

TAXI COMMISSION MEETING  
Minutes of the March 21, 2005 meeting

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**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Sanford called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**II. ATTENDANCE**

Present: Chair Sanford, Members Daggett, Feehley, Bresciano, Councilor Whitehouse, Sergeant Dubois, and City Clerk Barnaby.

**III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 20, 2004**

Frank Daggett moved to accept and approve the minutes of the January 18, 2005 Taxi Commission meeting. Seconded by Councilor Whitehouse and voted.

**IV. NEW BUSINESS**

1. Memo from Blue Star Taxi regarding taxi patron complaints

The memo from Blue Star Taxi regarding taxi patron complaints was directed to Blue Star staff in answer to a memorandum from City Clerk Barnaby concerning the following complaints:

- a. On January 29, 2005, a taxi company advising a potential customer who desired to be transported to Kittery, Maine that the company would not take that fare because it was "to busy".
- b. On February 24, 2005, one taxi company refused to accept a fare from downtown to Freedom Circle because the person requesting transportation, "was not a regular customer".
- c. A member of the Taxi Commission personally observed a taxi cab in the downtown area stopping in the incorrect travel lane to pick up a fare.

Frank Daggett stated that he personally saw the situations listed in the memo and that the first two were with Blue Star Taxi and the third was Sunshine Taxi.

James Feehley stated that Saturday nights are very busy and there is sometimes up to a two-hour wait. He also advised that he did not believe that his dispatch would have refused a person because they were not a regular customer.

Frank Daggett advised that he was there when the call was made and that is what he was told was said when the individual hung up with the dispatcher.

Alan Ladd stated that he would council his drivers regarding safe and proper driving practices.

Frank Daggett advised Anchor Taxi that the American Legion has asked all drivers to pick up and drop off fairs in the rear of the building.

Edward Spadafora stated that he did not know this and that his drivers would be informed and they would comply in the future.

Peter Bresciano moved to accept the Blue Star Memorandum and place it on file. Seconded by Frank Daggett.

Peter Bresciano stated that these types of complaints are very infrequent and that when we hear things we can't always know the truth unless we bring in all parties. He agreed that we need to get the word out, then let it lay.

Frank Daggett said that since he saw these incidents himself, he felt that it should not wait until this meeting. He discussed it with City Attorney Sullivan and they advised City Clerk Barnaby to put out a memo to expedite this information.

Councilor Whitehouse agreed with Peter Bresciano and that we should get the word out and then let it go. He also wanted to recognize the handwritten memo from Gary Moran from A-1 Taxi.

Motion passed.

Frank Daggett wished to state that the Commission was not trying to run the taxi's business, but were tasked with upholding the ordinance.

James Bresciano stated that people do not realize that Portsmouth does not have 30 medallions any more and that the taxi companies are doing their best to accommodate the city.

Councilor Whitehouse stated that 13 medallions are low.

Gary Moran stated that the cost of insurance is what is causing taxi owner's problems. He stated that his insurance has doubled since last year.

Peter Bresciano suggested that Councilor Whitehouse bring this issue to the City Council.

Councilor Whitehouse stated that he has brought the subject up in the past without success.

James Bresciano stated that there has been a rate increase within the last year.

Edward Spadafora stated that the raising gas prices are also beginning to hurt them financially.

James Bresciano stated that he would make an observation that in the future the taxi companies are going to have to come in for a rate increase. He requested that prior to this happening, the Taxi owners check with other cities, comparable with Portsmouth and see what fares are there and prepare a report to the Commissioner to substantiate their request.

He stated that he is not advocating a rate increase, but he would like to see the taxi companies come to the Commission prepared with the causes of the problem and the figures needed to correct the problem.

William Brown stated that a wage increase could soon elevate the problems.

2. Updated List of Taxi Medallions

City Clerk Barnaby provided the commission with an updated list of all current medallions, due to the number of changes since she provided the list at the January 18, 2005 meeting.

**V. OLD BUSINESS**

1. Report back from Sergeant Dubois regarding weights and measures inspection.

Sergeant Dubois said that there would be no additional costs to get the meters inspected. He proposed that in April/May he would do a no-notice spot inspection and do the meter inspection at the same time.

Paul Ford asked what was wrong with doing the scheduled inspections the way they were done last year.

Sergeant Dubois stated that both Lieutenant Winsor and himself were concerned about all the vehicles that came in with new parts on them during the last inspection, leaving them to believe that prior to the inspection many vehicle were not road worthy. Therefore, he has decided that a no-notice inspection would ensure that the taxis are being maintained on a daily basis and not just before a scheduled inspection.

Paul Ford stated that the Commission could amend the ordinance to have scheduled inspections every four months i.e. in March, June and November.

Sergeant Dubois stated that inspections during the winter months were difficult due to the unavailability of the lift at Public Works.

City Clerk Barnaby stated that she does not think that it needs to be put in the ordinance.

Peter Bresciano asked Sergeant Dubois how many inspections do we presently have a year.

Sergeant Dubois stated that there have been two since he became involved with the program.

Councilor Whitehouse moved to support Sergeant Dubois' proposal to do a no-notice spot inspection in April/May with the meter inspections at the same time. Seconded by Frank Daggett and voted.

Paul Ford offered Sergeant Dubois the use of their lift to inspect their taxis since they have seven of the thirteen medallions.

**VI. MISCELLANEOUS/UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

City Clerk Barnaby introduced Dianne Kirby as the new Deputy City Clerk and informed the Commission that Dianne would be responsible for the minutes for the commission and could assist them when needed.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

At 10:03 a.m., Councilor Whitehouse moved to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Daggett and voted.

Respectfully submitted by:

Dianne M. Kirby, Deputy City Clerk