



## Kingston Police Service Board

### Public Agenda Information Report

To: Chair and Members of the Kingston Police Service Board

From: Lorie Sargeant, Board Administrator

Subject: Police Governance Ontario (PGO) 2026 Spring Conference

Date: June 17, 2026

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#### Strategic Priority Alignment:

Administrative/Procedural

#### Recommendation:

**That** the Kingston Police Service Board receive this Report (Report Number 26-52) for information.

#### Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with a summary of the 2026 Police Governance Ontario Spring Conference, held in Niagara Falls, Ontario, from June 1 to 3, 2026, which was attended by the Board Administrator on behalf of the Kingston Police Service Board.

#### Conference Overview:

The conference theme, Moving from Compliance to Governance, focused on the continuing evolution of police governance from compliance-based oversight toward intentional, informed, and effective governance practices.

Throughout the conference, presenters explored the changing role of police service boards in shaping community safety outcomes, strengthening governance relationships, and supporting strategic decision-making. While each session addressed a distinct topic, several common themes emerged across the conference.

#### Key Themes

Report Number 26-52

## **Effective Governance Requires Structured Planning and Accountability**

Presenters emphasized the importance of strategic planning, performance measurement, and accountability frameworks in supporting effective governance. Boards play a critical role in establishing priorities, monitoring progress, and ensuring that policing services remain aligned with community needs and legislative responsibilities.

## **Strong Governance Depends on Clear Roles, Responsibilities, and Relationships**

Multiple sessions highlighted the importance of maintaining a clear distinction between governance and operational responsibilities. Effective governance relies on productive relationships among boards, chiefs of police, municipal partners, community stakeholders, and other oversight bodies, while respecting the legislated roles of each participant.

## **Community Safety is a Shared Responsibility**

Conference discussions reinforced that community safety outcomes extend beyond policing alone and require collaboration among municipalities, community agencies, health and social service providers, and residents. Police service boards have an important role in fostering partnerships and supporting community safety and well-being initiatives.

## **Meaningful Information Supports Effective Decision-Making**

Several presenters emphasized the need for boards to receive relevant, reliable, and meaningful information to support informed decision-making. Data, performance reporting, community feedback, and evidence-based practices were identified as essential tools for effective governance oversight.

## **Governance Capacity Must Be Continuously Developed**

The conference highlighted the importance of ongoing education, training, and professional development for police service board members. Effective governance requires a commitment to continuous learning and an understanding of emerging issues affecting policing, community safety, and public sector governance.

## **Conference Sessions**

The conference included presentations and discussions on strategic planning, budgeting and financial oversight, performance evaluation, accountability frameworks,

community safety data, governance relationships, board effectiveness, and emerging governance practices. While each session examined a different aspect of police governance, the presentations were intentionally structured to demonstrate the interconnected nature of governance responsibilities and the importance of adopting a comprehensive governance approach.

### **Relevance to the Kingston Police Service Board**

The conference reinforced a number of governance practices already underway at the Kingston Police Service Board, including strategic planning, policy oversight, performance monitoring (Chief/Deputy Chief), governance education, and relationship-building with community and policing partners.

The sessions also provided valuable insights into emerging governance trends and best practices that may assist the Board in continuing to strengthen its governance capacity and support informed decision-making.

### **Conclusion**

The 2026 Police Governance Ontario Spring Conference reinforced the ongoing shift from compliance-focused governance toward a more strategic, informed, and outcomes-based governance model. Collectively, the presentations emphasized the importance of accountability, effective relationships, evidence-informed decision-making, community engagement, and continuous governance development in supporting adequate and effective policing and community safety.

A detailed conference summary, including session overviews and key takeaways provided by the conference organizers, is attached for the Board's information.

### **Financial Considerations:**

The costs associated with attendance at the 2026 Police Governance Conference, including registration, accommodations, and travel expenses, were budgeted for and funded through the Board's approved 2026 operating budget.

### **Contacts:**

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### **Exhibits Attached:**

Exhibit "A" 2026 Spring Conference Session Summaries



**2026 SPRING CONFERENCE**

**Session Summaries**

**Moving from Compliance to Governance**

Niagara Falls, Ontario

June 1-3, 2026

## About This Resource

### Conference Session Summaries

This document provides a summary of educational sessions delivered during the 2026 Police Governance Ontario Spring Conference.

The summaries are intended to help attendees reflect on key concepts and discussions, while also providing board members and administrators who were unable to attend with an overview of the information shared during the conference.

Where available, presentation materials and supporting resources can be downloaded separately from the Members Portal.

Throughout the conference, presenters explored a common theme: the ongoing evolution of police governance from compliance-focused activities toward intentional, informed, and effective governance. While each session addressed a different aspect of governance, several common messages emerged:

- Effective governance requires structure, planning, and accountability.
- Strong governance depends on clear roles, responsibilities, and relationships.
- Community safety is a shared responsibility requiring engagement and collaboration.
- Boards require meaningful information to support informed decision-making.
- Governance capacity must be intentionally developed and continuously strengthened.

While each session addressed a distinct governance topic, the conference was intentionally designed to encourage participants to think about governance as an interconnected practice. Topics such as strategic planning, budgeting, performance evaluation, accountability, community safety, data, board leadership, and governance relationships were explored not as isolated responsibilities, but as complementary elements of effective governance. Together, these discussions reinforced the conference theme of moving from compliance to governance and challenged participants to think differently about the role boards play in shaping community safety outcomes.

The following summaries are presented in the order they appeared during the conference program.

Monday, June 1

OPP Boards – Getting Organized for Governance

Presenter:

Lisa Darling, Executive Director, Police Governance Ontario

Session Summary

One of the most common challenges facing newly established OPP Detachment Boards is the assumption that once members have been appointed and meetings have begun, the board is ready to govern. This session challenged that assumption and explored the difference between being legally formed and being operationally prepared to carry out governance responsibilities.

Participants examined the foundational elements required for effective governance, including terms of reference, meeting structures, roles and responsibilities, policies, budgeting processes, public transparency requirements, communication practices, and working relationships with key partners. The discussion emphasized that these elements are not administrative details or optional considerations. Rather, they form the operating system that allows a board to function effectively and carry out its responsibilities with confidence and consistency.

A significant portion of the session focused on helping boards understand that governance is not a series of disconnected meetings or tasks. Effective boards operate within a governance cycle that includes planning, engagement, reporting, budgeting, risk management, evaluation, and transition activities throughout the year. Understanding this rhythm allows boards to be proactive rather than reactive and helps ensure that important responsibilities are addressed at the appropriate time.

Participants also explored common challenges experienced by many newly established boards, including unclear meeting structures, over-reliance on municipal administration, delegation of governance responsibilities to policing partners, lack of documentation, and difficulties maintaining continuity during board transitions. These discussions encouraged participants to reflect honestly on their own board's level of readiness and identify practical opportunities for improvement.

The session reinforced that organization is not an end in itself. While establishing governance structures, policies, processes, and documentation may feel administrative in nature, these foundational elements create the conditions necessary for meaningful governance. Boards that

invest time in building strong foundations are better positioned to set direction, oversee performance, engage with their communities, and contribute to local community safety priorities.

