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Feb 16 · 35 tweets · [adamadonaldson/status/1626303304685744128](https://twitter.com/adamadonaldson/status/1626303304685744128)

Coming up soon, the start of this month's Police Services Board meeting. Here's what's coming up:



Chair McSherry has called the meeting to order.

Motion from closed session: That the GPS Board approved changes to the volunteer police check fees to align with legislation. This was a change the province made last year:

<https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1001888/ontario-making-it-easier-to-volunteer>

That was passed, so now we're on to the Community Response Break Enter Auto Theft Team Update presentation by Insp. Steve Gill.

Gill calls BEAT a "very successful" unit in the service, and shares some of the history. It goes back to 2015 and a tragic incident where a U of G student was struck by a stolen vehicle. That's when discussion about the unit began...

...Rate of auto-theft started going up in 2018/19 but these cases were of a lower priority in the general service. Also, it was noted that investigating these things in a regular police car was a threat to public safety as thieves risked to avoid arrest.

The unit changed tactics to investigate and wait to make an arrest away from the stolen vehicle so now one risks public safety to make a getaway. This four-month pilot was a success, but they didn't have the resources at the time to keep going.

The next pilot started in April 2021, again responding to an increase in property crime, in this case thefts and break-ins of shipping containers used as storage. This pilot was also considered a success.

After that, a full-time BEAT (1 sergeant, 4 detective-constables) was started. The focus of the unit aligns "perfectly" with the priorities of the Strategic Plan, and there are many other benefits to the unit incl. its flexibility beyond thefts incl. community outreach.

Stats from Jan '22-Jan '23:

90 arrests

28 search warrants

600 charges

\$500k-plus in recovered property (incl. vehicles)

\$122k in drugs recovered

3 firearms (2 loaded).

Gill says that the best part of the job is returning property, and he notes that people are sometimes shocked to get stuff back. One notable case was the return of a plaque and dog tags to a veteran.

Again, Gill calls BEAT a success as both an investigative unit and a deterrent.

Cllr Allt asks Gill to comment about homeless community getting confused with the "drug subculture" Gill mentioned. Gill says there is a confusion, and notes a rash of vehicle thefts that were linked to organised crime, and that's another factor.

Gill says there's many players in the drug culture, from petty thefts that might be done by people who are homeless, to organised crime, which happens "at a higher level."

Mayor Guthrie asks about stats in terms of repeat offenders. Gill says 14 of BEAT's 90 arrests were repeats at least, and two were three-time repeaters. Also, the sergeant is aware of one person released 8 times for charges of vehicle theft. 🙄

Guthrie asks how many repeaters outside the BEAT unit's stats. Gill doesn't have that info.

Guthrie says "it's a big problem."

McSherry asks if returning stolen items reduces insurance claims. Gill says that's difficult to measure because insurance may pay off before the vehicle is recovered. It's a matter of timing.

Deputy Chief Goetz notes that insurance rate depends on the area, so if there's an impact on auto thefts generally in Guelph, it could result in lower rates for all car owners in the city.

Vice-Chair Armstrong how many arrests are people from outside Guelph. Gill doesn't have those stats, but there was a "significant" ring of thefts that was done by a group that was made up of suspects from out-of-town.

Gill also notes that between Guelph and Waterloo Region, we share "a number of prolific offenders."

Approval of January minutes passes unanimously.

Approval of the agenda passes unanimously.

Consent agenda approved unanimously. To learn more about these items, check out the preview.

7.1	Board Correspondence Report	Information
7.2	Canadian Association of Police Governance Membership Renewal for 2023	Decision
7.3	Towing and Storage Contract Award	Information
7.4	Community Account Annual Report	Information

Next is Chief Cobey's update, and it's a twofer because he wants to get right into the Strategic Plan update. He says quite a lot has been achieved this year as 2022 brought challenges and opportunities.

Cobey says the spring of 2022 was when Police started getting back to the usual community contact and started to try and get more proactively engaged with citizens, including the Citizens Police Academy.

Citizen's Police Academy, where participants learn about the police thru presentations from different GPS units in an 8-week session, was launched and delivered to members of the Canadian Arab Women's Association and members of the Arab Women's Society of Guelph.

Coming up this year, police will begin the update of their Strategic Plan, which seems to be a very common thread through a number of groups and boards in 2023, including city council.

2022 also marked the end of the pilot for body-worn cameras, and the beginning of their formal deployment. Cobey says there was also a new "duty to report" procedure added to the policy.

Completion of marked police vehicles to hybrid tech was finished in 2022, on-time within the 3-year plan. Community policing committee also made progress with new handbook and a new site for personal and family safety tips and other crime prevention measures.

On organizational health, they've been expanding supports and the wellness co-ordinator to give training to members. New hire of the health and safety co-ordinator has also enhanced wellness in a proactive way.

First internal support network, aimed to help members identifying as women, launched in 2022. Also, the IMPACT team became the first to respond 24/7 and they will continue to advocate for the team.

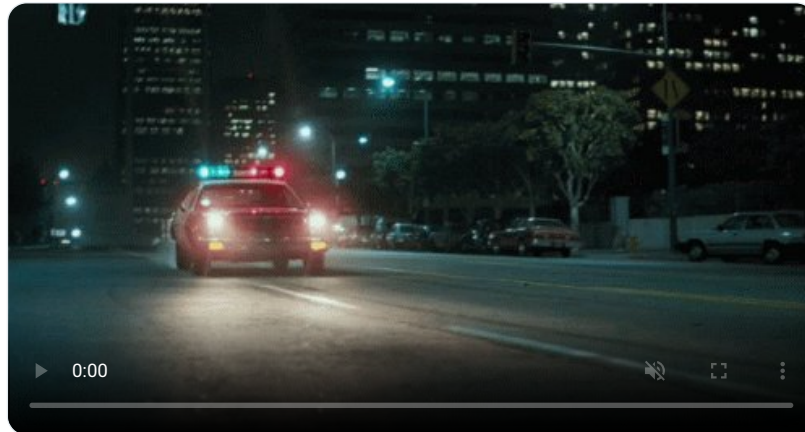
There were a record number of seizures in 2022 in terms of drugs, and at the same time they've kept pushing the role of harm reduction. On downtown, Cobey says GPS is committed to support with resource officer and 800 proactive engagements.

Guthrie says that this [report] is awesome work, and thanks the leadership of GPS and all the officers for the hard work. It's not going unnoticed.

McSherry says that the long-term improvements are showing fruit and also thanks Cobey.

No new business, so that's the end of the meeting!

Next meeting of the Police Services Board is Thursday March 16, 2023, 2:30 pm.



[@threadreaderapp](#), unroll please!

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