



**ANNUAL
GENERAL MEETING
REPORT 2024-25**



LOVE
HONESTY
HUMILITY
BRAVERY
RESPECT
WISDOM
TRUTH



www.naps.ca



Contents

Mission Statement	4
Message from the Chair	5
Welcoming Remarks	6
Honouring 30 Years: A Vision for Tomorrow	6
Chief of Police Report	10
Operations Update	11
New Regional Headquarters Building	11
Updated Strategic Plan	11
Leadership Changes and New Hires	11
Advances in Technology	11
AXON – Digital Evidence Management & Body Worn Camera (BWC)	12
Digital Evidence Management System (DEMS)	12
Fleet Management	12
Criminal Investigations & Specialty Operations	12
Issues and Potential Solutions	13
Motion - Approval of NAPS Board Policies and Operational Directives	14
Discussions Highlights	15
Conclusion	15
Legislation Update	16
Opt-in Legislation - The Community Safety and Police Act (CSPA)	17
Overview of the Opt-in Process for CSPA	17
Key Points and Updates on the Opt-In Process	17
Moving Forward	18
Issue and Potential Solutions: Navigating Questions on CSPA's Impact and Policing Responsibilities	19
Discussions and Key Concerns	20
Key Points of Discussion	20
Addressing Issues and Proposed Solutions	21
Conclusion	21
Bylaw Enforcement and the Community Safety and Policing Act (CSPA) Update	22
Insights from the Presentation: Bylaws and the CSPA	23
Concerns and Discussion Highlights	24
Issues, Opinions, and Potential Solutions	25
Conclusion	26
Key Action	26
2023-2024 Audit Report Overview	27
Statement of Financial Position	28
Statement of Operations	29
Statement of Changes in Net Assets	29
Statement of Cash Flows	30
Open Forum on Policing Challenges and Community Solutions	31
Overview	31
Key Points and Discussions	32
Issues, Opinions, and Potential Solutions	34
Conclusion and Next Steps	34

The Nishnawbe Aski Police Service is a dynamic organization that serves 34 First Nation communities in the Nishnawbe Aski Nation Territory.

Our officers are spread across an area that equals two-thirds of the province of Ontario, from the Manitoba border up the James Bay Coast, over to the Quebec border.



www.naps.ca

Mission Statement

The mission of the Nishnawbe Aski Police Service is to provide a unique, effective, efficient and culturally appropriate service to all the people of the Nishnawbe Aski area that will promote harmonious and healthy communities.

To achieve this mission, in partnership with the communities we serve, we shall:

- Be representative of the communities that we serve;
- Employ a community-oriented style of police service;
- Protect persons and property through crime prevention, community education, and appropriate law enforcement; and,
- Provide a level and standard of police service of the same or higher quality that exists elsewhere in Canada.

Message from the Chair

It has been a good year for NAPS as we are on the verge of being constituted under the Community Safety & Policing Act with Ontario. It has been the focus of the Board and our technical team for many years. Our final push began in February of 2024 when the Board office set out to have all NAPS community Chiefs sign on to the legislation. It did take several months to conclude that exercise. In the end we managed to get all 34 signatures on the document and forwarded that to Ontario through NAPS and NAN Executive. There was a major effort made to try and have the signing ready for the October AGM. Necessary last minute details and wordsmithing by counsel did delay the outcome and a new plan to finalize the process by the end of November concluded with NAPS signing onto the legislation on December 10, 2024. The Board itself was newly constituted on December 18, 2024. It is indeed the dawn of a new era for policing in the NAPS communities. With that I would like to thank leadership for their continued support throughout process. It will take time to build the service model as we strive to enhance recruitment levels that will allow for an additional 4 to 60 officers per year that is over and above the normal attrition rate of 20 officers per year. Improved working conditions, resolution to pay parity with OPP, additional equipment and more opportunities for advancement should all contribute to make our target achievable.

The board also worked with Management to outline a new strategic plan for the service. In the past a lot of the input was driven from operations. They would provide feedback to the board on what the officers were experiencing in the communities, reporting

on needs, new trends etc. The Board would take all those points under advisement and with details gathered during our community consultations outline a path forward creating pillars/goals to put into a new plan. Last years report was kind of a hybrid as we began to put emphasis on designing and implementing a strategic plan that stems primarily from the governance perspective. The board now facilitates the creation of the strategic plan using talking points taken from community consultation The board then discussed how we would like to see our service develop. The pillars of our plan are: Our Work, Our Plan, Our People and Our Communities. The plan is nearing completion and a brief outline will be provided at the AGM for the delegation. Launch of the Strategic plan is set for October/November of 2024.

We are prepared for the new oversight responsibilities that will be brought under the CSPA and are actively engaging with representatives from Ontario in all areas concerning operations and governance in relation to this new initiative. Community consultations will be part of our routine going forward. This represents a real opportunity for the board to stay current with community issues and to meet with leadership on-site. We look forward to serving you and will do our best to gauge our progression as we expand our service with the new standards provided under the Rule of Law outlined in the CSPA.

Frank McKay



Welcoming Remarks

Honouring 30 Years: A Vision for Tomorrow

NAPS celebrates a milestone as it turns 30 this year. The accomplishments and growth over those 30 years has been significant, and it continues to have a positive impact on the communities it serves. The Nishnawbe Aski Police Service has grown to become a leader

in First Nation Policing throughout Canada. This is a testament to the efforts and dedication of the sworn and civilian staff members who work hard to meet its mission statement and the communities' expectations.



Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler reflected on the significant journey of the Nishnawbe Aski Police Service (NAPS) as it marks its 30th anniversary. He recalled the vision of the leadership when NAPS was established, recognizing former Grand Chief Bentley Cheechoo, who “signed that agreement... because they wanted their own police service.” Fiddler emphasized the founders’ desire for “a police service that will look like them and that will be able to carry out and enforce their own laws.” While acknowledging the challenges in realizing this vision, he commended the NAPS management and board of directors for their dedication to maintaining it, even as they “deal with crisis situations almost every day.” Fiddler expressed optimism, noting, “with the work and the advocacy... we are getting close to achieving that vision.”



Frank McKay, Acting Board Chair of the Nishnawbe Aski Police Service (NAPS), marked the organization’s 30-year milestone by reflecting on its remarkable growth and ongoing journey toward equality in First Nations policing. He shared how NAPS began as a “program under a federal-provincial agreement” and how it has fought for recognition as a legitimate police force over the years. McKay highlighted the vision of the Chiefs and Elders who founded NAPS, saying they wanted to “own their own police force that they can control and direct” to align with traditional practices and First Nations laws.

He acknowledged the challenges faced in balancing Indigenous traditions with government-imposed laws and policies but expressed optimism about progress, noting that NAPS has applied to be fully constituted as a police force, which would enable it to receive

proper funding and resources. McKay emphasized, “We will no longer be a program that has to fight for resources on a yearly basis and beg for money.”

Currently, NAPS has approximately 260 officers, but McKay outlined an ambitious goal to expand the force to 500 officers while ensuring roles are filled by First Nations individuals and leadership reflects Indigenous values. “The work will just be beginning when we get constituted under the legislation,” he noted, reaffirming the organization’s commitment to enhancing community safety and advancing self-determination.



Interim Chief of Police **Terry Armstrong** reflected on his 40 years in policing, including his time on the Northwest Patrol Unit during the formation of the Nishnawbe Aski Police Service (NAPS). He recalled the early days, when a staff sergeant announced, “Nishnawbe Aski Nations is going to have their own police force, so pick a spot because you’re all transferred.” Over the decades, while some things have resolved, Armstrong noted, “a lot has remained the same, “particularly the challenges of officers working alone in understaffed communities. Addressing the future, he expressed hope for improvement as NAPS transitions from 260 to 520 officers, stating, “It’s a doubling of the police service... detachments, drug units, crime units, intelligence units.”

Armstrong also highlighted the rising demand for mental health support, calling it one of the most significant



challenges facing the police force today. He emphasized that police are not equipped to act as mental health counselors, stating, “We can’t arrest mental health problems away.” He urged for more robust mental health resources to better serve communities. Despite the challenges, Armstrong expressed gratitude for the opportunity to return to NAPS, remarking, “There is a brighter future on the horizon... I want to believe it’s going to happen.”



Finally, we caught up with **Anna Betty Achneepineskum**, the Deputy Grand Chief of NAN, who flew back from her packed schedule in Ottawa to recognize the vital contributions made by the Nishnawbe Aski Police Service (NAPS). She began by acknowledging the prayers and sacred items present, expressing her gratitude and honor in working alongside the NAPS Board and senior administration. Reflecting on the

importance of recruitment, Achneepineskum urged communities to “encourage your people to consider a career in policing,” highlighting creative ways like community events to promote this initiative. She noted the ongoing efforts to address barriers faced by individuals entering the profession, affirming the shared commitment to progress.

Achneepineskum also emphasized the importance of collaboration, saying, “We all need to work together,” as echoed by other leaders. She addressed concerns about the judicial system’s handling of drug offenses, calling for a stronger stance against these crimes: “We can’t be doing this hand slapping anymore... it’s not being a deterrent.” Her frustration was evident when discussing the challenges officers face in seeing their hard work undermined by lenient court decisions, stating firmly, “The judges need to be more firm.” Despite the hurdles, she maintained a hopeful tone, encouraging communities to express their concerns, whether through in-person or virtual meetings, and reaffirming her availability to support these dialogues. Achneepineskum concluded her speech with a call to unity and collective effort, leaving an inspiring message for the audience.





Chief of Police Report

Operations Update

New Regional Headquarters Building

Within the past few months, the Central Region Headquarters has relocated from Court Street to 973 Balmoral Street, Thunder Bay, Ontario. This state-of-the-art facility now serves as the fully operational Nishnawbe Aski Police Headquarters. This has been a significant move of both uniform and civilian staff and included construction of a new wing for the training center and quartermasters' stores. The new training center is modern and should serve NAPS training needs moving well into the future. The grand opening of this new building had taken place in October 2024.

Updated Strategic Plan

In preparation for the Community Safety and Policing Act (CSPA), NAPS has partnered with Lighthouse Leadership Services and been working alongside the board to develop a new Strategic Plan for 2024-2027. As part of this process, an Employee Survey was conducted with strong participation from both civilian and uniform staff. The feedback collected will create a SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats), which will be integrated into the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan. The dedication and passion of everyone involved in this process

have been evident in their discussions of both advancements and future challenges.

