

# A Year into the Pandemic: Impacts on Ontario's Police Personnel

Issue 80  
Spring 2021

COVID-19 Advocacy Efforts, Mental Health Resources, OMERS Updates,  
PAO President & Board Director Candidates, and More...



*A quarterly publication for the Police Association  
of Ontario's over 28,000 sworn and civilian police  
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**ON THE COVER:**  
Sworn and civilian police personnel members from Peel Regional Police, Windsor Police, Thunder Bay Police and Durham Regional Police photographed over the past year of the COVID-19 pandemic. We thank our members for their ongoing hard work and dedication to upholding public safety throughout this challenging time. Permission for photo usage granted by each police service noted.



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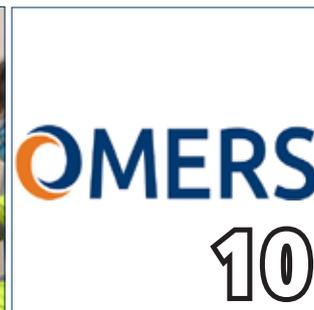
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# President's Report

Bruce Chapman, PAO President



As we pass the one-year anniversary of COVID-19 in Ontario, we should take a moment to reflect on the past, concentrate on the present and look to the future. Who would have thought we would be where we are today? Just over a year ago, we were gathered for the last time together in-person with over 240 association executives, senior management, police service board members and government officials at the PAO Employment Conference in Richmond Hill. That seems like a distant memory. I'd like to start this report to the membership by honouring and remembering those who we lost over the past year and encouraging everyone to continue to adhere to their local public health recommendations as we work through the vaccination process.

Since COVID-19 first hit last March, we have seen outbreaks and spikes in cases throughout the province and in the police sector. We have seen outbreaks at the Ontario Police College and numerous Police Services as well from front line patrol to communications personnel and everything in between. Throughout the challenges of this past year, you all have maintained your professionalism and continue to do your job to protect our communities to the utmost of your abilities. For that, I thank you.

The pandemic has now shown us that we are able to conduct business successfully in different ways than we were previously used to, including video meetings and webcasted conferences. Over the past year, the PAO has held its (delayed) 2020 Annual General Meeting, 2020 Fall Membership Meeting & Lobby Days, 2021 Winter Membership Meeting and 2021 Employment Conference virtually, and this will continue to be our normal practice until public health deems it safe to resume large, in-person events. The PAO's monthly board meetings and twice weekly staff meetings are all done through the use of computers and modern technology, and we are grateful these options exist. I must say though, there is nothing more important than the personal interactions within our profession and I hope those become a reality again soon. I have noticed that it has become common to fill our days even more than they already were with work and meetings, and we sometimes forget about prioritizing the importance of taking time off to focus on ourselves. This needs to be on everyone's radar to ensure a balanced work-life approach for our mental and physical health.

This past year has been the hardest one on record but also, I believe one of the most successful. The PAO continues to lead the discussions in policing on all fronts. Whether it is with government, media, or any other stakeholder, the PAO is involved. We have produced more position papers on issues of concern to our members with government and advocated to police service boards for the protection of our members' collective rights more than ever before, and we will continue this important work as we move forward. The PAO has influenced changes around COVID-19 and sick time, WSIB and ensuring coverage for time off, and early vaccinations for our members to name just a few areas of advocacy this past year.

Again, as mentioned in my previous reports, the new Community Safety and Policing Act (CSPA) continues to be a top priority of the organization. When it comes into force at the end of the year or early 2022, this new Act will be the legislation that each of you will have for the rest of your policing career in all likelihood.

The current PSA is over 20 years old now and is in desperate need of change. A notable change with the new CSPA will be around ensuring the police discipline system is fairer, and the PAO is at the table for conversations about regulations that will govern various areas of the Act. The new Special Investigations Unit Act (SIU Act) came into force in December 2020 and, once the few remaining cases from 2019 and 2020 are cleared, the PAO is committed to holding the SIU to account to ensure the 120-day investigation time limits are met. This is critical to the well-being of our members, those involved in the matter, and transparency of the system to the public.

As I provide these updates about the PAO's recent efforts on your behalf, I have a duty to look to the future. It is with somewhat of a heavy heart and sadness that I announce I will be retiring from my position as your provincial President in June of this year. It has been an amazing six years at the PAO and I hope I have helped make a difference to you in your careers – whether on the road or in the office, whether you are a civilian or a sworn police personnel member of the PAO. We have now welcomed back the Ontario Provincial Police Association into our membership and currently represent 46 member associations with over 28,000 members on the local level. Trust me when I say our voices are being heard throughout the province and we are stronger together. I want to thank the PAO staff for their dedication and commitment to the membership. Stephen, Sarah, Michael, Heather and Karen work cohesively behind the scenes to deliver high quality support, resource and guidance to our local associations. From our non-stop communications strategies to our evidence-based data to discussions on police and legislation in support of our positions, their efforts are critical to the successes the PAO has

had and will continue to have going forward. We will transition to a new President this June after elections are held during the Annual General Meeting, and I am confident that they will continue the great work that has been done along with our highly-motivated team of staff.

One of the most important steps the PAO will be looking to take this year will surround the organization's continued service to policing retirees. Strategies will be developed about how the PAO can best support our long serving and dedicated members who spend their careers protecting our communities in so many ways. We counted on our retirees to help get the message out when the previous provincial government introduced the Safer Ontario Act, and we will continue to engage them on important issues for the membership going forward. Even though they may not get up every day to uphold public safety in their community, their wealth of experience and knowledge is invaluable and the PAO would like to further support them. I am optimistic of more news throughout the year on this important initiative.

I close my article in the same way I have done over the past few years – with some encouraging words on the need to look after yourself, each other and your families and friends. This career is challenging, now more than ever, and it's imperative that we have each other's back. Sometimes, it's ok not to be ok. Recognize it and reach out if you are in need of assistance or you feel like a colleague may be struggling. It is time to end the stigma, and we will only be successful in doing so if we work together.

Be safe and be well. ♥

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# Economic Arguments Are the Best Defence Against Bumper Sticker Politics

## *Knowing How Your Budget Stacks Up Against Other Line Items Can Strengthen Your Case Against Calls to ‘Defund’ the Police*

Stephen Reid, PAO Executive Director



In recent months, Police Association Leaders and Chiefs have needed to adopt a more publicly engaging and proactive approach with local and provincial politicians in response to ongoing calls to ‘defund’ the police. This has included regularly explaining that cutting police budgets makes zero sense unless all levels of government invest more in line items that support programs for vulnerable and marginalized communities, especially in areas with higher crime rates.