#### Key Takeaways

- Being formed and being prepared to govern are not the same thing.
- Effective governance depends on having clear structures, processes, roles, and expectations in place.
- Terms of reference, governance policies, budgeting processes, transparency requirements, and communication practices form the foundation of board operations.
- Governance is cyclical and requires planning, engagement, budgeting, evaluation, and reporting throughout the year.
- Boards that do not establish a clear governance framework often find themselves reacting to issues rather than providing strategic direction.
- Building a strong governance foundation today creates the capacity for more effective governance tomorrow.

#### Related Presentation

OPP What You Need to Know to Get Started

#### **OPP Boards – Rules, Transparency & Accountability**

##### **Presenter:**

Anitra Basant Sisavang, Trainer, Police Governance Ontario

##### **Session Summary**

Effective police governance depends on public trust, and public trust depends on transparency, accountability, and clear decision-making. This session explored the legislative requirements that apply to OPP Detachment Boards while challenging participants to think beyond compliance and consider how governance becomes visible to the communities they serve.

Participants reviewed key transparency requirements under the Community Safety and Policing Act (CSPA), including public meeting requirements, publication obligations, board websites, governance documentation, annual reporting, and the appropriate use of closed meetings. Throughout the discussion, participants were encouraged to view these requirements not as administrative tasks, but as important tools that demonstrate accountability and reinforce public confidence in board decision-making.

The session highlighted a common misconception among boards: that posting documents or holding meetings automatically creates transparency. Participants explored the difference between simply meeting requirements and ensuring information is accessible, understandable, and

meaningful to the public. Board websites, agendas, minutes, policies, annual reports, and public communications were examined as practical examples of how governance is communicated and demonstrated in practice.

Participants also examined several governance tools available to boards, including local policies, Detachment Commander performance evaluation, codes of conduct, conflict of interest processes, and governance documentation. These tools were presented as mechanisms that allow boards to establish expectations, monitor performance, support accountability, and maintain public confidence in governance processes.

A significant portion of the session focused on closed meetings and the importance of understanding when confidentiality is appropriate and when matters should remain in public session. Through practical scenarios and discussion, participants explored the balance between protecting legitimate confidential information and maintaining openness wherever possible. The session reinforced that closed meetings are a governance tool to be used thoughtfully and not a default approach to conducting board business.

The session concluded with a discussion about annual reports and public accountability. Participants were encouraged to view annual reports as more than a legislative requirement and instead as an opportunity to tell the story of the board's work, demonstrate progress toward priorities, communicate outcomes, and strengthen relationships with municipalities, community partners, and the public.

### **Key Takeaways**

- Transparency is how governance becomes visible to the public.
- Compliance is essential, but effective governance requires boards to understand the purpose behind legislative requirements.
- Board websites, agendas, minutes, policies, and annual reports are important tools for demonstrating accountability and building public trust.
- Documentation should be clear, consistent, accessible, and understandable to the public.
- Closed meetings should be used thoughtfully and only when circumstances justify confidentiality.
- Governance tools such as local policies, performance evaluation processes, and conflict of interest procedures help boards establish accountability and support effective decision-making.
- Annual reports should communicate outcomes, progress, and community impact rather than simply document activities.

### **Continuing the Learning**

The topics explored during this session form an important foundation for effective police governance. Police Governance Ontario will continue to expand training and resources related to transparency, accountability, governance documentation, annual reporting, public engagement, conflict of interest management, and closed meeting requirements through its training program and future professional development opportunities.

Members are encouraged to watch for upcoming workshops, webinars, templates, guides, and governance resources that build on the concepts introduced during this session.

## **OPP Boards – Understanding Your Role in Community Safety**

### **Presenter:**

Natalie Champagne, Trainer, Police Governance Ontario

### **Session Summary**

One of the most significant shifts introduced through the Community Safety and Policing Act is the expectation that police governance boards play an active role in understanding and contributing to community safety priorities. This session explored what that responsibility means in practice and challenged participants to think beyond traditional reporting relationships and meeting agendas.

Participants examined the board's role within the broader community safety landscape, including Local Action Plans, Community Safety and Well-Being Plans, community partnerships, and municipal priorities. While boards are not responsible for delivering policing services or directing operations, they do have an important responsibility to understand the needs, concerns, and expectations of the communities they serve and to ensure those perspectives are reflected in governance discussions and decision-making.

A key focus of the session was the Local Action Plan and the board's role in its development and review. Participants discussed how Local Action Plans are informed by community needs, data, policing priorities, and local circumstances. The session reinforced that boards should not view these plans as administrative documents or operational products, but as important governance tools that provide insight into local priorities and opportunities for board input. Boards were encouraged to review Local Action Plans thoughtfully, ask questions, provide feedback, and consider whether the identified priorities align with community needs and expectations.

The session also explored the importance of gathering information from multiple sources. Participants were encouraged to think beyond Detachment Commander reports and consider how information from community organizations, municipal partners, Community Safety and Well-Being tables, lived community experience, and local stakeholders can contribute to a more complete understanding of community safety issues. The discussion emphasized that boards relying on a single source of information risk developing an incomplete picture of local needs and priorities.

Throughout the session, participants were encouraged to shift from passive oversight to active governance by asking better questions. Rather than focusing solely on what has happened, boards were challenged to explore emerging trends, identify unmet needs, understand community concerns, and consider how success is measured. The ability to ask thoughtful governance questions was presented as a critical skill for boards seeking to provide meaningful oversight and contribute to community safety outcomes.

The session concluded by reinforcing that effective governance begins with understanding. Boards cannot provide meaningful input into priorities, plans, and performance if they do not have a clear understanding of the communities they represent. Strong governance requires curiosity, engagement, multiple sources of information, and a willingness to actively participate in conversations about community safety and well-being.

### **Key Takeaways**

- Boards play an important governance role in understanding and contributing to community safety priorities.
- Local Action Plans are governance tools that provide opportunities for board review, input, and oversight.
- Effective governance requires information from multiple sources, not solely Detachment Commander reports.
- Community Safety and Well-Being Plans, community partners, municipal leaders, and residents all provide valuable perspectives.
- Boards should focus on asking thoughtful governance questions rather than seeking operational details.
- Understanding community needs and emerging trends helps boards provide more informed input into policing priorities.
- Effective governance depends on understanding the community being served.

### **Continuing the Learning**

Understanding community safety is an ongoing governance responsibility. Police Governance Ontario will continue to develop resources, tools, and learning opportunities related to Local Action Plans, Community Safety and Well-Being planning, community engagement, governance questions, and evidence-informed decision-making.

Members are encouraged to explore how their boards gather information, engage with community partners, and contribute to discussions about local priorities as part of their broader governance responsibilities.

### **PGO Strategic Update: Building Governance Architecture**

#### **Presenters:**

Lisa Darling, Executive Director, PGO

Linda Skoyles, Director of Curriculum & Training, PGO

Jeanine Lassaline-Berglund, Director of Communications & Engagement, PGO

### **Session Summary**

This session provided members with an overview of Police Governance Ontario's ongoing organizational evolution and the strategic direction guiding future services, supports, advocacy efforts, and governance development initiatives.

The presentation began by examining the increasingly complex environment in which police governance boards now operate. Participants reflected on growing public expectations, legislative change, labour relations pressures, technological advancement, disclosure requirements, community safety challenges, and the expanding demands being placed on governance bodies. The discussion emphasized that effective governance requires more than compliance with legislative requirements. It requires informed leadership, strategic thinking, sound oversight, and a commitment to continuous improvement.

A central theme throughout the presentation was the importance of building strong governance foundations. Participants explored how boards create long-term success through strategic planning, appropriate resourcing, governance infrastructure, education, access to expertise, and ongoing leadership development. The session reinforced that governance itself must be intentionally resourced and that effective governance requires investment in both board capacity and organizational capability.

