

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

Fire Station 2
George Pierce Training Room
August 11, 2020

Portsmouth, NH
1800 hours

I. Call to Order:

Chairwoman Matthes called the meeting to order at 1800 hours.

II. Pledge of Allegiance with Attendance:

Chairwoman Matthes led the pledge of allegiance.

Present were Commissioners: Jennifer Matthes, Richard Gamester and Michael Hughes; Fire Chief Todd Germain, Deputy Fire Chiefs: James Heinz and Patrick Howe; Executive Assistant Tracy Freeman, City Manager Karen Conard, Firefighters: Clark Brighton, Greg Harnois and Jacqueline Cole with their family members along with members of the department.

III. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Motion, to approve the minutes of July 14, 2020, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

IV. Public Comment Session:

Commissioner Gamester took a moment to recognize City Manager Karen Conard

V. Presentations of Written Communications: None.

VI. Recognition of Groups or Individuals:

Chief Germain swore in Firefighter Clark Brighton, Firefighter Gregory Harnois and Firefighter Jacqueline Cole.

Commissioner Gamester made the motion for a 10-minute recess for pictures at 1815 hours. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.

Meeting reconvened at 1825 hours.

VII. Reports:

A. Fire Chief's Reports:

Chairwoman Matthes motioned to discuss Chief's reports 20-052 through 20-055. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes.

Chief Germain reviewed reports with the Commission.

Report (052), 2020 Response Report with Service Activity and Safety message for July 2020. The report unfortunately was for the previous year and not for 2020 however, Chief Germain noted that the department responded to a total of 424 calls for the month: 138 Fire Calls and 286 Ambulance Calls. Chief noted that call volume is incrementally getting busier as things are beginning to open up. We are staffing 3 ambulances during the day Monday through Friday with full shift coverage. Total year to date is approximately 2500 calls and apologized for not having the correct report on hand. Chief noted that there were no major incidents of interest this month. The safety message he noted was focused on scooter and moped safety. Report (053), Fire and EMS Call Summary Report, shows the department responded to 138 fire calls for the month of July. EMS activity was 286 with the top three responses being for weakness (no specific cause), alcohol abuse and effect and syncope/fainting. There were 5 calls for drug overdose/abuse and 65 non-transport. Report (054), FY21 Budget, Chief Germain reviewed the budget with the Commission and noted that many of the costs right now are upfront and why the spent to date is higher than the percentage into the year. The FY21 Budget will be watched closely and staffing will be adjusted as we learn of expenditures and surplus. He spoke briefly about the FY20 Budget with the anticipated surplus of \$211K. This is largely impart due to retirements after the budget was formulated, firefighter vacancies not filled right away and overtime for earned time significantly reduced due to COVID19 impacts. We did request to encumber funds to cover 3 LifePak Defibrillators that have software that has expired to a point where they are now unrepairable. LifePak was offering a half off deal on a new one so we wanted to take advantage of that to be sure we had defibrillators that were up to date and working and not fail us during the time of need. This expense is included in the anticipated surplus amount. Report (055), Overtime Analysis, provided a breakdown of how overtime was used in the month of July along with a summary of what was charged to OT-Recall for the month and Shift Coverage for COVID related impacts.

Motion, to accept Chief's Reports 20-052 through 20-055, was made by Chairwoman Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

B. Staff Reports:

Deputy Chief Heinz reported on Operations and Training within the department. He noted lifting and jacking training held at National Wrecker using hydrofusion struts, EMS virtual training from PRH, Lonza tours with Fire Prevention Officers, Station 2 internet upgraded and pre-planned the confined space entry operations at the Port Authority.

Deputy Chief Howe reported on Prevention noting several projects happening within the city and not seeing a slowdown in permitting for construction. The Bridge Street lot pop-up opened last week, and we are starting up again on hotel inspections and preparing for inspection of apartment buildings once pandemic is over.

IX. Old Business: None.

X. New Business:

Chief reviewed the items he wishes to purchase using the Geraldine Webber account for funding. The Ballistic Protective Equipment (\$4,500) would provide 3 more sets of ballistic gear each including a vest, helmet, goggles, EMS kit and carry bag. This will bring the department to a total of 18 sets, outfitting each station with 6 sets.

The hydraulic stabilization struts (\$12,000) are quick deployment struts used to stabilize a heavy overhead object so that firefighters can safely perform rescues underneath that object.

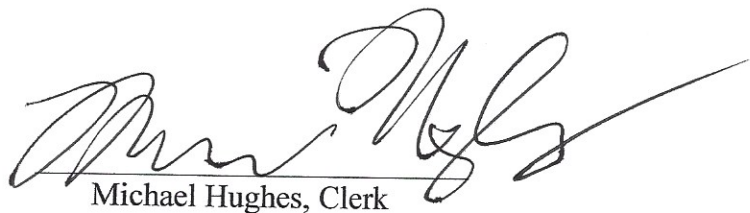
The gear washer-extractor for station 1 (\$12,790) is in need of repair after being the only gear washer-extractor for the whole department for many years. It has received a lot of use and is now in need of some major repairs. Anticipated repair costs are about 80% of the cost for a new smaller one. Keeping gear clean is paramount in limiting the spread of dangerous carcinogens to firefighters and their families. These carcinogens have been found to significantly increase firefighters' chances of being diagnosed with cancer. Replacing this gear washer-extractor will ensure department personnel have the means to continue to keep their gear clean and free of dangerous contaminants. The other two stations have their own gear washer-extractors now which help expedite the cleaning process when needed.

Chairwomen Matthes wanted to confirm that the gear washer-extractor followed the guidelines of "safety equipment" in using the Geraldine Webber funds. Chief Germain replied stating that it is and given the current situation, gear is being washed more often. Keeping gear clean and free from hazardous chemicals, contaminants, etc is key in providing safety for all personnel.

Commissioner Hughes made the motion, to approve the Fire Chief to purchase the Ballistic Protective Equipment, the Hydraulic Stabilization Struts and the Gear Washer-Extractor for station 1, as presented from the Webber Bequest at a cost of no more than \$30K. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gamester and passed unanimously.

XI. Adjournment:

Motion, to adjourn at 1900 hours, was made by Chairwoman Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gamester and passed unanimously.



Michael Hughes, Clerk