



Interview Summary: Acting Deputy Chief Patricia Ferguson (Ottawa Police Service)

Acting Deputy Chief Patricia Ferguson was interviewed by Frank Au, Mark Pritchard, Eric Brousseau, and Etienne Lacombe on August 11, 2022. Questions about this summary should be directed to Frank Au.

Background

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson's Background

Patricia Ferguson is the Ottawa Police Service (**OPS**) Acting Deputy Chief (Investigations, Intelligence and Information Command). At the time of the Freedom Convoy, she was Acting Deputy Chief (Community Policing Command). She was also the Major Incident Commander (**MIC**) during the convoy. This was Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson's first time assuming the role of MIC. She had previously served as an Incident Commander (**IC**) during the Canada 150 celebrations, worked in a number of roles for Canada Day festivities every year, during U.S. President Barack Obama's visit to Ottawa in 2009, and during the North American Leaders' Summit.

The most relevant training Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson received before assuming the role of MIC is the two-week critical incident commander (**CIC**) course at the Canadian Police College. During this course, she trained on negotiation and tactical options to resolve critical incidents such as a hostage-taking or barricaded person. She learned the command triangle model during the course. Under that model, the CIC serves as the pointy end of the triangle and makes decisions based on information from both the negotiation and tactical teams. She relied heavily on this training during the Freedom Convoy.

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson also trained in the emergency management model. The model is scaled from levels 1 to 400, with level 400 being major incidents such as natural disasters, and Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson is trained to level 400.

Status of OPS Before the Freedom Convoy

The OPS executive experienced significant change after Peter Sloly became OPS Chief in October 2019. Many experienced leaders left OPS because they were unhappy with OPS's leadership. One of OPS's deputy chiefs, Uday Jaswal, was suspended in March 2020 in relation to allegations of misconduct. Due to Deputy Chief Jaswal's suspension, superintendents rotated through the deputy chief positions in six-month increments as acting deputy chiefs. Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson characterized OPS as lacking direction.



OPS was also under stress for a variety of other reasons. OPS took a beating from the COVID-19 pandemic, and lost a member to suicide. OPS also experienced a series of scandals during this time, and was faced with the Black Lives Matter and defund the police movements that were vocally critical of OPS.

Role of PLT

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson described the Police Liaison Team (**PLT**) as police's first point of contact with protestors and as a great way to get information on protests and ensure public and officer safety during protests. PLT engages with protestors to facilitate lawful protest, learn about their intentions, and warn about lines that protestors cannot cross. If disruptive behaviour occurs during an event, PLT will engage with protestor contacts to attempt to de-escalate the situation.

The OPS has about two dozen PLT officers. These officers performed PLT responsibilities on a part-time basis in addition to their other responsibilities at OPS. Many of them also worked in the Special Events branch. During the convoy, the OPS's PLT was not specifically managed by any unit as the members' substantive positions were elsewhere within OPS. PLT was loosely attached to Special Events. Perhaps a dozen PLT members were actively involved during the convoy and they ultimately reported to Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson as the MIC.

In fall 2021, the OPS offered PLT officers a one-week specialized training. Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson encouraged that training because PLT members had reported to her that, during a past event, they felt they were not performing as they should under the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police National Framework for Police Preparedness for Demonstrations and Assemblies (**National Framework**). The training was for non-command officers.¹

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson became familiar with the National Framework during the Freedom Convoy. To her knowledge, no one else in a command level position was particularly familiar with the National Framework as the OPS had lost significant corporate knowledge to retirements and other resignations. Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson was not sure if OPS had a specific PLT strategy beyond its reliance on the National Framework. Further, the COVID-19 pandemic reduced the number of major events in Ottawa for OPS to practice PLT work at.

OPS Relationship with Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson characterized OPS's policing relationship with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (**RCMP**) in the National Capital Region as excellent. She indicated that the OPS-RCMP relationship is governed by both formal and informal agreements. For instance, while RCMP has jurisdiction over NCC-governed parkways,

¹ COM00000666.



OPS has arrangements with RCMP to respond to accidents that occur on parkways and to issue tickets. There is an expectation that RCMP will police incidents at foreign embassies and the Supreme Court of Canada. OPS also works with RCMP on major events. RCMP is currently in the process of drawing down its presence in the National Capital Region, which includes a proposal to transition some of RCMP's existing responsibilities to OPS.

