

**The Board of Fire Commissioners
Portsmouth Fire Department**

Fire Station 2
January 15, 2014

Portsmouth, NH
1900 hours

I. Call to Order:

Chairman Richard Gamester called the meeting to order at 1900 hours and led Pledge of Allegiance. Along with Chairman Gamester, Present were: Commissioners Michael Hughes and Jennifer Matthes; Chief Steven Achilles; Deputy Chiefs Carl Roediger and James Heinz; Lieutenant Rick Condon; members of the Portsmouth Fire Department and family members of DC Heinz and Lt. Condon. Portsmouth Herald Representative Chuck McMahon also present.

II. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Motion to approve the minutes of December 16, 2013 was made by Chairman Gamester, seconded by Commissioner Hughes, unanimous.

III. Public Comment Session: None.

IV. Recognition of Groups or Individuals:

Chairman Gamester introduced new Fire Commissioner Jennifer Matthes.

Chief Achilles performed the swearing in ceremony of Lieutenant Rick Condon and Deputy Fire Chief James Heinz. A five minute break followed to allow for pictures.

V. Reports:

A. Fire Chief's Reports:

Chief Achilles reviewed reports with the Commission. Earnings Analysis report is tracking at 13%. Chief Achilles mentioned that he would provide a trending analysis for the past 2-years for next meeting. Report 005 provided a breakdown of overtime and how it was used in the month of December. December's Response Report (006) showed the department responding to 2543 Fire Calls and 3198 Ambulance Calls for the year 2013. Chief noted that he would start tracking total number of incidents to reduce any duplication in numbers. Currently, some of the fire incidents are EMS incidents too so there may be a duplication in numbers. The Fire

Department's website has been updated and under the "statistics" tab a more robust report is produced. Overall, the responses increased 332 calls over 2012. FY14 budget is tracking slightly higher than where we should be based on percentage into the year. Chief Achilles stated that if the department stays on current trend, we will be in the red so some measures are being put into place to reduce costs and bring budget back in line. With the number of long term injuries sustained off duty, shifts are currently being realigned to reduce some of the overtime being created by these vacancies.

Commissioner Matthes asked the Chief if he could produce a report on how overtime has trended over the last five years for the next meeting. He agreed to.

Motion to approve Chief's Reports 14-004 through 14-007 was made by Chairman Gamester, seconded by Commissioner Hughes, unanimous.

B. Staff Reports:

Deputy Roediger reported on department operations for Deputy Heinz who had to leave the meeting. His report included FF. Russ Bassett having obtained his Firefighter Engineer stipend; first group of teachers, approximately 100, who work at the high school have received Trauma and First Aid training; working with US Coast Guard to implement a mutual aid training program; all personnel received Traffic Incident Management training from Department of Transportation; SCBA Fit testing has been completed and the Seacoast Chief's Mobile Command Post is currently out of service due to several items needing repair and is at manufacturer in Rhode Island.

Deputy Roediger reported on Prevention noting 25-30 projects being currently active within the city. Several projects that were on paper are now breaking ground. During the inspection of the new cinema, some issues were found with not having enough water pressure so plans to implement the addition of a fire pump is being worked on. Walk through was done at Connie Bean with the developer.

VI. Old Business:

Chief Achilles reported on the firefighter oral boards which was held back in December. Eight candidates participated and one candidate was given a conditional offer. He is a resident of York Maine, is an EMT Intermediate, currently employed with American Ambulance and prior to that was a Firefighter/EMTI in New Mexico. Chief noted that he received three unsolicited references for this candidate and he comes highly recommended.

Chief Achilles provided an update on the FY15 CIP which City Council has a work session scheduled for January 27th. Both Car 1 and the utility are now in

service. Ford pickup and Crown Vic have been added to the City's surplus listing and will be going to auction soon.

VII. Presentations of Written Communications: None.

VIII. New Business:

With Deputy Roediger's contract expiring this year, Chief Achilles recommended the Commission and City Negotiator begin working on it now.

Chief Achilles reminded the Commission of the Public Hearing on the Fire Department Proposed FY15 Budget which is scheduled for February 5th at 7PM here at Station 2. He also stated that he has prepared a draft budget as the department is today, without firefighter contracts because they haven't been approved yet, and it appears to be about 3% higher than FY2014.

Chief Achilles identified the purpose behind the Citizen Feedback Forums that he is looking to host January 28th from 6:30pm to 8:30pm and February 1st from 9:30-11:00. Would like for the public to have an opportunity to get to know us, rate our services and hear their feedback on what services they may want or what they feel we could do better. Feels these forums would be valuable as part of our department's community involvement which is noted in our mission and vision statements.

Chief Achilles provided a brief review of the City Manager's established Emergency Service Rates for Calendar Year 2014. Rates are aligned with the City's Ambulance Billing company and Medicare and reflect with what is happening today and is considered to be reasonable. The department has about a 76% collection rate right now. This schedule is based on the level of care that is provided plus mileage. Chairman Gamester asked about the mileage rate and feels it is too low and recommended that the rate be increased.

Motion, to accept the Emergency Service Rates for Calendar Year 2014 as established by the City Manager, made by Commissioner Hughes, seconded by Commissioner Matthes. Commissioner Gamester opposed. Motion passed 2-1.

Chief Achilles commented on the Fire Department Study Committee meeting held last week. Committee has voted to move forward with RFQ and hire a consultant. Scope of study has been identified with four main areas to be addressed: staffing models and options, overtime, privatizing ambulance and call volunteers. Chairman Gamester inquired about the possibility of the study not going forward pending cost for a consultant. Chief Achilles replied that after six meetings, he believes the committee is very precise in what they are looking for and believe most are wanting to see cost savings. Does not anticipate any reason for it not to move forward. Chairman Lown of the Committee will be making the

recommendation to move forward with RFQ to hire a consultant at next City Council meeting which is January 21, 2014.

IX. Public Hearings: None.

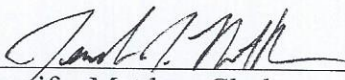
X. Non-public Session:

Motion to enter into Non-public session at 1958 hours for informational purposes, was made by Chairman Gamester, seconded by Commissioner Hughes, unanimous.

Motion to come out of Non-public session at 2047 hours with no votes taken, made by Chairman Gamester, seconded by Commissioner Hughes, unanimous.

XI. Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn at 2049 hours was made by Chairman Gamester, seconded by Commissioner Hughes, unanimous.



Jennifer Matthes, Clerk