Several police services and associations have had to remind some of their local politicians that recent funding of social programs as a whole need to be reviewed within their communities, as such a review would inevitably reveal that the system cannot sustain any more cuts to police over and above what is occurring now. A local

police service is currently the only 24/7 support service in place in many municipalities across the province for an increasing number of people that, unfortunately, find themselves to be in dire need of help.

Reviewing a municipality’s Financial Information Return (FIR) reports are a helpful exercise to understand how various public services are being supported. For instance, the City of Timmins FIR report indicates the municipality has allocated around 1% or less towards public health support programs every year between 2016 to 2019. Over that same time period, the police service budget has remained at 12% of the total budget while the Crime Severity Index (the StatsCan formula that allocates a weighted score of crime – from low crime to high crime) has grown from 95 to 137 over those four years.

American author and well-known podcast commentator on current issues, Mr. Sam Harris, who often challenges quick fixes to social problems from multiple viewpoints, has been openly critical of ‘defunding’ police advocates and the concept of ‘either/or’ solutions as they could, if implemented, hurt vulnerable and marginalized communities the most. He argues that shifting dollars from police budgets to support social programs and healthcare is only addressing part of social ills that plague some communities, and that less police on the street will provide additional opportunities for crime to be committed.

Waterloo Regional Police Service is another example of what ‘defunding’ the police could look like for other Ontario municipalities. Every year, between 2014 and 2019, the WRPS police budget

experienced a 1% reduction in funding. Those who suggest this is a small amount that police services can afford to save without compromising public safety need to take a look at what has happened over these six years. During this period, Waterloo Region's population grew by 9%, the Crime Severity Index grew by 31% and the Violent Crime Severity Index grew 70%. While social service and health budgets remained stable at 30% and 6% respectively to keep pace with population growth, there was no impact on crime reduction and the result is exhausting the front-lines with a greater volume of calls and no additional headcount.

At a recent Barrie Police Services Board meeting, local councillor and camera-seeking 'defund' the police supporter Keenan Aylwin continued with a line of attack using the bumper

sticker slogan while demanding Barrie Police find a way to do more with less and divert police funds towards local social support programs. The Barrie Police Chief's response to this suggestion was the same as many other police leaders have been adopting over the past few months – local council needs to develop a balanced funding approach, otherwise the societal challenges will simply be shifted from police to another public service without ever making a solid effort to address the issues at their core.

We are more effective increasing the economic arguments of why policing is important to communities, because 'defunding' the police is, and continues to be, a branding exercise that still has no real product. ♥

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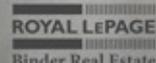
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# PAO Advocates for COVID-19 Vaccine Prioritization for Ontario's Front-Line



Image courtesy of the Brantford Police Association

This past year has been exceptionally challenging for Ontario's sworn and civilian police personnel. All other factors aside, the COVID-19 pandemic has imposed an increased level of pressure and risk on the profession that has never been experienced by our active members.

When COVID-19 vaccinations started being approved by Health Canada and distribution plans were initially developed by Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health and the provincial health table, police and fire were originally placed into phase two of the vaccination campaign. Phase one rightfully prioritized inoculating those at the highest risk of exposure to the virus, including long-term care personnel and residents as well as health care personnel.

As the second wave of the pandemic began to

have a much more significant impact on the policing profession in early winter, the Police Association of Ontario concurrently ramped up our provincial advocacy efforts surrounding vaccination prioritization for front-line police service members as first responders and essential service providers.

Regular meetings and conversations occurred throughout January and February – sometimes daily – to ensure key decision-makers with the Ministry of the Solicitor General, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Premier's Office were thoroughly briefed on the level of risk our front-line members were facing as well as the outbreaks that had been reported in police services across the province. This was a top priority of the Association in the first quarter of 2021 in collaboration with other policing stakeholders such as the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP).

“At every opportunity, the PAO has communicated the Association's concerns to the provincial government for our members' health and safety as well as overall community safety in regards to COVID-19 transmission and the need for an effective vaccination prioritization plan,” said PAO President Bruce Chapman back in February. “We have confidence that those responsible for executing this plan – both provincially and locally in communities across the province – will recognize the constant risk for exposure faced by our front-line police personnel and ensure they are vaccinated as soon as possible.”

While discussions with the government progressed, the PAO strongly encouraged our member associations throughout the province to work with senior management in their police service towards developing plans to jointly contact the area managers of the public health unit(s) in their region and offer to have police members fill any vaccination appointments that were missed or left vacant. This allowed a small percentage of front-line police personnel to be vaccinated sooner based on their higher levels of risk if their

role included significant public interaction.

On February 25, the PAO issued a member communication officially announcing that our advocacy efforts had been successful – once COVID-19 vaccinations were available, Ontario’s front-line police personnel would be included in the prioritization for their distribution. This was followed by a formal announcement by the Ministry of the Solicitor General through an All Chiefs Memo that was distributed throughout the province on March 1, 2021. Their communication provided much-needed clarification on eligibility for front-line police personnel, and the PAO also sent the memo to our member associations to

ensure the message was disseminated as widely as possible.

At the time of writing this article (mid-March), it is the expectation of the PAO that all Ontario police personnel who are deemed essential service workers will be prioritized for vaccination when phase two begins in April and as vaccines become available. We will continue to advocate for this with the provincial government until we know that every single member has the opportunity to receive the COVID-19 vaccine and is provided further assurances of their health and safety while on the job. ♥

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# Review of OMERS 2020 Financial Results – Q&A Between PAO President Bruce Chapman and OMERS President & CEO Blake Hutcheson



(From left to right: PAO President Bruce Chapman and OMERS President & CEO Blake Hutcheson)

In late February 2021, OMERS publicly released its 2020 financial results and annual report, which indicated that their rate of return in 2020 was minus 2.7%. Understandably, as an OMERS plan sponsor on behalf of the majority of our sworn and civilian police personnel members across the province, the PAO was concerned with this announcement.

In response, meetings were immediately scheduled with Yung Wu, PAO Administration Corporation Representative, George Cooke, Chair, OMERS Administration Corporation Board of Directors and Blake Hutcheson, OMERS President & CEO. Additionally, the PAO requested that Blake engage in a written Q&A interview with PAO President Bruce Chapman regarding last year's results. Their exchange is captured below and aims to provide members with a better understanding of what factors contributed to the plan's performance over the past year, as well as OMERS commitment to all plan members moving forward.

