

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

Fire Station 2, George Pierce Training Room
February 12, 2019

Portsmouth, NH
1730 hours

I. Call to Order:

Chairwoman Matthes called the meeting to order at 1734 hours.

II. Pledge of Allegiance with Attendance:

Chairwoman Matthes led the pledge of allegiance.

Present were Commissioners: Jennifer Matthes, Richard Gamester and Michael Hughes, Chief Steven Achilles, Deputy Fire Chiefs: Carl Roediger and James Heinz, Executive Assistant Tracy Freeman, Captains: Todd Germain and Jason Gionet, Lieutenant Rick Condon, and Firefighters: Samuel Couinard, Scott D. Young, Ezekiel Tappin, Shawn Wheeler and Timothy Griswold.

III. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Motion, to approve the minutes of January 8, 2019 was made by Chairwoman Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

IV. Public Comment Session: None.

V. Presentation of Written Communications:

Chief Achilles read the thank you note from Lawrence Fire Chief Brian Moriarty.

VI. Public Hearings:

Chairwoman Matthes turned the meeting over to Chief Achilles for his presentation on the FY2020 Proposed Budget.

Chief Achilles present the FY2020 Proposed Budget. Staffing and organizational requests are based on demand for services, concurrent request for services and growth and development. The department is presenting a demand-based budget proposal which recognizes current and projected service activity, improving gaps in emergency and community risk reduction services and continuing to ensure reliable, equitable and predictable delivery of emergency and community risk reduction services. The position summary report shows the department currently at 62 fulltime position and 3 part-time positions. The department will be requesting to add 3 additional firefighters and 1 more fire prevention officer and reduce the

part-time fire alarm position. This would bring the department to 66 total full time positions and 2 part-time positions.

Chief Achilles continued his presentation showing the FY2020 proposed budget at 4.99% increase over FY19. At the request of the City Manager through the direction of the City Council, departments were asked to revise their budgets factoring in a \$150K reduction. Working with Tracy, we were able to find \$150,602 savings bringing the FY2020 proposed budget to \$9,263,569 which is 3.32% over FY2019 budget. The reduction comes with phasing in 2 of the new firefighters in July 2019 and 2 after January 2020. We also had to take into consideration the new State Laws which increased our Worker's Compensation Insurance substantially. This revised budget does not however, include cost of living adjustments for fire officers or firefighters. A 5-year strategic plan was also outlined by Chief Achilles where the goal is to provide for 1 staffed fire truck and 1 staffed ambulance in each of the three geographic response zones of the city and appropriately fund salary, benefits, shift coverage lines to ensure 15 on-duty firefighters and officers 24/7.

Chairwoman Matthes made the motion to open the public hearing for comments on the proposed budget FY20. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gamester and passed unanimously.

Chairwoman Matthes asked if anyone wished to speak on behalf of the proposed FY20 budget. There were no speakers.

Chairwoman Matthes made the motion to close the public hearing. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

Chairwoman Matthes thanked Chief Achilles for his presentation and for including a 5-year plan for the department. She went on to ask Chief Achilles how far does this proposed budget get us to the 5-year plan? Chief replied that by phasing in the firefighters it will bring us to the 15 max goal however, it does not fund overtime for shift coverage or retirement around the clock so we would have 15 on shift with minimum staffing at 13. With each year, we hope to fund the additional overtime and retirement to increase minimum staffing to 14 and 15 respectively. Commissioner Hughes asked if having 15 on shift, would it staff an ambulance and engine in each of the three districts. Chief replied that at 15, yes it would, but anything below 15 on duty, we would not have the third ambulance in service.

Commissioner Gamester made the motion to approve and submit to the City Manager, the proposed FY2020 Budget as presented, at 3.32%. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

VII. Recognition of Groups or Individuals: None.

VIII. Reports:

A. Fire Chief's Reports:

Commissioner Gamester motioned to discuss Chief's reports 19-014 through 19-017. Motion seconded by Commissioner Hughes.

Chief Achilles reviewed reports with the Commission.

