

**PORTSMOUTH POLICE COMMISSION**

**MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 27<sup>TH</sup>, 2010 MEETING**

8:15 AM (Non-Public) – Little Theater Room, Portsmouth High School

9:15 AM (Public) – Little Theater Room, Portsmouth High School

Gerald W. Howe, Chairman

John C. Russo

John F. Golumb

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The chairman called the October 27<sup>h</sup>, 2010 monthly police commission public session to order at 8:10 AM in the Little Theater Room of the Portsmouth Public High School.

**Action: Commissioner Golumb moved** to go into non-public session for the purpose of discussing personnel issues as per RSA 91-A:3, II.

**Seconded by Commissioner Russo.**

**On a Roll Call Vote:** The board voted unanimously to go into non-public session at 8:11 AM.

**Action: Commissioner Russo moved** to come out of non-public session.

**Seconded by Commissioner Golumb.**

**On a Roll Call Vote:** The board voted unanimously to come out of non-public session at 9:04 AM.

**Chairman Howe called the public session back to order at 9:19 AM.**

**Present during the public session:** Commissioners Howe, Russo, and Golumb, Chief David Ferland, Deputy Chief Stephen DuBois, Captain Frank Warchol, Captain Corey MacDonald, Executive Assistant Kathleen Levesque, members of the PHS student body and their teachers.

- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Captain Warchol led the Pledge of Allegiance.

- III. **ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:**  
September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010

**Action: Commissioner Russo moved** to accept the minutes and place them on file.

**Seconded by Commissioner Golumb.**

**On a Roll Call Vote:** The board voted to accept the minutes of the September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010 police commission meeting and place them on file.

Chairman Howe gave the attending student body a brief overview of the make-up and function of the commission.

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENT: None**

**V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None**

**VI. NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. POLICE COMMISSION:**

**1. Personnel Items that require action:**

**Action: Commissioner Golumb moved** to accept the resignation of Crime Analyst Krista Comrie.

**Seconded by Commissioner Russo.**

**On a Roll Call Vote:** The board voted unanimously to accept the resignation of Krista Comrie.

**Action: Commissioner Golumb moved** to accept the resignation of Court Office Secretary Michelle Ruelle.

**Seconded by Commissioner Russo.**

**On a Roll Call Vote:** The board voted unanimously to accept the resignation of Michelle Ruelle.

**B. CHIEF OF POLICE**

Chief Ferland gave the students a brief overview of the organization of the department, the number of officers, and the different internal departments such as patrol, detectives, etc. He explained that as Chief of Police, he is required to report to the commission on the status and activities of the department.

Chief Ferland then turned the meeting over to Deputy DuBois. The deputy briefed the commission on the following items:

- Officers Small and Tondreau are finished their accelerated FTO program. Both were lateral transfers from other departments.
- Our newest officer, Craig Magner, is still in the academy. He is currently ranked first-in-class.

- We currently get between 400-500 hits per week on our Facebook page, and have about 1700 fans. This is an excellent way to reach the people we serve, and keep them informed.
- With the cold weather bearing down on us, this is the time of year we do a complete check of the homeless camps in the city. We reach out to this population to be sure they are aware of all of the mental health and social services that are available to them. It is our hope that as many as possible will access these services so they are not out in the winter elements.

We are able to effectively locate the majority of them because a few years ago some of our detectives took it upon themselves to map all the locations of homeless camps in the city.

The Chair asked what the homeless population is in the city. The deputy said while it is a shifting population, he believed there were currently about 15 or so people the department identifies as homeless.

- Officer Pearl and K-9 Wes took first place in their age division at the Iron Dog Challenge. There was a brief discussion on the recent Iron Dog competition, the nature of the various categories, etc.
- The steering committee that is meeting to select a vendor for an independent study of the police department has had two meetings and is making good progress.
- UPCOMING EVENTS
  - Trick or Treat
  - Halloween Parade- has become a large event. The route has changed, and will be starting on Pierce Island this year.
  - Operation Safe Commute on Nov11th - in cooperation with the state police, we will be focusing on distracted driving, road rage, and other unacceptable driving behaviors specifically during commuting hours.