Members were also provided with an overview of the organization's transition from the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards to Police Governance Ontario. The transition was presented as more than a rebrand, reflecting a broader strategic evolution intended to better position the organization to support modern governance realities through expanded training, research, advocacy, partnerships, resources, and member services.

The session highlighted several ways in which PGO is strengthening support for members, including expanded governance resources, practical guidance materials, governance tools, discussion groups, First Nations governance roundtables, training opportunities, website and members portal enhancements, and direct governance support provided to boards and administrators throughout the province. Participants were introduced to the organization's growing focus on continuous engagement, practical governance navigation, peer learning, and accessible governance support.

An overview of current and upcoming training initiatives demonstrated PGO's commitment to building governance capacity across Ontario. New programs will focus on governance fundamentals, community engagement, critical thinking, labour relations, governance conversations, and practical governance skills designed to help boards operate with greater confidence and effectiveness.

The session concluded by examining PGO's advocacy role and future priorities. Participants discussed the need for stronger strategic intelligence, benchmarking, labour relations analysis, sustainability planning, and broader system leadership. The presentation reinforced the importance of collaboration, shared learning, and collective advocacy in addressing increasingly complex public safety and governance challenges. Members were encouraged to view their association not as a subscription service, but as an investment in stronger governance and a resource available to support boards as they navigate evolving responsibilities and expectations.

### **Key Takeaways**

- Effective governance requires more than compliance and must be supported by strong foundations, clear roles, and intentional leadership.
- Governance itself must be resourced through education, expertise, planning, communication, and governance infrastructure.
- The transition to Police Governance Ontario reflects a broader strategic evolution designed to support modern governance realities.
- PGO continues to expand practical governance supports, training opportunities, member engagement initiatives, and governance resources.
- Discussion groups, governance roundtables, peer learning opportunities, and direct support are becoming increasingly important components of governance capacity building.
- Strong governance depends on access to information, strategic intelligence, expertise, and ongoing professional development.
- Collective leadership, collaboration, and advocacy will play an important role in addressing future governance and public safety challenges.

#### **Related Resources**

Presentation materials, governance resources, training information, and member supports referenced during this session are available through the PGO Members Portal.

Tuesday, June 2

#### **From Compliance to Governance: Why the Shift is Challenging in Practice**

##### **Moderator:**

Lisa Darling, Executive Director, Police Governance Ontario

##### **Panelists:**

Cal Corley, CEO, Community Safety Knowledge Alliance

Melanie Fix, Partner, Advisory Services, MNP

Stephanie Johannsen, Chief Governance Officer, London Police Service Board

#### **Session Summary**

This opening plenary session explored one of the central themes of the conference: why the transition from compliance-focused oversight to effective governance remains challenging in practice.

While legislative requirements, governance expectations, and accountability frameworks have become increasingly clear, many boards continue to navigate evolving responsibilities within

governance environments that were not originally designed to support the level of strategic oversight now being expected. The panel acknowledged that boards across Ontario are working diligently to fulfill their responsibilities, but emphasized that compliance alone does not automatically produce effective governance. Governance maturity requires intentional development, practical experience, organizational support, and continuous learning. Cal Corley opened the discussion by examining why governance is often more difficult in practice than it appears on paper. Participants explored the realities of inherited governance cultures, competing expectations, increasing complexity, evolving public accountability demands, and the challenges boards face in moving beyond procedural compliance toward meaningful strategic leadership. The discussion reinforced that many governance challenges are not the result of unwillingness or poor intentions, but rather the reality of governing within increasingly complex systems.

Melanie Fix then explored what effective governance looks like in practice. Drawing on her experience working with boards and commissions, she described governance as a continuous cycle involving strategic direction, information gathering, critical questioning, decision-making, performance monitoring, and ongoing adjustment. Participants discussed common governance challenges, including the tendency to focus heavily on legislative compliance, uncertainty regarding governance and operational boundaries, overreliance on a single source of information, and the impact of limited governance training and high board turnover. The session emphasized that effective governance depends on more than good intentions. It requires structure, clarity, capability, and deliberate effort.

Stephanie Johannsen concluded the panel by examining the increasing need for governance infrastructure and dedicated governance support. Using the London Police Service Board experience as an example, she discussed how governance complexity continues to evolve and why organizations are beginning to invest in governance expertise, continuity, support structures, and capacity-building. The discussion highlighted the growing recognition that governance requires its own resources, systems, and professional support if boards are to effectively meet modern expectations.

Throughout the moderated discussion, panelists explored the gap between governance expectations and governance realities, the supports boards need to succeed, the importance of governance relationships, and the role of organizational culture in governance effectiveness. A recurring theme was that governance is not intuitive and should not be expected to develop automatically. Like any leadership function, it requires education, experience, reflection, support, and a commitment to continuous improvement.

The session concluded by encouraging boards to view governance development as a journey rather than a destination. Boards are not expected to achieve governance excellence overnight. Instead, progress is built through intentional effort, stronger governance infrastructure, ongoing learning, and access to practical supports that help bridge the gap between governance expectations and governance practice.

### **Key Takeaways**

- Compliance and governance are not the same thing.
- Effective governance requires more than meeting legislative requirements.

- Governance maturity develops over time through experience, support, education, and intentional effort.
- Strong governance depends on clear roles, quality information, critical thinking, accountability, and continuous improvement.
- Many boards face common challenges related to governance capacity, role clarity, information quality, and organizational support.
- Governance infrastructure, dedicated support, and professional expertise are becoming increasingly important as governance responsibilities evolve.
- Boards should view governance development as an ongoing journey rather than a fixed destination.

### **Continuing the Learning**

The themes explored during this panel were reflected throughout the conference program. Subsequent sessions examined governance foundations, community safety oversight, budgeting, strategic planning, board relationships, governance accountability, performance evaluation, and governance leadership in greater depth.

Members are encouraged to explore related governance resources, discussion groups, training opportunities, and practical tools available through Police Governance Ontario as they continue building governance capacity within their own organizations.

### **Governing the AI Era: What Police Service Boards Need to Know**

#### **Presenter:**

Stefan Schurman, Director of Sales, Axon Public Safety Canada

#### **Session Summary**

Artificial intelligence is rapidly becoming part of the policing environment, creating both opportunities and new governance responsibilities for police service boards. This session explored the role boards should play in overseeing the responsible adoption and use of AI technologies while remaining within their governance mandate.

Participants were reminded that boards are not expected to become technical experts or direct operational technology decisions. Instead, their responsibility is to ensure that AI-enabled tools are adopted responsibly, with appropriate safeguards, transparency, accountability, privacy protection, and human oversight. The session emphasized that governance should focus not only on whether a technology works, but also whether its use is lawful, explainable, auditable, aligned with policy, and consistent with community expectations.

The presentation explored a range of potential AI applications within policing, including transcription, translation, report drafting, redaction assistance, evidence review, and policy

analysis. Participants were encouraged to consider the governance questions associated with each use case, including who remains accountable for final decisions, how outputs are reviewed, how errors are identified, and what safeguards exist to protect privacy and public trust. A recurring theme throughout the session was that AI should assist decision-making and workflows, but should never replace human judgment or accountability.

