



## Regarding the Executive Governance Committee Report to OIPRD - Death Reinvestigations

March 9, 2022  
(Thunder Bay – Ontario)

The Executive Governance Committee for the reinvestigation of 9 deaths has released a detailed report back to the OIPRD regarding recommendations 1 to 4 of the Broken Trust report.

First and foremost, it is important to acknowledge the impact on the families regarding the loss of a loved one. The families have an unquestionable need for answers. We acknowledge that very critical need. Therefore, we have fully supported the independent oversight of the Executive Governance Committee and the experts brought onboard for the reinvestigation of each of these deaths.

The report back to the OIPRD from the Executive Governance Committee states that the cause and manner of death for the deceased in 8 cases has been determined to be the same as the findings from the original investigations. One cause of death was changed from accidental to undetermined. The 9 original cases ranged from 2000 to 2017. The report also details several issues relating to each of the original investigations.

The process for how death investigations are conducted has evolved considerably since 2000.

“The multi disciplinary team was able to employ the advancements in investigative technologies and methodologies which have occurred over the last 22 years as they examined these deaths in depth.” said Chief of Police Sylvie Hauth, “It is therefore not surprising that they were able to point to deficiencies in the original investigations.”

The Thunder Bay Police Service has documented numerous milestones in addressing the Broken Trust report recommendations including, but not limited to the following:

- The TBPS 2019 operating budget was expanded in the amount of \$1,082,000 to fund a permanent increase in staffing for the Criminal Investigations Branch (CIB).
- A Major Crimes Unit was established within the CIB which included 2 Detectives and 4 Detective Constables.
- Increased professional development and training. In addition, joint training was undertaken with the Office of the Coroner.
- Updates to policies including missing persons investigations.
- Assignment of a Family Liaison Officer during investigations to help facilitate communication with families which is open and respectful of cultural needs.
- Acquisition of a drone aircraft and 3D survey technology to advance scene examinations.
- Creation of a Quality Assurance position (a Staff Sergeant) to develop plans, protocols, and training packages.
- Met the recommendations from the 2019 Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services’ Major Case Management Inspection Report.
- Establishment of a position within CIB for a Power Case trainer. Power Case is a provincially hosted software/database program designed to link major case information between police services.



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The Executive Governance Committee also recognized the need for a separate final report. That report will more broadly identify best practices, lessons learned, with input from families and Broken Trust team members, and will provide recommendations based on the cumulation of all the information and interactions.

Chief Hauth added. “The TBPS has understood the need to take a critical view of the entire death investigation process which includes Police, the Coroner and the legislation which provides the legal framework. Therefore, we are awaiting the final report, to be written by an independent author, which will provide recommendations that will be beneficial for not only the TBPS, but for all agencies involved in the death investigation system. These recommendations will have an impact on death investigations in Ontario.”

In addition to the examination of the 9 deaths named by the OIPRD Broken Trust Report, the Blended Investigation Team reviewed 1,771 TBPS death investigations within the same original timeframe of 2000 to 2017. Of those incidents, 229 were further examined by law enforcement agencies outside of the TBPS. The result of that extensive examination is that:

- 14 cases have been submitted to the Ministry of the Attorney General by the Executive Governance Committee for consideration.
- 2 cases should be considered for a Coroner led review.
- One remaining case was referred to the Province’s Special Investigations Unit.

The death of Stacy DeBungee is the subject of a reinvestigation by the O.P.P. as per Broken Trust Report recommendation 4.

The Thunder Bay Police Service will continue to evolve and respond to the needs and best interests of the families and communities who have lost loved ones. We recognize that each death we investigate is unique and will receive the best possible care and attention we can provide. We acknowledge the continued efforts of the members of the Thunder Bay Police Service to support those personally effected and we remain committed to building trust with Indigenous peoples.

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