Chairman Howe observed that Portsmouth has a lot of events, approximately 100 events a year, and that number goes up during election cycles. He said this is one of the extra obligations for the police department that doesn't exist in most towns. It is incumbent upon us to ensure the safety of event participants and visitors, no matter how many events or people there are.

Portsmouth is very much a tourist town; we double our population every day through both business and tourism. Portsmouth is a unique community, one that is in the spotlight, and it presents challenges.

Deputy DuBois finished his briefing, and turned the meeting back to Chief Ferland.

The chief returned to the agenda items under item **VI. 'NEW BUSINESS', B. CHIEF OF POLICE:**

1. **Thank you to Stephen Waitt and Dan Zimmer** for the handmade display frame they made for the United States battle flag that is on display in the detective division of the police department.

Before moving to the next agenda item, Chief Ferland added the following:

- Chief Ferland explained that the Portsmouth Police Department is the Internet Crimes Against Children Taskforce headquarters and we will be conducting high-level cybercrime training here next month. The chief explained the hierarchy of law enforcement in the United States. And indicated this training will bring high-level federal and state law enforcement officials to Portsmouth.

He then spoke briefly about the event at the Memorial Bridge as another example of the number of high-ranking officials that seem to come to Portsmouth fairly regularly for one reason or another. There was a member of the president's cabinet, in addition to two governors, several senators and representatives in attendance at the ceremony to turnover monies for the Memorial Bridge project.

- Explorer Cadet Captain Kyle Brake is the recipient of a Congressional Gold Award which recognizes initiative, service, and achievement in young people. This is the highest award ever received by one of our explorer cadets. It was awarded by Maine representative Chellie Pingree.

Chief Ferland gave a brief rundown of some cases currently under investigation:

- We continue to hunt down the identity of a key player in a local prostitution case involving a minor.
- We have made arrests of two suspects we believe are responsible for a number of recent car break-ins.
- The graffiti investigation is ongoing and we have developed good information in these cases.
- We have undertaken a number of crime prevention initiatives specifically directed at our elderly and handicapped population, as these groups have been specifically targeted in recent months.

The Chief said Portsmouth is the recipient of yet another award – this one from Boston Magazine, which designated Portsmouth as the top weekend getaway city.

Chief Ferland shared some of the many ‘Thank You’s’ received by the department. He then returned to the agenda and the next item, which was the acceptance of the following grants. Chairman Jerry Howe explained each of the grants for the benefit of the student audience.

#### Grants

- a. Bulletproof Vest Partnership FY 2010 Award – An award in the amount of \$9,325\* has been received from The Bureau of Justice Assistance for bulletproof vests.

**\*Note:** This is a matching grant from BJA. The City of Portsmouth matches these monies with an in-kind grant for \$9,325. Bulletproof vests have a shelf life. This grant allows the police department to replace old vests and outfit new officers with this life-saving protection.

**Action: Commissioner Golumb moved** to accept the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grand Award from the Bureau of Justice Assistance in the amount of \$9,325.

**Seconded by Commissioner Russo.**

**On A Roll Call Vote:** The board voted unanimously to accept the BJA Vest Partnership grant in the amount of \$9,325 and forward it to the city council for their action.

- b. A training grant in the amount of \$2,000 was received from the Police Standards & Training Council to enable two new sergeants to attend the Command Training Series: First Line Supervisor Course at Roger Williams University in January, 2011.

**Action: Commissioner Golumb moved** to accept the PS&TC training grant in the amount of \$2,000.

**Seconded by Commissioner Russo.**

**On a Roll Call Vote:** The board voted unanimously to accept the PS&TC training grant and forward to the city council for their action.

2. The next item on the agenda was the Administrative Services Division report. The chief explained the nature of the financial report. Chairman Howe explained that the budget is formulated for a 12-month period, and by nature a budget is an estimated guess of future costs, based on experience. Captain Frank Warchol reviewed the admin. report for the commission and answered their questions.

#### Administrative Services Division Report

- a. Financial Reports, by line item
- b. Overtime Report
- c. Attendance Report
- d. Personnel and Training Report
- e. Information Systems Report
- f. Records Division Report
- g. Fleet Report
- h. Communications Center Report

At the conclusion of the captain's report, the chief introduced Capt. Corey MacDonald to the students. Capt. MacDonald spoke to the students about cyber-bullying, and the new NH law that addresses bullying. The captain explained that our law is different than those of other states in that it does not specify penalties. Instead, it empowers law enforcement and prosecutors to bring charges and penalties forward that are already on the books, such as criminal defamation and disorderly conduct, under the umbrella of the new bullying law.

