

PORTSMOUTH POLICE COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE APRIL 22nd, 2021 POLICE COMMISSION MEETING

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

***Remote Meeting via Zoom Conference Call**

Stefany Shaheen, Chair
Joseph Onosko, Commissioner
Thomas Hart, Commissioner

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chairperson Stefany Shaheen called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m., following the non-public session. (A full recording of this meeting is available on the City's website & City's Youtube Channel.)
- Present:** Commissioners Shaheen, Hart and Onosko, Chief Mark Newport, Admin. Manager Karen Senecal, Exec. Assistant Jackie Burnett, members of the Department and the public.
- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Commissioner Hart led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- III. **ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:** March 23rd, 2021
Action: Commissioner Onosko moved to accept the minutes of the March 23rd, 2021 Police Commission Meeting as drafted.
Seconded by Commissioner Hart.
On a unanimous roll call vote 3-0, motion passed.
- IV. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**
There being no one wishing to speak, Chairperson Shaheen closed the public comment section.
- V. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None.
- VI. **NEW BUSINESS:**
A. POLICE COMMISSION:
1. Facilities Update

Chief Newport provided an overview of various on-going projects within the police building. Mark summarized progress made with the remediation of the 2nd floor (Administrative wing). Phase 1 of the 2nd floor project is anticipated to be done in May. Workers are currently replacing the HVAC system in the entire building complex. They've turned the heat off to the building in order to complete this project.

Chair Shaheen asked how many employees have been displaced as a result of the 2nd floor project. **Chief explained** that phase 1 has displaced five employees and phase 2 will displace three employees.

Chief reported on where the department is at with mold remediation. He mentioned that he's still working with the City on this. There are plans to have a forensic analysis performed on the building. Once we receive a report back from the analysis, we will learn more about what next steps should be taken (remain working in the building or arrange for other accommodations). Current status on having a forensic analysis performed: The City is working with the Unions on selecting a company to perform the analysis – hoping to have the report within the next couple of months.

2. Community Forum Update

Commissioner Onosko reported that terrific progress has been made. He asked Administrative Manager, Karen Senecal, about the status on the CAD/RMS RFP. Karen mentioned that the RFP has been submitted to Capt. Sargent for final review to ensure accuracy. With so many details associated with such a system, the process of final review will take a bit of time. Commissioner Onosko said that data collection is dependent upon a new CAD/RMS system, as a new system will be capable of tracking more data points. We'll get some bids and are looking at a timeline of roughly 12-18 months before that system is up and running. Commissioner Onosko took a moment to give credit to the Resident Group Representatives for their help and leadership. He also thanked the Chief, and other leadership staff at the PD, for their participation and openness to feedback.

The Chair reported that she and Stephanie Hausman have had several follow-up meetings to learn more about the CAHOOTS model to better diversify public safety response teams. The state is taking measures to ensure that community mental health organizations are actively involved and deployed at times when those services are most needed. She mentioned the current collaborative relationship between the PD and Seacoast Mental Health and added

that Lt. Keaveny is an active member on their Board. The Chair has a follow-up meeting scheduled with Seacoast Mental Health for next week to discuss these services further.

Commissioner Onosko added that the PD is working on getting their SOPs (standard operating procedures) posted to the Police Department's website. He explained that some policies will remain private for the effectiveness of LE services and the safety of officers.

Chief Newport mentioned that the agency is working on posting as many policies as possible.

Chair Shaheen reminded those tuning-in that this 'Community Task Force' group came together to discuss meaningful means of reform. We'll continue to work on ways to ensure connection, transparency and outreach with the community. The Chair encouraged members of the public to come forward with input/feedback.

Commissioner Hart commended the PD for their openness to public ideas and input. He added that everyone has been cooperative and are interested in making the agency better.

The Chair added that members of the community have expressed to her how grateful and happy they are with Chief Newport's leadership.

3. Budget Update

Administrative Manager Karen Senecal explained that the final budget numbers have been submitted to City Finance as of yesterday. It was reported that the budget is coming in at 4.42% increase from last year, but it's very important to note that due to the NHRS's biennial review of the pension fund (and they review the employer and the employee contribution rates), the sworn went up almost 5% and civilian went up just under 3% this year. That is accounting for 2.9% of 4%. \$352,000 of our budget increase this year is attributable to those retirement increases. The remaining 1.1% is attributed to the regular contractual costs (health insurance, step increases, etc.) and 0.46% is for increase in 'other operating' (training, gasoline, email licenses, K9 training equipment, office supplies, etc). Other department's will report increases due to retirement increase as well.