The session also highlighted opportunities for boards to use AI as a governance support tool. Potential applications included reviewing lengthy board packages, identifying policy gaps, tracking commitments and follow-up items, supporting strategic planning, and assisting with policy comparisons. These examples reinforced the idea that AI may help boards work more efficiently, but does not replace governance responsibilities, critical thinking, legal advice, or board judgment.

Participants were encouraged to begin preparing for the increasing role of AI in policing by understanding existing and emerging uses of AI within their organizations, reviewing governance and policy frameworks, establishing governance questions for future technology decisions, and ensuring appropriate reporting and oversight mechanisms are in place. The session concluded with a reminder that public trust, transparency, and accountability must remain at the centre of AI adoption and governance discussions.

### **Key Takeaways**

- Boards do not need to become technical experts, but they do need to govern the responsible use of AI.
- AI adoption should be guided by accountability, transparency, privacy protection, and human oversight.
- Governance questions should be considered alongside operational benefits whenever AI-enabled tools are introduced.
- Human review and approval remain essential when AI is used to support decision-making or workflow processes.
- Boards should understand how AI is currently being used within their organizations and what safeguards are in place.
- AI may also support governance activities such as policy review, strategic planning, information analysis, and board preparation.
- Public trust should remain a central consideration in all discussions involving AI adoption and governance.

### **Continuing the Learning**

Artificial intelligence will continue to influence policing, governance, information management, and public sector decision-making. Boards are encouraged to monitor emerging developments, review governance implications, and consider how existing policies, accountability mechanisms, and oversight practices may need to evolve as AI technologies become more widely adopted.

Look for information soon regarding a summit on this topic.

## **Governance Under Pressure: Lessons from Peel**

### **Moderator:**

Robert Serpe, Executive Director, Peel Police Service Board

### **Panelists:**

Al Boughton, Chair, Finance Committee, Peel Police Service Board

Deputy Chief Mark Dapat, Peel Regional Police

Superintendent Dyson Smith, Peel Regional Police

### **Session Summary**

This session provided participants with a practical case study examining how governance, leadership, strategic planning, and long-term decision-making intersect within one of Canada's fastest-growing and most complex policing environments.

Using the Peel Region experience, panelists explored the cumulative impact of rapid population growth, increasing service demands, evolving community expectations, provincial policy decisions, municipal budget pressures, and workforce challenges. Participants were encouraged to consider how governance decisions made today can influence organizational capacity, community safety outcomes, leadership development, and public trust for years to come.

A central theme throughout the discussion was the concept of the "governance gap." While population growth, service demand, and community expectations can increase quickly, staffing, infrastructure, leadership development, and funding decisions often occur incrementally and require careful planning. The panel explored how delays in addressing emerging pressures can create cumulative challenges that become increasingly difficult and costly to resolve over time. Participants were reminded that governance involves anticipating future needs rather than simply responding to current conditions.

The presentation highlighted Peel's governance and organizational reset beginning in 2019. Panelists discussed how a renewed focus on accountability, transparency, community safety, evidence-informed decision-making, and strategic planning helped establish a foundation for organizational transformation. The discussion demonstrated the importance of alignment between board governance, organizational leadership, community expectations, and long-term strategic priorities.

A significant portion of the session focused on workforce planning and leadership development. Participants explored the reality that policing capacity cannot be created overnight and that future organizational leaders require years of experience, mentorship, training, and development. Through Peel's Project 300 initiative, panelists illustrated how recruitment, succession planning, leadership development, training, and organizational culture must be viewed as interconnected governance considerations rather than isolated operational activities. The discussion reinforced that governance decisions related to funding, staffing, and strategic direction directly influence the future leadership capacity of police organizations.

The panel also examined the risks associated with deferred investment and reactive decision-making. Participants were encouraged to think beyond annual budget cycles and consider the long-term implications of governance choices. The session demonstrated how boards can contribute to organizational sustainability by supporting strategic planning, asking forward-looking questions, and ensuring that decisions are informed by future needs rather than solely by present pressures.

The session concluded with a discussion about governance responsibility and stewardship. Panelists emphasized that effective governance requires boards to think beyond immediate issues and recognize their role in shaping the future capacity, culture, leadership, and effectiveness of the organizations they oversee.

### **Key Takeaways**

- Governance decisions often have long-term consequences that extend well beyond current board terms.
- Population growth, service demand, and community expectations can outpace organizational capacity when planning does not keep pace with growth.
- Strategic planning, budgeting, workforce development, and leadership succession are interconnected governance responsibilities.
- Effective governance requires boards to anticipate future needs rather than simply respond to current pressures.
- Leadership development begins years before individuals assume senior leadership positions.
- Sustainable policing requires alignment between governance priorities, organizational strategy, community expectations, and available resources.
- Boards play an important role in ensuring long-term organizational capacity, resilience, and sustainability.

### **Continuing the Learning**

The Peel experience demonstrated the value of long-term thinking, strategic planning, and governance leadership in addressing complex organizational challenges. Boards are encouraged to consider how demographic trends, workforce realities, community expectations, infrastructure needs, and succession planning may influence future governance decisions within their own communities.

While every community faces unique circumstances, the principles of proactive governance, organizational sustainability, and strategic stewardship apply across all policing environments.

## **Budgeting for Governance: Understanding Roles, Responsibilities & Budget Realities**

## **Part 1: Budgeting for Governance – Strengthening Board Oversight & Decision-Making**

Presenter: Caitlin Brown, Partner, MNP Community Safety & Well-Being Practice

## **Part 2: Municipal Police Budget Realities**

Presenters: Roger Ramkissoon, Kirsten Hand, Karen Doobay and members of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police Budget, Finance and Asset Management Committee

### **Session Summary**

This two-part learning experience explored one of the most important responsibilities assigned to police service boards: financial oversight and stewardship. Together, the sessions examined both the governance responsibilities of boards and the practical realities influencing police budgets across Ontario.

Part One focused on the board's role in budgeting. Participants explored the legislative framework established through the Community Safety and Policing Act (CSPA), the board's authority to approve budgets, and its responsibility to ensure sufficient resources are available to support adequate and effective policing, fulfill legislative obligations, and fund the board's own governance activities. The discussion reinforced that budgeting is not simply a financial exercise. It is one of the most significant governance tools available to boards and an important mechanism through which priorities, risks, accountability, and organizational performance are managed.

Participants examined the budget development process, the distinction between board budgets and police service operating budgets, and the importance of establishing clear financial expectations. The session emphasized that effective boards do more than approve budgets. They understand the assumptions behind them, ask thoughtful questions, evaluate risks, monitor performance, and ensure that financial decisions remain aligned with strategic priorities and community needs. Financial oversight was presented as a continuous governance responsibility rather than a once-a-year budget exercise.

A recurring theme throughout the discussion was the importance of avoiding both disengagement and micromanagement. Boards were encouraged to focus on strategic oversight rather than operational decision-making while maintaining sufficient understanding of financial information to provide meaningful accountability and informed governance direction. Participants were reminded that board members do not need to be financial experts, but they do need to be informed and engaged stewards of public resources.

Part Two expanded the conversation by bringing together boards and police leaders to explore the broader realities affecting police budgets throughout Ontario. Presenters from the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police provided insight into the legislative, financial, operational, and political factors influencing budget development and long-term financial planning.

Participants examined the growing pressures associated with Community Safety and Policing Act requirements, collective agreements, population growth, changing crime trends, facilities management, technology investments, grant funding limitations, workforce sustainability, and long-term capital planning. The session highlighted that many budget pressures are structural rather than temporary and require boards and police leaders to think beyond annual budget cycles when making decisions.

