

Notes for Remarks by

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Salutations (tbc)

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

As a former police chief and now Deputy Minister of Community Safety, I have had a front row seat in the arena of civilian police governance for many years. It's an issue with which we are all quite familiar. Now that the province and the country are focused on the sustainability of policing, the role of civilian governing bodies demands our renewed attention.

As it should be, civilian police governance is one of the important areas of focus for the policing community, governments and administrations as well as civil liberties groups and the public at large. It is certainly a focus for Ontario.

So, I want to talk today about where we have been as a province and where we are going. In particular, I will focus on the connection between transformation in police service delivery and effective, outcomes-based police governance.

Although I speak as an Ontario government executive, and will focus on the Ontario experience, the challenges we face in Ontario are similar to the challenges being faced in jurisdictions all across the country.

For this reason, we continue to collaborate with our colleagues in other provinces and territories and with jurisdictions around the world. Their experiences serve as important lessons for us to learn from, as, I hope, they can learn from ours.

This afternoon, my remarks will flow from this fundamental question: how do we modernize our model of policing so as to enhance accountability, efficiency and sustainability while continuing to harness the strengths of our communities and public safety partners?

The issue of modernizing civilian police governance is happening in a wider provincial context, where Ontario is on a path of program review, renewal and transformation. Here, I quote the Honourable Deb Matthews, president of the Treasury Board of Ontario as she outlined Ontario's approach:

"We are going to do it by doing government differently. By focusing on outcomes and rigorous evidence... by enabling transformation... streamlining access to services and, using technology to drive better value.

And we are committed to working in partnership:

With the public who uses these services, with public servants and service providers, with the business community, with labour, educators, and the not-for-profit community – all of who have good ideas about how to make things work better."

This is the approach that will guide our work in transforming policing and civilian police governance.

The challenge is how to sustain effective policing service delivery in an environment of greater demand, rising costs and limited budgets.

Police leaders across this province can be proud of the fact that Ontario is one of the safest jurisdictions in North America.

Since 2003, Ontario's crime rate has dropped by 34% and Ontario's violent crime rate has dropped by 27%.

In fact, Ontario has had the lowest crime rate of any province and territory every year since 2005.

So as we see crime rates steadily falling across the country, why is the cost of policing not doing the same?

The issues faced by today's police officers are more complex than ever anticipated when the current policies and police frameworks were developed.

These frameworks never anticipated the increasing complexity of fraud - that someone could wipe out a person's life savings with the simple click of a mouse.

They did not anticipate the increasing frequency of interacting with individuals suffering from mental health or addiction.

And these frameworks never anticipated the rapid acceleration of technological advances and how they would be used both to commit and to fight crime.

In addition, we are increasingly asking and expecting our police officers to do more and to play a larger role in securing the wellbeing of our communities.

The time has come for us to realign our policing framework to reflect this new reality.

Realignment is the key to building sustainable, effective, and community focused policing in the 21st century.

The Ontario government is moving to a program delivery model that is firmly based in evidence and outcomes.

Government is looking at every program with fresh eyes and assessing each one, asking:

- Is it still appropriate?
- Is it still effective?
- Is it sustainable?

These are the questions the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services has been asking as we work with our policing partners to review the future of policing in the province.

It's also the approach we have taken to creating a strategy for a safer Ontario.

It's about finding smarter and better ways to do things, using evidence and experience to improve outcomes and measuring performance based on achievement of those outcomes.

In 2012, following Ontario's Summit on the Future of Policing, we created the Future of Policing Advisory Committee.

We asked our policing partners to review core police services and recommend ways to ensure sustainable police service delivery.

The idea was to clearly define the core services that police should deliver, where they could find efficiencies and how to ensure effective, accountable and transparent governance of police services.

At the same time, the ministry has been consulting with other stakeholders and participating in dialogue at the national level through the Economics of Policing and Community Safety Summit. We have been working with you, including the Canadian Association of Police Governance, to identify the challenges with governance, to validate those challenges and to begin developing solutions. These solutions must not be a Band-Aid for today's challenges – they must be comprehensive and adaptable to meet new challenges that may lie beyond our horizon.

