

Statement from the Surrey Police Board

Public Board Meeting – October 26, 4pm

The Board would like to thank all of you, all staff, and all Surrey Police Service members for your ongoing commitment and dedication during what continues to be a challenging period. We would also like to congratulate Mayor-elect Locke and the city councillors elected in the October 15th municipal election.

In June of 2020, The Surrey Police Board was established as a local, non-partisan oversight body with a mandate to govern the establishment of Surrey Police Service. We live and work in this community, we are raising our families here. The structure of municipal independent policing is very different than the structure of the RCMP which is governed from Ottawa with no civilian oversight.

To date SPS has nearly 300 sworn officers and over 50 civilian employees and has deployed over 150 police officers to work 24/7 on the frontlines in Surrey, with 35 more officers joining them in November. We are now the second largest municipal police department in British Columbia.

The mayor-elect has communicated her position on the issue of a policing transition which does not align with the provincial mandate of this Board. The Board has been transparent about our finances during our monthly meetings, and we will be providing mayor and council with a clear accounting of the transition to date, an overview of our progress and the benefits of an independent police service.

In addition, we plan to present to council information that underlines some of the complexities of this project, including:

- The significant financial investments made to build the infrastructure of SPS, the majority of which are not compatible with RCMP technologies,
- Human resource issues including a binding collective agreement with the Surrey Police Union and the fact that SPS members left other municipal agencies and the RCMP because they want to work in Surrey for a municipal police service,
- Consideration of the human component: Over 50 police officers and staff uprooted their families and came to Surrey from other provinces to serve our families,
- Finally, we would like to brief council on the progress made to meet all provincial requirements to become Police of Jurisdiction.

We hope that between our discussions with the mayor-elect and council, and a final decision by the Provincial government, that there will be a timely resolution to this matter, to continue to move SPS forward. The Board believes firmly that SPS is the best public safety decision for the future of Surrey as our vibrant city continues to grow.

We are grateful to our entire team for the patience and the perseverance you have shown while we work through this period of the transition of Council. As a Board we are also thankful to both the provincial and federal governments for their continued support during this time. We understand this decision was carefully considered and the intention was not to switch back or re-evaluate the transition under changing municipal leadership.

We know the municipal election period hasn't been easy on our staff nor has it been easy for the public who have worked with us through our engagement plans and who continue to support the SPS.

To the community, thank you. Surrey Police Board is 100% committed to continuing in our mandate to build a modern, responsive, and progressive police service – our community deserves that.