Leadership Changes and New Hires

Leadership changes include Brad Duce as the new Deputy Chief of Police and the return of retired Chief Terry Armstrong as Interim Chief. NAPS is transitioning to the Community Safety and Policing Act (CSPA) and plans to expand its workforce by adding approximately 250 officers and 120 civilian staff. NAPS has hired a number of new officers in the recent months, and this will be a trend that will be continuing as NAPS continues its growth towards a legislative police service. They encourage all eligible NAN members to apply, and they will continue to be actively recruiting.

Advances in Technology

NAPS is leveraging advanced technologies like body-worn cameras (BWC) and drones to enhance policing and community relations. Through Axon's cloud-based platform, these tools reduce paperwork,



streamline reporting, and enable digital evidence submission directly from community members. These innovations allow officers to dedicate more time to proactive policing, crime prevention, and community engagement, further solidifying NAPS' leadership in Indigenous policing.

AXON – Digital Evidence Management & Body Worn Camera (BWC)

The introduction of Axon's Digital Evidence Management System (DEMS) and body-worn cameras marks a significant step in modernizing NAPS operations. DEMS provides secure, centralized storage for digital evidence, improving accountability and transparency. BWCs are designed to capture officer interactions, enhance public trust, and reduce the use of force. Supervisors and sergeants are already onboarded, with officer-wide implementation underway, promising improved efficiency and trust between NAPS and the communities it serves.

Digital Evidence Management System (DEMS)

DEMS transforms how NAPS handles digital evidence by enabling community members to upload crime-related videos or photos securely. This system minimizes administrative workload, allowing officers to focus on frontline duties. Future enhancements include hiring a DEMS Coordinator to

oversee data protection and ensure compliance, bolstering professionalism and operational efficiency in evidence handling.

Fleet Management

This year, NAPS procured 12 new vehicles with a budget of \$790,000 to replace aging units and expand the fleet for frontline operations. To support maintenance, a new 32x36 mechanic shop with a hoist and retrofitting bays was built, allowing mechanics to work side by side on vehicle repairs and builds. Advanced Ford diagnostic tools and NASTF (National Automotive Service Task Force)* licensing were acquired to manage modern vehicle technologies, enabling key programming and security system repairs. Maintenance kits were also distributed to detachments, reducing the need to transport heavy tools by air. Fleet Foremen Carveth Shaw and Nolan Armstead continue to travel extensively to ensure the fleet remains operational and will soon undergo Ford Factory Training to enhance their expertise. These improvements strengthen NAPS' ability to support officers and communities year-round.

*NASTF: The National Automotive Service Task Force provides access to essential vehicle repair tools, software, and information for technicians.

Criminal Investigations & Specialty Operations

NAPS continues to address staffing shortages while prioritizing officer well-being and operational efficiency. The Criminal Investigations Unit operates

across three regions (Northeast, Northwest, and Central) with nine detectives and is supported by the **Crime Unit Support Program**, which engages frontline officers to assist crime units on a rotational basis, gaining investigative experience in the process. The Intelligence Unit, focusing on drug enforcement and guns-and-gangs' teams, handled 197 investigations, resulting in 376 arrests, 1,015 charges, and the seizure of \$750,000 and 172 firearms. Methamphetamine pills and cocaine remain major concerns in the communities. Ongoing efforts include a \$10 million, three-year initiative to recruit 18 specialized drug enforcement officers to further strengthen NAPS' capacity.

Emergency response remains a cornerstone, with the Emergency Response Team (ERT) responding to 205 high-risk calls and assisting other agencies such as the Ontario Provincial Police. Annual training has expanded to include recertifications and new skills delivered at NAPS' new headquarters.

Community engagement initiatives include the **DARE** (Drug Awareness Resistance Education) **program**, which educates youth about drug, gang, and gun awareness, and has plans to double the program's size due to its positive community impact. Despite handling nearly 40,000 calls for service this year—a 4,000-call increase from the previous year—NAPS continues to face challenges related to crime severity, with a Crime Severity Index rating significantly higher than both

the provincial and national averages. Plans to track conviction rates in the coming year aim to further enhance accountability and operational efficiency.

Issues and Potential Solutions

Several important issues were raised by the board members and chiefs during the meeting, along with potential solutions to address them.

- One key issue was the **enforcement of BCRs (Band Council Resolutions)** concerning unwelcome guests and suspected drug dealers. Chiefs highlighted the difficulty of enforcing BCRs due to the lack of legal support, and one potential solution suggested was to pursue **peace bonds** through the court system, which could provide police with the legal backing needed to remove individuals from communities.
- Another concern was the **shortage of officers** and **retention** of current staff. Chiefs emphasized that many officers leave due to family-related reasons and the demands of remote work





schedules. The solution proposed was to improve **recruitment and retention** strategies, including hiring officers directly from **First Nations communities**.

- However, it was also noted that **HR barriers** currently prevent some qualified community members from joining the force due to past minor offenses, suggesting a need for **revised HR mechanisms** to support local recruitment.
- Additionally, **community engagement** was discussed, with Chiefs proposing the use of **cameras** at community entrances to deter unwanted visitors.
- Moreover, Community members expressed the need for a more transparent **complaints process to address concerns about interactions with officers**. NAPS leadership confirmed that complaints can already be

submitted online, through officers, or directly to the Professional Standards Bureau, which includes a sergeant and sergeant major. Additionally, under the Community Safety and Policing Act (CPSA), new legislative entities, such as the Law Enforcement Complaint Agency (LECA), will provide further avenues for complaints, ensuring multiple layers of accountability.