Report (014), 2019 Response Report with Service Activity and Safety message for January 2019. The report shows the department responding to a total of 367 calls for the month: 110 Fire Calls and 257 Ambulance Calls. Total year to date shows the same being the first month of the year. Chief spoke briefly about some of the activity for the month noting a water problem at City Hall, a dumpster fire at Flatbread Pizza, a roof fire in the duct work at Highliner Foods, and a vehicle fire at 3600 Lafayette Road with a report of a trash truck on fire. The safety message focused on American Heart Month. The Service Activity and Safety Message report was submitted to the Portsmouth Herald for publication in local newspapers. Report (015), Fire and EMS Call Summary Report, shows the department responded to 220 fire calls for the month of January with 110 of the calls being for rescue responses which gets deducted from the total of fire calls. EMS activity was 257 with the top three responses being for seizures, syncope/fainting and respiratory distress. There were 6 calls for drug overdose/abuse and 46 non-transports. Report (016), FY19 Budget, Chief Achilles reviewed the budget with the Commission and noted the department is still tracking in the good and would see a savings this year in salaries uniform personnel due to retirements after the budget was submitted along with a 9-month savings for a firefighter deployed overseas. Report (017), Overtime Analysis, provided a breakdown of how overtime was used in the month of January along with a summary of what was charged to OT-Recall for the month.

Motion, to accept Chief's Reports 19-014 through 19-017, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

B. Staff Reports:

Deputy Chief Roediger had nothing to report at this time.

Deputy Chief Heinz reported on Operations and Training within the department. He noted department personnel are in the process of being fit tested. This is where each members is tested yearly on their SCBA face piece to assure proper fitting. He went on to add that AEMT refreshers are complete, Rescue 7 equipment is coming in and being placed in service as department members are trained on the items, and hosted an LEPC meeting at station 2 this past month. Deputy Heinz took a moment to recognize Firefighter Riffert who started yesterday on 2/11/19.

Chairwoman Matthes inquired further what LEPC stood for and what it is. Chief Achilles noted that under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act, Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs) must develop an emergency response plan, review the plan at least annually, and provide information about chemicals in the community to citizens. Companies that are within each community that have chemicals are required to report them to their local Fire Chief/LEPC coordinator via a Tier II report.

IX. Old Business:

Chief Achilles noted Deputy Roediger will be retiring at the end of this month. Along with his retirement we will have the retirement of Captain Murphy and Firefighter Ward and several promotions for next month.

Chief Achilles spoke about the Captain's promotional exam with top candidate being Lieutenant Rick Condon. Through his leadership and knowledge, I making the recommendation that he be promoted to the rank of Captain, to fill the vacancy created with the retirement of Captain Murphy effective March 1, 2019.

Motion, to accept the Chief's recommendation of promoting Lieutenant Rick Condon to the rank of Captain to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Captain Murphy, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.

Chief Achilles noted oral boards were held for the Fire Inspector's position with four interested candidates all firefighters. Chief's recommendation will be forthcoming. Swearing in will take place at March's meeting of all of our promoted Officers. Deputy Heinz is working on filling the firefighter positions with one who has retired and another vacancy created by a firefighter who will fill the Inspector's position.

X. New Business:

After a brief discussion on Commission officers, Commissioner Hughes nominated Richard Gamester to the position of Vice-Chairman and Jennifer Matthes to remain in the position of Chairwoman. Commissioner Gamester accepted and made the nomination for Michael Hughes to be appointed to the position of Clerk. Commissioner Hughes accepted. Chairwoman Matthes accepted.

Election of Officers is: Jennifer Matthes, Chairwoman; Richard Gamester, Vice-Chairman and Michael Hughes, Clerk.

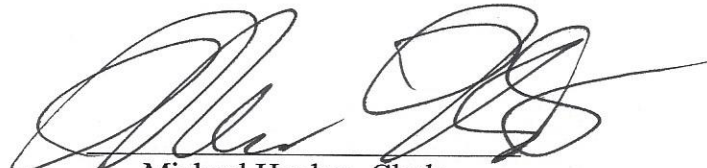
Chief Achilles read letter from the Currington's for their donation of \$300.00 to the department.

Motion, to accept the \$300.00 donation from The Currington's to be used towards firefighter safety and equipment at the Chief's discretion, was made by

Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

XI. Adjournment:

Motion, to adjourn at 1808 hours, was made by Chairwoman Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gamester and passed unanimously.



Michael Hughes, Clerk