**Bruce:** Blake, I'd like to thank you for participating in this Q&A to help the PAO's sworn and civilian police personnel members, notably those who hold their pension with OMERS, understand the recent announcements regarding the pension plan's performance in 2020.

Let's dive into the questions. We might as well start strong – are you satisfied with the return that OMERS plan members received on their investment in 2020?

**Blake:** The short and definitive answer is – no. Our results in 2020 fell well short of our goals and expectations. Like many businesses, institutions and individuals, this COVID-19 year hit us very hard, and head on.

As CEO, I own the results, and I also own the plan to move us forward. I take this responsibility extremely seriously and can assure you that our entire team is engaged in activities that will

restore the loss from this year, bolster your trust in us and get us back on track producing the results you expect of us.

As we do every year, we've published a detailed annual report with more information about our 2020 results. You can find it at [www.omers.com](http://www.omers.com)

**Bruce:** How did 2020's performance unfold? Since December 31, 2020, how has the plan's performance shifted moving into 2021?

**Blake:** Looking back fifteen months ago, in January 2020, we had just posted a very strong 11.9% return, which was our best result in a decade.

Then, in early 2020 our performance was stressed as markets reacted dramatically to the initial impacts of the pandemic. Many of the blue-chip equities in our portfolio -- high-quality stocks OMERS invests in because they tend to generate stable dividends that are a good match for our pension obligations -- were down substantially early in the year and did not recover by the end of December.

In addition to the market decline of between 30% and 40% in March and April of 2020, we saw a dramatic drop in the Canadian dollar and were warned of a grave concern coming from the highest financial authorities in Canada that a further significant drop was coming. We took a number of actions proactively to enhance and protect the Plan's liquidity from the possibility of further adverse market events -- including reducing our foreign currency hedging positions. These actions achieved their stabilizing objectives, though they also led to currency losses as the Canadian dollar appreciated.

Our consumer-facing retail assets and businesses also suffered as people stayed at home and many businesses were fully, or partially closed. This impacted certain asset values both within our Private Equity portfolio and our Real Estate portfolio -- Oxford Properties.

As things stabilized, we took deliberate action throughout the rest of the year to add value to the portfolio. The last half of 2020 was a significant improvement over the initial hit from the pandemic at the beginning of the year. I just wish we had one more quarter in 2020 -- but a calendar year is a calendar year.

We believe the actions we have taken throughout 2020 and early this year to optimize our investment portfolio and the strategies that underpin it, will allow us to capture the opportunities that we expect to emerge as the pandemic abates and economic activity recovers.

**Bruce:** What are the differences between OMERS and other sizable pension plans such as the Healthcare of Ontario Pension Plan (HOOPP) and the Ontario Teacher's Pension Plan (OTPP) that allowed those plans to recover more quickly and post gains in 2020, if gains are in fact posted?

**Blake:** I completely understand the desire to keep an eye on the results posted by other plans as a point of comparison. I have to admit, I do it too. However, it is important to remember that while we are all defined benefit plans, we are also very different from each other. We have distinct strategies, discount rates, contributions, risk appetites, and asset mixes. In any given year, the results from one plan to another can be very different based on those factors.

So, while it is not appropriate for me to comment on the returns of other plans, I will say that many institutional investors, including some of our peers, make substantial allocations to long government bonds, which performed well last year. Due to their low yields, however, these bonds do not typically meet OMERS investment benchmark and we have only a small allocation to them.

Likewise, technology-enabled growth stocks delivered strong returns in 2020 for those who held them through year-end. OMERS has not meaningfully invested in these stocks as they do not generally pay stable dividends and can be highly speculative. Accordingly, our 2020 returns did not materially benefit from these gains.

Our primary focus remains on our commitment to you and to generating the funds needed to provide pensions to our members. Our investment strategy is designed to do that over time, and while we measure our investment performance annually, we emphasize consistent long-term performance, as pensions are paid over decades. I want you to know that 2020 was one year in our long history, and it will not define us.

**Bruce:** Should OMERS plan members be concerned about their pension's stability? Should they

consider taking their commuted value if eligible?

**Blake:** We wake up every morning to work extremely hard for our 525,000 members and I am confident about our future. We have a diversified portfolio of quality assets, managed by world-class investment teams around the globe. Our portfolio has performed well over time, we have ample liquidity and over \$10 billion of firepower to invest into the global marketplace. In 2020, we paid out more than \$5 billion in benefit payments, and of course we will continue to promptly make all pension payments in 2021 on time and as usual.

In my view, our investment strategies are well positioned to capture the opportunities that we believe will be available once the pandemic abates and economic activity recovers.

As for taking a commuted value (CV) payment, as you know we caution against it. And while I am not in a position to offer investment advice, as everyone's situation is different, I will share a few things to consider. While a CV may appear to be a favourable one-time option in the short term, it is taxed at source and comes with many risks. Members considering this option should ask themselves 2 important questions:

1. Do I really want the responsibility and often high cost of managing my own investments year after year?
2. Will other investment instruments really offer me access to the quality portfolio that OMERS has?

If you choose to transfer your OMERS pension out of the Plan, you assume all responsibility for the management and risk of your investment, you may incur substantive and/or hidden additional costs, and you may not be able to tax-shelter these funds.

An additional potential risk of taking a CV payment is outliving one's savings. With OMERS, you will have a stable income for life. Our entire team is devoted to delivering on it.

**Bruce:** Are OMERS overall financial strategy and leadership team different now than they were at the beginning of 2020?

**Blake:** The fundamentals of our investment

strategy have not changed. We still have strong conviction in a high allocation to private investments (approximately 50% of the portfolio), which has served OMERS well for over a decade. We still prefer safe but higher-yield credit investments over low-yield government bonds. And we are still looking to allocate more money to Asia, where we see terrific long-term growth opportunities.

That said, we are always mindful of changes to the investment landscape and work closely with our Board to pivot where required in the best interest of the Plan and our collective future.

Some of the changes we have made in recent months include elevating new leadership with deep experience and greater diversity across key areas of our business – not only in terms of gender and cultural background, but also industry experience. Specifically, we have new leaders for Capital Markets, Infrastructure and Private Equity, as well as Human Resources and have appointed a new Chief Operating Officer. We believe diversity of thought is a competitive advantage for OMERS, especially as we enter additional jurisdictions seeking new investment opportunities.

