

**PORTSMOUTH POLICE COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018 POLICE COMMISSION**  
**MEETING**

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

Joseph J. Onosko, Chair  
Jim Splaine  
Rev. Dr. Arthur Hilson

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018 monthly Police Commission meeting was called to order at 4:37 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 (a), “Dismissal, promotion or compensation of any public employee...”, and (c), “Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person...”

**Action: Commissioner Splaine moved** to enter non-public session for the purpose delineated above.

**Seconded by Commissioner Onosko.**

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

Commissioner Onosko:	“Aye.”
Commissioner Splaine:	“Aye.”
Commissioner Hilson:	“Aye.”

The motion passed to go into non-public session at 4:40 p.m.

**The public session was called back 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 Onosko, Splaine, and Hilson, Chief Robert Merner, Admin. Manager Karen Senecal, Exec.

Assistant Kathleen Levesque, members of the Department, the public, and the press.

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

- III. **ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:**  
The Chair asked for a motion to accept the minutes.

**Action: Commissioner Splaine moved** to accept the minutes of the July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018 meeting as written.

**Seconded by Commissioner Hilson.**

**On a Voice Vote:** The motion passed to accept the minutes of the July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018 meeting as written.

- 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 scrolling down the home page of the City's website to "Recent Meeting Broadcast", or "City YouTube Channel..." which is in the blue box just below it.)

There being no one wishing to speak, the Chair closed the public comment section.

- V. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None.

- VI. **NEW BUSINESS:**

**Action: Commissioner Hilson moved** to suspend the rules, and move to items 1-3 under, "**B. CHIEF OF POLICE**".

**Seconded by Commissioner Splaine.**

**On a Voice Vote:** The motion passed to suspend the rules and move to items 1-3 under, "**B. CHIEF OF POLICE**".

**B. CHIEF OF POLICE:**

1. Life Saving Medal Award – Officer Jordan Wells
2. Promotion – Detective Seth Tondreault was promoted to Sergeant.
3. Swearing-In – Officer Matt Loureiro was sworn in as our 65<sup>th</sup> officer.

The Commission returned to the agenda as written.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. POLICE COMMISSION:**

1. Commissioner Onosko:

- a. Police Department Survey – The UNH survey of Portsmouth residents is complete. This was a very successful survey with a high rate of participation. The Chair would like to have an informal discussion with the public in a round table format after the September or October monthly Police Commission meeting, regarding the findings of the survey.

It was agreed the Commission would hold an informal round-table-style discussion after the October monthly Police Commission meeting. The session would start at 7:00 p.m, and would review the results of the UNH survey regarding residents' perceptions of their police department.

- b. Motorcycle Enforcement – The Chair asked Chief Merner to update the Commission on the Department's work to address this issue. Chief Merner credited Master Patrol Officer Dean Outhouse with putting this initiative together and developing the mailings and public education materials. The Chief said we have two meetings scheduled with two different motorcycle associations. The Chief said we are working with other seacoast towns on this issue, as loud motorcycle noise is a regional problem, especially in the summer months. Chief Merner said a big part of this is police outreach to the motorcycle drivers, as well as the residents. He said the motorcycle operators want to be good citizens too, and getting each side to see the other side's concerns goes a long way. The Chief did say the educational phase has concluded, and we are now in the enforcement phase of addressing this issue.

2. Commissioner Splaine:

- a. Body Cameras and Dash Cams – The Commissioner would like to put the document he has written on this subject on the September agenda for more formal discussion. The document is attached to these minutes.

The other Commissioners agreed the subject should be studied.  
Chief Merner said this is the proper way to approach this subject.

**B. CHIEF OF POLICE, cont'd:**

4. Semi-Annual K-9 Report: Lt. Kinsman oversees the K-9 Unit, and briefed the Commission on the activities of our K-9 Unit's two teams. They have handled over one hundred calls for service in the last six months. In March, Officer Stacy and K-9 'Max' completed the rigorous training required to become a drug-certified K-9 Team.

Officer Blanding has developed a new documentation process that enables us to document a greater amount of team deployments and training. It has more functionality and is less expensive to use than the program we were using. There is no software license required. It is a Google cloud-based program that allows the handlers to enter data from their phones, so they no longer have to come back to the station and sit at a computer to complete reports and document trainings.

We are in the final stages of a new agreement with the US Coast Guard that will allow our Portsmouth K-9 Teams to be used for drug interdiction out on the rivers and coastlines. The agreement uses our K-9 Teams as tools for identification and discovery of contraband. Any resulting seizures or arrests will be handled and processed by the Coast Guard.

Chief Merner said he has had discussions with the local Coast Guard Commander and the Chiefs of other area agencies regarding the amount of drugs moving over our waterways. He feels this will be a very effective partnership.

Lt. Kinsman said in the next two or three years, we will need to begin the process of identifying, acquiring and training another dog. K-9 Max is currently five years old. Starting somewhere around 8 to 10 years of age, K-9 working dogs typically will no longer be able to meet the rigors of police work. The actual point at which an individual dog needs to be retired varies from dog to dog. Since the lead time is so long from the point one begins to look for a suitable animal, through purchase, training, and deployment, the Department should begin the process in the next 24 months.

Chief Merner added that he is presently working with our K-9 teams to bring the New England Regional K-9 Competition to Portsmouth next year.

5. Accreditation Report
6. Traffic Stats for July:
  - a. 873 stops
  - b. 73 Summonses
    - i. 19 summonses for speeding
    - ii. 9 for hand-free violations
7. Financial Report:
  - a. Grant Report
  - b. Facility Report

**C. PATROL DIVISION:**

- a. This report is included in the commission packet.

**VII. COURT OFFICE REPORT**

- a. This report is included in the commission packet.

**VIII. MISCELLANEOUS/OTHER BUSINESS:**

- a. Commissioner Splaine: The Commissioner said he had recently been traveling in both Maine and Massachusetts, and relayed compliments paid to the Portsmouth Police Department by police officers in both states, saying Portsmouth has a reputation for excellence. He added that police officers around the country seem to know Chief Robert Merner and think very highly of him.

**IX. NEXT REGULAR MEETING:**

The next commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018, with the public session beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers.

**X. MOTION TO ADJOURN:**

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

**Action: Commissioner Hilson moved** the August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018 Monthly Police Commission Meeting be adjourned.

**Seconded by Commissioner Splaine.**

Police Commission Meeting  
August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018

**On a Voice Vote:** The motion passed to adjourn the August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018  
Monthly Police Commission Meeting at 6:54 p.m.

END OF MEETING

*Kathe*

*Respectfully Submitted By Kathleen Levesque, Executive Assistant*

*Reviewed By Commissioner Hilson, Clerk of the Commission*

*Arthur L. Hilson*