- Finally, representatives from land code communities voiced concerns about **difficulties in enforcing locally created laws on reserves**. Strengthening understanding and collaboration between NAPS and land code administrators was suggested as a pathway forward. Efforts are underway to address bylaw enforcement challenges, with ongoing discussions involving legal entities to find practical solutions.

Motion – Approval of NAPS Board Policies and Operational Directives

This section revolved around the motion to approve the NAPS Board Policies and Operational Directives. These internal policies span 460 pages and encompass operational directives, the board’s policy, adequacy standards policy, and other essential governance frameworks. They were initially

approved by the board on September 26th. However, the chiefs and participants engaged in discussions to deliberate and finalize the approval, ensuring the policies align with the unique needs and expectations of the communities they serve.

The conversation reflects a collaborative effort to address concerns, clarify misunderstandings, and achieve consensus among the chiefs present. This process underscores the importance of inclusivity and transparency in shaping policies that are fundamental to the functioning and governance of the NAPS organization.

Discussions Highlights

During this section of meetings, some discussions and concerns are being raised by the chiefs and the community representatives. Here are some important highlights:

- Lack of Clarity on Policy Details:
 - » Some members expressed concerns about the insufficient explanation or accessibility of the policies and directives. They requested further clarification to ensure everyone fully understands the implications before approval.
- Need for Chief Involvement:
 - » There was a perception among a few participants that chiefs were not adequately consulted during the creation or revision of the policies, potentially leading to a disconnect between leadership and policy implementation.

- Policy Implementation Challenges:
 - » Questions were raised about how the policies would be operationalized and whether they are practical in the context of local realities, particularly regarding resource allocation and enforcement.
- Concerns About Flexibility:
 - » Some members worried that the policies might lack flexibility to accommodate the unique needs of different communities under NAPS jurisdiction.

Conclusion

The motion to approve the policies was tabled, providing additional time for review and ensuring all stakeholders could provide meaningful input. The chiefs emphasized the importance of establishing a more structured process for policy review and communication. This decision reflects a collective commitment to creating policies that are not only operationally effective but also inclusive and adaptable to the needs of the communities. Moving forward, the organization will work on fostering collaboration and transparency to ensure the policies serve as a strong foundation for governance and community engagement.



Legislation Update

Opt-in Legislation - The Community Safety and Police Act (CSPA)

Overview of the Opt-in Process for CSPA

The legislation update focuses on NAPS' pivotal step toward opting into Ontario's Community Safety and Policing Act (CSPA), a legislative framework designed to ensure equitable policing standards and sustainable funding while preserving Indigenous identity. This significant development is the result of decades of advocacy and collaboration, aiming to address systemic inequities in public safety for Indigenous communities.

The tragic death of Lena Anderson in 2013 served as a wake-up call, highlighting the resource deficiencies that plagued NAPS and led to devastating consequences. Responding to such incidents, NAN leadership and chiefs united to demand legislative reforms. The CSPA, adopted in 2019, was co-drafted with NAN and NAPS, incorporating tailored provisions to address the unique needs of First Nations communities.

Since 2021, an Opt-In Working Group has been addressing key questions around resource requirements, policy alignment, and implementation. These

efforts culminated on July 2, 2024, with NAN submitting the final opt-in application, supported by the NAN 34 Resolution and a detailed draft regulation. The CSPA's implementation, which came into effect on April 1, 2024, is expected to mark the beginning of a new era for Indigenous policing.

Key Points and Updates on the Opt-In Process

- **Historical Context and Advocacy:** NAPS' journey to legislative integration stems from longstanding calls for fair treatment in policing standards. For years, chiefs have emphasized the need for a legal framework that matches the protections afforded to non-Indigenous communities.
 - » The Lena Anderson tragedy was a key turning point, emphasizing the dire consequences of inadequate resources.
 - » The 2013 Public Safety Notice issued by NAN leadership underscored the urgent need for reform, although it initially received no response from provincial or federal authorities.
- **CSPA's Legislative Framework:** The CSPA represents a major leap forward for First Nations policing, enabling equitable standards and sustainable funding mechanisms.
 - » The legislation introduces adequate and effective policing standards, ensuring culturally



responsive services for Indigenous communities.

- » A critical feature is the arbitration mechanism, allowing NAPS to seek funding adjustments if resources fall short of operational needs. The arbitrator is mandated to consider the additional costs of culturally responsive policing.
- » Provisions ensure cultural autonomy, safeguarding NAPS' unique identity as a First Nations police service.

• **Key Milestones in the Opt-In Process:**

- » 2019: Adoption of the CSPA, with NAN and NAPS contributing to its co-drafting.
- » 2021: Formation of the Opt-In Working Group to address the legislative transition.
- » 2024: Final opt-in application submitted, supported by the NAN 34 Resolution.

- **Implementation and Current Status:** The opt-in application awaits final approval through Ontario's regulatory process. NAN leadership has maintained pressure

on provincial authorities to expedite feedback on the draft regulation.