We also have promoted a strong Pensions leader who has a seat on the Executive Leadership Team. The Pensions team worked tirelessly under extremely difficult circumstances in 2020 with member satisfaction coming in at 91%.

In tandem with these leadership shifts, we are evolving other aspects of our investment strategy. We are complementing our high-quality dividend-paying public equities with more proven new economy stocks. We are seeking high-quality assets in sectors such as: health-care and technology; high-demand real estate such as logistics, life sciences and cold storage; and low-carbon intensity opportunities, such as renewable energy investments. A recent transaction involving the acquisition of solar power development projects by Leeward Renewable, an OMERS Infrastructure company, is an example of this focus. We have also recently announced our overall commitment to reducing carbon intensity by 20% across the portfolio by 2025. For more information, please see our Sustainable Investing page on [www.omers.com](http://www.omers.com).

**Bruce:** Thank you for answering these questions on behalf of our police personnel members who hold their pension with OMERS, Blake. We

Investing page on [www.omers.com](http://www.omers.com).

**Bruce:** Thank you for answering these questions on behalf of our police personnel members who hold their pension with OMERS, Blake. We greatly appreciate you taking the time to address OMERS' 2020 financial results and your commitments for moving forward on behalf of all OMERS plan members. Do you have anything you'd like to share with the PAO membership to conclude this Q&A?

**Blake:** I want to thank you sincerely for giving me the opportunity to address these questions with you directly.

On behalf of the entire OMERS team, I would like to express our sincere gratitude for everything that PAO members are doing to keep the rest of us safe and our communities functioning on so many important levels. We are honoured to serve those who are serving Ontarians so well and so faithfully.

As the new CEO of OMERS in 2020, I am particularly excited about working with you closely in the years ahead. I have the utmost respect for your professional commitment and purpose. Thank you on behalf of all of us! ♥



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# 2021 PAO Virtual Employment Conference – Record Attendance, Engaging Topics

The 30th Annual PAO Employment Conference was held at the beginning of March. This preeminent conference on police labour relations is unique as it brings together police association representatives, management and other stakeholders from across the country to discuss emerging workplace issues related to the policing profession. As labour relations in the public safety sector are constantly changing, police association executives, service boards, chiefs, and managers need to be aware of the latest trends to do their jobs effectively.

The 2020 Employment Conference was held just prior to the pandemic being declared in Canada last year, so given the ongoing provincial public health orders, 2021 was the first time this particular event was not held in-person in its 30-year history. Though webcasts have been known to present some challenges, we are pleased to report that this conference was a great success with the virtual platform running smoothly, the continued ability for speakers to interact with one another and engage in lively debates on the agenda topics, and a record-setting number of attendees joining in over the two-day event.

This year, the PAO was thrilled to have Nini

Jones with Paliare Roland Rosenberg Rothstein LLP and Richard Baldwin with Mathews Dinsdale & Clark LLP co-chair the event. Nini and Richard did a fantastic job curating a rich agenda filled with relevant and engaging topics. Attendees were provided with comprehensive updates and encouraged to ask questions regarding many crucial issues in the police employment world, such as:

- The COVID-19 pandemic
- Human rights
- Collective bargaining
- Systemic discrimination
- Police activity and discipline
- Probationary employees
- Labour law
- And more

We welcomed a robust and well-versed group of speakers during this year's event to discuss the above topics, including Lynda Bordeleau with Perley-Robertson, Hill & McDougall LLP; Anne Cumming, Counsel with the Toronto Police Association; Michael Duffy, Policy & Research Counsel with the Police Association of Ontario; Donald Jarvis with Filion Wakely Thorup Angeletti LLP; Elizabeth Keenan with Mathews Dins-



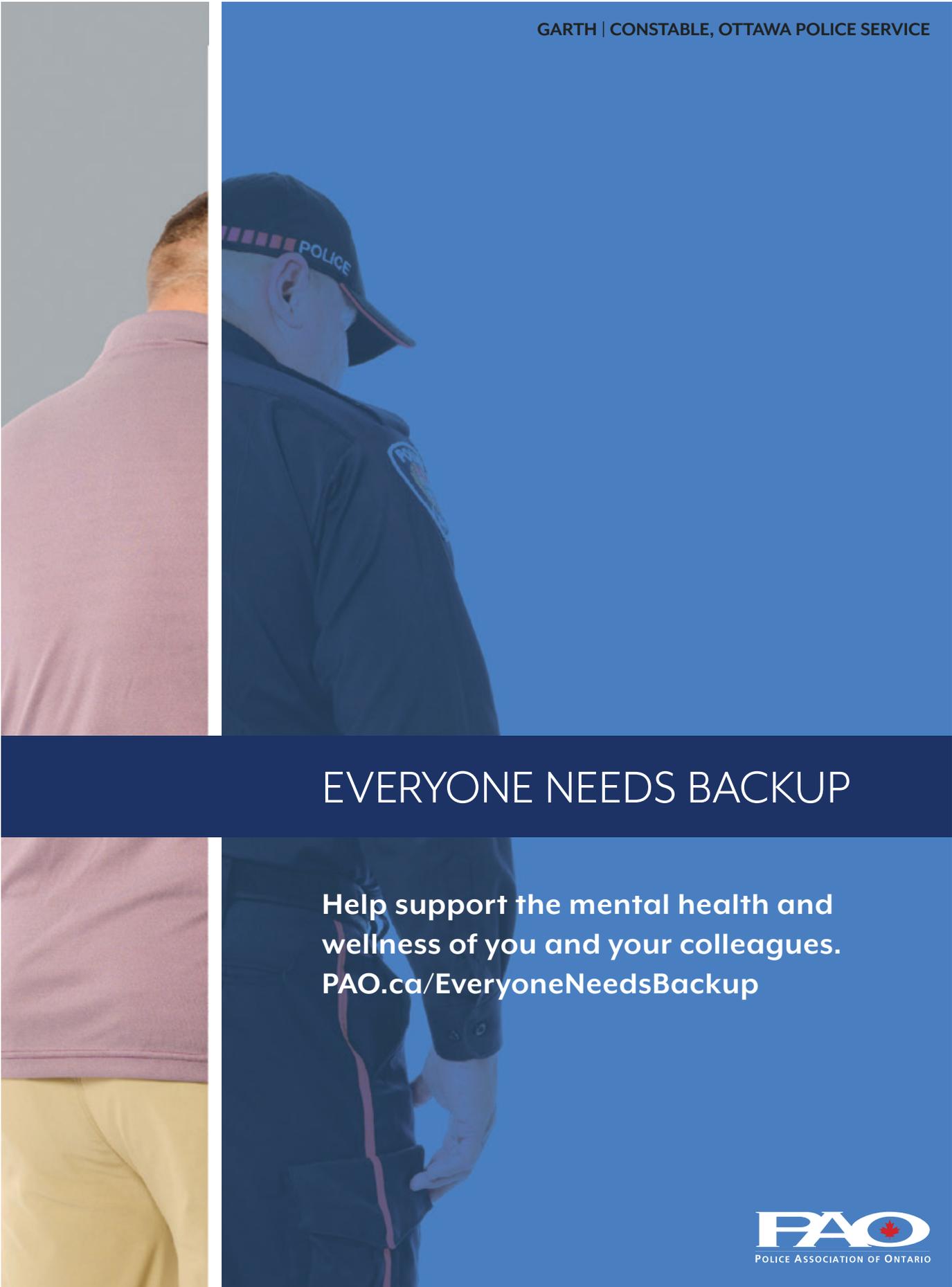
dale & Clark LLP; Jodi Martin with Paliare Roland Rosenberg Rothstein LLP; Joanne Mulcahy with Harry G. Black Professional Corporation; Sonia Regenbogen with Mathews Dinsdale & Clark LLP; and, Katie Rowen with Ursel Phillips Fellows Hopkinson LLP.

