

PORTSMOUTH POLICE COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE MARCH 26TH, 2019 POLICE COMMISSION
MEETING

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

Joseph J. Onosko, Chair
Jim Splaine
Stefany Shaheen

- I. CALL TO ORDER: The March 26th, 2019 monthly Police Commission meeting was called to order at 4:30 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...”, (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 purposes delineated above.

Seconded by Commissioner Onosko.

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

Commissioner Onosko:	“Aye.”
Commissioner Splaine:	“Aye.”
Commissioner Shaheen:	“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 Shaheen, Chief Robert Merner, Admin. Manager Karen Senecal, and Exec. Assistant Kathleen Levesque.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Kathleen Levesque led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Action: Commissioner Shaheen moved to accept the minutes of the March 7th meeting as written.

Seconded by Commissioner Splaine.

On a Voice Vote: The motion passed to accept the minutes of the March 7th, 2019 meeting as written.

Action: Commissioner Shaheen moved to accept the minutes of the March 12th meeting as written.

Seconded by Commissioner Splaine.

On a Voice Vote: The motion passed to accept the minutes of the March 12th, 2019 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:

A. POLICE COMMISSION:

1. Commissioner Onosko:

The Commission moved to item (d) under Commissioner Onosko and addressed the building, mold, and air quality updates.

d. Karen Senecal reported there is no new data since the last meeting regarding the air quality in Capt. Warchol's office. They did test the room after the work was complete and he had moved back into his office, and found the air quality was still poor. In response, they

installed a high powered air scrubber and they will test again. Work is ongoing in Lt. Cummings' office for similar serious mold and air quality issues. They will test his office again when the work is complete. Commissioner Shaheen asked if the remediation planned to address the mold and air issues encompasses all of the areas that actually need remediation in the Department. Karen said it did, although she does not have a timetable yet for all the abatement work that has to happen before the remediation work. They will test the air quality after the abatement work has been completed.

While awaiting retrieval of the three written reports from Chief Merner's office, Commissioner Onosko asked for a motion to suspend the agenda and move to Letters of Appreciation and Recognition from the Chief's report.

Action: Commissioner Splaine moved to suspend the agenda and move to Letters of Appreciation and Recognition from the Chief's report.

Seconded by Commissioner Shaheen.

On a Voice Vote: The motion passed to suspend the agenda and move to Letters of Appreciation and Recognition from the Chief's report.

B. CHIEF'S REPORT:

2. Letters of Appreciation from Outside the Department

Chief Merner read a letter of thanks into the record from a family member of a resident whom Portsmouth Police Officers rescued from a parking lot. The resident was in the midst of a diabetic emergency and responding officers brought the resident to the emergency room. The family was so grateful for the officers' response and care.

Commissioner Shaheen stated for the record that often well-meaning people don't know how to help someone experiencing a diabetic emergency, and the informed response of the officers was most welcome.

1. Recognition – Kathleen Levesque was recognized for 20 years of service to the Portsmouth Police Department.

The Chair returned to the agenda as published.

- a. Internal Report: PD's Response To Resistance (2017 & 2018) (formally known as 'Use-of-Force' report):
In 2018 the Portsmouth Police Department recorded 135 RTR reports compared to 2017, where there were 152 RTR reports. This is an 8% decrease in one year. Chief Merner continued to review the statistics contained in the report.
Chief Merner noted that the 20% decrease in injuries to suspects, and the 42% decrease of injuries to officers was a direct result of the training officers have received.
- b. Internal Report: PD's Biased-based Policing (2017 & 2018):
There were no complaints alleging bias in 2018. The department responded to nearly 50,000 calls for service. In 2017 we received one complaint for an officer action which the complainant felt was based on race. The complaint was investigated by Internal Affairs and deemed to be unfounded. The individual making the complaint has been pulled over for a violation of the hands-free law.
- c. Internal Report: Police Department's Vehicle Pursuit Policy & Incidents (2017 & 2018): The Portsmouth Police has an SOP that specifically governs pursuits. These are among the most dangerous of police actions. In 2018 we had 50,000 calls for service, and we had a total of 7 pursuits. Upon review, all 7 pursuits were found to be policy compliant. Two pursuits were called off by the agency. In two other cases, we made policy changes because the pursuits involved two-wheeled vehicles. In 2017, there were no pursuits.

All three of these reports will be posted to the website and available to the public.

B. CHIEF OF POLICE

- a.) Accreditation Update – Our accreditation manager, Jackie Burnett, has recently begun a review of our policies to insure we continue to be in compliance with the new CALEA standards. Jackie has identified 14 policies that need some tweaking on the wording to bring them up to the new standard.
- b.) Monthly Traffic Stats: 1539 stops for January and February

Stats for this past week:

- o 250 Motor Vehicle stops
- o 25 Summonses
- o 60+ written warnings
- o We are averaging a minimum of 250 stops per week.

We will continue to increase our traffic enforcement with the addition resources from the state highway safety grants.

- c.) Financial Report – As we near the end of the fiscal year, Karen can confirm the Department will again end the year in the black.
- d.) Facilities Update
- e.) Grants:
 - NH Highway Safety Grant Applications: These are due after the first of April.
 - Bullet-proof Vest Grant: We are still awaiting the application.
 - Drone Grant: We are currently in the bid process.
 - ICAC Forensic Shield funding: We are seeking a continuation of funding from the state budget that we received last year. We are looking for \$250,000 per year.
- f.) The proposed budget is currently posted on the home page and will remain there until the budget is approved. Commissioner Shaheen asked Karen several questions on budget line items.
- g.) Strategic Plan: The plan was reviewed briefly with some highlights noted by Chief Merner. The complete report will be up on the website.

Comm. Shaheen asked the Chair when it would be possible to present the strategic plan to the city council. Chief Merner said we would get the chance to review a lot of it at the upcoming work session with the council. Commissioner Shaheen recommended we make time to review it before the city council. It would be very helpful for the current council and incoming councilors to know what is ahead for the police department in the next five years.

C. PATROL DIVISION:

- a. This report was included in the 3-26-19 commission meeting packet.

VII. COURT OFFICE REPORT:

- a. This confidential report was included in the 3-26-19 commission meeting packet.

VIII. MISCELLANEOUS/OTHER BUSINESS: None.

IX. NEXT REGULAR MEETING:

The next commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 23rd, 2019, 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 Shaheen moved the March 26th, 2019 Police Commission Meeting be adjourned.

Seconded by Commissioner Splaine.

On a Voice Vote: The motion passed to adjourn the March 26th, 2019 Monthly Police Commission Meeting at 6:37 p.m.

END OF MEETING

Kathe

Respectfully Submitted By Kathleen Levesque, Executive Assistant
Reviewed By Commissioner Splaine, Clerk of the Commission

Jim Splaine