- » A modernized policy framework for NAPS is under development, with expert consultants ensuring alignment with legislative standards.
- » The transition plan includes resource reviews, funding proposals, and operational readiness assessments to meet CSPA requirements.

Moving Forward

The integration of NAPS into the CSPA framework represents a landmark achievement for First Nations governance and public safety. By opting into this legislative model, NAPS will secure resources and standards on par with municipal police services while retaining its cultural identity.

However, challenges remain, including the exclusion of First Nations bylaws from the mandatory policing standards—a point acknowledged as an oversight during negotiations. Addressing this gap will be a priority for future advocacy.

The journey to legislative integration highlights the resilience and unity of NAN leadership and chiefs, who have driven this process through tragedy, advocacy, and negotiation. The focus now shifts to finalizing regulatory approval and ensuring the smooth implementation of CSPA provisions, paving the way for safer and stronger First Nations communities.

Issue and Potential Solutions: Navigating Questions on CSPA's Impact and Policing Responsibilities





Key Points of Discussion

- **Impact on Treaty Rights:**

- » Chiefs raised concerns about whether adopting new policies under the CSPA might inadvertently undermine treaty rights, particularly around hunting, fishing, and trapping.
- » Delegates emphasized the importance of maintaining the distinction between treaty rights and public safety issues, with assurances that opting into the CSPA does not affect treaty rights.

- **Governance and Law Development:**

- » Discussions highlighted the need for stronger alignment between policing frameworks and traditional First Nations governance systems.
- » Chiefs advocated for integrating peacekeeping systems and restorative justice practices with NAPS operations to better reflect Indigenous cultural and legal principles.

- **Officer Responsibilities and Training:**

- » Specific cases, such as a reported incident at an airport involving an intoxicated individual, revealed gaps in officer understanding of their arrest powers and responsibilities under the Criminal Code.

Discussions and Key Concerns

The Q&A session following the legislative update addressed pressing concerns regarding the potential impact of the Community Safety and Policing Act (CSPA) on treaty rights, the operational responsibilities of NAPS officers, and broader governance and justice issues. Chiefs and delegates voiced thoughtful questions, reflecting on both historical and ongoing challenges faced by First Nations communities.

- » Calls were made for enhanced training and clarity on the scope of officer duties, particularly in public settings like airports.

- **Structural Challenges:**

- » Chiefs voiced concerns about fragmented governance structures, noting that siloed approaches among various First Nations organizations hinder comprehensive law development and service integration.

Addressing Issues and Proposed Solutions

- **Treaty Rights Safeguards:**

- » It was clarified that the CSPA does not impact treaty rights or alter First Nations' agreements regarding hunting, fishing, or trapping. Chiefs were reassured that public safety legislation and treaty matters remain distinct legal domains.

- **Enhanced Training for Officers:**

- » Plans to reinforce officer training were proposed, particularly regarding the proper application of the Criminal Code in diverse scenarios, ensuring officers are equipped to handle public disturbances effectively.

- **Consultation Mandates in the CSPA:**

- » The CSPA includes provisions requiring First Nations boards to consult with community leaders regarding cultural traditions before establishing policies or strategic plans. This legal obligation ensures that First Nations' voices shape policing approaches.

- **Integrated Governance Structures:**

- » Chiefs underscored the need for a unified approach to governance and law development. Proposals include the creation of a centralized framework to address interconnected issues across policing, restorative justice, education, and health services.

Conclusion

By addressing these issues and potential solutions, NAPS and NAN leadership reaffirmed their commitment to improving public safety, respecting cultural traditions, and maintaining First Nations' autonomy. The discussions reflected the resilience and unity of Indigenous leadership in striving for equitable, culturally aligned policing systems. The details regarding the 'opt-in' process for the CSPA can also be found in the presentation report titled '*Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019 – 'Opt-in' Update,*' provided by the legal counsel.



Bylaw Enforcement and the Community Safety and Policing Act (CSPA) Update

This section addressed the intersection of bylaw enforcement within NAPS-policed communities and the ongoing challenges under the framework of the Community Safety and Policing Act (CSPA), 2019. The discussion reflected on the current inadequacies in Canadian legislation, the role of Indigenous laws

and Band Council Resolutions (BCRs), and the efforts needed to enhance community safety and autonomy. It also explored solutions to overcome legal and practical barriers while emphasizing the importance of cultural responsiveness and Indigenous-led legal structures.

Insights from the Presentation: Bylaws and the CSPA

This section began with a slide presentation titled Bylaws in the Community Safety and Policing Act (CSPA), presented by Asha James of Falconers LLP. The presentation highlighted some of the laws that communities are implementing to combat the drug crisis and addressed community concerns surrounding Band Council Resolutions (BCRs). The presentation also explored structuring bylaws to allow NAPS to assist effectively with impact of the CSPA, which NAPS is in the final stages of adopting.

• **Overview of Band Bylaws:**

- » NAPS' dual obligations under Canadian laws and Indigenous community laws.
- » Types of bylaws:
 - ◇ Search and Seizure Laws: Target drug importation and trafficking.
 - ◇ Trespass and Removal Laws: Address removal of individuals involved in illegal activities.
- » Challenges:
 - ◇ Many bylaws lack provisions to meet the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, complicating enforcement.
 - ◇ Outdated or under-resourced community laws struggle

to address the drug crisis effectively.