As this is a labour-related conference, we were honoured to have Ontario's Minister of Labour, the Honourable Monte McNaughton, provide opening remarks to our 2021 attendees on behalf of the provincial government. Axon Canada, one of the PAO's corporate partners, delivered a valuable presentation to attendees focused on perception vs reality in regards to police technology and equipment, and the importance of

technological modernization within police services. Additionally, another one of the PAO's corporate partners, The Co-Operators Group, provided some fantastic virtual door prizes to our attendees. We thank them both.

Again, the PAO wishes to extend a huge thank you to our 2021 Employment Conference co-chairs Nini Jones and Richard Baldwin, our honoured speakers and all attendees for helping to make this year's virtual event a success. We remain optimistic that we might be able to gather in-person for next year's 31st Annual Employment Conference, and we look forward to working towards it.♥





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# Spotlight on Mental Health & Wellness Services: Badge of Life Canada



Kim Inglis, Volunteer Submission on Behalf of Badge of Life Canada

**B**adge of Life Canada is a peer-led, charitable organization committed to supporting police and corrections personnel who are dealing with psychological injuries diagnosed from service. Our programs are open to ALL First Responders, active or retired, sworn or civilian. If you need help, we are here for you.

We believe the best approach starts with cultivating the right environment.

At Badge of Life Canada we understand first-hand what it is like to cope with psychological trauma. We come from lived experience so we can empathize with the feeling of isolation and lack of trust that can accompany such issues. We also understand the dynamics that this can present both in the workplace and at home. It is what drives us to press forward and help those in need, and it is what makes us unique.

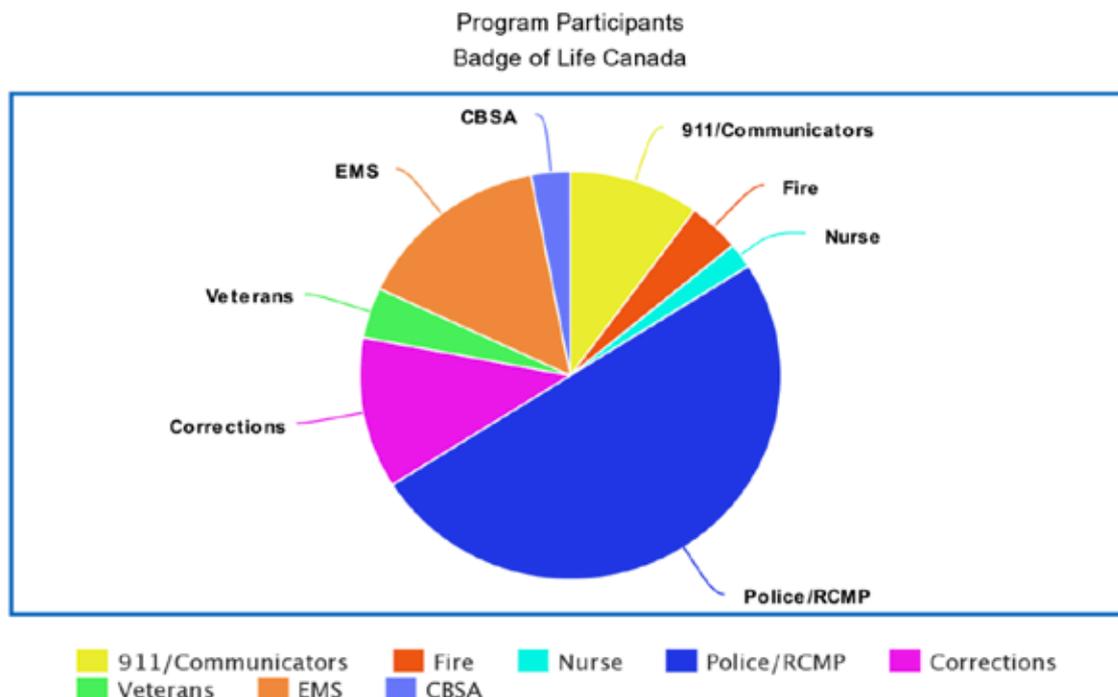
We are very proud to have already helped more

than 500 First Responders, and we have received worldwide recognition for our work.

All of our programs use evidence-based approaches and are led by mental health professionals, chaplains, and lived experience peers who are trained in peer support. We provide the right environment for you to begin your healing journey.

We offer four main programs:

- Weekly virtual psychoeducational peer sessions. These sessions are open to ALL First Responders dealing with an operational stress issue and provide a great resource for those wanting professional weekly guidance. Participants register via our website and a virtual Zoom link is sent out each week.
- Hero's Call and S.O.L.E. Sistas – 19-week comprehensive programs. These programs fo-



cus on psychoeducation that is facilitated within a peer support structure. The first two weeks feature virtual online meetings, followed by a one-week in-person retreat, and then 16 weeks of virtual aftercare. Ten weeks of online support sessions for spouses are included. A key component of this program is our team building aspect as it helps foster healthy connections that support you through the process. We model positive post-traumatic growth while incorporating group activities such as equine assisted learning, high-ropes courses and hiking, all practiced in safe environments.

