

**PRESENTATION TO KINGSTON POLICE SERVICES BOARD  
BY CHIEF ANTJE MCNEELY  
MEETING 20-8, JUNE 18, 2020**

I would like to take the time to update the Board on what has transpired over the past few months over and above the COVID-19 pandemic, as it relates to the killing of George Floyd.

The killing of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, by Minneapolis police and the resulting vigils and demonstrations by communities globally, including our own, prompted a letter addressed to our Kingston community and signed by our leadership team and the Association president on June 2, 2020.

Members of our CORE Unit had reached out to the local organizers in advance, and we maintained a neutral low-profile presence with respect to demonstrations here, which have been respectful and peaceful, and we recognize the importance and significance of bringing these issues to the forefront so that we as a community including the police can listen to and learn from lived experiences and be part of a culture of change.

On the 5th of June, our community, facilitated by the Kingston Immigration Partnership, led a virtual town hall discussion about race and racism called “Kingston: Let’s Talk.” The town hall had a number of guest panelists, including our mayor, responding to questions from the community on this topic.

That same day, we became aware of an opinion posted by one of our officers on his Facebook page regarding the killing of George Floyd and others, which was subsequently screen captured and posted on Twitter. We immediately took action, and the matter is currently being investigated as an internal complaint.

As part of today’s meeting I would like to provide some local context and to advise the Board and our community about steps that have been taken and will continue to occur within our organization, to ensure that members of the Kingston Police practise enforcement activities that are carried out in a manner that respects the community’s rights and freedoms; that members practise bias-free policing; and that we are committed to doing our part to address systemic racism. Leaders of every organization have to assume that there is systemic racism within their organization because our systems and institutions are often based on ideas that might not be objective and therefore differentially impact our diverse community. I acknowledge that there is still work to be done, and we are committed to being part of this culture change.

As many of you may remember, Chief Closs led our organization through a one-year data collection project starting in October 2003 following a series of events that highlighted the need for action on the part of the Kingston Police to address perceptions of racially biased policing. We embarked on this data collection journey due to circumstances in our community surrounding perceptions; anecdotal stories from members of our community; a lack of understanding about police procedures and the very difficult role police officers experience as they resolve volatile, emotional conflicts; and police response to two high-profile police interactions with members of our Black community. As this project was carried out, specific scenario-based training was also initiated to help underline the necessity of having articulable

cause for exercising police powers and to enhance skills in defusing situations such as when an innocent person has been stopped because of matching a suspect's description and being in the suspect's location.

Prior to that, Chief Closs developed the Bias-Free Policing order, which was rolled out in May 2003 to ensure that law enforcement activities were carried out in a manner that respects the community's rights and freedoms and to reinforce that bias-based policing was not tolerated. This order, which is still in effect, requires all members to adhere to the principles of equality and fairness as embodied in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, and the *Police Services Act*.

The order also directs that any employee of the Kingston Police who observes or receives a complaint of bias-based policing shall take immediate corrective action and notify the appropriate supervisor.

This order is allied to the order on Collection of Identifying Information in Certain Circumstances (CIICC), which was provincially mandated through Ontario Reg. 58/16 and came into effect January 2017. As you are aware, part of this regulation requires us to file an annual report with the Board. Of note, the CIICC validates the 2003 efforts of the Kingston Police to emphasize the importance of articulable cause.

The bias-free policing and CIICC orders are reviewed annually with our members through training scenarios, presentations, or online recertification through the Ontario Police College.

Chief Closs also developed a stand-alone Victim Services and Diversity Coordinator position in 2004, which highlighted the importance of creating harmonious community-police relationships. This position is currently held by Constable Bryan McMillan and has grown to include a recruitment outreach component to attract more young people of diverse backgrounds to a vocation in policing.

Community engagement and mobilization has been part of our business plans since 2012 and is key to our CORE Unit (Community-Oriented Response and Engagement Unit). Police-community interaction in positive settings helps to build trust and encourages members of the public to report criminal and suspicious activity.

