

# ***Investigating the Need for Structural and Functional Reform of Ottawa Police Service and Ottawa Police Services Board***

**Dr. Barry Wellar**

Professor Emeritus, University of Ottawa

President, Information Research Board

<http://wellar.ca/informationresearch/>

**POLICE REFORM PROJECT**

**Report 1**

Ottawa, Canada  
September 27, 2020

## **A. Police Reform Investigation Terms of Reference**

The call to “Defund the Police”, as well as related calls about disbanding, re-organizing, downsizing, reviewing, and re-designing police service organizations and police services boards have attained a great deal of traction in communities across Canada, including Ottawa.

As a result of that broad interest and the wide variety of concerns, there are many different topics which are pertinent to investigations into the need for structural and functional reform of police service agencies and police services boards, and there are many different ways to undertake the investigations.

For a mix of reasons, this investigation is limited in scope to Ottawa Police Service and Ottawa Police Services Board. Consequently, the politicians of initial interest are members of council, City of Ottawa.

Further, and consistent with the pillars that define the purpose of the Information Research Board (<http://wellar.ca/informationresearch/6Pillars.html>), the focus of this investigation is on citizens having free, easy, timely, and direct online access to police service records, and those of Ottawa Police Service in particular.

And, as a final introductory remark, the research design uses survey questions as the means to ascertain the positions of Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson and councillors regarding the need for structural and functional reform of Ottawa Police Service and Ottawa Police Services Board.

As shown in this and subsequent reports, minimal documentation is required to explain and demonstrate the research process. Major advantages of the survey question approach include the research instrument being readily communicable to citizens in Ottawa and elsewhere, and being readily transferable to those undertaking similar investigations in other localities.

## **B. Police Reform Emails to Mayor Jim Watson and Councillors**

The topic, *Investigating the Need for Structural and Functional Reform of Ottawa Police Service and Ottawa Police Services Board* is a matter of citywide concern, so it is appropriate to simultaneously inform all City of Ottawa politicians about the matter of interest.

That was done by an email, which follows in its entirety.

From: Barry Wellar [mailto:wellar.barry@gmail.com]

Sent: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 11:20 AM

To: Matt.Luloff@ottawa.ca; Laura.Dudas@ottawa.ca; jan.harder@ottawa.ca;  
Jenna.Sudds@ottawa.ca; Eli.El-Chantiry@ottawa.ca; Glen.Gower@ottawa.ca;  
Theresa.Kavanagh@ottawa.ca; Rick.Chiarelli@ottawa.ca; Keith.Egli@ottawa.ca;  
Diane.Deans@ottawa.ca; Tim.Tierney@ottawa.ca; Catherine.Mckenney@ottawa.ca;  
Riley.Brockington@ottawa.ca; capitalward@ottawa.ca; Jean.Cloutier@ottawa.ca;  
George.Darouze@ottawa.ca; Scott.Moffatt@ottawa.ca; Carolanne.Meehan@ottawa.ca;  
Allan.Hubley@ottawa.ca; 'shawn.menard'; Rawlson.King@ottawa.ca;  
Mathieu.Fleury@ottawa.ca; Rawlson.King@ottawa.ca; Jim.Watson@ottawa.ca  
Cc: George A. Neville ; Doug Arnold; Craig MacCaulay; granda k; Joanne Chianello;  
jwilling@postmedia.com; krista.ferraro@ottawa.ca; Burns, Kathy A (Police);  
wellar.barry@gmail.com

Subject: Need for Structural and Functional Reform of Ottawa Police Service and  
Ottawa Police Services Board.

Mayor Jim Watson and Councillors  
City of Ottawa

Dear Mayor Watson and Councillors,

As you may be aware, the call to “Defund the Police”, as well as related calls about disbanding, re-organizing, downsizing, investigating, reviewing, and re-designing police services and police services boards has attained a great deal of traction in communities across Canada, including Ottawa.

Based on a number of communications with researchers and interested parties across Canada, and my own communications with Ottawa Police Service and Ottawa Police Services Board, I believe that there are grounds to examine the need for structural and functional reform to Ottawa Police Service and Ottawa Police Services Board.

