

OPENING REMARKS FOR BUDGET PRESENTATION – January 29, 2016

Mayor Brown and Members of Council, we appreciate the opportunity to come before you today to provide further background and answer questions about the proposed police services budget for 2016 to 2019. This year marks the first time we appear before you in the new four-year budget process. I extend our thanks to staff who worked with us to understand the new process and to position our budget appropriately. We know the police budget is one of the most significant investments council will make in our community. Witness the fact that we have all hands on deck today to listen to your debate and to answer any questions you may have. I'm joined in chambers today by board members Paolatto and Deeb, Chief Pare, DCs Williams and Longworth, and Director Kim Darling. Following my brief remarks, I'll turn the podium over to Chief Pare to provide further background on the business case for the budget before you. Mr. Paolatto will conclude our presentation from his perspective as Budget Chair. We will then field any questions you have.

I would make three points before I hand the podium over to Chief Pare.

First, all of us sitting in chambers today are members of the public served by the London Police Service. We all have a sense of the kind of city we want to live in. We all want our police service to provide adequate services to our community and to do so in an efficient manner. However, under the Ontario Police Services Act, it is the London Police Services Board – Mayor Brown, Councillor Turner, Council Appointee Paolatto and provincial appointees Mr. Deeb and I – who are charged with bringing forth a budget to achieve this. The budget details you have received and the further information on the business case you will hear today represent the budget that has been diligently debated and is supported by this Board.

Second, to help you make an informed decision for our community, we provided Council with a significant level of detail on the business case for our budget. Chief Pare will provide further information. However, I would emphasize that, once Council provides a total number for the Police budget, it will be the Board and our Senior administration who will decide the final allocation of these funds.

Finally, as you consider the police budget, I would ask that you not conflate or confuse events in other communities and other police services with our local situation. We're all aware of debates in Toronto and other communities about inefficiencies in their police service. Based on my understanding of these debates, I can tell you that many of the concerns they raise were dealt with a long time ago by your police service. Chief Pare and his staff, and those who came before them, have worked diligently to achieve many efficiencies that we should be proud of. However, it is this same striving for an efficient service that leaves what might be too lean a machine for the challenges you will hear about in a few minutes.

On that note, I pass the podium on to Chief Pare.