget request by the police service was 9.92%. This is not true.**

The correct budget request was **9.22%**

**You said the original budget request was 9.98%. This is not true.**

The correct number was **9.8%** - which was also below the 10% that was ear-marked in the draft budget book and originally presented, by me, to Council in June 2025.

**You stated that the police budget is the largest driver of the city budget. And went on to say that a single department [police budget] is driving the entire tax increase in the city of Peterborough. This is not true.**

Your statement about the police budget driving the entire tax increase is more than hyperbolic rhetoric, it is reckless and so far removed from the truth, that one can only conclude that you have a anti-police bias that is evidently contrary to your performative announcement that you support public safety and the police. The truth is that the amount of the 2026 budget, that all external agencies (which includes the police) represents, amounts to 1.76% of the 6.56% increase, with the City's operating budget increase representing 2.11% and infrastructure and capital representing 2.16%, both of which exceed the police budget impact.

**You said it was stated in the *Community Safety and Policing Act (CSPA)* that police services have until 2027 to comply. This is not true.**

I am not sure where you got this information that you said is stated in the *Act*, perhaps you might provide a section number for that as I am unable to find that.

What I have stated to Council is that the OACP (Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police) has estimated they expect the earliest any police service will be able to meet full compliance with the new *Act* is 2027.

If you are able to provide me with the section of the *Act* you are referring to, that would be helpful as even if your assertion that 2027, is the date of compliance, that date takes effect at the end of the 2026 budget year – the same budget year that we brought our budget before Council, with the intention of working toward compliance. This is three years after the coming into force of the *Act* and not the two years you have stated.

Further, you will recall that I have been very vocal about the fact that this *Act* was coming into force on April 1, 2024, and when I have done so, in a January 2023 session of Council, you challenged me on that comment stating, at the time, that it wasn't guaranteed to happen, and you used that argument to push back against the budget request at that time. The fact is, it is here and we must comply.

**You suggest the list of 10 hires was a “want” list not a “need” list. This is your opinion and is not factually supported.**

For clarification, what was included in the budget submission was the equivalent of 10 full-time positions. The budget request included staffing for two sworn positions (which were deferred in the 2025 budget submission, as part of Council's request to reduce that budget by 1%) and six full-time civilians and four part-time positions.

The need for civilian positions is to address the administrative workload that is being generated by the sworn officers significant increase in arrests, and charges, in addition to an increase in calls for service, not to mention the demands by the public, and requirements for more timely disclosure for court cases as mandated by the Ontario Court of Justice, Chief Justice. In fact, you will recall that during the 2026 budget process (Nov. 17<sup>th</sup>) you forwarded me an e-mail from a citizen asking why

the wait for a background check was going to take 21 days. I explained then and do so again, workload that exceeds staffing levels is the reason why.

**You indicated that we have asked for one new police constable and that we have just hired five.**

This statement is misleading at best. Yes, we have hired police officers in 2025, and that was to fill the two positions included in the 2025 budget and to backfill others as a result of retirements and resignations. Surely you are not suggesting that backfilling vacancies is the equivalent of net new officers?

For further clarity – the rank of Detective Constable is a constable serving in a detective function. It is not a promotion as you stated. The rank of Detective is equivalent to Sergeant and is a promotion. You will find the rank structure of police services in Ontario in O. Reg. 399/23, but if you would like further clarity on rank structure, please feel free to ask me.

**You stated that City staff could assist in certain roles (Finance, IT, Police recruiter) related to the request for positions.**

This is not realistic given the specific technical knowledge and requirements for these positions in a policing environment. Furthermore, your statement is predicated on your assumption that the City has sufficient capacity to take on such workload: I am quite confident they do not.

City staff are competent professionals, who are subject matter experts in a municipal environment; however, none have the specific knowledge required to properly manage a police service of our size. This was confirmed by the recent response by Carrie Rucska, Director of Information Technology for the City, when you asked her during the November 18<sup>th</sup> budget meeting if PTS could provide the I.T. services required by the Police Service, presumably as a means of fact checking me and my assertion as Chief of Police, that the policing needs were not being met.

**Further, on the matter of a City I.T. staff member being “seconded” to the Police Service for 5 or 6 years and that you don’t believe that they don’t know what they are doing for the police. This is not true.**

I am the person you should ask that question of, but you did not ask. Fortunately, you have now fact checked my previous assertions on this matter, with Carrie Ruscka, and she confirmed what I had previously told you in Council.

Your statement about a seconded member is partially correct but inaccurately positioned. For decades, the Peterborough Police Service transferred approx. \$320,000 to the City for I.T. support. That included having an I.T. resource working from the police station. One person is insufficient to meet the needs of the police service, and the extremely specific software and hardware we utilize. Furthermore, that resource had not worked in the police station since April of 2025 as PTS worked on their migration to becoming a city department.