In the case of my experience, which I am informed is shared by a number of Ottawa residents, I am led to believe that free, easy, timely, and direct online access to police records is one key to effectively and efficiently achieve insights into the need for police service reform involving such issues as transparency, accountability, performance assessment and, top-of-list, the allocation of funds for management and operational activities. (Mayor and councillors may recall the reference to “free, easy, timely, and direct online access” from previous communications. They are in publications which can be viewed at <http://wellar.ca/informationresearch/>.

Pertinent to the point about the need for citizens to have free, easy, timely, and direct online access to police records in order to conduct their investigations, the results of inquiries to date reveal that there is no practical alternative. In brief, my emailed communications in the above regards to Ottawa Police Services Board over a number of months have been met with the equivalent of a 'blank stare'; silence from Ottawa Police Service; and, in the near-totality of cases, complete and utter silence from College ward Councillor Rick Chiarelli.

I note in this respect that should you seek evidence about the non-response situation, it is to be found in a number of email communications about various matters, including traffic study reports, truck route violations, speeding vehicles, noisy vehicles, and failure to stop violations that were transmitted to Councillor Chiarelli, Ottawa Police Service, and Ottawa Police Services Board.

On the one hand, therefore, it is my belief that there are grounds already in place for Ottawa council to launch a substantive reform initiative, and that means diligently scrutinizing the structural and the functional characteristics of Ottawa Police Service and Ottawa Police Services Board.

Pertinent communications in this regard include emails with the subject heading, *Practical and Feasible Budgetary Reductions in Ottawa Police Service Expenditures*.

On the other hand, however, I believe that there is additional information which is necessary when deliberating the terms of reference for a reform inquiry, and then evaluating the results of the inquiry.

Towards that end, I have several questions for mayor and councillors which represent some of the research findings, and also represent concerns, issues, etc., that have been brought to my attention.

I note that this appears to be a domain which to date has received relatively little public exposure, so detailed explanations from mayor and councillors will no doubt be appreciated by citizens of Ottawa, citizens from other communities in Canada and abroad, and members of the media.

**Question 1.** In order to meet duty of care and standard of care obligations, is it prudent and/or necessary that council explicitly adopt the principle that any reform initiative is primarily intended and is so designed to serve citizens, and to also explicitly stipulate that the principle is to be fully respected in practice by Ottawa Police Service, Ottawa Police Services Board, members of council and staff, and city staff?

**Question 2.** Is it necessary that an instruction be given to Ottawa Police Service to open its records to public access with reasonable invasion of privacy and confidentiality limitations rather than what amount to “cover-up restrictions”? The point of the question to be explicit about its intent is that records contain the data from which information is derived, and access to records is required in order for citizens to become informed about needed reforms involving such issues as transparency, accountability, performance assessment and, top-of-list, the allocation of funds for management and operational activities.

I have suggested that at minimum citizens should have free, easy, timely, and direct online access to police records, and I welcome suggestions from mayor and councillors that improve on my suggestions about the appropriate level of citizen access to Ottawa Police Service records.

**Question 3.** Given that complaints are made in communities across Canada about citizens not having adequate access to police records, what steps will mayor and councillors take to provide citizens with a level of access to police records which are essential to understanding how to effectively and efficiently achieve police service reform involving such issues as transparency, accountability, performance assessment and, top-of-list, the allocation of funds for management and operational activities?

**Question 4.** In your respective opinions, mayor and councillors, do you agree that as soon as access to records is up to speed, a basis is in place for citizens to do their due diligence and examine the records for what they reveal about needed reforms to Ottawa Police Service performance, operations, and management?

**Question 5.** Do mayor and councillors have any suggestions as to what else could be done to ensure that citizens have proper access to the records/data which are needed to effectively and efficiently participate in a police service reform initiative involving such issues as transparency, accountability, performance assessment and, top-of-list, the allocation of funds for management and operational activities?

I look forward to receiving responses from mayor and councillors at your earliest convenience for inclusion in a production to be posted on my website, <http://wellar.ca/informationresearch/>.

This way the results of my inquiry can be made readily available to citizens of Ottawa, and to interested parties elsewhere in Canada and abroad.

