



WATERLOO REGIONAL
POLICE SERVICE
BOARD

WATERLOO REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE BOARD POLICY

Policy Number: 060

BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

Date Approved:	April 10, 2002
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Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines for communication practices that promote transparency, accountability, and public trust in accordance with the *Community Safety and Policing Act (CSPA)*. This policy applies to all Board members and designated staff involved in communication activities.

The Waterloo Regional Police Service Board commits to communication grounded in the principles of transparency, respect, inclusion, and procedural fairness as required under the *CSPA* and *Regulation 408/23*. All communication must uphold the highest standards of professionalism, confidentiality, and cultural sensitivity. The Board is committed to fulfilling its obligation to publish strategic plans, annual reports, and directions to the Chief of Police in a timely and accessible manner.

Policy of the Board

Governance Media Relations

1. The Board recognizes it best serves the community by providing as much information as possible through the media, except where prohibited for legal reasons or if the release of information could jeopardize an investigation or future prosecution.
2. All personal and confidential information received by the Board shall be handled in compliance with applicable privacy laws, including the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)*.
3. Unless otherwise specified, the spokesperson for the Board is the Chair of the Board. Should the Chair be unavailable, the Vice-Chair shall be the spokesperson for the Board. Staff support will be provided to assist with the preparation and review of communications, including press releases and media statements.
4. In special circumstances, such as labour relations or where a Board subcommittee has been established on a specific issue, the Board may designate the member leading the negotiations, or the Chair of the subcommittee, to act as spokesperson for the Board on the subject in question.

5. The Board Executive Assistant may provide factual information regarding administration of the Board, or a decision of the Board, in response to an enquiry.
6. The Board Executive Assistant is responsible for informing the local media of the date and time of future Board meetings and news conferences held by the Board. He/she is also responsible for arranging news conferences and for coordinating joint events with the Waterloo Regional Police Service Media Relations when both the Board and the Police Service are affected.
7. When required, the Board Executive Assistant will serve as a liaison between the media and the Board spokesperson when requests are received for interviews or comments.
8. In the event individual Board members are contacted directly by stakeholders, including the media, they may not purport to speak on behalf of the Board (that is the responsibility of the Chair or Vice-Chair), unless authorized by the Board to do so, and must limit any response to their individual opinion, clearly identified as such. Board members, if approached for comment, should direct inquiries to the Board Chair.
9. Board media releases shall be approved by the Chair prior to release, or in his/her absence, the Vice-Chair. Board members shall be sent a copy of the release no later than the time of the release to the media. The Board will utilize appropriate platforms, including the website and social media, to engage with the community.
10. News conferences shall be called only at the discretion of the Chair, or in his/her absence, the Vice-Chair. Board members shall be advised of the calling of a news conference and the reason therefor prior to its taking place.
11. The Board spokesperson shall be careful to speak only on matters within the jurisdiction and mandate of the Board and to avoid speaking about matters that fall under the jurisdiction of the Chief of Police. The Board's role is to focus on communication related to governance, oversight, accountability, and community reassurance, while avoiding interference in operations.
12. If warranted by the significance and seriousness of the matter, and where practicable, the Board Chair may consult with the Board and/or Chief of Police before information is released to ensure public release is appropriate and justified, and to receive advice on the format and tone of the communication.

Operational Media Relations

1. It is the policy of the Waterloo Regional Police Service Board with respect to the release of operational information to the media, that falls under the purview of the Chief of Police, that the Chief of Police shall develop procedures that:
 - a. identify members authorized to distribute information to the media; and
 - b. outline the type of information that may lawfully be released to the media while not having a negative impact on investigations or future prosecution;
2. The Chief of Police/Service spokesperson shall be careful to speak only on matters within the jurisdiction and mandate of the Service and to avoid speaking about matters that fall under the jurisdiction of the Board.

3. If warranted by the significance and seriousness of the matter, and where practicable, the Chief of Police may consult with the Board Chair and/or Board before information is released to ensure public release is appropriate and justified, and to receive advice on the format and tone of the communication.
4. When operational matters under the jurisdiction of the Chief of Police are likely to spark significant public interest or debate, the Chief will inform, where practicable, Board members before a public statement is made.