Pre-Arrival Planning and Intelligence

OPS Command Structure and Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson's Role

During the week of January 17, 2022, Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson learned that the Freedom Convoy would be travelling to Ottawa. The Freedom Convoy was mentioned in a regular morning meeting intended to review major calls throughout Ottawa and upcoming major events. At the time, the convoy did not appear to be anything more than the types of slow-roll protests Ottawa has seen before.

As planning for the Freedom Convoy got underway, Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson ultimately began to serve as MIC. She oversaw the directorate responsible for planning and operations during the Freedom Convoy. Now Interim Chief Steve Bell, who at the time was the Deputy Chief (Investigations, Intelligence and Information Command), oversaw the directorate responsible for intelligence.

As MIC, Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson worked with the Event Commander, Superintendent Chris Rheume, and the IC, Inspector Russell Lucas. Inspector Lucas reported to Superintendent Rheume, who in turn reported to Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson. Superintendent Rheume assumed the role of Event Commander because he was the superintendent in charge of specialized policing and oversaw functions relevant to the event, such as the Special Events team, traffic, and operations support. Inspector Lucas assumed the role of Incident Commander because he led the Special Events branch.

As MIC, Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson saw her role as providing high-level strategic oversight and direction to Superintendent Rheume and Inspector Lucas and ensuring that the overall goal and strategy were being accomplished. In contrast, Superintendent Rheume and Inspector Lucas were to lead the management of the event and provide operational direction. As an example, she stated that her role at the MIC level could be establishing a strategy to get Freedom Convoy protestors to leave Ottawa, while Superintendent Rheume and Inspector Lucas would be responsible for using various tools to implement that strategy.



Major Events and Event Planning Policy

OPS has a Major Events and Event Planning policy. That policy applied to the Freedom Convoy because it was a major event under the policy. The “Objectives” section of the policy provides as follows:

“Ottawa Police Service will collaborate with law enforcement partners, other government agencies, community stakeholders and event participants to:

- a. maintain public order and preserve the peace;
- b. remain neutral where possible and facilitate the building of trust between police, participants and the community;
- c. ensure the safety and security of the public and the emergency services personnel;
- d. minimize disruption for Ottawa residents, businesses and visitors;
- e. identify and assess threat and risk and develop contingency plans to mitigate where required;
- f. provide security commensurate to the threat level; and
- g. enforce laws and investigate offences where warranted while respecting the democratic freedoms of thought, belief, opinion, expression and peaceful assembly.”

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson stated that these objectives very much guided OPS’s response. She recalled that the policy contemplated the assessment of threats, sharing of information, and assembling a team before the event. She indicated that when Chief Sloy became OPS Chief, he emphasized that plans needed to be intelligence-led and based on evidence.

Dissemination of Intelligence & Role of Intelligence in Planning

Two principal OPS officers led the intelligence team for the Freedom Convoy under Deputy Chief Bell: Inspector Kenneth Bryden, and Superintendent Mark Patterson. Inspector Bryden attended intelligence briefings by the Ontario Provincial Police (**OPP**) commencing on January 26th.

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson observed challenges with the dissemination of intelligence information related to the Freedom Convoy. The Intelligence Directorate was not forthcoming with information and shared intelligence reports on a need-to-know basis, which was consistent with covert nature of their usual work. The Project Hendon



intelligence reports that OPP shared with OPS exemplified the challenges in disseminating intelligence. Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson did not learn of the existence of these reports until February 4-6, one week after the Freedom Convoy arrived in Ottawa. She did not think that Deputy Chief Bell was receiving Project Hendon reports either. Information from Project Hendon reports was not shared with the OPS executive command during the early days of the Freedom Convoy. However, she understood that Chief Sloly was receiving the Project Hendon reports and could not speak to what conversations may have occurred as between the members of the intelligence directorate and Chief Sloly or what conversations may have occurred between the intelligence directorate and those responsible for authoring the operational plans.

Because Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson did not have access to intelligence reports, she relied heavily on information provided by PLT and open-source information in her oversight of planning. Specifically, she knew that OPP's Provincial Liaison Team, the OPP equivalent of OPS's PLT, was engaging with and obtaining information about the Freedom Convoy.

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson's Understanding of Intelligence

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson's initial impression upon learning of the Freedom Convoy was that it did not appear to be different from previous vehicle protests in Ottawa. Ottawa had experience with vehicle protests by farmers and slow-roll protests.

