

## PORTSMOUTH POLICE COMMISSION

### MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016 MONTHLY POLICE COMMISSION MEETING

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

Brenna Cavanaugh, Chair

Joseph J. Onosko

Joe Plaia

\*\*\*AMENDED 1-24-2017\*\*\*

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016 monthly Police Commission meeting was called to order at 4:40 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...”, and, (i) “Consideration of matters related to the preparation for, and carrying out of, emergency functions intended to thwart deliberate acts intended to cause widespread property damage, personal injury and loss of life.”

**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 5:35 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, Public Works Director Peter Rice, Exec. Assistant Kathleen Levesque, members of the public and the press.

II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Admin. Manager Karen Senecal led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. **ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:**

**Action: Commissioner Onosko moved** to accept the minutes of the October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016 police commission meeting.

**Seconded by Commissioner Plaia.**

**On a Voice Vote:** The motion passed to accept the minutes of the October 25<sup>th</sup> commission meeting.

IV. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** There was no public comment.

V. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None.

VI. **NEW BUSINESS:**

**Commissioner Plaia moved** to suspend the rules to allow Public Works Director Peter Rice to update the Commission on planned repairs and improvements to the city hall/police department building.

**Seconded by Commissioner Onosko.**

**On a Voice Vote:** The motion passed to allow Public Works Director Peter Rice to update the Commission on planned repairs and improvements to the city hall/police department building.

Public Works Director Peter Rice used PowerPoint slides to give the Commission a briefing on the physical history of the city hall building and to highlight the conditions that require immediate repair (a copy of the PowerPoint handout is attached to these minutes). Mr. Rice laid out an overview of the work that would be done. These repairs are scheduled to begin in the spring of 2017.

Mr. Rice answered questions from the commissioners.

**A. POLICE COMMISSION:**

1. Commissioner Cavanaugh:
  - a. K-9 Cost Analysis – Admin. Manager Karen Senecal presented the Commission with a rundown of training and associated costs for the Portsmouth K-9 Unit.

The Chair said going forward, she would like to have a report on the K-9 Unit given semi-annually, to coincide with the required semi-annual report from the Commission to the city council.

- b. Building Update from Admin. Manager Karen Senecal. Ms. Senecal reviewed current and recent issues as follows:
  - Conversion of large storage area into an office on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.
  - Storage space problems. We do not have enough storage to satisfy our records retention requirements. We have done a lot of purging and shredding of old records, but still do not have adequate secure file & record storage.

The Chair asked about the rodent problem. Karen said the Department of Public Works checks the traps every month. We have not had any recent sightings or evidence of rodent activity.

- We did have a bee problem in the area outside the Detectives' entrance, which has been cleared.

- c. Joint Budget Committee PC designee – Commissioner Cavanaugh thanked Commissioner Onosko for representing the Commission on the Joint Budget Committee.

2. Commissioner Plaia:
  - a. Structure & Function of the Police Commission – Commissioner Plaia gave a brief history of the Police Commission as an institution in Portsmouth. He explained the responsibilities of the Commission as it presently functions to provide citizen oversight of the Portsmouth Police Department.
  - b. Draft of Rules & By-laws Document – Commissioner Plaia said the document is in final draft form, pending a final review from Chief Mara and staff members. (changed to: “. Pending suggestions from Chief Mara and staff members.”)

**B. CHIEF OF POLICE:**

1. Police Radio System – The police radio system is past the end of its functional life. We have been dealing with radio transmission/reception issues for more than a year, and it has reached the point of being a personnel safety issue. Chief Mara

explained what the department is facing in undertaking the replacement of this system. Both police and fire use the same radio system; we have been working together on this, along with Mr. Pete DeNutte, who is in charge of the 911 system for the state. Chief Mara said that as of today, we have a signed lease in hand for this new system to be built by Motorola. He thanked the city manager for his crucial help and support in resolving this serious public safety issue.

2. Financial Report – Karen Senecal. Karen reported we are 34.6% through the FY '17 budget and are about 29.60% expended, so we are tracking very well right now. Ms. Senecal answered the Commission's questions about different aspects of the financial report.
3. Letter of Thanks from Outside the Department – Chief Mara read a letter into the record from a businessman in South Carolina, Mr. Witz. Mr. Witz wrote to let Chief Mara know that while visiting family members, Portsmouth Police Officer Bill Werner saved the life of a close friend of his. Mr. Witz's friend suffered a heart attack at a local ball field and if Officer Werner had not sprung into action administering an AED, the gentleman would not have survived until the paramedics arrived.
4. Chief Mara praised the quality of officers working in Portsmouth and briefly reviewed a number of community initiatives and outreach events Officer Rochelle Navelski has undertaken on her own as the new full-time community policing officer. He commended Officer Navelski and Officer Chris Worthington for their recent idea to get together with Portsmouth retailers and conduct loss prevention and response training for them. The Chief said he encourages this type of self-initiated work and our officers are doing things like this all the time in all areas of police and detective work.

Chief Mara also informed the Commission that Officer Seth Tondreault was a recipient of the Chief Michael Maloney Heroes Award for 2016. He was nominated by a nurse at Portsmouth Hospital who was impressed by Officer Tondreault's personal efforts to come by the hospital and check in on children, to calm and reassure them, to speak with distraught people struggling with mental health issues, or who are high or otherwise impaired.

The Chief described another planned event for seniors call the “Senior Lights Tour” coming in December, as well as a for-charity game of basketball between the fire department and the police department also coming up in December.

Chief Mara described the recent addition of a CrimeMapping function now available on the police website.

**VII. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS:**

The Chair listed off many police and community events the Commissioners participate in and attend. She felt it would be beneficial if the Commissioners had some type of identifying jackets or clothing so they would be readily identifiable to the public at such times, as opposed to being an unidentified group of civilians following the chief around. Chief Mara said he would not be opposed to looking into the idea.

**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 November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016 police commission meeting be adjourned.

**Seconded by Commissioner Onosko.**

**On a Voice Vote:** The motion passed to adjourn the November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016 police commission meeting at 6:47 p.m.

END OF MEETING