• S.E.R.V.A.N.T. Leadership course. We collaborate with key stakeholders including the Ontario Provincial Police, delivering educational programming to a variety of supervisors including Chief Superintendents. We help increase awareness of operational stress injuries, moral risks of policing, sanctuary trauma, perceived injustice, toxic work environments, compassion, fatigue and burnout.

Our website connects you with licensed therapists across the country, crisis resources, self-care coping tools and alternative support systems, including service dog and equine information. We also have links to podcasts and education for family members.

Our goal is to prevent members from becoming statistics. We want to help you create healthy connections and tools so that you can ultimately find your tribe, your passion, and where you belong. You are not alone. We are here to help you.

Badge of Life Canada is operated entirely by volunteers. We do not have staff or salaries, so that 100% of our proceeds go directly to assisting those who need our help. If you're a reader who does not need assistance but would like to volunteer, please contact us directly.

To learn more about our programs and access our resources, please visit [www.badgeoflifecanada.org](http://www.badgeoflifecanada.org) or email [info@badgeoflifecanada.org](mailto:info@badgeoflifecanada.org). ♥

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# Spotlight on Mental Health & Wellness Services: The Haven



Michelle Vincent, MACP/PhD Candidate, Retired YRP Police Officer –  
The Haven Founder/Director

Imagine, you have just come home from a rough day at work. Another death and this one is hitting home. You can't face your family so you stay out in the garage and have a few drinks. The liquid burns as it goes down, however you know the relief is coming. Your supervisor reprimanded you for taking too long on that call and your platoon mates, you feel, are talking behind your back. You just couldn't leave that scene for some reason... there was something about this routine death that hit a chord deep from within. As you sit, images wrack your mind. There is nowhere to go, no one to call. You are distraught... and then it comes to you. Wasn't there something about a place called The Haven? You heard some talk about it on morning parade. A place to connect with peers in-house or from home, where their work is exclusive to First Responders and Uniform Personnel. A quick google for The Haven and your call is answered by their 24/7 crisis hotline. There is a bed available if needed. Outpatient resources as well if that is preferable. Let's get help started.

This situation could have a much different ending and, to this day, it has for so many. Suicides are an unfortunate prevalence in the world of policing and The Haven wants to help change this outcome. Suicide amongst our Police Officers and Civilians is a significant issue, as are the serious mental health issues we experience as a result of our occupational and organizational critical incidents. We are all too familiar with the statistics – 44.5% of Public Safety Personnel screen positive for clinically significant mental health issues (Carleton et al, 2018) and that number increases as we continue to research. However, did you know that when First Responders perceive strong social supports within their organization and family environment, the likelihood of developing operational stress injuries, such as PTSD, is much lower?

The Haven will be Ontario's first and only non-profit, occupational-specific, inpatient treatment centre exclusive to First Responders and Uniform Personnel. It will be situated on an oasis of

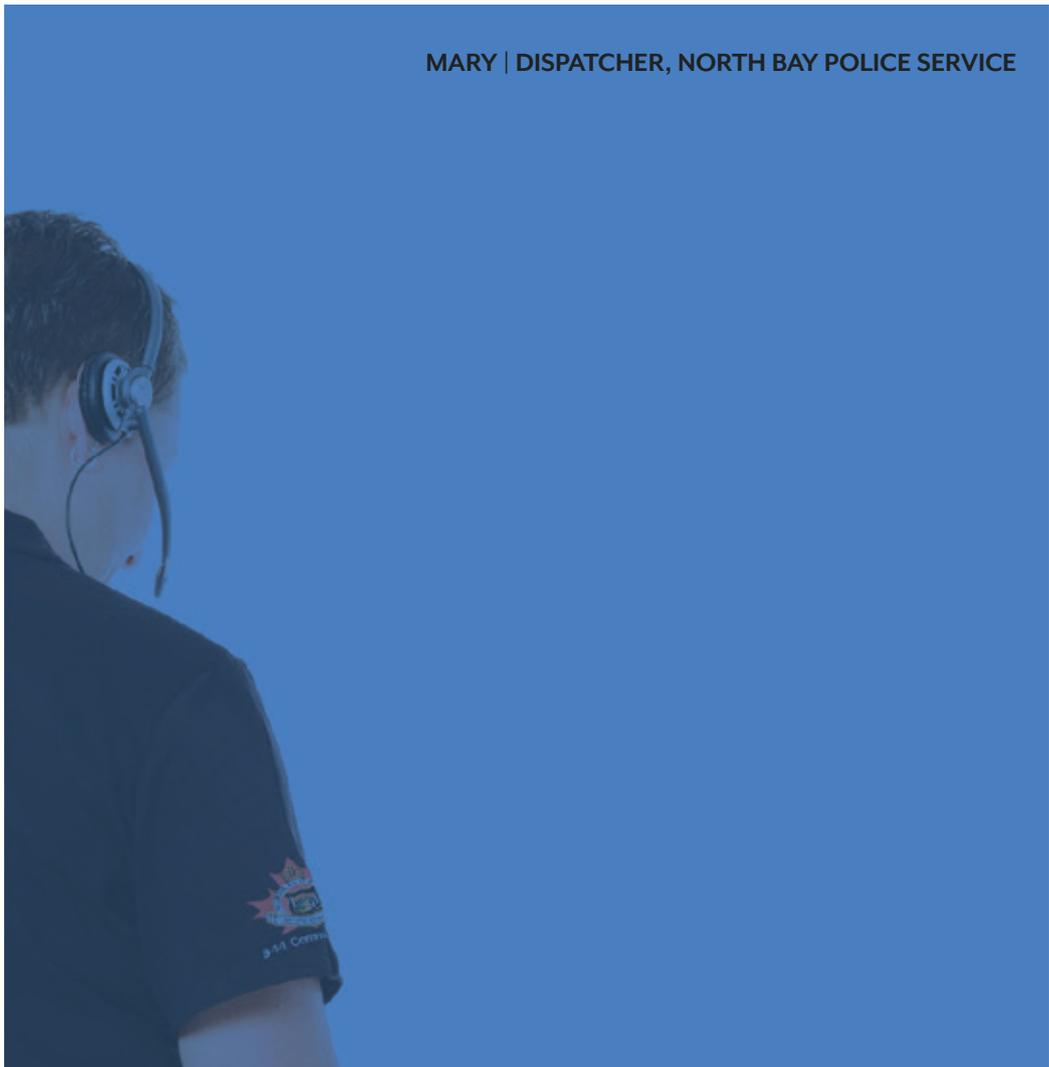
acreage in a home-like setting on a remote farm, offering equine/canine therapy and a variety of evidence-based programming such as cognitive behavioural therapy, dialectical behavioural therapy, exposure therapy – all delivered through a mindfulness lens. Research from an outside educational agency will be ongoing at The Haven to ensure our practices are effective. The Haven will welcome clients with addictions as well as mental health issues as it will be supervised by a Psychiatrist and medical staff. A peer-supported environment throughout your experience with The Haven and an in-depth reintegration program will be offered by specially-selected, trained Peers to ensure you are always supported in your return to your family, community and work when ready.

