



WINNIPEG POLICE ASSOCIATION

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Affiliated with Manitoba Police Association and
Canadian Police Association

March 5th, 2021

Danny Smyth
Chief of Police
Winnipeg Police Service
245 Smith Street

Dear Chief Smyth,

I will not mince words: There is a clear, present and growing morale crisis among the members of the Winnipeg Police Service ("WPS"). The Winnipeg Police Association ("WPA") represents 1900 plus of these sworn and civilian members, and it is on their behalf that I write to you today, to advise you of the problem and the steps we feel need to be taken in order to begin addressing it.

Let's start with a clear analysis of the situation. Your current 2020 business plan, approved by the Police Board, speaks of recognizing "the importance of a safe and healthy workplace." The trends we are seeing, in our daily contacts and conversations with members, make it abundantly clear that this commitment is simply not being met. The recent loss of two sworn members, including at least one that was tied directly to profound emotional and mental suffering, brings this chasm into terrible focus.

This is not a matter of the number of wellness sessions or fitness appraisals you are helping to organize. This comes down to leadership.

Leadership is never easy, and Winnipeg is a community that faces many serious challenges. Yet those same challenges bring opportunities to make a difference, to allow our members - civilian and sworn - to have the best possible impact on the communities they serve and the families they protect. The WPS has a role to play in helping Winnipeg to grow and thrive, and our members cannot do this if their workplace is not safe and

healthy, and if the leadership appropriate to the moment is not in place. Yes, these are difficult times for our community, but that is not an acceptable basis to tolerate lack of execution.

So, where can we turn for a solution? We believe it starts with an objective assessment. As President of the WPA, I interact with frontline members every single day. And, to be perfectly blunt with you, the comments I have heard over the past several months are unlike anything I've ever experienced during my tenure at the WPA.

I am deeply concerned over the state of morale in the WPS, and yet, at the end of the day, even all of the negative reports I just referenced are still only one data point. The WPA believes we need a complete picture of the problem and, with this in mind, we are proposing to move forward with an objective survey and assessment of the members and their morale.

We know that Canadian-based expertise to assist in this sort of assessment exists, and we have already contacted one such organization to explore options. We intend to move shortly to implement a survey and assessment process, gathering input from our members - sworn and civilian alike - to accurately chart the shape and depth of the morale problems facing the WPS, and to examine the ways in which new approaches to leadership would play a role in addressing these issues.

The current morale crisis did not develop overnight, and it will not be solved overnight. But the leadership of the WPA is committed to playing a positive role in addressing and rectifying the problem, and we hope you will support our efforts.

Sincerely,



Maurice "Moe" Sabourin
President
Winnipeg Police Association

cc: Winnipeg Police Board

cc: Winnipeg Police Association Membership