One of these solutions is our Strategy for a Safer Ontario. The strategy is an ambitious project to expand and unify our approach to community safety and well-being and make it a truly collaborative effort on the part of all sectors – public and community-based – that have a role to play in service delivery.

The Strategy will expand linkages with other ministries and public sector organizations, focussing exclusively on promoting community safety and well-being.

In many communities we found a focus on collaborative partnerships that is producing results. These partnerships include police and other sectors such as education, health care and social services working together to make communities safer.

That is the way forward.

This integrated approach recognizes that multi-disciplinary partnerships produce better results at lower costs to each organization.

These are the same goals that Premier Kathleen Wynne mandated for the ministry.

The mandate specifically identified the need to:

- *Develop a new strategic vision for community safety and policing;*
- *Accelerate the development of a package of reforms to policing service delivery;*
and,
- *Maintain a strategic focus on community safety through a made-in-Ontario community safety and well-being strategy that builds on past work and complements other key government initiatives.*

The overlap of these priorities necessitates a shift from a focus on policing alone towards the value of community safety and well-being at the local level.

Robust and effective civilian police governance will be a key factor in the success of the Strategy for a Safer Ontario. And, this is yet another reason why we must also examine the role that civilian police governance plays in our overall policing reform and determine to what extent reform in this area may be required.

As part of the process of achieving these objectives, our partners at the Future of Policing Advisory Committee have worked with us to develop a Roadmap for the Future of Policing.

This Roadmap will guide proposals for legislative, regulatory and policy change, including proposals to enhance civilian police governance. It outlines a vision, a mission and goals for the future of policing in Ontario.

As we focus more closely on outcomes-based policing and performance, governance assumes an even more critical role in assuring that the goals that are set, are achieved.

Strong local governance is highlighted in the vision, and is also one of the three principal goals driving the Future of Policing Project, the two other goals being strategic use of resources and shared commitments.

Specifically, Goal 1 of the Roadmap is “enhanced governance through clear and sound direction and evidence-based decision making”. But, we cannot expect boards to discharge these important functions if there is not a clear understanding of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities, as well as the appropriate tools in the toolbox to deliver on a commitment to the important principles of good governance.

Put differently: not governance as a check-box or governance for governance’s sake – but, real governance.

PRINICIPLES OF CIVILIAN POLICE GOVERNANCE

Through our journey we have been speaking with the experts, analyzing the literature and participating in the dialogue provincially, nationally and internationally. This is what we are hearing.

The function of police services boards comprises two essential components: the governance component, and the accountability component.

As Justice Morden noted in his report:

“*Governance* in policing refers to the authority and responsibility for the development of policies that become the framework within which decisions will be made and actions will be taken by the police service.”

The governing body – police boards – sets the strategic direction of the police service and monitors and evaluates the performance of the service against this strategic direction and legislated standards and responsibilities.

The other component is accountability.

An effective civilian police governance body must *evaluate* the actions and activities of the police to ensure they are consistent with community needs and meet legislated requirements.

This accountability can be broken down into three aspects. The first is accountability to the *community*. In Ontario, this is done largely through the business planning process.

This is the process by which the strategic direction, objectives and priorities of the police service are set, after consultation with the community and the Chief of Police.

Secondly, there is accountability to the *province* for meeting legislative requirements, which also have an effect on objective and priority setting. Boards and board members are accountable for the performance of duties and for compliance with prescribed standards of service.

Finally, there is fiscal accountability to the *municipality* through efficient and effective management of resources and infrastructure.

It is through a board's accountability processes that decisions and actions can be evaluated with a view to learning applicable lessons. A board is then – and only then – in a position to build that learning into its policy framework.

Effective civilian police governance can forge a trusting police-community partnership that is essential for effective policing.

The primary driver of police service delivery should be the needs of the community.

Boards serve as a connection between the community and the police and should reflect community needs in its strategic direction and policy. Whether it is through the formalized business planning process, public delegations or the policy-development process, ongoing engagement with the community is crucial to delivering effective policing. It is also essential to empower the board to act as an effective link between a community and the police who serve it.

As the community safety and well-being planning model continues to gain momentum in Ontario, communication between the board and the community (including other human services sectors, community-based service delivery entities, the public, levels of government, etc.) has never been more important.

