

022

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

Fire Station 2
George Pierce Training Room
February 11, 2020

Portsmouth, NH
1800 hours

I. Call to Order:

Chairwoman Matthes called the meeting to order at 1805 hours.

II. Pledge of Allegiance with Attendance:

Chairwoman Matthes led the pledge of allegiance.

Present were Commissioners: Jennifer Matthes and Richard Gamester; Fire Chief Todd Germain, Deputy Fire Chiefs: James Heinz and Patrick Howe; Executive Assistant Tracy Freeman, Lieutenants: Scott Egan and John Goodwin; Firefighters: Steve Smith, Jon Gray, Adam Lamonica and Annie Cole; and City Councilor Petra Huda.

Absent: Commissioner Michael Hughes

III. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Motion, to approve the minutes of January 14, 2020, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.

IV. Public Comment Session: None.

V. Presentations of Written Communications:

Chief Germain read two thank you notes. First note from Silke Psula regarding the visit of Canine Companions for Independence at Station 1. Second note was from Shannon Calliari with sincere appreciation for helping her terminally ill mother take her last ride to the beach.

Motion, to accept and place on file, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.

VI. Public Hearings:

Chairwoman Matthes turned the meeting over to Chief Germain for his presentation on the FY2021 Proposed Budget.

Chief Germain presented the FY2021 Proposed Budget. Staffing and organizational requests are based on demand for services, concurrent requests for services and growth and development. The department is presenting a demand-based budget proposal which recognizes current and projected service activity, improving upon emergency services and community risk reduction services and continuing to ensure reliable, equitable and predictable delivery of emergency and fire prevention, education and inspection services. Goals and objectives identified were to maintain and strengthen reliable delivery of essential emergency and non-emergency services with the deployment and distribution of personnel, apparatus and fire stations to support equal coverage to all areas of the city. Promote the safety of employees and the community through comprehensive education and training. Encouraging employee health, safety, wellness and fitness through education and proven industry standard programs and maintaining effective training programs and state-of-the-art equipment. Minimize the risk of life and property loss through proactive planning, education and enforcement of applicable codes and standards with a goal to permit 100% of assembly, educational and hotel occupancies every year along with inspecting all daycare occupancies every 3 years and inspect all multi-family residences and all business occupancies and bring into code compliance. The position summary report maintains current staffing with 66 full-time positions and 2 part-time positions.

Chief Germain continued his presentation showing the FY2021 proposed budget at 3.51% increase over FY20. This increase takes into account the impact of the 3 additional firefighters and 1 fire prevention officer that were phased in over the past year to reduce costs, the increase in worker's compensation insurance and the approved firefighters and officers contract bargaining agreements with COLAs. This proposed budget maintains current level of service, staffing, stations and resources. Chief also noted that 96% of the budget is made up from salaries and benefits which are governed by the contracts in place. In keeping with the 5-year strategic plan proposed last year, Chief Germain continued with the goal of providing 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 FY21 budget. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gamester and passed unanimously.

Chairwoman Matthes asked if anyone wished to speak on behalf of the proposed FY21 budget. There were no speakers.

Chairwoman Matthes followed with inquiring about inspecting of all multi-family and business occupancies and the plan to meet the 100% goal and what was needed to make that happen. Deputy Howe replied that prior to this year, state laws didn't require this. When it went into effect, we didn't have the ability to meet the mandate with the number of place of assemblies and plans that were coming into the city and not having the manpower to keep up. With the addition of the new fire

prevention officer last July, we are working on catching up and are now close to meeting the 100% goal and anticipate meeting it fully by year end.

Chairwoman Matthes asked if the Chief could clarify what is meant by responding to 100% of all concerns related to life safety hazards. Are we not doing that now? Chief Germain turned that question over to Deputy Howe who provided an example: when you are in a restaurant and say you see a table and chairs stacked up and blocking an exit route that could potentially cause or become a dangerous situation so you call the fire department to bring this to our attention. This is what is meant by a life safety hazard and we take care of these situations within hours of receiving the call. Many concerned citizens call us regarding "life safety" issues and we make it appoint to address all concerns immediately. The only time where we may not be able to respond as quickly is if a caller calls on a weekend and leaves a voice mail in the administration mailbox and that is not answered until Monday when administration returns.

