

PORTSMOUTH POLICE COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE MAY 28TH, 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 May 28th, 2019 monthly Police Commission meeting was called to order at 3:30 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...”, and (i), “consideration of matters related to the preparation for...emergency functions...”

Action: Commissioner Shaheen 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 3:30 p.m.

The public session was called back to order at 5:41 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, Exec. Assistant Kathleen Levesque.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Commissioner Shaheen led the Pledge of Allegiance.

NOTE: Commissioner Shaheen expressed sympathy to Officer Steven Blanding and the Department on the loss of K-9 Max. She said she and her family know firsthand what it is like to depend on a service animal for life protection, and how strong and special the bond is that develops with that animal.

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 May 20th, April 26th, and March 26th, 2019 meetings as written.

Seconded by Commissioner Onosko.

On a Voice Vote: The motion passed to accept the minutes of the May 20th, April 26th and March 26th, 2019 meetings 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:

A. POLICE COMMISSION:

1. Commissioner Onosko:

- a. Update on Body & Car Camera Exploratory Sub-Committee
 - i. A pro/con list is being assembled. The sub-committee has been meeting since November of last year. The Chair would like to have the pro/con list done sometime in June. The Commission will make its decision after reviewing the work product of the sub-committee.

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

A. POLICE COMMISSION:

1. Commissioner Onosko:

a. Promotion Procedures for Ranking Officers

Commissioner Splaine said the Commission will be holding interviews for Captain and for Lieutenant on the 12th and 13th of June.

Action: Commissioner Splaine moved to video tape and live stream the interviews for Captain & Lieutenant.
Seconded by Commissioner Shaheen.

The motion was brought to the floor for discussion:
Commissioner Splaine went on to explain that having a public component to this process will showcase the talent present in the department. He felt it would also help to allow the public to understand a little more about the intricacies connected to these positions.

The Chair explained there is a lot that goes into the evaluation process.

On a Roll Call Vote: The motion carried to video tape and live stream the interviews for Captain & Lieutenant. The vote was as follows:

| | |
|----------------------|-------|
| Commissioner Onosko | “Aye” |
| Commissioner Splaine | “Aye” |
| Commissioner Shaheen | “Aye” |

B. CHIEF OF POLICE:

OLD BUSINESS – From the April 23rd, 2019 Meeting:

1. Grants & Donations:

a. Donation of \$55 made by West End Studio. The donation will support our Police Explorers Post.

Action: Commissioner Shaheen moved to accept the grant from West End Studios in the amount of \$55 in support of the

Portsmouth Police Explorers, and forward to the City Council for their action.

Seconded by Commissioner Onosko.

On a Voice Vote: The motion passed to accept the grant from West End Studios in the amount of \$55 in support of the Portsmouth Police Explorers, and forward to the City Council for their action.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Recognition – Chief Merner briefly described the work of Officer Nick Small who took a theft report from an elderly citizen, and following his good police intuition and genuine concern for this exploited elderly person, put together a significant case of multiple thefts at multiple housing properties. This successful case ended a crime spree and restored stolen property to its owners.
2. Letters of Appreciation from Outside the Department –
 - a. A note of thanks from Asst. Mayor Lazenby for the ride-along experience of seeing our Portsmouth Officers in action on a busy Friday night.
 - b. Thank you from the Portsmouth Catholic Share Fund for the safety training given to their staff by Det. Rochelle Navelski.
 - c. A thank you note received from everyone at ‘Hive’, in commemoration of National Police Week. Hive is a thriving local business in Portsmouth.
 - d. Granite State Defense Options thanked Chief Merner for the safety and self-defense instruction given by Officer Rochelle Navelski.
3. Accreditation Update – The department has begun the stewardship and preparation process to be ready for re-accreditation in 2023.
4. Traffic Stats for the Month of April:
 - a. 1,095 motor vehicles stops
 - b. 133 summonses
 - i. 24 for speeding
 - c. 32 accidents
 - d. Chief Merner noted that our Persons-in-Crisis calls are increasing daily. Many involve mental health emergencies and addiction-related crises. These are by nature time and resource intensive calls.
5. Financial Report:
 - a. Strategic Plan

- b. Grant & Application updates
 - c. Facilities Report
- 6. Chief Merner – Summarized a news story in The Union Leader regarding the work of Portsmouth Det. Sgt. John Peracchi, who is the Internet Crimes Against Children Commander for New Hampshire. The work of Det. Sgt. Peracchi and his ICAC Task Forces resulted in 12 arrests for online solicitations of minors for sex. Chief Merner added that a Federal grant and a State grant pay the full salary for Det. Sgt. Peracchi, as well as several part time positions outside the agency that provide admin. and field support for the Task Force.
- 7. Chief Merner added a brief update on the sentencing of an individual in Maine who had been spoofing other people's email addresses and using them to terrorize people in colleges, schools, and other police departments. In particular, the felon used Chief Merner's email address to send threatening emails to members of police admin. staff.

C. PATROL DIVISION:

- a. This report was included in the 5-28-19 commission meeting packet.

NOTE: Chief Merner took a moment to speak about the sudden loss of K-9 Max. He said the Department will be scheduling a service for Max. Officer Blanding has asked for some privacy during this difficult time. We have received an outpouring of support from around the country and around the world. It has been an amazing response.

VII. COURT OFFICE REPORT:

- a. This confidential report was included in the 5-28-19 commission meeting packet.

VIII. MISCELLANEOUS/OTHER BUSINESS: None.

IX. NEXT REGULAR MEETING:

The next commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 23rd, 2019; there is no Police Commission Meeting in June. The public session begins 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 May 28th, 2019 Police Commission Meeting be adjourned.

Seconded by Commissioner Splaine.

On a Voice Vote: The motion passed to adjourn the May 28th, 2019 Monthly Police Commission Meeting at 6:21p.m.

END OF MEETING

Kathe

Respectfully Submitted By Kathleen Levesque, Executive Assistant

Reviewed By Commissioner Splaine, Clerk of the Commission

Jim Splaine