The Haven originates from a life-saving organization in Quebec called La Vigile, founded and directed by 33-year Police Veteran, Jacques Denis Simard. La Vigile is offered in French only and we are very excited and proud to start providing our services in both official languages, English and French.

Our business model is tri-funded, with monies coming from private/corporate sponsors, the government and our organizations/associations partnerships. This is why we need your support in the promotion of this life-saving organization. Our costs are less than half the cost of for-profits and with organizational/association support, those costs may be minimized for those participating. Finally, there will be multiple The Haven builds nationwide so we can eliminate waitlists, gathering of funds and the necessity for WSIB approval prior to being accepted. Located near Pearson International Airport, The Haven will be completely accessible to our members from remote areas.

For members by members, consider mentioning The Haven to your ECT/Association President so we can begin serving Ontario's police personnel! ♥

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# 2021 Election for PAO President – Candidate Profile: Mark Baxter, Brantford



On June 3rd, police association leaders from across Ontario will cast their ballots to elect a new president of the Police Association of Ontario (PAO) for a three-year term. I am confident I have the necessary experience, knowledge and skills to fill this role.

I have been committed to representing police personnel since 2012 when I was first elected as vice-president of the Brantford Police Association (BPA). Three years later, I was elected as BPA president, a position I still hold today.

I was first elected as a PAO uniform director in 2014, and two years later, chosen by my peers on the board to be the PAO Chair. Over the past seven years, I have served on, and been actively engaged with, all PAO committees which has allowed me to develop an in-depth understanding of all provincial issues. In addition to my work on those committees, I am the Co-Chair of the Section 21 provincial Health and Safety Committee and am also a Commission member of the Ontario Police Arbitration Commission.

As president of a mid-sized police association, I am on the front-lines of all association related matters. This includes assisting members when the SIU is called, and when members are served with OIPRD and Chief's complaints. I know firsthand the toll working during a pandemic takes on members; how the unrelenting criticism from special interest groups wears on one's psyche; and how trying to show compassion and exercise discretion while

a "concerned citizen" films your every move, can complicate the simplest of calls. As an officer working the front-line, I continually face the same tough challenges you do, and this can only make me a stronger advocate.

During my five years as PAO chair, I have gained significant experience meeting with government, including Cabinet Ministers and key personnel responsible for drafting legislation. I understand the importance of a solid and respectful working relationship with elected officials, and their staff, to ensure the PAO is in a position to effectively influence policy. This experience and familiarity with key government officials will allow me to build upon the solid foundation set by President Chapman.

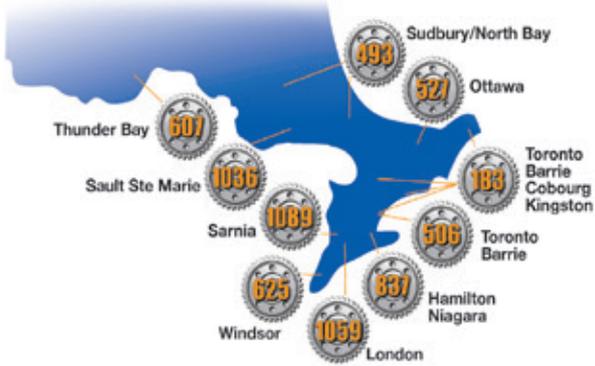
My in-depth understanding of current PAO issues along with established relationships, both inside and outside the PAO, will allow for a seamless transition. I will continue to advance the PAO's priorities with respect to the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act; and will continue to be engaged and bring a front-line policing perspective to the technical tables for the regulations.

Experience has taught me that it is important to deliver a proactive front-line police perspective to the citizens we serve. We cannot let ill advised and kneejerk calls to defund the police dominate the media. I will ensure the PAO is a leading voice of support for promoting professional policing and safe communities in Ontario.

As an officer working the front-line, I am living the same challenges our members must face every day. It is an important part of who I am, and will make me a stronger advocate on their behalf. I look forward to advocating on behalf of all Ontario's police personnel from every corner of the province. Your issues – whether arising from an urban core to a rural town; whether civilian or sworn; and everything in between – will become my issues. I will ensure your voice, the PAO voice, is strong and respected with all stakeholders, especially those at Queen's Park.

Sincerely, Mark Baxter

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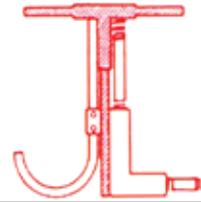
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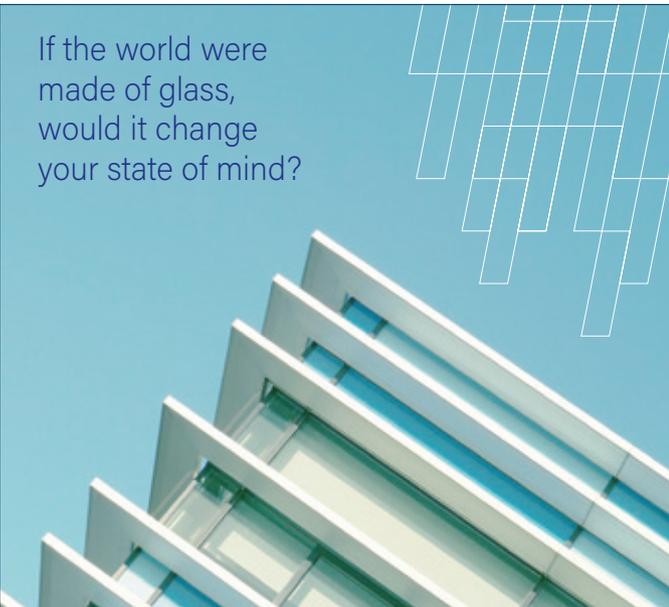
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# 2021 Election for PAO President – Candidate Profile: Clint Twolan, Hamilton



I'm Clint Twolan and I am seeking your support for the position of President of the Police Association of Ontario ("PAO").