With no other speakers, Chairwoman Matthes made the motion to close the public hearing. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gamester and passed unanimously.

Commissioner Gamester made the motion to approve and submit to the City Manager, the proposed FY2021 Budget as presented, at 3.51%. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.

VII. Recognition of Groups or Individuals:

Commissioner Gamester took a moment to thank Councilor Huda for attending.

VIII. Reports:

A. Fire Chief's Reports:

Chairwoman Matthes motioned to discuss Chief's reports 20-016 through 20-019. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gamester.

Chief Germain reviewed reports with the Commission.

Report (016), 2020 Response Report with Service Activity and Safety message for January 2020. The report shows the department responding to a total of 413 calls for the month: 113 Fire Calls and 300 Ambulance Calls. Fire calls were slightly down from last month however, ambulance calls were slightly up from last month. Being the first month of the year, totals are those presented. Chief spoke briefly about some of the activity for the month noting a motor vehicle fire in the area of 171 Leslie Drive for a reported car fire which was quickly knocked down. Chief also spoke about a call for a cardiac arrest at the Music Hall where a female was in cardiac arrest. Units arrived on scene to find bystander CPR and AED in progress. Paramedics successfully resuscitated the female within minutes of arrival and through the combination of bystander CPR and AED, fast municipal paramedic response and definitive hospital intervention, the patient was discharged from the hospital four days later.

Another call noted was for an outside fire in the area behind 775 Lafayette Road. Upon arrival, a fire in the woods spreading from a homeless camp had burned about an acre due to the dry ground conditions. Extensive manpower and several hundred gallons of water was needed to fully extinguish the fire. The safety message focused on the month of February which is American Heart Month. The Service Activity and Safety Message report was submitted to the Portsmouth Herald for publication in local newspapers. Report (017), Fire and EMS Call Summary Report, shows the department responded to 113 fire calls for the month of January with 19 of the calls being for rescue responses which gets deducted from the total of fire calls. EMS activity was 300 with the top three responses being for weakness, syncope/fainting, and trauma or injury to the head/scalp. There were 4 calls for drug overdose/abuse and 38 non-transports. Report (018), FY20 Budget, Chief Germain reviewed the budget with the Commission and noted that the department is still tracking with a surplus and is accounting for an anticipated long term officer vacancy due to a disability and projected expenses for the remainder of the fiscal year however, does not account for the repair to Engine 3 that we just received a quote for today which will be just over \$8,000. Report (019), 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 20-016 through 20-019, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.

B. Staff Reports:

Deputy Chief Heinz reported on Operations and Training within the department. He noted the various trainings that occurred over the past month which included school shooter drill at the PHS/PMS which was a local drill not involving EMS or police response but training on accountability for the students in the event of an active shooter, early cancer detection with an outside speaker from the cancer support network who came in to speak to our men and women, touring the Passport center in follow up to the large scale drill held back in September last year, hosting a RADEF (radiation) Officer class in anticipation of the upcoming Seabrook Station exercises, rolling out our Rescue 7 training orientation to mutual aid towns which include Pease and PNSY. Other items noted: Lt. Goodwin completing his orientation and has started on Group B at station 2 today, on duty yoga taking place a couple of times this past month and Safety Committee meeting.

Deputy Chief Howe reported on Fire Prevention and being a busy month. A temporary warming shelter was set up this past weekend due to the cold temperatures and we will have another one this weekend with the expected low temperatures. Hotel inspections are coming in. Busy with the primaries which took up some time. Moxie Hotel, Lonza Biologics, Heinemann bldg. are all being developed. The AC Hotel's event center and restaurant and bar is expected to be completed soon. The big un-named grocery store is still being

worked out and the substantial project behind 5-Guys on Lafayette Road is in its proposal stages.

VIII. Old Business:

Chief Germain noted receipt of the fire prevention vehicle and is currently in the process of being lettered and having radios installed.

IX. New Business:

Chief Germain read Firefighter Chouinard's retirement letter effective March 1, 2020 and his last shift being February 29th.

Commissioner Gamester made the motion, to accept Firefighter Chouinard's letter of retirement with regret and wishing him all the best in his retirement. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.

X. Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn at 1905 hours was made by Chairwoman Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gamester and passed unanimously.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Hughes', written over a horizontal line.

Michael Hughes, Clerk