



LESSONS LEARNED AS A NEW POLICE FORCE

Date: November 24, 2022

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KEY EVENTS

On November 24, 2022, Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) Jennifer Hyland of the Surrey Police Service presented *Lessons Learned as a New Police Force*. The presentation was followed by a question-and-answer period with questions from the audience and CASIS Vancouver executives. The key points discussed were the development of the Surrey Police Service (SPS) over the past year and understanding their engagement with the community and other policing organisations.

NATURE OF DISCUSSION

Presentation

DCC Hyland discussed the ongoing challenges and improvements that the SPS has faced as a new organisation, noting how the SPS is working towards creating a stronger engagement with the community and other policing agencies through effective communication and awareness.

Question & Answer Period

During this question-and-answer period, DCC Hyland expressed the importance of working with the community to ensure public trust, suggesting that this can be accomplished through communicating effectively and maintaining awareness when addressing conflict.

BACKGROUND

Presentation

DCC Hyland began by discussing the gradual evolution of the SPS since Surrey's 2018 decision to transition from RCMP to municipal police, stating that the organisation has been constructed from the ground up through the development of policy and mission values. During this period, the SPS transition struggled to gain support from some members of the municipality; however, DCC Hyland explained that the province retains the final authority to change the policing model and provincial legislation secured its formation. Since 2020, the SPS has established a police board, police union, collective agreements, and hired 370 employees—315 of which are now sworn police officers.

DCC Hyland noted that the SPS has undergone an internal development which engages its members' diverse experiences from different organisations in order to produce a cohesive system. DCC Hyland stated that this diversity has been instrumental to the culture of the SPS, expanding the organisation's knowledge by drawing on individuals' experience from a range of different policing backgrounds. Through this engagement, SPS pursued a modernised development and training process, an approach that has, at times, drawn ire from proponents of status quo models of policing in the municipality.

DCC Hyland expanded on the innovative, though controversial, methods through which the SPS sought to staff the organisation, such as extending recruitment to individuals approaching retirement with another police service. Though this allowed for experienced staff to continue their careers through the SPS, there were concerns among a contingent who felt that this was inappropriate and constituted disloyalty to the previous organisation. DCC Hyland suggested that this was an unfair accusation, as loyalty should be to the profession and mission of law enforcement, not to one organisation over another. Despite the mixed reception to this recruitment method, it has allowed the SPS to focus on areas of global retention and effective organisational relations.

DCC Hyland stated that Surrey has experienced a "politicization of policing", with the transition to the SPS being met with mixed reactions and, in some cases, fostering division. Regardless, she asserted that SPS remains impartial and focused on the fulfilment of its mandate, exhibiting the many benefits of municipal policing. DCC Hyland concluded that the SPS is committed to the community it serves, and seeks to ensure its safety through the valuing of

individual experiences and collective vision, and the practice of flexibility, humility, and patience.

Question & Answer Period

In the question-and-answer period, DCC Hyland discussed protest mitigation, deescalating violence, and forecasting future violent movements. DCC Hyland suggested that police organisations should never make protests about themselves, but rather maintain awareness of the purpose of the protest and ensure they proceed safely and within the law.

DCC Hyland discussed the ways in which poor communication can foster misunderstanding with the public, intensifying anger and frustration. She stated that modernised approaches to community connection, such as social media, can help to deescalate volatile situations and negative public perceptions of police organisations.

Regarding the current protest climate, DCC Hyland pointed to the 2022 Freedom Convoy and noted that current mitigation strategies must develop as protests evolve. She stated that the forecasting of future violent events by law enforcement can only be accomplished by remaining current in its practices and not fixated on past strategies.

KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION

Presentation

- The SPS has been constructed from the ground up through the development of original policy and mission values, and this transition struggled to gain unilateral support from members of the municipality
- The SPS values the diversification of individuals within their organisation and this allows for a breadth of knowledge and skills that aids in the expansion of its organisational goals and modernisation.
- The SPS modern practices have faced external scrutiny, with some going so far as to question the integrity of the organisation and its members. This claim is unjustified, however, as the SPS promotes an environment of loyalty to the profession and mission of law enforcement.
- Despite the recent “politicization of policing” in Surrey, the SPS remains focused on the fulfilment of its mandate, exhibiting the many benefits of municipal policing.

Question & Answer Period

- In policing protest, deescalating violence, and forecasting future violent movements, police organisations must maintain awareness of the purpose of the protest to ensure its safe operation within the confines of the law.
- Poor communication with the public by police organisations can foster misunderstanding and negative interactions, though modernised approaches to community connection, such as social media, can help to deescalate volatile situations and negative public perceptions.
- In order to forecast future violence movements, police organisations must be dynamic in their approach and accept new strategies of law enforcement.



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