DAN REITH
Chair

LYNN COATES
Vice Chair

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MEDIA RELEASE

St. Thomas Police Services Board Approves 2027 Operating Budget

ST. THOMAS, ON – September 2026 – The St. Thomas Police Services Board has approved the St. Thomas Police Service's proposed 2027 Operational Budget of $24,220,687.50 for submission through the City of St. Thomas municipal budget process.

The operational budget represents an increase of $2,591,925.32, or 11.98 per cent, over the approved 2026 budget after applying $150,000 from eligible Police Service Development Charge Reserve funds.

Under Ontario's *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019*, the Police Services Board is responsible for preparing and submitting budget estimates sufficient to provide adequate and effective policing, including the resources, equipment and facilities required by the Police Service. The Board is responsible for reviewing and determining the individual components of the police budget, while City Council determines the municipality's overall financial contribution.

Board Chair Dan Reith said the 2027 submission reflects the Board's responsibility to balance public safety requirements with careful stewardship of public funds.

"The Board takes its responsibility for both public safety and financial oversight very seriously. Our role is to ensure the St. Thomas Police Service has the resources necessary to provide adequate and effective policing while carefully considering the impact of those decisions on our community and taxpayers. St. Thomas continues to grow, and the demands placed on our Police Service are becoming increasingly complex. The Board has reviewed, adjusted and approved the proposed 2027 budget through that lens. We believe this submission represents a responsible investment in maintaining front-line capacity, supporting our members and ensuring the Service remains prepared to meet both current and future public safety needs."

The proposed budget includes the addition of two Constable positions and one Financial Coordinator. The two Constable positions are intended to strengthen front-line and investigative capacity and support effective 24/7 policing. The Financial Coordinator will strengthen financial oversight, budgeting, forecasting, purchasing controls, grant administration, audit readiness and asset planning. Together, the three positions account for approximately 1.41 per cent of the proposed 2027 budget.

A significant portion of the budget increase relates to existing contractual obligations. The Service's collective agreements provide for a 4 per cent wage increase in 2027, together with associated increases in benefits, OMERS, specialty pay and shift premiums. Salaries and benefits represent over 96 per cent of the budget requirement.

The Board also considered current service demands and community feedback in its review. As of August 2026, STPS had recorded more than 1,200 additional occurrences compared with the same period in 2025, creating additional pressures across front-line response, investigations, disclosure, supervision, records processing and victim support.

Community consultation conducted in 2026 also identified drug activity, crime prevention, police visibility and community safety, emergency response, and violent crime as the five highest policing priorities over the next several years. Ninety-three per cent of survey respondents supported continued investment in proactive crime prevention, public education and community outreach, while 91 per cent identified collaboration with health, education, housing, social-service and community organizations as an important role for the police service.

Recent crime and social disorder data is encouraging and reflects the strategic investments and operational adjustments made in recent years. Over the past three years, Crime Severity Index values have declined across all three measures: overall crime severity by 10%, violent crime severity by 6%, and non-violent crime severity by 12%. Notably, following a 22% increase in violent crime severity in 2024, significant resources were strategically deployed to address this trend, contributing to a 17.4% reduction in 2025.

A multi-year analysis also reveals calls for service in the downtown core have declined by 18% since 2020. Complaints involving unwanted persons have decreased by 75%, while complaints related to drug use and associated activity have fallen by 84% since 2020.

Chair Reith added:

"The Board has heard clearly from the community about where residents want their Police Service focused. We also recognize that policing cannot address every community challenge alone. The Chief has implemented strategies that increase collaboration with the City and our health, housing, education and social-service partners – and this will remain important as we work collectively to keep St. Thomas safe. This budget is about maintaining a Police Service that is accountable, properly resourced and prepared for the community we are becoming. The Board believes the 2027 Operational Budget submission strikes an appropriate balance between responsible financial governance and our obligation to ensure the people of St. Thomas are safe and feel safe. These significant reductions demonstrate that responsible and sustained investments in public safety produce meaningful results when resources are deployed strategically and supported by strong community partnerships, and a *Right Care–Right Person* approach."

The 2027 budget builds on investments made in 2026 while targeting additional capacity in areas of identified operational need. The Service continues to compare favourably with similar Ontario police services on cost per capita, while carrying one of the higher resident-to-officer ratios within the comparator group.

The endorsed budget will now proceed through the City of St. Thomas municipal budget process for consideration.