

## PORTSMOUTH POLICE COMMISSION

### MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 30<sup>TH</sup> 2012 PUBLIC FORUM FOR INPUT ON THE POLICE BUDGET FOR FY '13

6:00 p.m. – Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers, Portsmouth City Hall

John F. Golumb, Chairman  
Gerald W. Howe  
John C. Russo

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The chairman called the January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2012 public forum to order at 6:01 p.m.

**Present during the public forum:** Commissioners Golumb, Howe, and Russo, Chief David Ferland, Deputy Chief Stephen DuBois, Captain Frank Warchol, Executive Assistant Kathleen Levesque, members of the public, and the press.

- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Commissioner John Russo led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### III. INTRODUCTION OF THE COMMISSION

### IV. BUDGET BRIEFING FROM THE CHIEF

The Chair asked Chief Ferland to review what a status quo budget would look like. Chief Ferland began by correcting recently published information that stated this was the budget that would be presented to the council. This is incorrect. Rather, this is an exercise to see what a status quo budget would look like. It is a starting point requested by the commission in preparation for this hearing.

He explained that city-wide, 84% of costs are personnel-related costs. In the police department, it is 95%. The reason for this is the police department provides its services through people. We don't make things, we provide a service that requires people to deliver those services.

Commissioner Howe then clarified that 'status quo' means the level of service would be the same as the level of service in 2011, it does not mean the budget numbers would look exactly the same.

After Chief Ferland finished his synopsis of a status quo budget, Captain Warchol explained the new venues used this year to reach out to the public regarding the budget process. The department established a budget-specific Facebook page, as well as a dedicated e-mail address and phone line that people could use to leave their comments, concerns and suggestions regarding the budget. Captain Warchol read what was received into the record. There was a brief discussion of the value of using social media outlets in this way and the commission supported the Chief's decision to continue to use it as the budget process continues.

**V. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

1. Mr. Ted Mountzuris, 172 Hanover Street. Mr. Mountzuris is an owner of The Page restaurant. Mr. Mountzuris has recently read about allocations the city has made for future growth. He said with growth, a city needs appropriate infrastructure; police, fire, and schools are definitely part of that infrastructure. Mr. Mountzuris felt the police department has done a significant amount of work to impact their expenses, and feels the city has required more than is prudent in terms of cuts to police services. He said one never used to hear of burglaries, merchant thefts, public fights, bank robberies, and worse. All of these kinds of crimes have occurred in Portsmouth, especially in the downtown, over the last year.

Mr. Mountzuris said that requiring police services to maintain a status quo while planning growth is not going to work. It would put the city and its residents in a dangerous position.

2. Mr. Mark Brighton, 285 Union Street. Mr. Brighton identified himself as the president of the Portsmouth Taxpayers Association, and said that we're being told we have to live with "a 2.9". He said he was also there speaking as a private citizen. Mr. Brighton said he had occasion in the recent past to need emergency services and that the two or three extra minutes they took to arrive seemed like an eternity. He said words to the effect that if the criminal element is coming through his window, he wants to know that the police department has the resources to be coming in right behind them. He said he was inclined to think public safety trumps schools and administration and the city needed to maintain the right priorities.

There being no further public comment, the chairman closed the public comment session.

**VI. NEXT STEPS IN THE PROCESS:**

Chairman Golumb explained the next step in this process would be for the commission to meet in a non-public work session and further refine the numbers. This non-public work session on the budget was scheduled for Wednesday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, at 10:30 a.m. in the police department.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the commission, the chairman asked for a motion to adjourn.

**Action: Commissioner Russo moved** to adjourn the January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2012 public forum on the police department budget for FY '13.

**Seconded by Commissioner Howe.**

**On a Roll Call Vote:** The board voted unanimously to pass the motion to adjourn at 6:20 p.m.

*Kathe*

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

*Gerald W. Howe*