The discussion also explored the distinct but interconnected roles of police chiefs, boards, municipalities, and provincial governments within the budget process. Participants reviewed how budgets are developed, approved, monitored, and defended, while recognizing that effective budgeting depends on strong relationships, clear communication, transparency, and trust among all parties involved. The importance of maintaining productive relationships with municipal councils and community stakeholders was identified as a critical component of successful budget development and implementation.

Together, the two sessions reinforced that budgeting is fundamentally about governance. Financial decisions influence service levels, organizational sustainability, facilities, technology, staffing, leadership development, risk management, and community safety outcomes. Boards were encouraged to view budgeting not as a technical process delegated entirely to finance professionals, but as a strategic governance responsibility requiring informed oversight, thoughtful questioning, long-term planning, and collaborative leadership.

### **Key Takeaways**

- Budget approval and financial oversight are core governance responsibilities of police service boards.
- Effective boards understand and can explain the assumptions, priorities, risks, and trade-offs reflected in their budgets.
- Financial oversight is an ongoing governance activity that extends beyond annual budget approval.
- Board budgets and police service budgets serve different purposes and should be considered separately.
- Strong financial governance requires thoughtful questioning, performance monitoring, and alignment with strategic priorities.
- Many police budget pressures are structural and driven by legislation, population growth, labour costs, facilities, technology, and service demand.
- Long-term planning is essential to support organizational sustainability, workforce development, infrastructure needs, and adequate and effective policing.
- Productive relationships between boards, police leaders, municipalities, and community stakeholders contribute to stronger budget outcomes.
- Effective budgeting depends on transparency, communication, trust, and a shared understanding of responsibilities.

### **Continuing the Learning**

Budgeting remains one of the most significant governance responsibilities assigned to police service boards. As policing environments continue to evolve, boards will be required to balance increasing service expectations, legislative obligations, financial pressures, and long-term organizational sustainability.

Members are encouraged to continue developing financial literacy, strengthening budget oversight practices, and exploring governance approaches that support informed decision-making, strategic planning, and effective stewardship of public resources.

## **Understanding the OPP: Structure, Roles & the Board's Place in the System**

### **Presenter:**

Lisa Darling, Executive Director, Police Governance Ontario

### **Session Summary**

For many newly established OPP Detachment Boards, understanding the structure of the Ontario Provincial Police is an important first step toward effective governance. This session provided participants with an overview of the OPP's organizational structure while exploring how boards fit within a policing model that differs significantly from most municipal police services.

Participants examined the scale and complexity of the OPP, including its provincial mandate, integrated policing model, regional structure, specialized services, communications centres, detachments, and support functions. While the size and complexity of the organization can sometimes create the perception of the OPP as a large and distant provincial institution, the session reinforced that community policing remains at the centre of the organization's mission and that local communities remain a critical focus of service delivery.

The discussion explored how OPP Detachment Boards interact with an organization that operates across municipal boundaries, delivers specialized services through shared provincial resources, and utilizes integrated command structures that differ from many municipal policing models. Participants were encouraged to view their local detachment not as a standalone police service, but as one component of a much larger policing system that provides both local and province-wide public safety services.

A key focus of the session was the role of the Detachment Commander and how that position fits within the broader OPP command structure. Participants examined reporting relationships, regional oversight, specialized support functions, and the ways in which local policing priorities intersect with provincial responsibilities. Understanding these relationships was presented as essential to developing productive governance relationships and realistic expectations regarding decision-making authority, resource deployment, and operational responsibilities.

The session also reinforced the distinction between governance and operations. Through practical examples, participants explored the types of questions boards should be asking and the areas where boards can have meaningful influence. Governance responsibilities such as identifying community priorities, monitoring outcomes, reviewing Local Action Plans, supporting strategic planning, and ensuring accountability were contrasted with operational decisions related to investigations, enforcement strategies, staffing assignments, and deployment decisions. Participants were encouraged to focus on outcomes, priorities, accountability, and community needs rather than operational tactics.

Throughout the discussion, participants were reminded that understanding the OPP is not about memorizing organizational charts, ranks, or reporting relationships. Rather, it is about understanding how the system functions, how resources are shared across communities, where local decision-making occurs, and how boards can effectively exercise governance within a large, integrated policing model. The session reinforced that boards are most effective when they understand both the opportunities and limitations of their role and use that understanding to influence priorities, strengthen accountability, and support community safety outcomes.

### **Key Takeaways**

- Understanding the OPP's structure helps boards better understand their governance role and authority.
- OPP Detachment Boards operate within a large, integrated policing system that combines local and provincial responsibilities.
- Community policing remains at the centre of the OPP's mandate despite the organization's size and complexity.
- Understanding the Detachment Commander's role and reporting relationships helps boards establish productive governance relationships.
- Effective governance focuses on priorities, outcomes, accountability, and community needs rather than operational decision-making.
- Boards contribute through oversight, input, relationship-building, and strategic leadership.
- Understanding the limits of board authority is as important as understanding the opportunities for influence.

### **Continuing the Learning**

Understanding the structure and operation of the OPP provides important context for effective governance. Boards are encouraged to continue learning about Local Action Plans, regional OPP structures, community safety priorities, performance reporting, and governance responsibilities to strengthen their ability to provide informed oversight and meaningful input into community safety discussions.

Additional resources related to OPP governance, board responsibilities, and governance best practices are available through the Police Governance Ontario Members Portal.

## **First Nations Police Governance – Understanding the CSPA, Options & Practical Implications**

### **Moderator:**

Jeanine Lassaline-Berglund, Director of Communications & Engagement, Police Governance Ontario

**Panelists:**

Jeff Cooper, Inspectorate of Policing

Dylan Kekanovich, Indigenous Policing Unit, Ministry of the Solicitor General

Deputy Grand Chief Mike Metatawabin, Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Frank McKay, Chair, Nishnawbe Aski Police Service Board

**Session Summary**

This session brought together representatives from the Ministry of the Solicitor General, the Inspectorate of Policing, and First Nations policing leadership to explore the practical realities of Community Safety and Policing Act (CSPA) adoption and implementation within First Nations communities.

Recognizing that many communities continue to have questions regarding the legislation, the session was intentionally designed as a practical governance discussion rather than a legal or advocacy presentation. Participants were encouraged to explore common questions, assumptions, concerns, and misconceptions while hearing directly from organizations that have already navigated the adoption process. Throughout the discussion, panelists emphasized that informed governance decisions require accurate information, honest dialogue, and an understanding of both opportunities and challenges.

Representatives from the Ministry and Inspectorate provided an overview of the Community Safety and Policing Act, the First Nations opt-in process, and the role of provincial oversight bodies. Participants explored what adoption changes, what it does not change, and how governance responsibilities, accountability structures, training expectations, and oversight relationships are affected under the legislative framework. Panelists reinforced that adoption is a governance framework decision and that each community must determine the path that best reflects its own circumstances, priorities, and readiness.

A significant portion of the session focused on lived experience and practical lessons learned. Deputy Grand Chief Mike Metatawabin and Frank McKay shared reflections on governance discussions, community engagement, leadership conversations, relationship-building, and implementation realities experienced throughout the process. Participants explored common concerns, areas of uncertainty, lessons learned, and the importance of trust, communication, and collaboration during periods of governance transition. The discussion emphasized that implementation is not simply a legislative exercise, but a process that affects governance relationships, organizational practices, and community expectations.