In June of this year, the PAO membership, through their local Boards, will be making a very important decision. Member Boards will be selecting a new leader who will be responsible for guiding the PAO over the next three years and beyond. Policing faces unique challenges – budget cuts, privatization, negative narratives, and others. Our profession's provincial voice, the PAO, requires an individual with proven leadership experience. The appointment of the next President is one of the most important decisions our Membership will make in recent years.

I served the members of the Hamilton Police Association ("HPA") for nine years, holding the following positions: Police Director, Vice President, Secretary Treasurer, and six years as President. Presently, I am on Patrol as a road Sergeant experiencing the challenges faced by our front line Officers and Civilians. I love being on the road, but I am equally passionate about Association business and that work is not complete.

I have extensive experience and knowledge of administrative responsibilities of Associations, such as drafting and administrating collective agreements, bylaws, policies, and budgets, as well as navigating the many legal issues policing faces. As President, I was responsible for operating the HPA offices which included oversight of four full-time staff, budgeting and the overall financial health of the organization.

I have represented our Police members in PSA investigations and hearings to ensure fair outcomes.

I have guided Officers in SIU investigations, ensuring they clearly articulate the lawful reasons for their actions. I have represented Civilians in the disciplinary process. I have overseen Civilian grievances to ensure that my members were properly compensated when deserved.

I have extensive experience with the media. I have done live radio interviews. I have interviewed for local television. I have spoken in a media 'scrum'. I have done countless print/online media interviews. I have taken each of these opportunities to defend not just my members but the policing profession as a whole.

Each of these qualifications is a must for the leader of our Provincial organization. These are qualities that are required on day one, and I have demonstrated proficiencies in each.

President Chapman, the PAO Board and PAO Staff have positioned our organization incredibly well. I plan to build on their great work. The Policing profession faces unprecedented criticism. My plan is to counter this by implementing a positive, pro-Police narrative. This can be achieved by utilizing the extensive reach of social media platforms, along with traditional media sources. I will continue to expand our media program, highlighting the incredible work our members do every day. The PAO Board, and Membership, will guide this process.

Member services and advocacy are the two pillars of the PAO. My experience with budgeting and finances has positioned me well to lead the PAO and evolve the role of Member Services. I will expand legal advocacy for small and medium Associations as we know that legal outcomes can have a trickle up effect; what happens to any Police Officer or Civilian affects all of us.

I am a self-motivated problem solver. When presented with a problem, I find a solution. My work has proven this. My approach is simple: be prepared, be methodical, and be professional. I adhere to an introspective and consistent approach. This is what the PAO needs in a leader at this critical juncture.

Ensure your Board's vote is cast for the best qualified person. Vote for Clint Twolan to ensure the best representation for our 28,000 members.

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# 2021 Election for PAO Sworn Board Director – Candidate Profile: Cameron Gough, Kingston



spectrum of policing practice, allowing me to have conversations and make decisions based on lived experience.

I was first elected to the Kingston Police Association in 2012 as a Sworn Director. I was then elected Vice-President, and President six years ago. I have been involved with and led several collective agreement bargaining sessions, numerous grievance processes, member wellness initiatives, and efforts to improve member morale and workplace conditions.

Currently, the PAO is the strongest I have ever seen it. I truly believe that we are stronger together, with the goal of one voice to represent police personnel, sworn and civilian, in Ontario.

The PAO has worked hard to assist the KPA on several issues, and I hope to be able to work hard for the PAO, representing the entire Provincial membership at the Provincial level. Some of my experience with the PAO includes bringing issues to the attention of local Presidents to gain support for members, being the Secretary for the PAO PACAP Committee, and more.

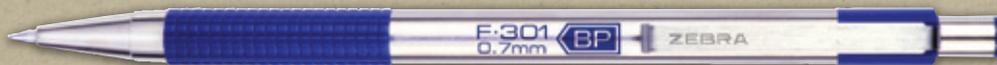
I take pride in my service and Association work at the local level, and I hope that you will encourage your local Association Executive to vote for me in June as a PAO Sworn Director. Thank you for your consideration, and please have your local Association contact me with any questions.

**M**y name is Cameron Gough. I have been the President of the Kingston Police Association for almost six years and am seeking your support for a Sworn Director position on the PAO Board.

My policing experience began when I was hired by Kingston Police in 2002. I have worked in Patrol, on the Tactical Unit, and Criminal Investigations including Major Crimes. I am now a Sergeant in Court Services. I have a wide

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# PAO

## Upcoming Events Calendar

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Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the majority of the Police Association of Ontario's scheduled meetings and workshops for 2021 have been moved to virtual platforms.

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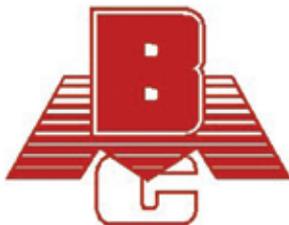
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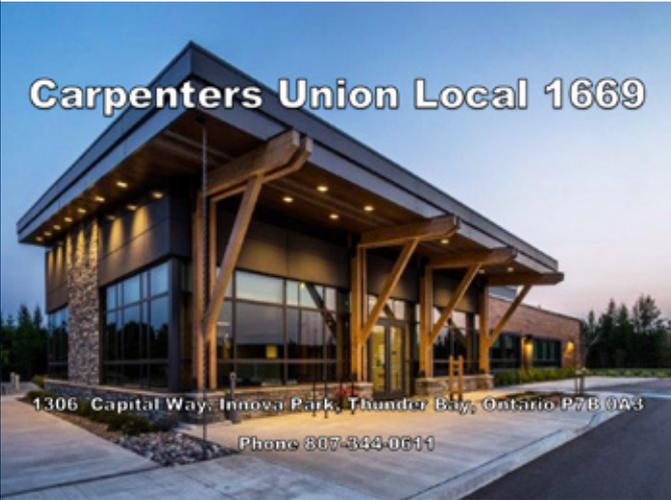


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