On January 21, Inspector Lucas informed Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson that the Freedom Convoy was gaining traction as it moved across Canada towards Ottawa and that its funding was increasing. She understood that the Freedom Convoy was larger than an ordinary slow-roll but was unsure how many people would be attending or how long they would be staying. She began to receive updates from the PLT, which was reaching out to the OPP Provincial Liaison Team and colleagues at other Canadian police agencies to obtain information on the size and type of the Freedom Convoy crowd.

On January 26 at 11:30 a.m., Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson's notes record that "RCMP have concerns about Rideau Hall + Harrington Lake – asking for heavy vehicles." She recalled that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his spouse were staying at those locations. RCMP was concerned because there was lots of vitriol being directed at the Prime Minister. RCMP wanted to use heavy vehicles to block access to Rideau Hall and Harrington Lake.

On January 26, Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson made the following statement to Global News:²

"The current info that we have at this time is that there is one main demonstration called the Freedom Rally which involves a number of trucks and private vehicles

² COM00000669.



arriving in Ottawa from across Canada. The exact number of participants in the main demonstration is not currently known. However, all open-source information and our interactions with Freedom Rally organizers indicate that this will be a significant, extremely fluid event that could go on for a prolonged period. We are planning for a range of potential risks including, but not limited to, counter-demonstrations, blocking of intersections, interfering with critical infrastructures, and unlawful and violent activity.”

She confirmed that this statement provided a fair assessment of the situation at the time. She explained that by “prolonged period,” she was referring to protestors staying for the January 29-30 weekend, as her perception of what constituted “prolonged” was informed by OPS experiences with previous demonstrations in Ottawa.

By January 28, Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson’s understanding was that the Freedom Convoy would be staying in Ottawa for the January 29-30 weekend and that most protestors would depart at the end of the weekend. She understood that only a few protestors might remain after the weekend. Her understanding was based on her 27 years of experience policing in Ottawa. She noted that OPS frequently experienced 6-to-7-hour protests, but that very few protests had gone into the following day. She was not looking at open-source information as her role was focused on managing staff and logistics. She was not aware at that time that Freedom Convoy leaders were indicating that they intended to stay in Ottawa until their demands were met.

Preparations for the Freedom Convoy & Activation of NCRCC

Inspector Lucas oversaw the preparation of the initial operational plan. He provided frequent updates to Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson. OPS’s initial planning focused on traffic management and not so much on public order. Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson realized that OPS would struggle to staff the response to the Freedom Convoy because Inspector Lucas informed her that other OPS sections were not offering staffing resources to him.

On January 27, Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson’s notes record “plan to bring them in + plan to exit them.” She recalled that OPS was developing ingress and egress plans for Freedom Convoy vehicles.

Chief Sloly became actively engaged in the response to the Freedom Convoy as it drew closer to Ottawa. By January 27, Chief Sloly began participating in regular calls and meetings concerning the Freedom Convoy. Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson understood that Chief Sloly had access to intelligence on the Freedom Convoy. She was not aware if Chief Sloly knew that Freedom Convoy participants were planning to stay in Ottawa beyond the January 29-30 weekend. On January 27, Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson’s notes record “Chief to address residents of Ottawa.” She recalled that Chief Sloly was planning to address Ottawa residents on the Freedom Convoy’s effects on traffic and



parking, and to set expectations concerning the lawfulness of convoy participants' behaviour.

As the Freedom Convoy approached Ottawa, OPS activated the National Capital Region Command Centre (**NCRCC**) to coordinate inter-agency responses to the Freedom Convoy. NCRCC is a physical place in a RCMP building that contains a command centre with screens to display camera footage and computers for each participating agency. OPS regularly used NCRCC to coordinate with other agencies on major events in Ottawa. Inspector Lucas was based at NCRCC. Representatives from RCMP, OPP, the City of Ottawa (**City**), Ottawa Fire Services, the Ottawa Paramedic Service, and OC Transpo attended NCRCC. Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson did not think that Parliamentary Protective Service (**PPS**) was present, at least initially. OPS coordinated road closures and diversion of OC Transpo routes with the City traffic and OC Transpo representatives at NCRCC during the Freedom Convoy.

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson indicated that OPS did not attempt to establish an integrated command with other police agencies before the Freedom Convoy because it considered the Freedom Convoy to be a protest similar to other protests that it had frequently managed. At this time, there was no discussion with other police agencies about coming to Ottawa to assist with command and/or strategic direction.

Coordination with City of Ottawa

OPS understood that it, and not the City, was the lead agency in response to the Freedom Convoy. The City deferred to OPS on protests and other major events that had the potential to endanger people and respected OPS as the subject matter experts. Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson was not aware of any formal arrangements that indicated that OPS should take the lead in responding to protests.