Sincerely,

*Barry Wellar*

Dr. Barry Wellar  
President, Information Research Board Inc.  
133 Ridgfield Crescent  
Nepean, ON K2H 6T4  
CANADA  
<http://wellar.ca/informationresearch/>

The same email was subsequently sent under separate cover to Mayor Jim Watson and each councillor for several reasons, courtesy of lessons learned from the pilot study, **Chronicling the Use of Transparency and Accountability as Political Buzzwords, and as Drivers Ensuring the Standard of Access to Public Records in Canada is Best Practice.** (<http://wellar.ca/informationresearch/>)

First, an email sent to mayor and councillors can be readily ignored by everyone, and with some justification, because the politicians are not named. It is prudent to presume that a line of thought about not taking responsibility on a potentially dicey public policy issue will be followed by several and perhaps many politicians.

Second, it is important to be able to track each politician so that he or she can be held accountable by residents in her or his ward. And, at a broader scale, residents across the city may have an interest in examining responses to questions for signs of patterns among politicians, such as those which represent voting as a group, bloc, coalition, etc., over time and space.

Third, the investigation in phase one involves five questions and 24 members of council (mayor and 23 councillors) when it is at full complement, which can lead to various combinations of questions and answers.

Therefore, the research design needs to ensure sufficient flexibility to deal with whatever combinations emerge that invite investigation.

To achieve that requirement, a modular design based on communications with each politician is used. This disaggregate approach is very efficient and effective for analysis purposes in the present report, and in future reports as the pilot study progresses through the questions put to individuals and then compiles the responses at the council level in the closing report for phase one.

## C. Follow the Money: OPS Budgets

In future reports the budgets of OPs and OPSB will be examined in detail as part of the large challenge posed in Question 3, that is, understanding how to effectively and efficiently achieve police service reform involving such issues as transparency, accountability, performance assessment and, top-of-list, the allocation of funds for management and operational activities.

For the purposes of this report several figures should be sufficient to establish that the annual budgets for Ottawa Police Service involve substantial amounts of money, which would seem to be cause for members of council to have all due regard for the questions asked in phase one about the need for structural and functional reform of Ottawa Police Service and Ottawa Police Services Board.

OPS gross operating budgets and shares of the City of Ottawa's annual budgets for 2018, 2019, and 2020 are approximately as follows:

<b><u>Year</u></b>	<b><u>OPS Budget</u></b>	<b><u>City Budget</u></b>	<b><u>OPS Share of City Budget</u></b>
2018	\$330,000,000	\$3,420,000,000	9.65%
2019	\$349,500,000	\$3,623,200,000	9.65%
2020	\$362,100,000	\$3,764,000,000	9.62%

Give or take minor adjustments in figures here or there, the OPS budget is a substantial share of the city's budget claiming close to 10% year after year, and the 2020 amount of \$362 million is actually \$32 million more than just two years previous.

From a reform perspective, obvious questions arise as to whether allocations to Ottawa Police Service could yield better returns to citizens if allocated to priorities and purposes other than for police service as currently offered, and/or to the services offered by other current service providers, or by different service providers.

## D. Wards of City of Ottawa Politicians

Some residents of Ottawa may not know the names of the councillor for each ward, or the locations of wards. Table 1 lists the ward numbers, ward names, and the name of the councillor for each ward, and Figure 1 is a location map of the wards using ward numbers for ID purposes.