Effective communication between the board and the municipality is key to ensuring not only that the police service has the necessary budget and infrastructure to deliver services that reflect community need, but also to ensuring that the services being delivered are consistent with the overall goals and priorities of the municipality and complement those of other service providers in achieving community safety and well-being.

While we are on the subject of communication, we cannot forget the importance of communication between the governing body and the Chief of Police. Effective communication between the board and the Chief is essential. Believe me, I know this from my own experience as a Chief.

[placeholder for personal comments about experiences as a chief working with a board – what were the challenges; what worked well]

Boards and chiefs must truly start to view one another as *partners* working for the same community safety goals; understanding of one another's perspectives is necessary, and open communication is key. Therefore, boards and chiefs must have in place the communication necessary to ensure a flow of relevant information occurs; otherwise, neither partner will have what they need to discharge their statutory responsibilities.

CURRENT CHALLENGES AND THE WAY FORWARD

The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services is leading efforts to examine how to effectively calibrate civilian police governance to provide a foundation for service delivery that reflects and serves the needs of communities in Ontario.

The aim is to modernize and strengthen the civilian police governance system, to provide consistent, effective oversight and accountability, and to facilitate strong partnerships between police, municipalities and other service providers such as fire, health, education and social services.

This discussion on civilian police governance must take into account the following components:

- First, the purpose of police services boards as the mechanism for civilian police governance. We must ensure that the environment in which police boards exist and operate permits them to carry out their duties in accordance with the principles of civilian police governance that I just spoke of.

- Second, roles and responsibilities for police services boards and board members. This means ensuring that police services boards are clear and knowledgeable about their roles and responsibilities, and the distinction between their role and that of senior police leaders. Simply put, this means exchanging information, insights, concerns, and analyses on the policing issues, and, if necessary, a healthy debate on those issues.

- Third, that police services board members have the ability to perform their role. The board collectively needs to have the skills, competencies and training to effectively perform all aspects of their governance role.

- Fourth, police services boards have access to appropriate and effective resources to fulfill their obligations and make the right decisions to ensure accountability.

- Fifth, that police services board members are measuring and evaluating police service performance and ensuring continued improvement, sustainability, and providing appropriate information to the public to build confidence in policing.

Policing stakeholders have helped the ministry in the above discussions to identify areas for focus and related challenges. The ministry has been and continues to work with stakeholders and partners across Ontario and nationally, to validate these areas of focus.

In the coming months, we will identify and propose potential opportunities for legislative, regulatory and policy change to the current civilian police governance framework, based on the good work that has been done to bring the best ideas together.

While the province can propose and even mandate, the input from boards and their members is essential for the success of this process of transformation. We recognize that you are the experts in what works, and what could work better.

WHAT IS NEXT?

I believe it is time to advance our discussion concerning civilian police governance. We have to move past the traditional discourse of debating *whether* boards are entitled to information from the chief regarding the operation of the police service, to a discussion of how boards can identify *what* information it needs, and how to *use* this information to ensure adequate and effective policing.

So, as we continue to engage you, help us understand the ways in which boards can fulfil the promise of civilian governance that has been made to our citizens. Where additional tools are needed, tell us what those are. Where clarity as to roles and responsibilities would be beneficial, identify in what areas. Where a discussion concerning board's capacities is required, help inform it. Help us get this right.

Just as importantly, we as policymakers and administrators must listen to your input – And all of the partners with a stake in community safety and wellbeing must actively participate in a frank and ongoing dialogue if we are to deliver the transformation we all seek.

Conclusion

Thank you again for inviting me to this important Summit and for allowing me to talk about our government's vision to build safer, stronger communities.

These Summits provide an opportunity to share best practices, evidence-based research, and create an environment for collaborative networking, with the ultimate goal of enhancing civilian police governance across the country.

Our Strategy for a Safer Ontario is ambitious, it is bold, and it will be guided by evidence and will be focused on outcomes.

We must embrace this opportunity – now is the time to set the course for an effective, sustainable, and community-focused model of policing for the 21st century. A model in which effective civilian police governance maintains the important partnership that must exist between our citizens and the police for our communities to remain safe.

We are at the doorstep of change, and we are asking all of you to drive this change with us. We look forward to working with you.

Thank you.