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson recalled that OPS briefed City Council and the Ottawa Police Services Board before the Freedom Convoy arrived and that Chief Sloy participated in these briefings. OPS could not share intelligence that it received from OPP with the City; the "third party rule" of intelligence prohibits the sharing of intelligence information authored by another agency without that agency's permission. The Ottawa Police Services Board could be provided high level operational details of OPS plans in camera and ask clarifying questions, but it had no authority to modify OPS plans. OPS did share real-time information with the City through a coordinating body called INTERSECT that the City participated in.

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson was not sure if OPS requested that the City make parking space at Coventry Road near the Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton Park available for Freedom Convoy overflow parking. She did recall participating in discussions about having Freedom Convoy vehicles park at Coventry Road and then arranging shuttles to bring them downtown so that they could protest on foot.



The Pre-Arrival Operational Plan

OPS has standard plans that it uses for parades and other major events. Staff Sergeant Kevin Kennedy from the Special Events section has prepared those plans for nearly a decade, and they follow a standard template. Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson was familiar with these types of plans.

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson confirmed that the plan titled “Freedom Convoy – Canada Unity, January 29 2022” was OPS’s initial operational plan for the Freedom Convoy (the **Pre-Arrival Operational Plan**). She indicated that Inspector Lucas was responsible for approving this plan but couldn’t confirm whether it had been approved. She did, however, confirm that this was the plan that was operative at that time.

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson confirmed that the Pre-Arrival Operational Plan was premised on the Freedom Convoy being a two-day event. That was her interpretation of the intelligence at the time.

The Pre-Arrival Operational Plan included an appendix titled “Freedom Convoy Operational Plan, Sat 29th and Sun 30th Jan 2022” that contained a traffic plan (the **Traffic Plan**). The Traffic Plan defined four protest areas for traffic planning. The section for area 1, the “Parliament Hill Core,” stated that “[t]he ‘real estate’ roadway on Wellington between Kent and Elgin will be filled on a first come basis.” Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson indicated that some of the protestors coming from areas near Ottawa obtained the prime spots on Parliament Hill. She indicated that OPS outlined the four protest areas based on PLT’s understanding of where protestors wanted to go and what success looked like for them, including their desire to have their voices heard in front of Parliament Hill. She indicated that the Traffic Plan was based on the assumption that the Freedom Convoy would be a weekend event. Comparatively to residential streets, OPS felt it could afford to lose roadways such as the Sir John A. MacDonald Parkway. The Traffic Plan attempted to balance the right to protest and public safety.

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson indicated that OPS considered blocking the Freedom Convoy’s access to downtown Ottawa but rejected this option, for at least two reasons. First, OPS determined that it lacked authority to restrict access to downtown Ottawa. Second, OPS was concerned that the public would not have accepted that police could decide which protests are allowed into the city and which are not. Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson indicated that she would have acted differently and would have restricted access to downtown if she knew that the Freedom Convoy would become an unlawful protest.

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson’s understanding was that PPS was not consulted about OPS’s decision to permit Freedom Convoy trucks to enter downtown Ottawa.

The Traffic Plan also stated that “[i]t is imperative that there is a lane secured as emergency access between Kent and Elgin.” Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson recalled that



OPS was able to maintain an emergency lane on Wellington St. for some time after the Freedom Convoy arrived, but that the emergency lane may have shut down on the evening of January 29 or on January 30.

The “Threat Assessment” section of the Pre-Arrival Operational Plan states that “[t]he Canadian Integrated Terror Assessment Centre (ITAC) indicates that the current threat level for Canada is medium.” Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson indicated that the ITAC assessment is a national-level threat level that has been medium since 2014 and that the plan included the ITAC assessment to provide generalized awareness that officers should be on guard for potential terrorism. She indicated that OPS included the national-level ITAC assessment as a standard practice because much of what OPS observes in Ottawa are protests relating to national issues.

Below the ITAC assessment, the “Threat Assessment” section states that “OPS SIS has prepared an Intelligence Assessment, and have [sic] highlighted the following points.” Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson indicated that this portion of the “Threat Assessment” section (the **Intelligence Assessment**) was prepared by the OPS Security Intelligence Section, the unit within the Intelligence Directorate that was receiving Project Hendon reports. She expected that this section of the “Threat Assessment” included an updated assessment from the Project Hendon reports.