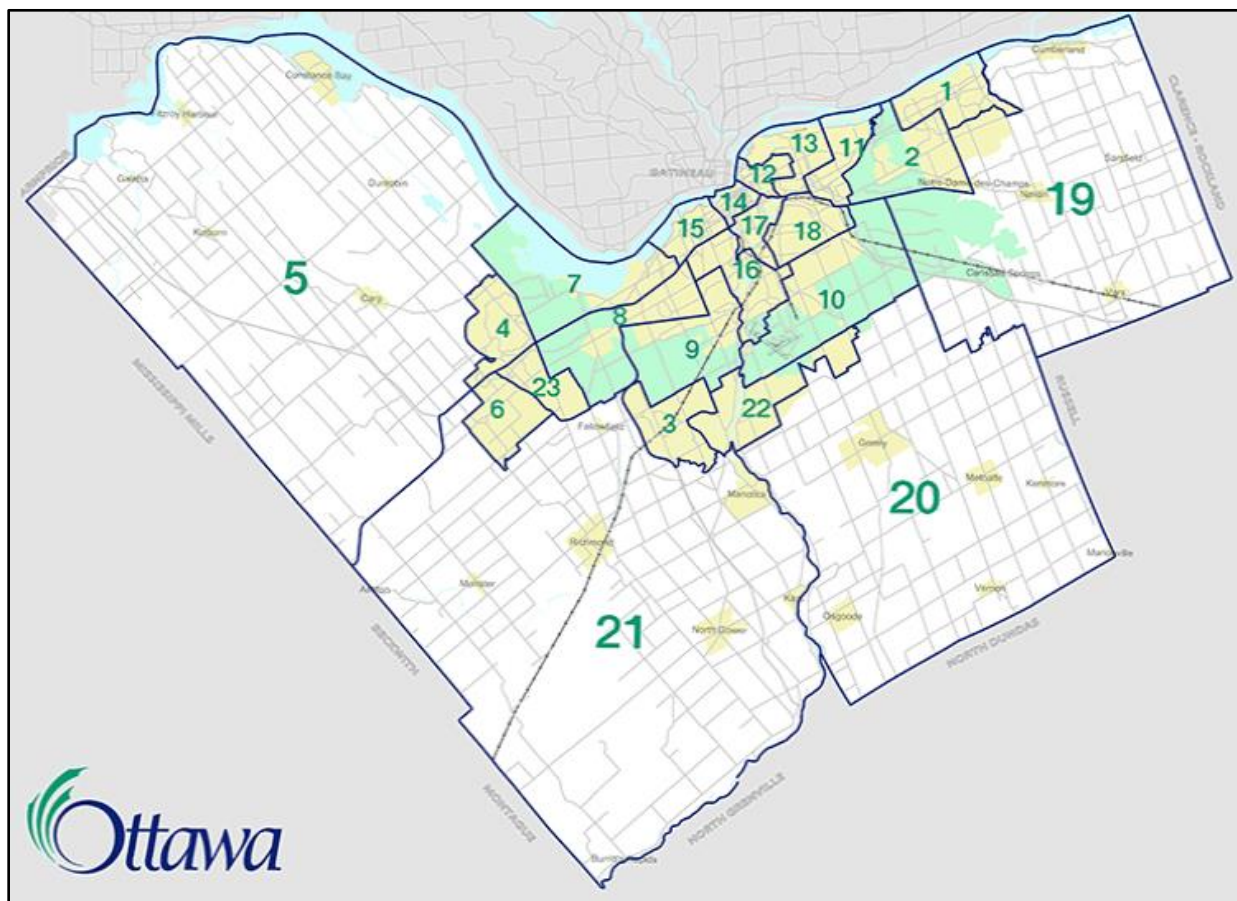
At this stage of the research, Figure 1 provides geographic context for readers examining the responses by mayor and councillors to questions, and as the study

progresses geographic context may be very helpful in describing and examining the police services presence across the City of Ottawa, and in understanding why members of council respond as they do to each of the questions.

**Table 1. City of Ottawa Councillors,  
Ward Numbers and Ward Names**

<b><u>Councillor</u></b>	<b><u>Ward #</u></b>	<b><u>Ward Name</u></b>
Riley Brockington	16	River
Rick Chiarelli	8	College
Jean Cloutier	18	Alta Vista
George Darouze	20	Osgoode
Diane Deans	10	Gloucester-Southgate
Laura Dudas	2	Innes
Keith Egli	9	Knoxdale-Merivale
Eli El-Chantiry	5	West Carleton-March
Mathieu Fleury	12	Rideau-Vanier
Glen Gower	6	Stittsville
Jan Harder	3	Barrhaven
Allan Hubley	23	Kanata-South
Theresa Kavanagh	7	Bay
Rawlson King	13	Rideau-Rockliffe
Jeff Leiper	15	Kitchissippi
Matt Luloff	1	Orléans
Catherine Mckenney	14	Somerset
Carolanne Meehan	22	Gloucester-South Nepean
Shawn Menard	17	Capital
Scott Moffatt	21	Rideau-Goulbourn
Jenna Sudds	4	Kanata North
Tim Tierney	11	Beacon Hill-Cyrville
Vacant	19	Cumberland

Figure 1. Ward Map, City of Ottawa



Map Source: <https://app01.ottawa.ca/wardlookup/wardSearch.jsf?wsAction=gw&newReq=yes&wardId=21&>

## E. Building on Previous Surveys of City of Ottawa Politicians

The first phase of the pilot study is a form of ‘feeling out’ process. In this case feeling out means getting a handle on the kind of participation to expect from each politician, and the directness and quality of responses.

