



NIAGARA REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE

Police Service Board Report

CONFIDENTIAL AGENDA

Subject: Special Investigations Unit – Case Number 23-OCD-166 – Incident of May 3, 2023

Report To: Chair and Members, Niagara Police Service Board

Report Date: 2024-11-20

Confidential Report

Confidential Report with respect to the legal matter of an identifiable individual – *Community Safety and Policing Act 2019, s. 44(2)(b)* “personal matters about an identifiable individual, including members of the police service or any other employees of the board” and *Community Safety and Policing Act 2019, s.44(2)(e)* “litigation or potential litigation affecting the Board, including matters before administrative tribunals.”

Recommendation(s)

That the Niagara Police Service Board (Board) receives this report for information and makes the report available to the public.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to advise the Board of the findings and any action taken or recommended by the Chief of Police following a notification and investigation of an incident by the Special Investigations Unit (SIU). Ontario Regulation 268/10, Section 32 under the Police Services Act requires that the Chief of Police initiate an investigation following a notification to the SIU.
- The purpose of the Chief's investigation is to review the policies of, or services provided by the police force and the conduct of its police officers.
- On May 4, 2023, a notification was made to the SIU regarding a male who had suffered medical distress while uniform officers were present and ultimately passed away.
- On September 16, 2024, the SIU notified the Service that their investigation had concluded and advised that there were no grounds for criminal charges against the subject officials.
- The subsequent Section 32 investigation by the Professional Standards Unit (PSU) determined there were no issues with respect to officer conduct, policies or services provided by the Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS).

Financial Considerations

There are no financial implications relating to the recommendations contained in this report.

Analysis

On Wednesday May 3, 2023, at 11:34 p.m., members of the NRPS were dispatched to attend an address in St. Catharines regarding an unwanted person who was reported to be high on drugs.

Two officers arrived on scene and had an interaction with a male in the residence. The male, who was acting irrationally, accompanied the officers outside at their request. Once outside, the male became increasingly disruptive and caused a disturbance. The officer's attempted to arrest the male and placed him in handcuffs. A few moments later the male was observed to be in medical distress. The handcuffs were removed, and an ambulance was requested. Narcan was administered at the scene. The male was transported to the hospital.

The SIU was contacted and invoked their mandate.

On May 7, 2023, the NRPS was advised by the coroner that the male had been pronounced deceased.

The SIU designated eight members of the Service as witness officials.

Two members were designated as subject officials.

On September 16, 2024, the SIU closed its investigation into this matter. In his decision letter, SIU Director, Mr. Joseph Martino wrote "The file has been closed and no further action is contemplated. In my view, there were no reasonable grounds in the evidence to proceed with criminal charges against the subject officials."

A copy of the SIU report was publicly posted on the SIU's website.

In accordance with Ontario Regulation 268/10, Section 32, the Service's PSU conducted an investigation and review of this incident which considered the following three areas:

1. The policies of the Police Service;
2. The services provided by the Police Service; and
3. The conduct of its police officers.

The Section 32 investigation encompassed a compliance review of applicable provincial legislation which governs members of the Service, as well as General Orders, policies and procedures, and the conduct of the involved officers.

Where available, investigations include a review of communications recordings, Service occurrence reports, forensic evidence and reports, officer interviews conducted by the SIU and all duty book notes, SIU documentation including the Director's conclusion letter and investigative report, statements of civilian witnesses gathered and released by the SIU at the conclusion of their investigation upon the consent of the civilian witnesses, and any other information and evidence available on a case by case basis.

1. The Policies of the NRPS

PSU investigators determined that the following General Orders had primary relevance in this matter, and they have been reviewed accordingly in the context of this incident.

- 1) General Order 079.10 – Special Investigations Unit
- 2) General Order 095.10 – Major Incidents and Routine Criminal Investigations
- 3) General Order 053.25 – Use of Force
- 4) General Order 100.10 – Powers of Arrest
- 5) General Order 168.06 – Officer Note Taking
- 6) General Order 034.11 – Report Submissions
- 7) General Order 274.04 – Naloxone

Upon review, it was determined that the direction and guidance provided by the relevant General Orders is sufficient in its governance for members of the Service and no issues were identified.

2. Services Provided by the NRPS

There were no issues identified relating to the services provided by NRPS during this incident.

3. Conduct of NRPS Officers

There were no officer conduct issues identified during the SIU investigation or the PSU investigation and review of this incident regarding compliance with General Orders or legislation. On behalf of the SIU, Mr. Martino thanked the members of the police service for their cooperation during the investigation.

The PSU investigation and review of this incident was undertaken in compliance with Section 32 of Ontario Regulation 268/10 made under the Police Services Act. The relevant policies of the Service, the services provided, and the conduct of the involved Service members was the focus of this review and investigation.

In conclusion, there were no issues identified as it pertains to services provided, the conduct of the involved Service members, or the existing General Orders governing these situations.

Alternatives Reviewed

- 1) To not receive the report.
- 2) To not make the report available to the public.

Subsection 34(1) of Ontario Regulation 268/10 made under the Police Services Act provides that, upon receiving this report, the Board may make it available to the public.

The Police Services Act provides that meetings of the Police Services Board shall be open to the public subject to exceptions that are set out in Subsection 35(4). The applicable exception to be considered in this case is whether or not “*the desirability of avoiding disclosure in the interest of any person affected or in the public interest outweighs the desirability of adhering to the principle that proceedings be open to the public.*”

In considering whether or not to make this report available to the public, it is respectfully submitted that the Board consider the following factors:

- 1) There are no public security matters revealed in this report.
- 2) This report does not reveal any intimate financial or personal matters.

Relationship to Police Service/Board Strategic Priorities

Not applicable.

Relevant Policy Considerations

Not applicable.

Other Pertinent Reports

C8.7 - 2024.11.28 – Request for Legal Indemnification – SIU Case Number 23-OCD-166 – May 3, 2023.

This report was prepared by Lynda Hughes, Inspector, Professional Standards Unit and reviewed by Sandy Staniforth, Superintendent, Executive Services. Recommended by Darrin Forbes, Acting Deputy Chief, Support Services.



Submitted by:

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Acting Chief of Police

Appendices

Not applicable.