The Intelligence Assessment states that “[t]he Convoy will be able to stop and effectively shut down movement if they desire.” Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson confirmed that the Freedom Convoy’s ability to shut down movement in downtown Ottawa was well-known at the time the Pre-Arrival Operational Plan was prepared.

The Intelligence Assessment also states that “there is no critical intelligence to suggest any sort of violent actions or concerns for violence.” Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson understood “critical intelligence” to refer to information that had been corroborated by at least two other sources. She also noted that not all criminal activity, such as street harassment, is considered violent by police.

[OPS Initial Response to the Freedom Convoy: January 28-February 6](#)

OPS Initial Response to the Freedom Convoy

The Freedom Convoy arrived in Ottawa on Friday, January 28 and Saturday, January 29. On January 29, Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson and Deputy Chief Bell walked around the downtown Ottawa Freedom Convoy protest site. At the time, Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson was not aware that the Freedom Convoy intended to stay and did not observe any indications that the Freedom Convoy intended to stay.

Chief Sloly was very involved in the days leading up to the arrival of the Freedom Convoy, and became increasingly involved in OPS’s response to the Freedom Convoy over the January 29-30 weekend. By January 30, it became clear to OPS that the Freedom



Convoy was more disruptive than OPS had expected and Chief Sloly began to explore options to shut the convoy down and remove people. She recalled that the OPS executive had discussions about the powers that an injunction could grant and that Chief Sloly engaged in discussions with the City about pursuing an injunction on or around January 30.

On January 31, many of the Freedom Convoy protestors remained in Ottawa and did not leave as OPS expected. At 11:31 a.m. that day, Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson received an email from her executive assistant that contained the notes from an 8:00 a.m. briefing that morning.³ A bullet in that email stated: “No longer a protest but an occupation now.”⁴ Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson stated that the Freedom Convoy became a critical incident at this time. She stated that the presence of trucks weighing thousands of pounds was a game changer that inconvenienced OPS and placed it at a disadvantage. The trucks were potential places to hide people or weapons, and they posed a very different situation from the people carrying banners that OPS was used to dealing with.

It also became apparent to OPS during the week of January 31-February 6 that it lacked the resources to support the actions required to make the Freedom Convoy leave Ottawa. Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson noted that when the RCMP launched an enforcement operation to clear the blockade in Coutts, Alberta, on February 1, the protestors ended up staying longer. She expected that an OPS enforcement operation during the week of January 31 would have been similarly unsuccessful.

On February 2, Chief Sloly stated publicly that “[t]here may not be a police solution to this demonstration.” Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson thought that he meant that protestors had arrived in Ottawa because of a political issue. At the time, she believed that the Freedom Convoy was not simply an OPS issue because OPS lacked the resources to remove protestors and lacked the authority to give them what they wanted: a meeting with Prime Minister Trudeau and the removal of all public health mandates. She did not understand Chief Sloly to mean that there was no role for police to play.

OPS Posture During the Week of January 31

OPS struggled to staff the Freedom Convoy during the week of January 31. OPS addressed staffing by amalgamating the six platoons that cover the 24-hour period into four platoons working 12-hour shifts. She also ensured that OPS officers policing the Freedom Convoy were instructed to conduct policing in a neutral manner without expressing their opinions about the Freedom Convoy protestors' demands.

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson was concerned for officer safety during the week of January 31. OPS officers were facing noise pollution and a hostile crowd. OPS officers

³ OPS00004976.

⁴ *Id.*



gathered information for subsequent arrests, but they mostly did not make arrests or seize fuel because they lacked the resources to do so safely. OPS attempted to balance officer safety and the need to ensure community safety.

OPS attempted to both police the Freedom Convoy and respond to non-Freedom Convoy-related service calls. OPS sent officers to respond in areas like Kent St. where community members were being harassed by protestors. OPS corporate communications also made efforts to update the public on OPS's operations. OPS also developed and approved some plans for Freedom Convoy-related operations, but it had a number of starts and stops as it relates to those plans.

