

PORTSMOUTH POLICE COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 25TH, 2016 MONTHLY POLICE COMMISSION MEETING

5:30 p.m. Public Session – Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers

Brenna Cavanaugh, Chair

Joseph J. Onosko

Joe Plaia

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The October 25th, 2016 monthly police commission meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m. in the Wm. Mortimer Room of the Police Department for the purpose of going into non-public session.

The Chair called for a motion to go into non-public session under the provisions of RSA 91:A, 3-II (c), “Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person...”

Action: Commissioner Onosko moved to enter non-public session for the purposes delineated above.

Seconded by Commissioner Plaia.

On a Roll Call Vote: The motion passed as follows:

Commissioner Cavanaugh:	“Aye.”
Commissioner Onosko:	“Aye.”
Commissioner Plaia:	“Aye.”

The public session was called to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers. (An archived video of the meeting is available on the city’s website.)

The following people were present: Commissioners Cavanaugh, Onosko, and Plaia, Chief David Mara, Captain of Operations Frank Warchol, Admin. Manager Karen Senecal, Exec. Assistant Kathleen Levesque, members of the public and the press.

II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Captain Frank Warchol led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. **ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:**

Action: Commissioner Plaia moved to accept the minutes of the September 27th, 2016 police commission meeting.

Seconded by Commissioner Onosko.

On a Voice Vote: The motion passed to accept the minutes of the September 27th commission meeting.

IV. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** (The following is a brief summary of each person's comments and represents the speaker's personal opinion. The entire meeting can be viewed online by going to the city's website and clicking "Channel 22", and then clicking on "Archived 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016 meetings.")

Mr. George Dempsey – 42 Dennett Street: Mr. Dempsey commented on a letter to the editor written by Mr. Brendan DuBois in which he criticized the police commission for taking too long to hire a new permanent chief of police for Portsmouth. Mr. Dempsey cited a recently published article on the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms report on the range fire of several year's ago in the Portsmouth Police Department. Mr. Dempsey criticized Chief DuBois, who has since retired, for not revealing the name of the officer who used the range the night of the fire.

Mr. Brendan DuBois – Exeter, NH: Commented on Mr. Dempsey's comments that were directed at him personally.

V. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None.

VI. **NEW BUSINESS:**

A.) **POLICE COMMISSION:**

1. Commissioner Plaia:

- a. Update on Draft Document of Police Commission Rules and By-laws – A draft of this document was posted a few months ago for public comment. The commission received little comment, although the other commissioners had input that resulted in some tweaking. A final draft will be ready for the next regular police commission meeting. Commissioner Plaia did not think the commission would need the work session scheduled for November 8th at 5:30 p.m. to work on the document.

- b. The November 8th extra scheduled work session – This work session was canceled.

B.) CHIEF'S REPORT:

1. VAWA Grant –

Action: Commissioner Plaia moved to accept the New Hampshire Department of Justice Violence Against Women Grant ('VAWA') in the amount of \$60,000 and forward to the city council for their action.

Seconded by Commissioner Onosko.

On a Voice Vote: The motion passed to accept the New Hampshire Department of Justice Violence Against Women Grant in the amount of \$60,000 and forward to the city council for their action.

2. Last Senior Walk – Chief Mara said the department held it's last Senior Walk of the year last week. This program will pick up again in April. The department will continue to collaborate with Brinn Chute of the Senior Center as the department sees opportunities.
3. Physical Agility Challenge – This was a volunteer event at the department organized by Training Officer Eric Benson. Physical fitness standards for police officers are high. This event was designed to challenge the officers through friendly competition. Nineteen people took part; this was a fun, team-building event. We will have another event next May.
4. Beards for Bucks – This has been a fundraising event through the month of October for the Child Advocacy Center of Rockingham County. Chief Mara spoke briefly about the work of the Center.
5. New K-9 – The department has a new K-9 Team. Officer Aaron Stacy and K-9 "Axe" have been training in Boston. Note: Commissioner Cavanaugh asked the Chief why the department is training in Boston and said she would like to see about bringing the training back to Portsmouth and would like to talk about it at the next meeting.
6. Donation:
Action: Commissioner Plaia moved to accept a donation in the amount of \$700 from 'Friends of the South End' in support of the Portsmouth Police Explorer Cadets and forward to the city council for their action.

Seconded by Commissioner Onosko.

On a Voice Vote: The motion passed to accept the donation in the amount of \$700 from 'Friends of the South End' in support of the Portsmouth Police Explorer Cadets and forward to the city council for their action.

VII. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS:

- A.) Commissioner Plaia – Met a gentleman at the Spinnaker Point Gym, who came up to him and spoke in glowing terms about his interaction with Officer Christina Meyer, who responded to a traffic accident he was involved in.
- B.) Commissioner Onosko – Gave an on-air greeting to Ms. Barbara Wardwell, whom he call a friend of the commission, who was not feeling well.
- C.) Commissioner Cavanaugh –
 1. Asked Chief Mara for an update on the department's enforcement of the Hands-Free law. Chief Mara said his officers have taken their own initiative in doing some intense enforcement in the downtown area. He added the department wanted to continue to educate as well.
 2. Portsmouth City Charter – The commissioner read a portion of the charter aloud that gives the commission the same oversight powers regarding the police department as the city manager has over the non-charter departments of the city. The Chair talked about the commission becoming better fiscal managers.
- D.) Financial Report – Karen Senecal
- E.) Chief Mara thanked everyone who came to the inaugural Police Department Community Meeting. He said these meetings would be held quarterly.

VIII. MOTION TO ADJOURN:

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

Action: Commissioner Plaia moved the October 25th, 2016 police commission meeting be adjourned.

Seconded by Commissioner Onosko.

On a Voice Vote: The motion passed to adjourn the October 25th, 2016 police commission meeting at 5:51 p.m.

END OF MEETING