• **Challenges with Current Bylaw Approaches:**

- » BCRs alone often lack sufficient legal grounding for enforcement.
- » Implementation requires significant resources, training, and coordination.
- » Crown prosecutors have shown limited commitment to supporting bylaw enforcement in courts.

• **Potential Solutions for Enforcement:**

- » Integration of existing provincial or federal laws into community-specific bylaws (e.g., adopting the Trespass to Property Act).
- » Creation of a regional Chiefs Committee to streamline training, resources, and enforcement.
- » Scaling administrative burdens like fine collection to a regional level.





Concerns and Discussion Highlights

During this section, chiefs and delegates raised some concerns and discussions to highlight the critical role of bylaw enforcement in addressing pressing safety concerns within NAPS-policed communities under the evolving framework of the Community Safety and Policing Act (CSPA), 2019. Through a combination of insights from a presentation titled Bylaws and the Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019 and extensive discussions among Chiefs and community leaders, the section delves into the current challenges, opportunities, and pathways for strengthening bylaw enforcement. Themes included the 'integration of Indigenous legal principles', 'the operational implications of the CSPA', and 'the collaborative efforts needed' to combat drug crises and enhance community governance. These discussions emphasized the urgent need for culturally responsive solutions and the development of Indigenous-led legal frameworks to complement existing Canadian laws.

- **Effects of the CSPA on Bylaw Enforcement:**

- » Section 11(2) excludes enforcement of First Nations bylaws from the "adequate and effective" standards.
- » Despite challenges, the CSPA allows for policies exceeding these standards and requires culturally responsive policing.

- **The Path Forward:**

- » Indigenous legal systems must be developed in parallel to current frameworks.
- » NAPS' opt-in under CSPA positions it for funding necessary to enforce Indigenous laws alongside existing systems.

- **Concerns Around Charter Compliance and Traditional Authority**

Chiefs raised issues about Canadian legal standards being misaligned with Indigenous governance principles. The focus on Charter compliance often undermines traditional authority, leading to

frustration over external systems dictating Indigenous community operations. Solutions include transitioning to Indigenous legal systems that reflect cultural values and practices.

- **Drug Crisis and Community Safety**

The drug epidemic is a critical issue. While bylaws addressing search, seizure, and trespass aim to curb drug trafficking, enforcement remains limited due to resource constraints and legal ambiguities. Collaborations between communities, NAN Legal, and NAPS are essential to bridge these gaps.

- **Need for Indigenous Legal Structures**

Indigenous leaders emphasized the importance of creating comprehensive legal systems that incorporate cultural traditions and governance. Developing Indigenous legal frameworks would enable communities to exercise greater self-determination in justice and policing.

- **Role of Chiefs in Justice Development**

The proposal for a Chiefs Committee to oversee justice initiatives highlights the need for leadership-driven strategies. Such a committee could align NAN Legal, NAPS, and community representatives to advance cohesive legal and enforcement systems.

Issues, Opinions, and Potential Solutions

After raising concerns and engaging in discussions with Chiefs and delegates, the Issues, Opinions, and Potential Solutions section seeks to identify actionable strategies to address challenges in bylaw enforcement under the framework of the CSPA. This segment is driven by the need to align enforcement mechanisms with Indigenous governance values while tackling the pressing issues of drug trafficking and community safety.

This section emerged from extensive deliberations during the AGM, supported by insights shared through the Bylaws in the Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019 presentation. It examines the gaps in current legal systems, explores the integration of provincial and federal laws, and proposes the development of Indigenous legal structures. The purpose of this discussion is to ensure that bylaw enforcement not only combats the drug epidemic effectively but also empowers communities to reclaim their governance and legal systems.



By fostering collaboration between NAN leadership, NAPS, and legal advisors, this segment aims to lay the groundwork for sustainable solutions that respect Indigenous traditions and address modern-day challenges.

Issues:

- Lack of legal provisions and resources for enforcing bylaws.
- Misalignment between Canadian laws and Indigenous governance.
- Insufficient support from Crown prosecutors for bylaw enforcement.
- Overlap between drug enforcement and community safety initiatives.

Opinions:

- Community members view current frameworks as inadequate and overly dependent on external laws that disregard Indigenous principles.
- Chiefs advocate for Indigenous-led governance and justice systems as sustainable solutions.

Potential Solutions:

- Integrate elements of Canadian laws into BCRs and bylaws to bolster enforcement.
- Establish a regional Chiefs Committee for oversight and resource coordination.
- Use the CSPA's provisions for exceeding adequate policing standards to secure funding for Indigenous initiatives.
- Develop parallel Indigenous legal systems to complement current frameworks.



Conclusion

The ongoing discussions and initiatives surrounding bylaw enforcement and the CSPA underscore the need for innovative, Indigenous-led solutions to community safety challenges. As NAPS moves into the final stages of CSPA opt-in, there is a critical opportunity to address systemic issues and build frameworks that reflect and respect Indigenous governance. Collaborative efforts, such as the proposed Chiefs Committee and the integration of traditional laws, will be pivotal in achieving these goals. The presentation, *Bylaws and the Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019*, serves as a foundational reference for understanding these complexities and guiding future actions.

Key Action

The “Bylaws in the Community Safety and Policing Act” presentation provides a detailed roadmap for communities and leaders to work collaboratively with NAPS, ensuring bylaw enforcement aligns with community safety goals and respects cultural governance.