Relationship with Chief Sloly & Assessment of Chief Sloly's Leadership

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson observed that Chief Sloly struck her as a leader who did not trust his team. He was very engaged and needed details on operations to make decisions, even to the point of being in the weeds. He was very good at providing direction and being clear on what he wanted. However, his directions changed frequently. Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson observed that Chief Sloly may have struggled to build relationships with OPS officers due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Switches in Event Commanders

OPS switched Event Commanders three times during the Freedom Convoy. The initial Event Commander, Superintendent Rheume, stepped down on or around February 4th because he needed time off. Superintendent Jamie Dunlop replaced Superintendent Rheume as Event Commander between February 4th-6th. Superintendent Dunlop was chosen for his skills and experience, but Deputy Chief Bell and Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson decided on February 5 that it was not fair to Superintendent Dunlop as Chief Sloly did not trust him and it would have been an unwinnable situation. Chief Sloly approved of the suggestion of Superintendent Mark Patterson as the next Event Commander and he served between February 6-10. On February 10, Superintendent Robert Bernier replaced Superintendent Patterson as Event Commander.

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson observed that the switches of Event Commanders did not impact OPS's response to the Freedom Convoy because she remained in the MIC role for the duration of the convoy situation.

Role of Navigator and Advanced Symbolics Inc.

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson's notes from a January 27 at 9:00 a.m. command call record the following statement:

"If you can predict it, we can start to prevent it. Crisis & Comms management issues management. Navigator + ASI pre-positioned."



Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson explained that this passage of the notes referred to Navigator Ltd. (**Navigator**) and Advanced Symbolics Inc. (**ASI**). Navigator is a communications company that provided communications and issues management services to OPS, while ASI performed social media scrolling to determine the sentiment of the crowd.

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson attended meetings with Navigator and ASI early in the Freedom Convoy but stopped attending them as the convoy progressed. She saw little value in Navigator and ASI's work. She noted that they inflamed protestors by putting out messaging that OPS was working with CAS to apprehend children at protest sites.

On February 14 at 11:51 a.m., Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson's notes record the following statement:

"In the last several weeks, there have been daily Navigator prep meetings for command. I have begun to decline them because I believe it has begun to drive our operations and influence the Chief's decision around things like enforcement – which we know has been putting our officers @ risk for safety reasons."

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson confirmed that she believed that Navigator was starting to influence Chief Sloly's decisions.

Relationship with the City During the Freedom Convoy

OPS and the City communicated regularly during the Freedom Convoy. Chief Sloly had conversations with Mayor Jim Watson. Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson and Deputy Chief Bell spoke with City Manager Steve Kanellakos. Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson also regularly engaged with Kim Ayotte, the City's General Manager of Emergency & Protective Services. Her understanding was that the OPS executive and the City's executive were communicating well. OPS shared updates with the City on any changes in its posture. OPS also communicated well on the ground with City traffic staff.

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson indicated that OPS did not direct the City and that the City should not and generally did not direct OPS. This practice of mutual non-direction characterized her interactions with Mr. Ayotte. She did recall, however, that Mayor Watson was extremely frustrated by the presence of protestors in Confederation Park during the week of January 31-February 6. Mayor Watson could see these protestors from his office. She recalled that he called Chief Sloly and stressed the need to remove protestors from Confederation Park.

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson recalled that OPS was facing considerable pressure from City Council to act. She, Chief Sloly, and Deputy Chief Bell spent lots of time updating City Council and the Ottawa Police Services Board.



Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson indicated that OPS did not direct the City's bylaw department to stop conducting enforcement or ticketing. OPS did advise the bylaw department on safety issues and may have informed bylaw not to enter the downtown core without an OPS escort to ensure safety.

February 7 Onwards

OPS Request for Resources and Arrival of Integrated Planning Team

During the week of January 31, OPS realized that it lacked the resources to resolve the Freedom Convoy and began to request resources from other police agencies, especially OPP and RCMP. OPS primarily requested more resources but was willing to provide greater integration of planning and command if the police agencies providing resources so wished. She recalled that OPS requested 1800 officers at one point and that OPS may have ultimately received more than 1800 officers.

On February 8, a joint RCMP-OPP Integrated Planning Team headed by OPP Chief Superintendent Carson Pardy arrived in Ottawa. Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson understood that the team arrived in response to OPS's requests for resources. She was supportive of the team's arrival. She and Chief Superintendent Pardy had served on committees together and she knew that he was coming to help.

However, Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson observed that Chief Sloly was unnecessarily antagonistic to the Integrated Planning Team upon its arrival. When the team arrived, Chief Sloly insisted that the team come to the OPS building to deliver a presentation even though there was lots of room at the RCMP building and limited space in the OPS building. She observed that while OPS was used to sharing knowledge and resources with other police agencies during major events, she speculated that Chief Sloly may not have had the same experience at Toronto Police Service (**TPS**) before he became OPS Chief. She also noted that, as Chief, Chief Sloly was ultimately responsible if he ceded control to the Integrated Planning Team and the integration did not go well and that, during his tenure as Chief, he needed lots of details to make decisions.

