

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

Fire Station 1, Training Room
August 9, 2016

Portsmouth, NH
1900 hours

I. Call to Order:

Chairwoman Matthes called the meeting to order at 1900 hours and led the pledge of allegiance. Along with Chairwoman Matthes, present were: Commissioner Richard Gamester, Fire Chief Steven Achilles, Deputy Fire Chiefs: Carl Roediger and James Heinz; Executive Assistant Tracy Freeman, Captain William McQuillen and Firefighters: John Goodwin and Rob Gagnon.

Commissioner Michael Hughes excused absence due to business out of state.

II. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Motion, to approve the minutes of June 14, 2016, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.

III. Public Comment Session: None.

IV. Recognition of Groups or Individuals: None.

V. Reports:

A. Fire Chief's Reports:

Chairwoman Matthes motioned to discuss Chief's reports 16-62 through 16-065. Motion seconded by Commissioner Gamester.

Chief Achilles reviewed reports with the Commission.

Report (062), 2016 Response Report with Service Activity and Safety message for July. The report shows the department responding to 142 Fire Calls and 333 Ambulance Calls for the month which is slightly up from last month. To date, the department has responded to 782 fire and related service calls and 2,074 ambulance service calls. This activity is tracked by calendar year. Chief noted a couple of incidents that happened in the month: with station 1 companies assisting a female who gave birth in a vehicle on the way to hospital in Dover; two structure fires one at 664 State Street and another at 820 Elwyn Road; and department responding to 11 incidents in just under 2

hours due to heavy rains, gusty winds and significant lightening on July 23rd. The Safety Message section focused on outside burning rules where fire permits are always required for any open fire in Portsmouth. The Service Activity and Safety Message report was submitted to the Portsmouth Herald for publication in local newspapers. Report (063), Fire and EMS Calls by Category, noted that there were 52 medical assist calls, 18 motor vehicle accidents with no injuries and 5 motor vehicle accidents with injuries, 15 calls relating to alcohol abuse, 2 overdoses and 11 traumatic injuries involving the head or scalp for the month. Chief noted the new EMS reporting format being lengthier. This report does show runs by day of week which indicates that there is not one day busier than another in the month of July. Report (064), FY17 Budget, Chief noted upfront costs for service contracts, insurances for health and workers compensation, hazmat team dues and clothing allowances as reasons for being slightly higher in percent spent to date vs percentage into year. Report (065), Overtime Analysis, provided a breakdown of how overtime was used in the month of July along with a summary of what was charged to OT-Recall for the month. Chairman Gamester asked if the EMS report could provide the number of mutual aid calls we answer and how many of those we transport and are able to bill for. Chief stated he would look into the reporting format and see if he could get this information for next meeting.

Motion, to accept Chief's Reports 16-062 through 16-065, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.

B. Staff Reports:

Deputy Heinz reported on operations and trainings of the department. He spoke of ongoing blood testing where Health and Human Services has included firefighters as a separate group; EMS awards dinner with 3 awards being received for Provider, Service and Cardiac call of the year; department touring Lonza and Middle St. Bridge construction projects; the opening of Safe Harbor, and the department's participation in National Night Out. He made note of the 9/10 Little League State Champion send-off where special recognition was given to our own Captain Germain who umpires for the league.

Deputy Roediger reported on a meeting he has scheduled with PD Detective Lt. Newport with hopes of working out an arrangement on fire investigations. Several incidents have been reported in the newspaper where the fire department should have been involved but weren't notified. Goal is to put together an integrated fire investigative group. Chairwoman Matthes inquired about what the main purpose of the meeting and this group? Is it for prevention? Deputy Roediger replied that it would be to inform the PD of what types of calls we, the fire department, should be notified on and to develop a plan that would allow us to work together on these calls. For instance, potential arson calls where taking evidence samples at the time of

the incident may help prove a case at a later date. He noted that both he, and Inspector Howe are certified Arson Investigators. Deputy Roediger noted continued growth within the city and plan reviews continuing to come in. Lonza Biologics has a project currently underway and there is rumor that they may have another in the near future.

VI. Old Business:

Chief Achilles noted that the FY16 budget came in with a 1% surplus, approximately \$77K. He has made a request to the City Manager to encumber over half of that money. Chairwoman Matthes commended the Chief and Executive Freeman for their hard work in balancing the budget, not only this year but for the past several years.

VII. Presentations of Written Communications:

Chief Achilles read the thank you notes and letters from the children of Temple Israel's Early Learning Center, Portsmouth Middle School's 8th Grade Students, Teachers & Administrators, Stefany Shaheen, Donna Westbrook and Jean Bell.

Commissioner Gamester made the motion to accept these thank you notes and place on file. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.

VIII. New Business:

Chief Achilles spoke briefly about the Kearsarge Steam Engine being back in-house. Working with crewmembers in familiarizing them with the Kearsarge and developed a pamphlet to hand out to public. Some requests have come in to use it at local parades and upcoming events. REP is fabricating a trailer which will hold the Kearsarge Engine and allow us to travel with it.

IX. Public Hearings: None.

X. Non-public Session:

Chairwoman Matthes made the motion to enter into Non-public session at 1935 hours in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II (a). Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gamester and passed unanimously.

Motion to come out of Non-public session and return to regular public session was made by Commissioner Gamester at 1945 hours. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.

Regular meeting reconvened at 1945 hours.

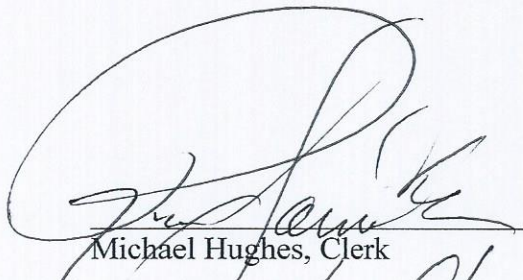
Captain McQuillen re-entered the meeting to inquire about the reason for entering in non-public session under the right to know law. Commissioner Gamester answered for business related to grievance letters that the Fire Chief received.

Chief Achilles led discussion on child car seats with four department members having taken the necessary training to become certified over the past several years to provide inspection services of car seats. Chief noted a discussion he had with part time Admin Assistant Gail Wright, who is currently the one we have doing them due to the work schedules of the others. This service that we provide voluntarily is becoming ever more cumbersome with the importance of keeping up on the numerous types of seats available and different types of automobiles they are being installed in and all the recalls. One of the concerns we face is that the service is to be for "inspection" of a car seat(s) that has been installed by the parent/grandparent already and we are seeing a growing number of seats being brought in with tags still on them and/or still in the box and the expectation of our department to "install" them which brings on legal concerns should something happen after they leave our fire department. Chief Achilles feels it is time to look into other partnerships to provide this service perhaps another department within the city or perhaps the hospital(s) or other area businesses who would have the capabilities and the time to provide the service.

Chief Achilles noted that Firefighter Bassett has retired as of August 1st and that a conditional offer of employment was made to a firefighter who took part in our last oral board and was a strong candidate. She currently works for Epping Fire and is a Paramedic. He noted that he interviewed several candidates last week and would conduct an oral board to create a list to use for future vacancies.

XI. Adjournment:

Motion, to adjourn at 2004 hours, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.


Michael Hughes, Clerk
Vice-Chair