This specific law took away the previous requirement that in order to be considered bullying, the act(s) of aggression had to take place on school grounds. The state now recognizes that the bullying that takes place off school grounds, and in cyberspace must receive equal weight and response.

Captain. MacDonald went on to describe the subtle nature that bullying can take on. Something as simple as a comment on someone's page can be devastating to a child or a teenager. He went on to explain what kids can do if

they are or become victims of this type of emotional or physical violence. He emphasized to the students that they are not alone – that there are people and resources available to stop these attacks, and they just need to reach out for help.

He went on to talk about what kids can do within their schools to minimize bullying; One example was an event called, “Unity Day” that sparked interest among the students when Capt. MacDonald opened things up for questions.

Chairman Howe asked if bullying was considered a crime, or a misdemeanor. Corey explained that under the law, a person would not be convicted of “bullying” per se, but the existing statutes would be brought to bear. Charges such as harassment and criminal defamation could be brought, depending on the nature of the bullying. He explained the difference between civil charges and criminal charges. Corey emphasized to the student audience that bullying has a lot of civil ramifications, and that parents are losing their homes, and paying heavy penalties and damages as a result of their children’s cruelty to other children.

In closing he repeated the key message, which is, you don’t have to tolerate bullying violence; we can help you, just speak up.

**7. Letters of Thanks & Appreciation from Outside the Department:**

- a. A letter of thanks from Lowell, Mass. Superintendent of Police Kenneth Lavallee for the presence of the Portsmouth Police Honor Guard at the funeral of Lowell Police Officer Patrick Johnson.
- b. A letter of thanks from the Blue Angels Commanding Officer, Captain G. A. McWherter, for the “tremendous hospitality” shown to them by the Portsmouth Police Department during their visit for the air show.
- c. A letter of thanks from the Daniel Webster Council’s Director of Finance, Mr. Joe Wiltrout, for the department’s support in making the air show a reality.
- d. A letter of thanks from Cub Scout troop 316 leader Suzanne Richardson for the presentations of Officers Duane Jacques and Brian Houde, and for Capt. Schwartz’s work in making the pack visit possible.

**C. PATROL SERVICES DIVISION:**

- 1. Offense Report
- 2. Program/Self-Initiated Activity/Directed Patrol Report
- 3. Animal Control Report

4. Special Teams/Programs report
  - a. K-9 Program
  - b. Seacoast Emergency Response Team
  - c. Field Training Program
  - d. Auxiliary Unit
  - e. Community Relations
5. Update on Special Events

**D. CITY PROSECUTOR REPORT**

**E. DETECTIVE DIVISION**

**VII. MISCELLANEOUS OTHER BUSINESS:**

**Action: Commissioner Golumb moved** to accept the division and team reports and place them on file.

**Seconded by Commissioner Russo.**

**On a Roll Call Vote:** The board voted unanimously to accept the division and team reports and place them on file.

The Chair opened the meeting up to the student audience for questions and answers. Principal Jeff Collins, who was also in attendance, asked the commission to speak about the unique nature of the commission, in that it is an elected body of residents that provides oversight of our police department and its officers. Students asked questions on a variety of topics, including how law enforcement at different levels interact during an emergency, how does one become a commissioner, and one student asked if she could gavel down the meeting.

**VIII. MOTION TO ADJOURN**

Chairman Howe asked if there was any other business before the commission. There being none, the Chairman asked for a motion to adjourn.

**Action: Commissioner Russo moved** the October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2010 meeting of the police commission be adjourned.

**Seconded by Commissioner Golumb.**

**On a Roll Call Vote:** The board voted unanimously in favor of the motion at 10:34AM.

**IX. NEXT MEETING: *Wednesday, November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2010, Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers, Portsmouth City Hall.***

*Kathe*

*Respectfully Submitted By Kathleen Levesque, Executive Assistant  
Reviewed By Commissioner Golumb, Clerk of the Commission*

*John F. Golumb*