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson expected that Chief Sloly may have been distrustful of the Integrated Planning Team because people he knew from his time at TPS were playing key roles during the Freedom Convoy, including the federal Minister of Emergency Preparedness and former TPS Chief, Bill Blair. She speculated that Chief Sloly likely felt isolated and that he did not have a friend in the world.

Superintendent Patterson's Tenure as Event Commander

Chief Sloly approved Superintendent Patterson as Event Commander on February 6 because he was looking for someone who would take a more aggressive enforcement approach. Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson's impression was that Chief Sloly and



Superintendent Patterson were on the same page and that Chief Sloly was happy that Superintendent Patterson was generating movement.

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson had some fundamental disagreements with Superintendent Patterson. Superintendent Patterson did not seem to understand the role of the PLT. For instance, he wanted PLT to give the information it collected to the intelligence team, which would undermine the trust that PLT was building. Similarly, he did not empower PLT to make decisions. As an example, when Freedom Convoy leaders offered to move trucks if PLT provided them with port-a-potties, PLT had to request approval up the chain of command. This undermined PLT's effectiveness because OPS officers higher up the chain of command were attending meetings and not able to respond quickly. Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson recalled that Chief Sloly did not appear favourable to PLT.

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson's fundamental disagreements with Superintendent Patterson extended beyond the role of PLT. She found Superintendent Patterson to have a more aggressive stance than was appropriate and felt his plans did not give sufficient weight to officer safety. She noted that his plans were not always fully executed, and cited as an example that his plan for fuel seizure did not contain the authorities for fuel seizures.

By February 10, Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson perceived that she was alone in vocalizing her opposition to Superintendent Patterson's approach. She also recalled that Chief Sloly stated in a meeting on or around February 10 that he would "crush" anyone who was not on board with the plan.

On February 10, Superintendent Patterson falsely accused Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson of unethical behaviour and colluding with her spouse, OPS Staff Sergeant John Ferguson, who was then supervising OPS's PLT team. After that meeting, Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson determined that she could not continue to work with Superintendent Patterson. She told Chief Sloly on February 10 that either Superintendent Patterson needed to be removed or he should replace her with someone else. Chief Sloly decided to remove Superintendent Patterson as Event Commander. Chief Sloly told Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson to take February 11-12 off as rest days.

Integrated Planning Team's Assessment of Situation as of February 10

During the interview, Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson was shown an excerpt from a February 10 draft demobilization plan prepared by the Integrated Planning Team.⁵ Section 3.1 of that document described the police response to the Freedom Convoy to date as follows:

⁵ OPP00004283.



3.1 Deployment Plan

Current

- Not Intelligence Led
- Participants have the initiative – Have retired police tactical leaders guiding (chief of security)
- Reactive, tactical, aggressive, risk
- Poor communications
 - No communication strategy (internal/external)
- Unclear and vague Command & control
- Unqualified trained leadership
- No or poor partner collaboration
 - Lack of collaboration
 - Strategy
 - Tactical
 - Focused on local issues only – no national perspective
- OPS focus is only maintenance and not resolution
- Boots on the ground
 - Low moral
 - Frustration
 - Lack of leadership/confidence of command- no clear direction
 - Physical & mental – exhausted
 - Poor decision making
 - Longer
 - Information sharing – incomplete and unknown command structure/OP not signed off
- Logistics
 - Hotel, staging, joining instructions/creature comforts Comms Tools/PPE
 - Network sharing
 - Info incomplete - unknown command structure
 - Org Chart not developed
 - Police resources - Not integrated
- Police Vulnerability – Business Continuity

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson agreed with all of the Integrated Planning Team's assessment. She stated that it accurately described the situation in Ottawa on the last day that Superintendent Patterson was the Event Commander. She described February 10 as probably the worst day of her policing career. She explained that, as outlined above, she felt that she was alone in her opposition to Chief Sloly and Superintendent Patterson's approach and was hurt by Superintendent Patterson's accusations of unethical behaviour.



Appointment of Superintendent Bernier as Event Commander

On February 10, Superintendent Robert Bernier was asked to replace Superintendent Patterson as Event Commander. Superintendent Bernier had to consider whether to accept the appointment because he had seen three Event Commanders come and go. He decided to accept the appointment and served as Event Commander until the end of the Freedom Convoy situation.