2023-2024 Audit Report Overview

The 2023-24 audit report provides a comprehensive analysis of the financial performance and position of the Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service (NAPS). This report, prepared for NAPS directors and community members, highlights a balanced approach to managing resources amid challenges. While the audit confirmed that financial records are materially accurate, it noted a departure from standard accounting principles due to funding agencies not allowing the accrual of vacation pay—a policy that would have added a \$3 million liability.

As of March 31, 2024, NAPS held \$24 million in assets, including \$14.5 million in tangible capital assets and \$9.5 million in liquid assets. Major investments during the year included a new location in Thunder Bay and body cameras, reflecting a commitment to modernization. Liabilities totaled \$20 million, leaving the organization with an overall surplus of \$3.2 million. However,

the year saw a \$5.6 million deficit due to increased operational costs, particularly in travel and staffing. Despite this, previous surpluses helped offset the challenges, underscoring the need for continued government support as NAPS works towards its vision of expansion and enhanced community service delivery.

In terms of mitigating travel costs, a significant operational expense for NAPS, \$9 million out of the \$72 million total annual expenses were attributed to aircraft leases, officer rotation charters, and specialized unit emergency deployments. To address these costs, NAPS has signed a new lease agreement to reduce reliance on charters and is planning to acquire its own aircraft within two years, which could yield substantial savings by eliminating airline profit margins.

Statement of Financial Position

As at March 31, 2024

Assets	2024	2023
Current		
Cash	3,002,341	6,439,269
Accounts Receivable (Note 3)	6,163,087	6,393,166
Prepaid Expenses	339,741	324,702
Inventory	-	2,510
Total	9,505,169	13,159,647
Tangible Capital Assets (Note 4)	14,585,462	9,572,960
Restricted Cash	81,179	44,520
Total Assets	24,171,810	22,777,127

Liabilities	2024	2023
Current		
Accounts Payable and Accruals (Note 6)	13,606,049	10,300,680
Deferred Revenues (Note 7)	1,981,450	121,418
Total Current Liabilities	15,587,499	44,520
Funds held in Trust	81,179	44,520
Deferred contributions related to Tangible Capital Assets (Note 8)	5,285,361	3,448,332
Total Liabilities	20,954,039	13,914,950

Net Assets	2024	2023
Unrestricted	(6,082,330)	2,737,549
Investment in Tangible Capital Assets (Note 10)	9,300,101	6,124,628
Total Net Assets	3,217,771	8,862,177

Total Liabilities and Net Assets	24,171,810	22,777,127
---	-------------------	------------

Statement of Operations

For the year ended March 31, 2024

Revenue	2024	2023
Operations (Schedule A)	59,042,883	56,365,92
Police Board (Schedule C)	1,228,664	1,308,469
Other Projects (Schedule D)	5,661,724	4,679,236
One-time funding (Schedule E)	1,090,089	684,534
Total Revenue	67,023,360	63,038,168

Expenses	2024	2023
Operations (Schedule A)	64,640,767	55,059,155
Police Board (Schedule C)	1,186,865	919,392
Other Projects (Schedule D)	5,750,045	4,750,744
One-time funding (Schedule E)	1,090,089	684,534
Total Expenses	72,667,766	61,413,825
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses for the year	(5,644,406)	1,624,343

Statement of Changes in Net Assets

For the year ended March 31, 2024

	Unrestricted	Investment in tangible capital assets	2024	2023
Net assets , beginning of year	2,737,549	6,124,628	8,862,177	7,237,834
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses for the year (Note 11)	(8,819,879)	3,175,473	(5,644,406)	1,624,343
Net assets , end of year	(6,082,330)	9,300,101	3,217,771	8,862,177

Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended March 31, 2024

Cash provided by (used for) the following activities		
Operating	2024	2023
Cash received from customers and funding agencies	67,595,175	56,781,133
Interest received	428,206	396,311
Cash paid to suppliers	(24,828,819)	(20,016,045)
Cash paid to employees	(40,528,618)	(35,551,819)
Total	2,665,944	1,609,580

Financing	2024	2023
Deferred capital contributions received	2,927,118	2,230,602
Increase in funds held in trust	36,659	-
	2,963,777	2,230,602

Investing	2024	2023
Proceeds on disposal of marketable securities	-	408,889
Purchase of tangible capital assets	(9,029,990)	(4,101,014)
Proceeds on disposal of tangible capital assets	-	10,000
Advances of restricted cash	(36,659)	(3,258)
	(9,066,649)	(3,685,383)

Increase in cash resources	(3,436,928)	154,799
Cash resources, beginning of year	6,439,269	6,284,470
Cash resources, end of year	3,002,341	6,439,269





Open Forum on Policing Challenges and Community Solutions

Overview

Following a day of critical discussions and presentations, the open forum provided an opportunity for chiefs, delegates, and participants to voice concerns, share experiences, and seek collaborative solutions regarding pressing issues in community policing.

The forum underscored challenges faced by Indigenous communities, including drug epidemics, enforcement gaps, and the balance between traditional and colonial legal systems. Participants shared stories, posed questions, and explored avenues for enhancing community safety, cultural preservation, and effective policing.



