

PORTSMOUTH POLICE COMMISSION

**STEERING COMMITTEE – INDEPENDENT STUDY OF THE PD
MINUTES OF OCTOBER 7TH, 2010 MEETING**

- I. CALL TO ORDER:** The chairman called the October 7th, 2010 meeting of the steering committee to order at 10:25 AM in Conference Room “A” of Portsmouth City Hall.

Present during the public session: Committee Chair John Gollum, and committee members Deputy Police Chief Stephen DuBois, Doug Bates, Lisa DeStefano, Chris Dwyer, Jerry Hejtmanek, Renee Riedel-Plummer. Executive Assistant Kathleen Levesque took the minutes.

- II. Meeting Discussion** of the environment and catalysts that preceded the decision to do the study.

Deputy DuBois indicated that the study comes at a good time for the department. We have experienced change from top to bottom and there are a lot of new officers as a result. It is a good time to step back and reassess the department and its operations to come up with a blueprint going forward for a period of time longer than the next five to ten years.

Lisa DeStefano said it may be that one of the things that comes out of this committee is that we shouldn't wait 30 years between studies. It was her feeling that some type of marketing or public relations efforts may need to be a part of this. Generally speaking, people really don't know the day-to-day demands that are made on police.

Chris Dwyer made the observation that while overall things have changed so much, our traditional institutions have not changed. This is especially challenging for an institution such as a police department where there is a paramilitary structure. Do roles change? Do jobs change?

Deputy DuBois replied that jobs within the police department have changed; he used the position of evidence technician as an example.

The management of evidence used to be the responsibility of a supervisor. The supervisor logged and tracked evidence in addition to all his/her other responsibilities. It was determined that it would be more efficient to transfer this responsibility to a civilian position and pay structure; this was done about nine years ago.

The department has gone through a number of reorganizations in the last decade, all with an eye toward a leaner operation. However we still repeatedly hear, “you have too many cops”. We need them.

Chairman Golumb said that every year during the budget process we hear, “You have too many cops.” The budget process gets tougher every year and that is not going to change any time soon. The commission felt that before the next budget process, it would be a good thing to have a study completed that looks at these things.

Lisa DeStefano said perhaps one of the parameters should be to examine the roles of everyone in the department. How often do we examine these elements?

Jerry Hejtmanek asked how does the administration know if everyone is working?

Deputy DuBois indicated that over time we have established how many bits of activity an officer can/does do in an hour. The software that we have does not do a good job of giving the data back to us in a useful way.

Chris Dwyer commented that it does seem like the department is drowning in information, which may be necessary, given the legal liabilities. But it seems like you (the department admin.) are not able to make good use of the information.

Deputy DuBois indicated this has been an ongoing frustration – we feed lots of information in, but getting it back in a good, useful format is not easy to do.

Doug Bates said we need to define the “bandwidth” of the study; we have to have a study with attainable outcomes. Everyone wants a cop there in 30 seconds, regardless of the importance of the call. We need to take a hard look at this whole area of response.

We are in a very delicate balance...there is an economic balance here that generates income. If that goes away, then what does this city look like? When people come here...whatever safe means to them...we have to plan to preserve that. The perception of safety really drives the vitality of the city.

Jerry Hejtmanek asked the question, “Do they feel safe because there are a lot of people around, or because there are a lot of cops around?”

Lisa DeStefano said perhaps one of the goals of the RFP should be to analyze the city in districts.

Deputy DuBois explained that the city is broken up into zones, based on activity. We haven’t revisited the parameters we originally used to do this in a while. A review of the beat boundaries may be appropriate.

Doug Bates felt the police department inherently knows where the issues are.

The discussion then turned to what kinds of consulting companies are out there:

Deputy Dubois felt the challenge was to select a vendor that will have both the expertise to conduct a law enforcement operational study and will have the capacity to bring fresh eyes to the organization. We need a firm where the principals are progressive and have dealt with agencies of a similar size and like challenges.

Doug Bates emphasized we did not want someone who is selling a “preloaded” product.

Chris Dwyer wondered if we could hold some monies aside to retain a second outside opinion.

Jerry Hejtmanek explained that something similar had been done in the search to replace the school superintendent. The committee retained a retired superintendent to help them review the resumes, and point out things that were red flags that perhaps the search committee would not recognize as an issue.

Renee Riedel-Plummer asked how long this facet of the project was going to take.

Chris Dwyer felt there was no advantage to rushing this in order to get it done in this year's budget cycle. We need to decide what the timetable is; if we rush, the study's results could wind up being trivialized, or become a political football. The time of year that it is released is important.

Lisa DeStefano felt we need to put a schedule together for completing and releasing the RFP.

Chris Dwyer then asked if we should be asking for an RFQ first. She explained that the RFQ would establish the qualifications of the vendor for even submitting a proposal for this particular project. Without it, a Request for Proposals is just that, a request for a proposal from anyone who wants to submit one.

A brief general discussion ensued about adding a requirement to the RFP that because the study would span more than one budget cycle, the vendor would have to be able to come into the pending budget process with an interim finding. The purpose being to provide Portsmouth taxpayers with some positive early outcomes from the study that will make the longer study time more palatable. This will help to support us through the next budget season.

The discussion then turned to what the parameters should be. **Deputy Dubois** briefly referenced a list, but since the appointed meeting time was coming to a close, it was agreed that the list would be taken up at the next meeting, and would be included with the minutes of this meeting for everyone to review ahead of time.

John Golumb wanted to resolve the matter of providing for public input into these meetings before the committee adjourned. The committee was in agreement that a time at the beginning of the meeting should be set aside for public input, and that they would follow the city's guidelines which allow three minutes speaking time per person. People may also submit input in writing to the committee.

The committee then set the date for the next meeting, and agreed the meetings should be an hour-and-a-half in duration. **Jerry Hejmanek** noted that he is not available on the 4th Thursday of each month.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 18th, at 9:00 AM. in Conference room “A” if it is available.

NOTE: Conference Room “A” was not available, so the meeting will be held in the Wm. Mortimer Conference Room on the second floor of the police department. Committee members can access the meeting room from the main entry floor of City Hall by turning left upon entering city hall, and going down to the end of the corridor. The second floor entry door to the police department is to the left of the Parking Department customer service counter.

Chairman Golumb thanked the committee for their time and adjourned the meeting.

Kathe

Respectfully Submitted By Kathleen Levesque, Executive Assistant

Reviewed By Chairman John Golumb

John F. Golumb