Interactions with Chief Sloly and Integrated Planning Team Until Chief Sloly's Resignation

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson took February 11-12 off work. When she returned on February 13, her view was that the situation had improved. She began working with the Integrated Planning Team to develop an integrated plan. She characterized the team as great and helpful.

On the morning of February 15, Chief Sloly resigned as OPS Chief. The Integrated Planning Team's work, OPS cooperation with OPP and RCMP, and decision-making proceeded smoothly after his departure. Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson does not know if Chief Sloly would have approved or opposed the plan that the Integrated Planning Team was developing.

City-Protestor Negotiations

The City did not consult the OPS on negotiating to move vehicles from residential areas. Instead, it notified OPS after it decided to negotiate with protestors. The City asked that the OPS send a representative to attend the negotiation, but this was to advise on issues like how many vehicles can fit in a location rather than to assist in negotiation. Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson was not familiar with the specifics of the negotiations or executing any plans to move vehicles and noted that these events may have occurred during February 11-12 when she was off work.

Police Handling of Trucks During and After the Final Police Operation

After the police operation to clear protestors from downtown Ottawa, police transported the seized trucks to an Ottawa lot and kept them there for seven days. Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson could not recall why police kept the trucks there for seven days.

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson was not sure if police damaged vehicles during the police operation. She observed that officers clearing the area during the police operation were on the ground in a vulnerable position, and were trying to clear the area as quickly and safely as possible. The goal is to surprise and overwhelm, which may involve smashing the window. In addition, some trucks had been abandoned.



Impact of Emergency Declarations

Impact of Municipal Emergency Declaration

On February 6, Mayor Watson declared a state of emergency for Ottawa in response to the Freedom Convoy. The City's emergency declaration permitted Mayor Watson to take certain actions without City Council's approval but had little impact on OPS. It may have elevated the perception of the seriousness of the Freedom Convoy situation.

Impact of Provincial Emergency Declaration

On February 11, the Premier of Ontario declared a province-wide emergency under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (EMCPA)*. The EMCPA assisted OPS by authorizing it to impose fines on and seize the licences of commercial vehicle operators, including truckers whose trucks were parked in downtown Ottawa.

Impact of Federal Emergency Declaration

On February 14, the federal government declared a public order emergency under the *Emergencies Act*. OPS was not consulted on and did not provide input to the federal government concerning the invocation of the *Emergencies Act*. As MIC, Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson did not have a view at the time concerning whether it was necessary to invoke the *Emergencies Act*.

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson stated that OPS was able to obtain towing because of the *Emergencies Act*. Before the federal emergency declaration, her understanding was that OPS had not been able to obtain towing. It had a RFP with a towing company and asked that company to assist, but the company was unwilling to do so. OPS also explored obtaining towing resources from the City, as OC Transpo had heavy towing capacity. She was not aware if the City made requests for towing capacity. Her understanding was that OPS only found towing capacity after the *Emergencies Act* authorized OPS to compel companies to provide towing. OPS arranged for a towing company to be on standby. The company was concerned that its trucks would be identified by protestors, so OPS installed decals or painted the trucks to conceal the company's identity.

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson found it difficult to say whether the Freedom Convoy situation could have been managed or resolved without the *Emergencies Act*. In her view, OPS would not have been able to resolve the situation as effectively without the *Emergencies Act*. OPS knew that if it arrived with tow trucks, many protestors would leave because the trucks were their home and livelihood. By assisting police in obtaining towing, the *Emergencies Act* helped police remove the truckers who were entrenched and were in Ottawa for the long-haul.



Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson was not aware of the specifics of the freezing of accounts under the *Emergencies Act*. She observed that RCMP and, to an extent, OPP used the financial measures that were enacted.

Lessons Learned

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson commented that the Freedom Convoy events reveal the importance of having succession plans. The OPS needs specialists in certain areas and those specialists must have enough time left in their careers to teach their successors.

The events also highlighted human and community dynamics in policing. For instance, checkpoints prohibiting outreach workers from entering the red zone and reaching unhoused community members caused the latter to suffer given the cold weather. She indicated that community tolerance for unlawful and disruptive protest activity is now very low, and that OPS has incorporated this into planning.

OPS has already reformed its processes for collecting and disseminating intelligence. OPS created an open-source intelligence team that gathers open-source information and provides briefings on it without waiting for that information to be corroborated by two sources.

Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson commented that mounted units greatly assisted the OPS and were effective in public order operations during the Freedom Convoy. She also noted that the OPS would benefit from acquiring a mounted unit.