The session aimed to identify actionable insights, strengthen inter-community collaboration, and reinforce the collective commitment to address ongoing crises, particularly those affecting vulnerable populations like youth and elders. The forum also highlighted the importance of integrating Indigenous laws, addressing enforcement limitations, and fostering mutual support among leadership and policing entities.

Key Points and Discussions

1. Concerns About Policing and Officer Welfare

One recurring concern was the well-being of NAPS officers, particularly those working alone. Chiefs and delegates expressed empathy for officers who endure long hours and

demanding conditions, often without adequate backup.

- Comment from a delegate: Highlighted the importance of checking in on lone officers, acknowledging their dedication despite being overburdened. This reflected broader community concerns about officer fatigue and the risks associated with understaffing.
- Point Raised: The need for more officers and resources to ensure safety and prevent burnout.

Additionally, the importance of officer training to handle sensitive situations, especially those involving children, was emphasized. Communities expressed a desire to ensure that children's safety is prioritized during policing activities.

2. Social Impacts of Drug Epidemics

The devastating effects of drug abuse, particularly methamphetamine and opioids, were a central focus. Chiefs shared emotional accounts of community members lost to drug-related tragedies, underscoring the urgency of addressing this crisis.

- Example shared by a chief: Recounted burying three young community members who died from drug-related issues, illustrating the far-reaching impacts of the crisis on families and communities.
- Initiative Highlighted: A community's "no-fly list" for drug dealers was introduced as a proactive measure that significantly reduced drug trafficking. Despite

facing legal challenges, this initiative demonstrated the potential of community-driven solutions.

- Point Raised: Prevention and decisive action are critical to slowing the influx of drugs, with a focus on bold measures even when they challenge conventional legal frameworks.

3. Balancing Traditional and Colonial Legal Systems

Chiefs consistently highlighted the tension between traditional laws and colonial legal systems. They called for a reconciliation of these frameworks to ensure culturally appropriate governance and justice.

- Insight from a delegate: Described a case where community protocols resolved a custody issue, bypassing colonial legal structures. This showcased the effectiveness of traditional laws in addressing local conflicts.
- Perspective shared by a chief: Stressed the need for communities to assert their authority in law-making and enforcement, advocating for the development of Indigenous legal systems to reflect cultural traditions and governance structures.

The discussion also explored how integrating traditional laws into NAPS operations could strengthen community trust and effectiveness.

4. Collaborative Support and Resource Sharing

Several delegates emphasized the importance of collaboration between NAPS, community resources, and external entities to address enforcement gaps.

- Proposal from a delegate: Suggested better communication and resource coordination between NAPS and local entities, such as crisis teams, mental health counselors, and community leaders. This approach could enhance response efficiency and alleviate officer workload.
- Role of Regional Hubs: Delegates suggested establishing regional hubs to streamline prosecution processes, fine collection, and appeals. This would address current limitations in enforcing bylaws and holding individuals accountable.

Delegates also highlighted the potential of partnerships with external organizations, like Canadian Rangers and Transport Canada, to enhance security at critical entry points such as airports and postal systems.

5. Leadership and Responsibility

The forum underscored the role of chiefs as leaders in driving change and fostering community resilience. Chiefs were encouraged to challenge systemic barriers and advocate for their communities.

- Call to Action by Elder Barney Batise: In a heartfelt closing speech, Elder Barney Batise highlighted the

critical need for chiefs to address systemic challenges together, particularly the drug trafficking crises harming their communities. He urged leaders to harness their collective authority and cultural knowledge to drive meaningful change, fostering resilience and unity to safeguard their people and future generations.

- Quote: “What else do you have?” Resonated as a challenge to improve existing systems while integrating traditional values and knowledge.

Issues, Opinions, and Potential Solutions

Issues:

1. Overburdened officers and insufficient staffing levels.
2. Inadequate enforcement mechanisms for community laws and bylaws.
3. Disconnect between colonial legal systems and traditional Indigenous governance.
4. Lack of support for addressing drug crises, particularly in remote communities.

Opinions:

1. Chiefs and delegates viewed current legal frameworks as insufficient and culturally misaligned.
2. There was widespread support for integrating traditional laws into policing practices.

3. Community-driven initiatives, such as no-fly lists, were seen as effective but required broader support.

Potential Solutions:

1. Increase resources and staffing for NAPS to address officer welfare and workload.
2. Develop Indigenous legal systems that reflect community values and traditions.
3. Establish regional hubs for enforcement and prosecution to enhance accountability.
4. Strengthen collaborations between NAPS, community resources, and external entities
5. Advocate for systemic reforms to better align policing and justice systems with Indigenous needs.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The open forum highlighted the urgent need for collective action and systemic reform to address NAN communities' challenges. Chiefs and delegates emphasized the importance of integrating traditional laws, enhancing officer support, and implementing community-driven solutions to combat crises such as drug epidemics. Moving forward, leadership must prioritize collaboration, resource allocation, and advocacy to build a safer and more resilient future. By leveraging the insights and commitments shared during the forum, communities can work together to achieve meaningful and lasting change.

NAPS Detachments



LEGEND

- Indigenous Communities
- 📍 Non-Indigenous Communities
- Nishnawbe Aski Nation Boundary
- North West NAPS Region
- Central NAPS Region
- North East NAPS Region



www.naps.ca

LOVE HONESTY HUMILITY BRAVERY RESPECT WISDOM TRUTH

