KENORA OPP DETACHMENT BOARD
CONSEIL DU DÉTACHEMENT DE KENORA
DE LA POLICE PROVINCIALE

KENORA OPP DETACHMENT
DÉTACHEMENT DE KENORA DE LA POLICE PROVINCIALE

Kenora Police Services Board
Regular Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 30, 2026
3:00 p.m.
City Hall Council Chambers

Present:	K. Van Belleghem, Chair L. Koch, Vice Chair J. McGrath, Member J. Duggan, Kenora OPP H. Pihulak, Admin Support to the Board
Regrets:	S. Dias, Member S. Norlen, Member

K. Van Belleghem, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and Vice Chair Koch read a Land Acknowledgment.

Declarations of Pecuniary Interest
All Members to declare any pecuniary interest from a meeting in which they were not present, or on today's meeting agenda.

There were none declared.

1.0 Approval of Agenda

Motion #1 – Moved by B. Manson, Seconded by L. Koch & Carried:
That the Agenda for the March 30, 2026 Kenora OPP Detachment Board meeting be approved as amended.

2.0 Election of Chair/Vice Chair

Heather Pihulak, Board Administrator, called for nominations from the floor for the position of Chair and Vice Chair for the term to November 14, 2026 as it is an election year.

Lindsay Koch, was nominated as Chair, and agreed to let their name stand. Heather called for any other nominations, there were none. Heather declared the Chair seat as acclaimed.

Sheri Norlen was nominated as Vice Chair, and agreed to let their name stand (via written confirmation). Heather called for any other nominations, there were none. Heather declared the Vice Chair seat as acclaimed.

3.0 Presentations/Delegations

Kristen Weirsma, Crown Attorney's office was present for a discussion on the work of the Crown Attorney's office.

Some of the impacts in Kenora there is there are 2,124 open cases in today's date and that does not count Dryden and Red Lake.

Of concern right now is there is a significant backlog of cases. Part of that was exacerbated by COVID and they have not been able to get ahead. It is impacting how we deal with cases.

A case in 2016 set standards (Canadian law, Jordan's timeline established by the Supreme Court in the landmark 2016 R. v. Jordan decision) which is the constitutionally mandated time limit for completing criminal trials which in provincial court is 18 months from the day the charges are formally laid. No one was meeting that. Files in superior court have to be done in 30 months from the day charges are laid and that was not happening. Ultimately what happens is if it is deemed, we are delaying cases the cases get stayed, and they are done entirely and can't do anything with those cases.

Currently out of 2,124 cases – 484 cases are above the Jordan's timeline. Those cases are at risk of being stayed. These cases are not limited to low hanging offences. Because of the Jordan timelines and the Crown's own backlog they have had to be very specific on which cases they are choosing to prosecute and which ones are moving efficiently through the system. The OPP are doing a great job in policing the city, but the Crowns office does not have the capacity to prosecute these cases. They have to make difficult decisions on where to draw the line and where to prosecute and the low level offences are getting stayed. This is the stuff that is causing significant concerns to the City of Kenora. It is affecting police and how the city is being viewed.

When they look at these cases, police need to respond, but arresting and charging who commits a low-level theft is not sustainable. We are not seeing a lot of prosecutions because the Crown is asking not to lay a charge and if they do, they usually withdraw.

For two reasons, they don't have the capacity and if they do, it takes away from the more serious offences. If the OPP increase the backlog, they risk the ability to prosecute the high end offences.

They are taking into account the low-end offences, the solution is not the justice system. The folks that are taking liquor bottles, stealing, there are underlying reasons why this is happening. We need to help the people, and the criminal code does not allow us to do that. Putting people who are suffering from addictions in jail is not the answer. If we are going to just arrest people and put them in jail, it's not a good look or good use of resources. Jail needs to be the last resort.

Strongly agree with the statement that we cannot arrest our way out of complex social issues problems. We need to address the root causes of crime and address upstream approaches. The Kenora justice centre adoption this approach and this is what they are trying to do and figure out what the root cause is. Youth get assigned a case manager and

try to connect people to services. We have a restorative program in the justice system but truly believe that would make a difference.

Resolving this problem should not land on the OPP or the Court system. Nothing has changed for many years in the court system but the world has changed.

They just lost 7 crowns, from the entire district and 18 fly in First Nations communities. They are fully staffed at 15 and that's not enough even if fully staffed.

The Board thanked Ms. Weirsma for her discussion.

4.0 Minutes of the Previous Meeting(s)
Resolution #2
Moved by B. Manson, Seconded by J. McGrath & Carried:-
That the minutes of the last regular meeting of the Kenora Police Services Board held January 13, 2026 be confirmed as written and circulated.

5.0 Business Arising from Minutes (Outstanding Items)

5.1 Outstanding Policy Development

Motion #3 – Moved by K. Van Belleghem, Seconded by J. McGrath & Carried:-
That Policy #KODB-2-2 Equal Opportunity, Discrimination and Workplace Harassment be hereby approved as presented.

Motion #4 – Moved by B. Manson, Seconded by J. McGrath & Carried:-
That Policy #KODB-6-1 Election Campaign Work and Political Activity Policy be hereby approved as presented.

6.0 Board Deliverables & Decisions

6.1 Board Self-Assessment
Chair L. Koch explained that the tool has two parts, self-assessment, and a collective assessment. It is intended to understand the work we are doing and capture if it is meaningful for you.

This is a rating scale and not a performance review, forming a planning tool, so we understand where we feel good about what we are doing and can allow for meaningful feedback to do better work together. This is strictly informative and is not punitive in any way.

This is to be completed individually and come together for results. Lindsay will send out to everyone and include a deadline.

7.0 Statistical Reporting
Jeff Duggan provided the statistical report for January, February for 2026. Calls for service is a new report which includes billable hours which is down slightly.

Motion #4 – Moved by K. Van Belleghem, Seconded by B. Manson & Carried:-
That the Statistical Information of the Kenora OPP be hereby received.

8.0 Strategic Plan

8.1Sub Committee Update – strategic plan tracker
No update

9.0 New Business

9.1 OAPSB 2026 Spring Conference & AGM - June 1 - 3, 2026 Niagara Falls
There are no members of the Board available to attend the conference this year.

9.2 Election-Year Board Transition & Continuity Guide
This guide was provided to the Board for their information and review.

9.3 Zone 1 Meeting Summary & Conference Summary
K. Van Belleghem provided a conference summary and divided her notes into several categories. Staffing continues to be an issue in every detachment and there are barriers to recruitment including housing which is a barrier. How we engage with our service feeds into the cultural piece.

The board review and self assessment – Inspector General of Policing is in place and there have been 468 complaints and boards who have had issues with conflicts of interest. Being able to understand where we are at with government standards. Funding pressures is another big theme. Essential service gaps are another area of concern.

As we heard earlier from the Crown's office, we are not going to police our way out of the current state of our communities. The Executive Director of Manitoba Chiefs of Police did presentation and there was a theme with funding going to policing which need to be directed to social service supports. What the role of policing is – and how to get people staff and there will always be specific challenges to the north.

NAPS is still working through this – provide adequate and effective policing through the Act. They don't have the conflict with Treaty 3 with Federal and Provincial funding support. They were getting additional resources added to them offered by the province.

11.0 Communication to the Board (emails directed to the Board)
No items were communicated.

Next Meeting Date

- Tuesday, April 28 @ 2:00 p.m. – City Hall

Meeting adjourned @ 4:18 p.m.