Throughout the conversation, panelists acknowledged that many First Nations policing organizations remain relatively early in their implementation journeys. While participants were able to share valuable observations and experiences, there was broad recognition that some challenges, opportunities, and longer-term implications will only become fully understood over time. As a result, the session generated as many future conversations as answers, highlighting the importance of continued dialogue and knowledge sharing across the First Nations police governance community.

The session concluded with a shared recognition that governance learning does not end once legislation is adopted. Ongoing conversations, relationship-building, peer learning, and the sharing of practical experiences will continue to play an important role in helping communities navigate implementation and strengthen governance capacity. Police Governance Ontario committed to supporting and facilitating these discussions as implementation continues to evolve across the province.

### **Key Takeaways**

- Decisions regarding CSPA adoption should be informed by accurate information, practical understanding, and community context.
- Adoption is a governance framework decision and does not diminish the importance of local leadership, relationships, or community priorities.
- Understanding the roles of the Ministry, Inspectorate, boards, and police services is essential to informed decision-making.
- Communities that have already navigated adoption provide valuable lessons and perspectives for others considering or implementing the framework.
- Trust, communication, and relationship-building are critical components of successful implementation.
- Many implementation questions are still emerging as communities gain practical experience under the legislation.
- Continued dialogue and peer learning will be important as First Nations police governance continues to evolve.

### **Continuing the Learning**

The Community Safety and Policing Act continues to shape police governance across Ontario, including within First Nations policing organizations. As implementation progresses, Police Governance Ontario remains committed to supporting respectful, practical, and informed conversations that help governance leaders share experiences, identify emerging issues, and learn from one another.

Members are encouraged to continue engaging with peers, reviewing available resources, and participating in future First Nations governance discussions and roundtables as this work evolves.

### **OPP Detachment Commander Performance Evaluation: Governance in Practice**

#### **Presenters:**

Lisa Darling, Executive Director, Police Governance Ontario

Linda Skoyles, Director of Curriculum & Training, Police Governance Ontario

## Session Summary

Evaluating the performance of the Detachment Commander is one of the most important governance responsibilities assigned to OPP Detachment Boards, yet it is also one of the most commonly delayed, avoided, or misunderstood. This session focused on helping boards move beyond uncertainty and approach the evaluation process with greater confidence, consistency, and understanding.

Participants explored the purpose of the Detachment Commander evaluation within the governance framework established under the Community Safety and Policing Act. The discussion reinforced that the evaluation is not an optional exercise, a courtesy, or a measure of operational policing expertise. Rather, it is a governance responsibility intended to support accountability, strengthen governance relationships, provide meaningful feedback, and contribute to continuous improvement.

A significant portion of the session focused on the barriers that often prevent boards from completing the process. Participants openly discussed concerns related to limited interaction with the Detachment Commander, uncertainty about what is being evaluated, turnover within the role, discomfort providing feedback, inconsistent historical practices, and a lack of confidence in conducting performance reviews. Facilitators acknowledged that these concerns are common but emphasized that they do not remove the board's responsibility to complete the evaluation. The session challenged boards to distinguish between legitimate obstacles and discomfort with the process itself.

Participants then examined what boards are actually evaluating. Rather than assessing operational policing decisions, boards were encouraged to focus on the Detachment Commander's relationship to governance. Areas of consideration included communication with the board, responsiveness to board priorities and requests, quality of reporting, support for Local Action Planning, participation in governance discussions, professionalism, leadership presence, and willingness to engage in accountability conversations. The session reinforced that boards are evaluating governance relationships and accountability practices, not policing tactics or operational outcomes.

The discussion also addressed several real-world scenarios frequently encountered by boards, including limited opportunities for interaction, multiple Detachment Commanders within a single evaluation period, and situations where participation in the evaluation process may be limited. Participants were reminded that perfect conditions are not required to complete a meaningful evaluation. Boards were encouraged to use the information available to them, document observations, apply a governance lens, and proceed with the process rather than delaying it indefinitely while waiting for ideal circumstances.

Facilitators reviewed practical approaches for gathering information, documenting observations, utilizing established evaluation tools, conducting discussions with the Detachment Commander, and completing required documentation. Throughout the session, participants were reminded that governance maturity is demonstrated not by having a perfect process, but by consistently carrying out governance responsibilities in a professional, fair, and disciplined manner.

The session concluded with a discussion about continuous improvement and governance accountability. Participants were encouraged to view the evaluation process as an opportunity to strengthen communication, clarify expectations, support leadership development, and improve the working relationship between the board and the Detachment Commander. Rather than being viewed as an annual administrative requirement, the evaluation was positioned as an important governance tool that supports accountability, trust, and organizational effectiveness.

### **Key Takeaways**

- The Detachment Commander evaluation is a governance responsibility, not an optional exercise.
- Boards are evaluating governance relationships, accountability, communication, and leadership rather than operational policing decisions.
- Limited interaction, turnover, or imperfect circumstances do not remove the board's responsibility to complete the process.
- Governance discipline is more important than perfect conditions.
- Boards should focus on evidence, observations, reporting, responsiveness, and engagement when conducting evaluations.
- The evaluation process supports accountability, continuous improvement, and stronger governance relationships.
- Effective evaluations contribute to both board development and Detachment Commander development.
- Completing the evaluation consistently demonstrates governance maturity and readiness.

### **Continuing the Learning**

Performance evaluation is an important component of effective police governance. Boards are encouraged to establish clear expectations, maintain appropriate records throughout the year, engage in ongoing governance conversations with their Detachment Commander, and utilize the tools and templates available through Police Governance Ontario.

Strong governance is built through consistency, accountability, and a willingness to carry out governance responsibilities even when the process feels uncomfortable. The Detachment Commander evaluation provides boards with an opportunity to demonstrate all three.

### **Using Data to Inform Community Safety & Governance Decisions**

#### **Presenter:**

Dubi Kanengisser, PhD, Inspectorate of Policing

#### **Session Summary**

Effective governance depends on informed decision-making, yet many boards struggle with how to use the information they receive. This session explored how OPP Detachment Boards can use data more effectively to support governance responsibilities, inform community safety discussions, and strengthen oversight of Local Action Plans and policing priorities.

Rather than focusing on statistical analysis or technical data interpretation, the session emphasized the board's role as a consumer of information. Participants were reminded that boards are not expected to become analysts or data experts. Instead, their responsibility is to understand what information is important, connect that information to governance priorities, and ask thoughtful questions that support informed decision-making.

The discussion began by examining a common challenge facing many boards: receiving data without knowing what to do with it. Participants explored the difference between collecting information and generating insight. A recurring theme throughout the session was that data alone does not create understanding. Information only becomes useful when it is connected to context, community concerns, governance priorities, and meaningful questions. Boards were encouraged to avoid treating data collection as a compliance exercise and instead view information as a tool that supports governance conversations and decision-making.

Participants reviewed the board's legislative responsibilities under the Community Safety and Policing Act related to reviewing reports, establishing priorities, requesting information, and supporting Local Action Planning. The session reinforced that boards have both the authority and responsibility to request information that helps them understand community safety issues, evaluate progress toward priorities, and identify emerging concerns. Data was presented not as an end product, but as one of several tools boards can use to support governance oversight.