In accordance with Ontario's approved Use of Force Continuum, the Kingston Police have incorporated verbal communication tactics for crisis intervention in the mandated annual training for officers for many years. In 2013, annual training was further enhanced in the area of de-escalation. This training is in lecture and video format as well as scenario-based. It stresses the Use of Force Continuum, and video taping of scenarios has been utilized to assist in debriefing officer actions. The purpose is to ensure that members think about and decide the appropriate use of force based on behaviours exhibited by the person in the scenarios. Actors have been used from the Queen's School of Drama, with scenarios based on real-life situations. Of note, a provincial audit was done a few years ago on de-escalation training, and the Kingston Police training ranked within the top four in Ontario.

In addition to de-escalation training, peer-to-peer early intervention has recently been incorporated into use of force training. This refers to when a member observes another member, who may be triggered by an incident, and steps in to redirect the situation on scene.

Recent world events in 2019 reinforced the need for the continuation of a local collaborative and coordinated effort to stand united together as a community and reinforce our commitment to have a welcoming, diverse, and inclusive community. We have held community partner meetings spearheaded by the Kingston Immigration Partnership, and this has begun the discussion in developing short-, medium-, and long-term plans to create a culture of inclusivity and to develop a community strategy for early intervention practices and education. Examples include initiatives such as the “Say Hello” campaign and sharing success stories of a number of individuals within our community who are mentors for others. One of our officers who is a recent immigrant to Canada contributed a video for this campaign.

In 2019 we incorporated Indigenous Cultural Awareness training for all our members. Topics include enhanced understanding and perspectives of the Indigenous community; the impact of residential schools; strengthening relationships between police and our Indigenous community; and implicit bias. Future educational seminars will look at mental health from an Indigenous perspective.

The Ontario *Anti-Racism Act* came into effect in 2017, with the Government of Ontario committed to eliminating systemic racism and advancing racial equity. As of January 1, 2020, the Ministry of the Solicitor General requires police forces to document the race of individuals as perceived by members of police forces in respect of whom a use of force report is required to be prepared and then submitted to the Ministry for research and analysis.

In February 2020 we initiated Implicit Bias and Cultural Competency training for all our members. This training was developed specifically for the Kingston Police and includes defining cultural competence and how this relates to respectful workplaces; legalities involving workplace harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination, and bullying; and key concepts of marginalization, power and privilege, discrimination, and equity, as well as implicit bias in policing.

In July 2016 the OIPRD began a systemic review of strip searches conducted by police services of individuals arrested and detained. In March 2020, in response to the OIPRD report *Breaking the Golden Rule: A Review of Police Strip Searches in Ontario*, the Kingston Police Search of Persons general order was revised to incorporate new policy and procedures in relation to strip searches. There was also related training conducted for all our members in the spring of 2020.

In 2019, under the direction of our HR Director, a committee, which includes Association representation, was struck to review our promotional policy with a view to ensuring that the competency-based process is fair, equitable, and transparent.

The Kingston Police Strategic Plan for 2019 to 2022 includes the objective “Safeguard Our Reputation and Invest in Relationships.” Under that umbrella goals have been set in relation to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Through the Diversity Officer, we intend to research and develop a Chief's working group (still working on a name). Although we routinely have community consultations as part of the business planning cycle, this would be a collaborative approach for informed decision making, e.g., a call for dialogue with members of the Kingston Police and one or more community groups regarding a particular issue or how to inform decision making. This doesn't have to be a defined community group; there can be different partners at the table, depending on the situation. What is most important is that the conversations are real, there is straight talk, and people are sincerely heard. By having real engagement and working on issues together, the Kingston Police can avoid prejudging or prescribing in isolation solutions that may ignore lived experience. It will also support our efforts to be adaptive and responsive to concerns on an ongoing basis.

Whatever we do, I want it to be thoughtful, meaningful, and collaborative in nature and an ongoing process of listening, learning, and understanding.

We must listen to and learn from lived experiences; address our own biases and privilege through meaningful and honest dialogue as part of a commitment to continual learning within our organization; and ensure that we have a workplace that embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion. Setting in motion a more consistent method for community dialogue will help us to achieve these goals through concrete action.