



Haldimand County Police Services Board
53 Thorburn Street South
Cayuga, ON N0A 1E0

August 27, 2020

Ministry of the Solicitor General
18th Floor
25 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, ON
M7A 1Y6

ATTN: The Honorable Sylvia Jones, Solicitor General, Ministry of the Solicitor General – Ontario
CC: Thomas Carrique, Commissioner, Ontario Provincial Police
John Cain, Chief Superintendent / Regional Commander, Ontario Provincial Police – West
Region

Dear Madam Solicitor General,

As you are aware, over the course of the past several weeks there has been an illegal occupation/protest of a development site in Haldimand County as well as occupations of municipal roads, Provincial Highway and a railway corridor. These activities are having significant impacts on the community, causing uncertainty about the future and much frustration for residents. These frustrations and concerns have been shared by residents with members of the Police Services Board (PSB).

The Haldimand County Police Services Board (PSB) establishes priorities, objectives and policies regarding policing in Haldimand County, in consultation with the Detachment Commander and Haldimand County Council. The rights and responsibilities of the PSB are legislated and outlined in the [Police Services Act](#), as a Section 10 Board.

The PSB recognizes that legally, its role is not to direct police operations. Rather, the PSB's role is to serve as a conduit to the wider community and provide an avenue for communication between community members and the OPP.

With respect to the current occupation of the McKenzie Meadows development and the regular blockades of municipal roadways by protestors, both the PSB and residents of Haldimand County have significant concerns about the adequacy and effectiveness of the OPP in maintaining public safety and upholding the rule of law. Acting as the 'voice' of Haldimand County residents on matters of policing, the PSB feels the need to further articulate the community's level of distress and raise a number of key concerns.

The key concerns of the broader community and PSB are:

- 1) The OPP is not upholding the law and allowing illegal activities (e.g. trespassing, vandalism, intimidation, mischief, equipment theft, property damage) to continue even after judicial orders have been given to prohibit this – on top of authorities that already exist under law.
- 2) The OPP was not prepared to address the McKenzie Meadows occupation upon approval of the initial injunction, despite having experience with similar occupations in the community. Not being prepared for the response to the enforcement of the initial injunction allowed the situation to escalate and result in blockades of municipal roadways, provincial highways and railway corridors.
- 3) Despite deploying additional staff resources in the community during the occupation of the development lands and provincial/municipal roadways, the OPP has not distributed resources adequately to anticipate and address traffic management, truck traffic and speeding – all of which have resulted in significant impacts to community health & safety.
- 4) The OPP did not provide sufficient resources to ensure the safety of municipal first responders, the protection of their equipment and the ability to perform their critical functions (e.g. extinguishing burning tires placed on roadways).
- 5) The court processes used to address illegal activities were not effectively followed by the Ontario Provincial Police. If the OPP executed the orders of the court in a competent manner, protesters would have been removed from the development site, roadways and railway corridor. Further, the OPP did not lay any charges for Mischief or Intimidation under the Criminal Code of Canada – charges that would be substantiated by glaring evidence (e.g. willful destruction of property and blocking public roadways). This is extremely concerning, as the OPP's inaction and failure to execute orders of the court provide no deterrent to individuals who continue to flaunt or disobey the law.

The Police Services Board recognizes that actions taken by the OPP in response to the McKenzie Meadows occupation and blockade of Argyle St. are the result of decisions not at the local detachment level, but higher up in the OPP's chain of command. The failure to understand the local circumstances and past history in our opinion has contributed to these issues.

As such, the PSB is requesting that the Solicitor General – or another designated official from the Ministry of the Solicitor General – attend an upcoming Police Services Board meeting to discuss the aforementioned concerns. The PSB has also requested that the OPP's senior officials – namely, Thomas Carrique, Commissioner of the OPP and John Cain, Chief Superintendent / Regional Commander of the OPP (West Region), the Bureau Commander of Indigenous Relations and the Major Critical Incident Commander responsible for this incident – be present to address these issues.



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The next Police Services Board meeting is scheduled for:

Wednesday, September 23 at 9:30am
Community Boardroom – OPP Detachment, Cayuga
72 Hwy 54, Cayuga, ON N0A 1E0

It is imperative that these concerns are addressed in a timely manner and even more critical that the OPP uphold the rule of law and maintain peace, order and stability within Haldimand County.

The PSB would appreciate a response to this meeting request by Thursday, September 17.

Respectfully,

Haldimand County Police Services Board

Bernie Corbett (Board Chair) – Haldimand County Council Member
Dan Lawrence – Haldimand County Council Council Member
Brian Haggith (Vice Chair) – Community Member
Kerry Boon – Provincial Member

cc. Ken Hewitt – Mayor, Haldimand County