A significant portion of the session focused on asking better questions. Participants explored how data can help identify trends, reveal gaps, test assumptions, and generate useful lines of inquiry. Rather than jumping to conclusions based on individual statistics or isolated reports, boards were encouraged to look for patterns over time, consider alternative explanations, seek additional information when necessary, and connect quantitative information with community experience and local knowledge. The discussion reinforced that data should prompt curiosity rather than certainty.

The session also highlighted the importance of connecting data to Local Action Plans and community priorities. Participants were encouraged to consider whether the information they receive helps explain local priorities, measure progress toward objectives, identify emerging issues, and support evidence-informed governance discussions. Community feedback, partner perspectives, Community Safety and Well-Being planning discussions, and lived experience were identified as important sources of information that complement traditional policing data.

Throughout the session, participants were reminded that data does not replace governance judgment. Good governance requires boards to combine information, context, community perspectives, and professional expertise when making decisions. The goal is not to be governed by data, but to use data as one tool among many to support stronger governance conversations and more informed decision-making.

### **Key Takeaways**

- Data is a tool for insight, not a task to complete.
- Boards do not need to become analysts, but they do need to understand how information supports governance responsibilities.
- Information should be connected to priorities, Local Action Plans, and community safety objectives.
- Data is most valuable when it helps boards ask better questions.
- Looking for patterns and trends is more meaningful than focusing on isolated statistics.
- Community feedback, partner input, and local knowledge are important sources of information alongside traditional policing data.
- Data should support governance judgment rather than replace it.
- Effective governance combines information, context, experience, and thoughtful inquiry.

### **Continuing the Learning**

As boards continue to mature in their governance roles, the ability to use information effectively will become increasingly important. Police Governance Ontario encourages boards to regularly review the information they receive, consider how it connects to local priorities, and explore whether additional sources of information may help strengthen governance discussions and decision-making.

Strong governance begins with asking good questions. Data helps boards identify which questions are worth asking.

### **First Nations Police Governance – Defining Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships**

#### **Presenters:**

Anitra Basant Sisavang, Trainer, Police Governance Ontario

Natalie Champagne, Trainer, Police Governance Ontario

#### **Session Summary**

Effective governance depends on clarity. Boards, police leaders, administrators, and community representatives all play important roles in supporting public safety, but confusion about responsibilities can create unnecessary tension, duplication of effort, and governance challenges. This session explored the importance of understanding governance roles, responsibilities, and relationships within First Nations policing environments.

Building on earlier discussions regarding the Community Safety and Policing Act and governance implementation, participants examined the distinction between governance and operations, the responsibilities assigned to boards, and the complementary roles played by police leadership and

administrative support. The discussion emphasized that effective governance is not achieved by doing more, but by ensuring that the right people are focused on the right responsibilities.

Participants explored common areas of confusion that arise within governance relationships, including expectations regarding operational involvement, decision-making authority, accountability, community engagement, reporting relationships, and board leadership responsibilities. Through practical discussion and examples, the session reinforced the importance of role clarity as a foundation for effective governance and productive working relationships.

A key theme throughout the session was the connection between role clarity and trust. When responsibilities are clearly understood and respected, governance conversations become more productive, accountability becomes more meaningful, and organizations are better positioned to focus on community priorities. Participants discussed how governance relationships are strengthened when expectations are openly communicated and responsibilities are consistently respected.

The session also explored the realities of governance within First Nations communities, recognizing that relationships, community expectations, cultural considerations, and local circumstances often influence how governance is experienced in practice. Participants were encouraged to consider how governance structures can support community priorities while maintaining clear accountability and effective decision-making.

Throughout the discussion, facilitators reinforced that governance is ultimately about relationships. Policies, legislation, and structures provide a framework, but effective governance depends on people understanding their roles, communicating effectively, and working collaboratively toward shared goals.

The session concluded by encouraging participants to continue conversations within their own organizations regarding roles, expectations, communication, and accountability. Strong governance relationships are built intentionally and require ongoing attention as organizations, boards, and communities continue to evolve.

### **Key Takeaways**

- Effective governance begins with clarity regarding roles, responsibilities, and expectations.
- Governance and operations serve different purposes and require different forms of leadership.
- Role confusion can create tension, inefficiency, and governance challenges.
- Strong governance relationships depend on communication, accountability, and mutual respect.
- Understanding responsibilities helps boards focus on strategic leadership rather than operational involvement.
- Governance structures are strengthened when expectations are openly discussed and consistently applied.
- Relationship-building remains an essential component of effective governance.

### **Continuing the Learning**

Understanding roles and responsibilities is an ongoing governance conversation rather than a one-time exercise. Boards are encouraged to regularly revisit governance expectations, clarify responsibilities, and engage in discussions that strengthen accountability and working relationships.

As governance frameworks continue to evolve, maintaining clarity around roles, responsibilities, and relationships will remain essential to effective governance and community trust.

### **First Nations Police Governance – Building Effective Relationships with Police Leadership**

**Presenter:**

Kai Liu, Executive Director, Indigenous Police Chiefs of Ontario (IPCO)

**Session Summary**

Strong governance depends on strong relationships. Building on earlier discussions regarding governance roles, responsibilities, and accountability, this session explored the relationship between police governance representatives and police leadership, with a focus on trust, communication, accountability, and respectful dialogue.

Participants examined the realities of governance relationships within First Nations policing environments, recognizing that strong working relationships do not develop automatically. Governance and police leadership each have distinct responsibilities, perspectives, and pressures. Effective governance requires both parties to understand these differences while remaining committed to shared goals related to community safety, organizational success, and public trust.

A key theme throughout the session was the importance of clarity. Participants explored how clearly defined roles, expectations, and communication practices help prevent misunderstandings and strengthen governance relationships. The discussion reinforced that healthy governance relationships are not built on agreement, but on mutual respect, trust, and a willingness to engage in honest conversations when difficult issues arise.

The session also examined common challenges that can emerge between governance bodies and police leadership. Participants discussed hesitation to raise concerns, discomfort with difficult conversations, uncertainty regarding accountability, and the tendency to avoid issues in an effort to preserve relationships. The discussion challenged participants to recognize that avoiding important conversations often creates greater challenges over time. Effective governance requires the confidence to raise concerns respectfully and the willingness to address issues before they become larger problems.

Participants explored practical governance conversations related to community safety concerns, youth engagement, substance use, emerging community issues, and long-term community well-being. The focus remained on governance-level discussions rather than individual incidents or operational decisions. The session reinforced that boards contribute most effectively when they

focus on issues, trends, outcomes, community priorities, and organizational accountability rather than operational matters.

Accountability was another central theme. Participants discussed how accountability is strengthened through regular dialogue, clear expectations, and ongoing communication rather than relying solely on formal evaluation processes. The session emphasized that accountability should be viewed as a normal and constructive component of healthy governance relationships rather than something that occurs only when problems arise.

Drawing on perspectives from Indigenous policing leadership across Ontario, the discussion also highlighted the importance of relationships within First Nations governance environments. Participants reflected on how community expectations, cultural considerations, local priorities, and leadership responsibilities influence governance conversations and decision-making. Throughout the session, relationship-building was presented not as a soft skill, but as a critical governance competency that supports effective oversight, accountability, and organizational success.

The session concluded with an invitation for participants to reflect on their own governance relationships and identify one conversation they may be avoiding, one relationship dynamic they would like to strengthen, and one meaningful governance question they are prepared to ask. Participants were encouraged to view governance as an ongoing process of dialogue, learning, and relationship-building rather than a series of isolated decisions or meetings.

