



BUILDING A POLICE SERVICE IN CHALLENGING AND CHANGING TIMES

Date: November 25, 2021

Disclaimer: This briefing note contains the encapsulation of views presented by the speaker and does not exclusively represent the views of the Canadian Association for Security and Intelligence Studies.

KEY EVENTS

On November 25, 2021, Deputy Chief Cst. Jennifer Hyland, with the Surrey Police Service (Canada), presented on *Building a Police Service in Challenging and Changing Times* at the 2021 CASIS West Coast Security Conference. The presentation was followed by a question and answer period with questions from the audience and CASIS Vancouver executives. The key points discussed included the development of a new policing service in a developing city with a diverse community such as Surrey, community policing, and practicing a healthy policing culture within the police force in order for it to be reflected externally in the community.

NATURE OF DISCUSSION

Presentation

Deputy Chief Cst. Hyland focused on the transition of a new policing service in a growing city, such as Surrey and how this speaks to the importance of community interaction. The presentation also touched upon the importance of police officers' physical and mental wellness to ensure the policing culture in Surrey is healthy environment that reflects in the community.

Question Period

During the question and answer period, Deputy Chief Cst. Hyland touched upon what police forces should take into consideration when considering applicants and how diverse experiences are needed when creating a police force.

BACKGROUND

Presentation

Deputy Chief Cst. Hyland began her presentation by highlighting the importance of a good policing culture within police forces as this is often reflected in the community. If an individual joins an organization that restricts diversity, this then becomes a restriction to the input of different perspectives. Therefore, for future proofing policing to succeed, it is important for police officers to encourage diversity. When an inclusive culture is practiced within the police force, this is likely to reflect in the community.

Deputy Chief Cst. Hyland noted that in the 1990s, the police force held strong hierarchical values that were not often examined. However, as the culture of a community changes and diversifies, it will likely have an impact on policing strategies. Deputy Chief Cst. Hyland stated that to adapt to the community, the Surrey Police Service (SPS) is building a culture where they bring on individuals with diverse backgrounds and experiences who can engage and police the community with those backgrounds and experiences at the forefront. Hiring individuals who reflect the needs of the community allows for diverse backgrounds to bring different perspectives and ideas to policing culture.

Deputy Chief Cst. Hyland emphasized that the SPS is also focusing on staff's mental health, passionate policing, and healthy working environment, which will allow police officers to provide a better policing service to communities. The SPS is also investing in its police officers, developing an organization that advocates for the most vulnerable and engaging and seeking regular and meaningful input from its members. Deputy Chief Cst. Hyland stated that mental wellness is no different than taking care of your physical health. Not prioritizing employees' wellness could lead to unwell officers out in the community doing an unwell job policing, which could then potentially impact the interactions among the police and the community. Therefore, the SPS also provides Wraparound services, focusing on the physical and mental health of its employees as well as the members of the community to ensure the wellbeing of all individuals is met.

The SPS also focuses on getting all police officers, regardless of their rank, involved in training itself and developing training and leadership courses. This allows for police officers to be directly involved in the type of policing culture they want to be a part of as it directly impacts them and their job performance. Thus, to develop a trusting relationship with members of the community, police

officers must have a trusting relationship among themselves and their service, Deputy Chief Cst. Hyland argued.

Deputy Chief Cst. Hyland concluded her presentation by noting that future proofing policing revolves primarily around instilling a healthy internal environment for police officers so that they then can express and practice those skills and behaviors externally into the community they police.

Question Period

During the question and answer period, Deputy Chief Cst. Hyland noted that it is important to evaluate the experiences, growth, and lessons learned of those who are applying to become police officers before denying them an opportunity that could not only benefit the police force but could also provide a valued perspective to the community. There are different people with different backgrounds in the roles of police officers, which often calls for a change in the definition of what makes a ‘good’ police officer. For example, if an individual applies to become a police officer but does not necessarily showcase a perfect past according to the police force intake standards, it might not always mean that they are not a good fit for the role of a police officer.

Regarding how to improve community policing and safety overall, Deputy Chief Cst. Hyland emphasized that community policing is an important part of several police forces, but in the end, it is everyone’s responsibility to keep communities safe.

KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION

Presentation

- Future proofing policing relies on a healthy and inclusive policing environment, which will then reflect in the community.
- Cultural changes in a community will likely impact policing strategies. Thus, hiring individuals with different experiences will bring different perspectives and ideas to policing culture.
- Prioritizing the physical and mental wellbeing of police officers will allow them to provide a better policing service to communities.
- To develop a trusting relationship with members of the community, police officers must have a trusting relationship among themselves and their service.

- Future proofing policing revolves primarily around instilling a healthy internal environment for police officers so that they then can express and practice those skills and behaviors externally.

Question Period

- It is important to evaluate the experiences, growth, and lessons learned of those who are applying to become police officers before denying them an opportunity that could not only benefit the police force but could also provide a valued perspective to the community.
- A change is necessary when defining what makes a ‘good’ police officer, as well as to consider applicants with different backgrounds.
- Community policing is an important part of several police forces, but it is everyone’s responsibility to keep communities safe.



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