As some readers may be aware, we have been down this road before with City of Ottawa politicians. One recent experience is published in Interim Reports 2,3, 8,9,16,17,19, and 20, which were produced for the pilot study, **Chronicling the Use of Transparency and Accountability as Political Buzzwords, and as Drivers Ensuring the Standard of Access to Public Records in Canada is Best Practice.**

<http://wellar.ca/informationresearch/>

The Interim report approach will be used again.

A particular value of this approach is that it is often necessary when dealing with politicians to have flexibility in the research process, because things happen that were not anticipated or could not be predicted earlier in the process. It is very useful to be able to switch gears and prepare a report on what could be termed “breaking news”, and insert it into the conversation.

Finally, previous experience with the surveys undertaken during the Chronicling project will be very helpful in designing the summary reports which tie together the findings from analysis of responses to the study questions.

And, similar to the previous survey experience, there will be a wrap-up phase one report which serves as the basis for decisions about the objective and research design of phase two of the investigation.

## **F. Recording Responses to Questions by Mayor and Councillors**

For the most part the questions lend themselves to responses of YES or NO, and then an explanation for the YES or NO choice.

Politicians are invited to elaborate as extensively as he or she wishes for each of the questions, and all provided insights will no doubt be valued by readers, including other members of council.

As noted above, and in numerous media stories, the issue of police reform is still being defined. Therefore, the more enlightenment provided by City of Ottawa politicians to this pilot study, *Investigating the Need for Structural and Functional Reform of Ottawa Police Service and Ottawa Police Services Board*, the greater the contribution to the police reform movement.

That is, numerous concerns, opinions, points of view, etc., have been expressed about the need to reform OPS and OPSB, and responses are elicited which assist in beginning to answer that larger question through the five questions selected for the first phase of this project.

As a result, straightforward answers are needed to ensure that we start off with a very clear understanding of each politician’s position on each question, and that position itself must be as clear and explicit as words permit.

As for the standard of clarity of responses, it is anticipated that politicians will answer at a level and to a degree which will be self- sufficient and self- explanatory, that is,

citizens will be able to readily grasp the position taken. And, should that not be the case, which can be ascertained by assembling citizen panels and other feedback means to review responses, then the subject politician(s) can be visited or re-visited by citizens.

Finally, policy decisions are made by mayor and councillors as a whole. As a result, it is intended to seek common ground among responses so that generalizations can be made about council positions on individual questions and combinations of questions, and about the positions of council sub-groups such as those representing majority and minority positions on individual questions and groups of questions.

As the reader may be aware, there are various ways which could be used to ascertain support for reform among politicians, but which way to use depends in part on what is already known based on evidence.

In that regard, it is our understanding based on informal inquiries that very little is known about the support of the current mayor and councillors for structural and functional reform of Ottawa Police Service and Ottawa Police Services Board. And, it is our further understanding that nothing is known about how they will express their positions.

Consequently, since we are breaking a lot of new ground with this research, it is aptly referred to as a pilot study, with particular emphasis on the challenge of obtaining straightforward, unambiguous, and pertinent responses to questions on a topic which involves deeply held and often diametrically opposed points of view among citizens and politicians.

Again, we have been down the survey road before with City of Ottawa politicians, and have also learned of the upsides and downsides of communications between citizens and politicians in other communities.

As a result of those lessons learned, there will be no repeat communications to attempt to move anyone from non-responses to clear and explicit responses, or from murky, vague, non-committal, elusive, and evasive remarks to clear and explicit statements about positions, and the reasons for positions.

Or, to re-phrase, we have no intention of chasing after politicians who engage in delaying, stalling, deflecting, bobbing-and-weaving, foot-dragging, forelock tugging, or other kinds of non-transparency and non-accountability practices in order to avoid responding to the questions.

Our purpose is to attempt to inform citizens about which way members of council intend to vote on motions involving structural and functional reform of Ottawa Police Service and Ottawa Police Services Board.

However, if politicians refuse to provide informative answers to the questions presented in this study, then the investigation is completed by naming these people.

After that, it falls to citizens, and perhaps those seeking municipal office to decide whether and how to require transparency and accountability from politicians regarding their positions on the need for structural and functional reform of Ottawa Police Service and Ottawa Police Services Board.

## **G. Next Step**

This report establishes the terms of reference for the pilot study. The next report records and examines the responses of City of Ottawa politicians to Question 1.