### **Key Takeaways**

- Strong governance relationships are built on trust, clarity, and honest conversation.
- Respect does not require agreement, and accountability does not require conflict.
- Clearly defined roles and expectations help strengthen governance relationships.
- Avoiding difficult conversations often creates larger governance challenges.
- Effective governance discussions focus on issues, outcomes, priorities, and community impacts rather than individual incidents.
- Accountability is strengthened through ongoing dialogue, not only formal evaluation processes.
- Relationship-building is a critical governance competency that supports effective oversight and organizational success.
- Healthy governance relationships create the conditions necessary for meaningful accountability and constructive decision-making.

### **Continuing the Learning**

Strong governance relationships require ongoing attention, communication, and trust-building. Boards are encouraged to regularly reflect on governance dynamics, identify opportunities to strengthen relationships, and create space for meaningful conversations about priorities, expectations, accountability, and community needs.

As governance responsibilities continue to evolve, the ability to engage in respectful, honest, and productive dialogue will remain one of the most important skills governance leaders can develop.

## **Labour Relations & Bargaining: Emerging Pressures & PGO's Path Forward**

### **Moderator:**

Lisa Darling, Executive Director, Police Governance Ontario

### **Panelists:**

Jessica Barrow, Partner, Perley-Robertson, Hill & McDougall LLP

Larry Vieira, General Counsel, Durham Regional Police Service

### **Session Summary**

This session explored emerging labour relations and collective bargaining considerations affecting police governance boards across Ontario.

The discussion focused on evolving labour relations pressures, governance responsibilities within the bargaining environment, and emerging considerations associated with proposed legislative changes, including discussions related to Section 220 of the Community Safety and Policing Act.

Given the dynamic nature of the topic and the importance of ongoing member engagement, Police Governance Ontario will continue to support discussions in this area through future resources, member consultations, and advocacy initiatives.

### **Key Themes**

- Emerging labour relations pressures affecting police governance.
- Governance considerations within the collective bargaining environment.
- Board responsibilities and limitations within labour relations processes.
- Legislative developments and their potential implications for governance boards.
- The importance of continued member engagement and feedback.

### **Continuing the Conversation**

Police Governance Ontario recognizes that labour relations and collective bargaining continue to be significant areas of interest and responsibility for police governance boards. As part of our ongoing advocacy and member engagement efforts, PGO will be connecting with municipal police service boards to gather perspectives regarding collective bargaining and proposed changes related to Section 220 of the Community Safety and Policing Act.

Members are encouraged to watch for upcoming communications and opportunities to provide feedback. Input received from boards will help inform future discussions, advocacy efforts, and member resources as these issues continue to evolve.

## **Strategic Planning as a Governance Tool: Setting Direction & Measuring Progress**

### **Presenter:**

Neil L. Dubord, PhD, O.O.M., Chief Constable (Ret.)

### **Session Summary**

This session challenged participants to rethink one of the most commonly misunderstood responsibilities in police governance: strategic planning. Rather than presenting strategic planning as a legislative requirement, planning exercise, or administrative task, Neil Dubord positioned the strategic plan as the central governance instrument through which boards establish direction, measure progress, create accountability, and influence long-term community safety outcomes.

Beginning with a candid assessment of current governance practices, participants were encouraged to reflect on whether boards have become trapped in a culture of compliance rather than governance. The presentation identified common governance habits that can leave boards busy but strategically ineffective, including rubber-stamping reports and budgets, drifting into operational discussions, and measuring activity rather than impact. Participants were reminded that these are not failures of effort, but often the result of governance systems that have historically focused on compliance rather than strategic leadership.

A central theme throughout the session was ownership. Participants were challenged to reconsider who owns the strategic plan and what role boards should play in its development. The discussion reinforced that strategic plans are governance documents, not operational documents. While police leadership plays an essential role in implementation, boards must define the long-term outcomes, community priorities, and strategic direction that guide organizational decision-making. As Dubord emphasized, the board determines the "what" and the "why," while police leadership determines the "how."

Participants explored the concept of the strategic plan as governance infrastructure. Rather than existing as a standalone document, the strategic plan was presented as the governance spine connecting board priorities, budget decisions, performance evaluation, community engagement, annual reporting, accountability, governance development, and organizational improvement. The discussion challenged boards to consider whether their strategic plans actively influence governance activities or simply sit on a shelf after approval.

The session also examined the relationship between governance, measurement, and accountability. Participants were encouraged to move beyond traditional policing metrics and consider whether boards are measuring outcomes that matter to communities. The distinction between inputs, outputs, and outcomes became a recurring theme, as did the importance of measuring public confidence, community well-being, equity, procedural justice, and long-term impacts rather than relying solely on activity-based indicators. Boards were encouraged to ask not only what police services are doing, but whether those efforts are achieving the outcomes communities expect.

Another powerful message focused on governance capacity. Participants explored what Dubord described as the "funding paradox" in police governance: significant investment in police operations alongside comparatively limited investment in governance capacity. The discussion

challenged boards to consider whether they are adequately investing in research, community engagement, training, evaluation, and governance supports necessary to fulfill their oversight responsibilities effectively.

The session concluded with a practical framework for board-led strategic planning, emphasizing agility, community engagement, focused priorities, meaningful measurement, and continuous review. Participants were encouraged to view strategic planning not as a document that is completed every few years, but as an ongoing governance practice that provides continuity, accountability, and direction. The final challenge to participants was simple but powerful: consider whether their board is investing in governance capability, measuring what truly matters, and ensuring that its strategic plan reflects community priorities rather than operational business planning.

### **Key Takeaways**

- Strategic planning is a core governance responsibility, not simply a legislative requirement.
- Boards should own the strategic plan and define the long-term outcomes and priorities that matter to their communities.
- The board determines the "what" and the "why"; police leadership determines the "how."
- Strategic plans should guide budgeting, evaluation, accountability, reporting, and governance development.
- Measuring activity is not the same as measuring impact.
- Effective governance requires a focus on outcomes, public confidence, equity, and community well-being.
- Governance capacity requires investment in training, research, engagement, and evaluation.
- Strategic plans should be living governance tools that influence decision-making throughout their lifecycle.

### **Continuing the Learning**

Strategic planning remains one of the clearest indicators of governance maturity. Boards that view strategic planning as a compliance exercise risk becoming reactive, fragmented, and overly dependent on operational leadership. Boards that embrace strategic planning as a governance function gain a framework for accountability, continuity, evaluation, and long-term improvement.

As governance expectations continue to evolve, boards are encouraged to regularly revisit their strategic plans, connect governance activities back to strategic priorities, and ensure that planning remains focused on the outcomes that matter most to their communities.

## **Governance in a Reactive World: Applying the Principles That Matter**

**Planned Presenters:**

Lisa Darling, Executive Director, Police Governance Ontario

Jeanine Lassaline-Berglund, Director of Communications & Engagement, Police Governance Ontario

**Session Update**

Due to evolving conference discussions and participant engagement opportunities, this session was not delivered during the conference program as originally scheduled.

The topic remains an important area of focus for Police Governance Ontario and will be developed into a future webinar for members.

The session was designed to explore how boards can remain focused on governance principles, strategic priorities, and long-term outcomes while responding to emerging issues, public pressures, critical incidents, and rapidly changing environments.

Additional information regarding the webinar and registration details will be shared with members in the coming weeks. Members are encouraged to watch for upcoming communications from Police Governance Ontario.