You are not and have not been a member of the Police Service Board, therefore, you cannot possibly possess the current knowledge of a subject matter expert in what a modern police service requires.

**You singled out an employee of the Police Service, stating that you sit on a Board with the Manager of Finance for the Police Board and while you went on to say that she is a lovely women and hard-working, but we have a Finance Department that can ask and help out here.**

You flippantly make this statement in total ignorance of what is required to manage the finances of a police service, and clearly without regard for whether the city finance department even has capacity. While I do not believe you intended it, you denigrated the work and efforts of this person, who single-handedly has been managing the finances for a multi-million-dollar public institution for several years by suggesting the City finance department could do so this work, without any insight or subject matter expertise.

**You questioned the need for a recruiter position, stating that the City staff could perform this function.**

For your awareness, there is one full-time civilian recruiter for the Police Service, and we rely on the assistance of a sworn member(s) to assist, on a part-time basis. Each recruitment process can take between 2 and 5 months for a civilian position, depending on the role and candidate success at each level of testing. To hire a police officer is an 8-to-9-month process, much of which is dictated by the requirements of the Ontario Government. The level of workload is not sustainable for a single individual.

Furthermore, in order to recruit for sworn police personnel the person must be a member of a Police Service and have taken the required training courses provided through the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police. City staff do not meet either or any of those criteria. Your comments are again without any grounding in policing, which is Police Boards, consisting of individuals who are provided the required background information, and not City Councillors are tasked with management of police service governance and oversight.

**You said that since 2022 there have been 59 hires, and that Council has done their 'bit' for the 'police force'.**

If the implication is that these were **net new positions**, then **it is not true**.

To date, the number of **net new staff** hired since 2022, is the equivalent of 25FTE. The number you have referenced is closer to the total number of people who have been hired, representative of new employees as well as those hired to backfill vacancies.

Although the number 59 is *close* to being correct, **it is not accurate and is not true**.

**You stated that a reduction of the budget request to 7% would be a savings of \$1.05M. This is not true.**

The correct impact, based on the correct budget request, would be \$837,968. I will remind you that you quoted, as fact, several budget requests that were not true. The budget request that was put before Council and which was sent back to the Board for consideration, was 9.22%.

**Finally, you stated that Council is spending \$91M to a build a new police station. This is not true.**

While I will concede that a Class B and Class A estimates have yet to be completed, as you have seen in several Reports given to Council, by City Staff, is that the current project total, (based on a Class 'C' estimate, as it relates specifically to police, is \$81M and that is for **renovations at two buildings**. The additional \$10 million represents the portion of the facility on Lansdowne Street ear-marked for future City use/designation.

To conclude, virtually all of your comments about the police and police budget were inaccurate at best, and outright untrue at worst. These disingenuous comments were delivered in a public forum where it would be reasonable to expect that they would be taken as factual by the public.

I recognize and appreciate the Council has an arduous task. I also recognize that Council and Councillors have a fiduciary responsibility to the taxpayers, made even more challenging in tough economic times. But I also recognize that Council (and the Municipality) that maintains a municipal board shall provide the board with sufficient funding to comply with the *CSPA*, including ensuring the Police Service Board can provide Adequate and Effective Policing, including the prescribed equipment and training. Further, the Municipality has a statutory requirement to provide funding for adequate Court Security (a cost outside of Adequate and Effective Policing).

This is a marked difference from some of the other Boards you referenced, where funding streams originate from more than just the City, which helps to reduce the direct ask on City Council. This is not an “apples to apples” analogy, as you tried to frame it.

This Police Service has worked hard to enhance and improve service delivery since my appointment in 2023. This is, in part, thanks to support from Council, through the budgeting process, but make no mistake, this service delivery is for the community of Peterborough, and for the citizens of Peterborough, and when you use inflammatory rhetoric such as “this Council has done our bit for the police force... we have done our duty for the police” you are implying that the provision of Adequate and Effective Policing has been met, and yet, many times throughout the year, you and others on Council, reach out with concerns that not enough is being done, which is contrary to your implied statement.

I welcome open dialogue, debate and criticism, but please do so on a foundation of facts.

I hope that you will correct the information that you confidently, yet inaccurately, provided to Council and those present for the meetings and that you will do so in an equally public forum.

Respectfully,



**Stuart Betts M.O.M, LL.M, MBA, CRM, CCMP, CMMIII Police Executive**

Chief of Police

Peterborough Police Service

Cc:

Mayor Leal	Councillor Baldwin
Councillor Lachica	Councillor Bierk
Councillor Crowley	Councillor Vassiliadis
Councillor Haacke	Councillor Beamer
Councillor Parnell	Councillor Duguay
CAO Raina	City Clerk John Kennedy
Police Service Board Chair Mary ten Doeschate	