

063

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

Fire Station 1
August 12, 2015

Portsmouth, NH
1900 hours

I. Call to Order:

Chairman Richard Gamester called the meeting to order at 1905 hours and led pledge of allegiance. Along with Chairman Gamester, present were: Commissioner Jennifer Matthes; Chief Steven Achilles; Deputy Fire Chiefs: Carl Roediger and James Heinz; Captain Todd Germain, Firefighters: Paul McKendry, Bruce Gosselin and Eric Detweiler.

Excused Absence: Commissioner Hughes

II. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Motion, to approve the minutes of July 8, 2015, was made by Commissioner Matthes, seconded by Chairman Gamester, unanimous.

III. Public Comment Session: None

IV. Recognition of Groups or Individuals: None.

V. Reports:

A. Fire Chief's Reports:

Chief Achilles reviewed reports with the Commission.

Report (053), 2015 Response Report with Service Activity and Safety message for July. The report shows the department responding to 133 Fire Calls and 281 Ambulance Calls for the month. To date, the department has responded to 885 fire and related service calls and 1867 ambulance service calls. The Safety Message section provided tips for cooking safety. The Service Activity and Safety Message report was submitted to the Portsmouth Herald for publication in local newspapers. Report (054), Fire and EMS Calls by District, identifies the number of calls broken down by districts for the month with district 1 having the highest call volume followed by district 2. EMS data shows the top three reasons for dispatch this month were falls, motor vehicle crashes and breathing problems. There were 5 reported overdoses this month. Portsmouth Regional Hospital was the hospital of choice.

Report (055), FY16 Budget, Chief noted being one month into the new fiscal year and tracking in-line with last year. A couple of members are out on disability leave due to injuries sustained off duty. Report (056), Overtime Analysis, provided a breakdown of how overtime was used in July along with a summary of what was charged to OT-Recall for the month. Chief inquired if the Commission would still like to have this report provided in their monthly packet since the information collected, although informational, does not change operations or how we do things. Chairman Gamester asked to continue to provide it.

Motion, to approve Chief's Reports 15-053 through 15-056, was made by Chairman Gamester, seconded by Commissioner Matthes, unanimous.

B. Staff Reports:

Deputy Roediger reported that it has been a relatively quiet month in Prevention. Inspector Howe has taken some time off and work is finishing up on existing projects. TAC meetings have been busy with few projects coming down the line. The old cinema building in the Bowl-A-Rama plaza is a project that is in the works and will have a Tuscan market and restaurant and the old Moose Lodge property on Sagamore will have residential units. Inspector Howe will be attending the National Fire Academy for the Arson Program in November. Roediger stated he would be attending the same program in February 2016.

Deputy Chief Heinz reported on operations and trainings happening within the department noting he is working on procuring the moose lodge and theatre for some training prior to being demolished. Two new battery powered hydraulic rescue combi tools have been received and will go on engine 1 and engine 3. Battery power on these tools will provide about 1-hour of service time and provides full power until it stops. Each tool has a spare battery and comes with an AC adapter. With the new technology, it provides 2-3 times more power than the older ones and allows for more room on the engine and flexibility in how it can be used. Several members participated in an active shooter drill at the high school and department personnel are currently undergoing annual fireboat training.

Commission Matthes asked about the status of the boat and where the department stood on their evaluation of what to do with it. Chief Achilles stated that the boat is used more in the summer so no decisions have been made at this time. He did state that PNSY firefighters have vessel based capabilities so may need to look into that further when we vet out options later on in September.

VI. Old Business:

Chief Achilles noted that the Haven Well testing results are still coming in. Deputy Heinz sits on the committee and has been encouraging all to be tested. Human Resources has been submitting workers' comp paperwork from those who have been exposed and have completed workers' comp paperwork. However, workers' comp carrier, Primex, is denying these claims. City officials will be meeting with Primex to discuss this further sometime next week. With the City owning the well, and city workers coming back with positive results, the City's workers' comp carrier not covering the claims will certainly draw attention he said. Most important part in all of this is that our staff are being tested and will continue to encourage all staff who come back with positive results, to submit a workers' comp claim to have it on file regardless of it being denied. Chief Achilles plans to meet with Human Resources on what happens next and what steps will be needed if claims continue to be returned rejected. The testing period will end within the next few months he stated and then depositions and talks will begin.

VII. Presentations of Written Communications:

Chief Achilles read the thank you note.

- Ms. Shawnda Dalton, for department's timely response and professionalism at they were able to save her sister-in law who was choking.

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

VIII. New Business:

Chief Achilles spoke briefly about FY16 Capital and next Monday having the second reading and presentations for the new engine. Some challenges this past month with current apparatus down to three at one point in time. Looking at dealers for demonstrators that may be available which would hopefully reduce some of the cost. Commissioner Mattes inquired about the process of obtaining a demo fire engine and wanted to be sure we were not cutting short on what the department needs just to get one. Chief stated that was not the case and added that he is working with several department members as part of a Truck Committee to be sure nothing is overlooked and the department is getting what it needs.

The municipal fire alarm replacement project is underway for all municipal buildings in getting them converted to 3rd party monitoring system.

Lighting upgrades at Station 2 to LED lights has begun with hopes to save energy and reduce costs. Station 1 has been completed and it is anticipated to provide the department with a cost savings.

Station 3 improvements, no funds to support it this year however, working with local contractor to get an idea of what renovations of the station may cost. Hoping to get a preliminary design with cost to know if renovations would be close to building a new station or less with renovating it. Again, just starting with one contractor to get an idea of cost so we have a starting point to work from. Would need to go out to bid if project was to move forward and accepted.

Chief Achilles provided a handout created by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) on Accreditation benefits and the process. Back in 2005, Chief Achilles stated that performance based budgeting was asked of each department and it continues today. Time and resources would be the largest part of the accreditation process because of the need in documenting, planning, research, etc. The self-assessment that was done earlier dovetails perfectly into this project. Once completed, taxpayers, elected officials and others will know we are not making things up as we go along. It validates what we do and why we do it. The handout also shows the four steps to the accreditation process with step 1 becoming a registered agency. Chief Achilles stated he would be attending the CFAI basic workshop training in September. Commissioner Matthes inquired about the timing of each step involved in the process. Chief replied by saying he believes to complete all the steps it would be a 2-year process. There are no accredited fire departments within the State of New Hampshire. White River Junction, Vermont is recognized as one and Achilles has already reached out to the individual involved for some guidance on the process. Chairman Gamester believes this to be a good tool to use for future requests. Chief Achilles stated that it was not an audit of our organization but a validation of what we say we are doing.

IX. Public Hearings: None

X. Non-public Session:

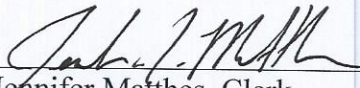
Motion, to enter into Non-public Session at 1955 hours for reason identified in RSA 91-A:3, II (a), made by Chairman Gamester, seconded by Commissioner Matthes, unanimous.

Motion, to come out of Non-public Session and return to public meeting at 2000 hours was made by Chairman Gamester, seconded by Commissioner Matthes, unanimous.

Regular public meeting reconvened at 2000 hours.

XI. Adjournment:

Motion, to adjourn at 2001 hours, made by Chairman Gamester, seconded by Commissioner Mattes, unanimous.


Jennifer Matthes, Clerk