

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

Fire Station 1
January 20, 2015

Portsmouth, NH
1900 hours

I. Call to Order:

Chairman Richard Gamester called the meeting to order at 1903 hours and led pledge of allegiance. Along with Chairman Gamester, present were: Commissioners Michael Hughes and Jennifer Matthes; Chief Steven Achilles; Deputy Fire Chiefs Carl Roediger and James Heinz; Captain Michael Hogan; Firefighters Mark Herrholz and Tim Dame.

II. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Motion, to approve the minutes of December 23, 2014, was made by Commissioner Hughes, seconded by Commissioner Matthes, unanimous.

III. Public Comment Session: None

IV. Recognition of Groups or Individuals:

Chief Achilles recognized the crew who rescued an elderly dog last week that was trapped in mud and ice on North Mill Pond. Ff. Herrholz was part of the crew that day who donned an ice-rescue suit and crawled out on the ice bringing the dog to safety. A job well done. Lieutenant McQuillen is attending the President's State of the Union Address in Washington DC tonight as the guest of Senator Shaheen. He is there representing New Hampshire's First Responders.

V. Reports:

A. Fire Chief's Reports:

Chief Achilles reviewed reports with the Commission.

Report (002), 2014 Response Report with Service Activity and Safety message for December. The report shows the department responding to 213 Fire Calls in December and 254 Ambulance Calls for the month. To date the department has responded to 2587 fire and related service calls and 3127 ambulance service calls. The Safety Message section was replaced with a Year Activity Review highlighting the top three fire incident types in 2014 as emergency medical services, motor vehicle accidents and smoke detector activations. The top three medical incident responses were fall injuries, motor vehicle accidents and difficulty breathing/breathing problems. The section

also noted that there were 28 fires in buildings; the busiest day of the week for fire responses was Fridays; and ambulance responses busiest day of the week was Saturdays. The Service Activity and Safety Message report was submitted to the Portsmouth Herald for publication in local newspapers. Report (003), Fire and EMS Calls by District, identifies the number of calls broken down by districts for the month and for year 2014. Chief Achilles noted that fire responses were up 2.6% over last year and over the past 5-years, it is up 1.8%. EMS responses declined last year by 0.1% however, was up 4.7% over the past 5-years. Report (004), FY15 Budget, currently shows department with a very minimal surplus. Earned Time and Disability shift coverage is still projected to be overspent. He noted one firefighter on suspension without pay with overtime being used to cover his shifts, another firefighter will be going out on disability for approximately 8 weeks beginning in February and another firefighter sustained an injury off duty and it is unknown at this time what his status is. Will continue to monitor the budget closely. Report (005), Overtime Analysis, provided a breakdown of how overtime was used in the month of December along with a summary of what was charged to OT-Recall for the month.

Motion, to approve Chief's Reports 15-002 through 15-005, was made by Chairman Gamester, seconded by Commissioner Matthes, unanimous.

B. Staff Reports:

Deputy Chief Heinz reported on operations and trainings happening within the department noting Ff. Escamilla almost being done with his probationary period, training is being scheduled for 2015 and Station 3 boiler repair/replacement will be covered by insurance. He also commented on the recent ruling that the New Hampshire Supreme Court made earlier in the week stating that the state can increase public employees' pension contributions, even after workers are considered vested (spending 10 plus years on the job). This ruling now affirms that the Legislature has the ability to make the changes they need to in order to preserve the New Hampshire Retirement System. Depending on how things transpire in the months to come, regarding this decision, it could result in a number of firefighters retiring he thought.

Deputy Roediger reported on the number of projects within the past 5-years noting multiuse buildings (mixed residential and commercial space) has seen \$100 million in construction costs with 1.6 million square feet of space being added all of which requires plan reviews, testing, and protection. Commissioner Hughes commented stating five times more things to protect and yet the department has stayed the same over the past 5-years. Deputy Roediger noted that Inspector Howe is currently at the National Fire Academy studying new sprinkler designs which will help in plan reviews. He added that he would be attending the same class in the next couple of weeks. A brief discussion took place over South Gate Plaza and their water supply should a 3-5 story residential structure replace Big Lots.

VI. Old Business:

Chief Achilles noted that the radio simulcast project is underway with a meeting scheduled with 2-Way Communications and City Communications personnel for the end of this week. A memo was sent to the City Manager withdrawing our interest to purchase a new Rescue truck. Fire Department study, which is an internal self-assessment, is still moving forward and hopes to have a meeting with labor and a commissioner at the end of the week to discuss the scope of this study. Met with Town Manager and Fire Chief of Rye regarding shared services. Based on items discussed, a meeting will be setup with the Town's Selectmen to see if there is continued interest. Chairman Gamester stated he received word that Newington may be considering the same with us.

VII. Presentations of Written Communications:

Chief Achilles read thank you letters.

- Mark and Carol Goldberg, thank you for prompt response, care and expertise after suffering a heart attack on the sidewalk on 12/29/2014. From time of call to receiving a cardiac artery stent, 45-minutes.
- John Beyer, thank you for the medical care provided to him on 1/5/2015.

Motion, to accept and place on file, was made by Commissioner Matthes, seconded by Chairman Gamester, unanimous.

VIII. New Business:

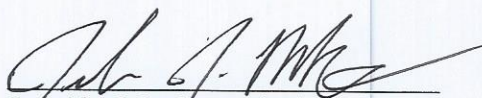
Chief Achilles reminded the Commission that there is a CIP workshop next week with a public hearing on the CIP scheduled for February 2, 2015. Also, the Fire Commission's public hearing on the proposed FY 2016 budget is scheduled for February 4, 2015.

IX. Public Hearings: None

X. Non-public Session: None.

XI. Adjournment:

Motion, to adjourn at 1945 hours, made by Chairman Gamester, seconded by Commissioner Hughes, unanimous.


Jennifer Matthes, Clerk