Commissioner Onosko commented that it's a bare bones budget. Karen agreed, adding that the department isn't asking for anything – no added positions or programs. Now that the numbers have been submitted to the City, we're working on the budget presentation for the May 11th City Council work session. We're currently compiling

data to finalize the Strategic Plan. The Commission will have drafts of the plan for review prior to the work session.

Commissioner Onosko commended Karen for her careful management and review of all elements of the budget. **The Chair asked** Karen whether we anticipate barriers in preparation for May 11th meeting? **Karen mentioned** that after meeting with Councilor Huda and Kennedy, they suggested we bring forward information re: overtime and staffing. She said that we are still within the median range for OT, based on an ongoing OT audit. We get grant money to provide additional patrols to cover some of the OT costs.

The Chair asked Karen to explain the reimbursement to the city of overtime expenses related to Covid and capital security. Karen added that FEMA reimbursements for operating expenses resulting from Covid allow the department to cover overtime due to National Guard deployments, Covid-related scheduling impacts, etc.

B. CHIEF OF POLICE:

1. Commendations for Outstanding Police Work

- a. Chief Newport explained the scenario in which Officer Timothy Conroy earned himself a Life-Saving Award and medal. Officer Conroy responded to a report of a motor vehicle crash involving a tractor trailer and a sedan. Upon arrival to the scene, Officer Conroy identified that the operator of the sedan was in need of immediate medical attention in which he was profusely bleeding out. Officer Conroy applied a tourniquet to control the bleeding until he was turned over to medical professionals. After the victim was released from the hospital, he took the time to send an email, thanking Officer Conroy for saving his life.

The three Commissioners extended their thanks to Officer Conroy for his quick actions that day.

2. Thanks & Recognition

- a. A resident from London, England, reached out to commend the officers on duty the day she called to request a well-being check on her friend. She was concerned her friend might harm himself. PPD Officers quickly located the individual and ensured that he was safe. She was very appreciative of the immediate response and efforts of our officers.

3. Grants & Donations

- a. Grant for \$15,392.26 has been awarded to the Portsmouth Police Department from the NH Department of Safety for Night Vision

Equipment. This grant cannot be executed until accepted and approved by both the Police Commission and City Council.

Action: Commissioner Hart moved to accept the \$15,392.26 grant from the NH Department of Safety for Night Vision Equipment and forward to the City Council for their action.

Seconded by Commissioner Onosko.

On a unanimous roll call vote 3-0, motion passed.

- b. Grant for \$24,759 from the NH Department of Justice through the ‘Victims of Crime Act’ (VOCA grant) is in the pipeline. The grant is for expenses incurred and services provided for direct victim services, to include expenses for personnel. Based on the tight deadlines of the grant, Police Commission approval is requested, “pending funding”.

Action: Commissioner Onosko moved to accept the \$24,759 grant, “pending funding”, from the NH Department of Justice through the ‘Victims of Crime Act’, and forward to the City Council for their action.

Seconded by Commissioner Hart.

On a unanimous roll call vote 3-0, motion passed.

The Chair made special note that we’ve seen some recent crimes (Short Sands Beach in Maine) – the work being done in the Victim/Witness Advocate position is invaluable.

- c. Donation of two (2) animal carriers from Port City Veterinary Referral Hospital by Ethos.

Action: Commissioner Hart moved to accept the donation of two (2) animal carriers for the Animal Control Office from Port City Veterinary Referral Hospital by Ethos.

Seconded by Commissioner Onosko.

On a unanimous roll call vote 3-0, motion passed.

The Commission and PD expressed their thanks to Port City Veterinary Referral Hospital for this donation.

4. Accreditation Update

Newly hired Accreditation Manager, Keri Wareing, has hit the ground running and is working on preparation for the May file review. She is working with the previous Accreditation Manager, Jackie Burnett, to get her trained up on the department and how the accreditation process has been managed and maintained.

The previous **Accreditation Manager, Jackie Burnett, explained** that the agency is now in communication with their

CSM (Compliance Service Member) to begin the process of our annual status report, AKA file review. Our CSM, Jeff Pierce (Captain at Oklahoma City PD) will review 25% of our standards and the documentation associated in order to determine whether we continue to adhere to industry best practices (we're in great shape going into this).

5. Traffic Stats

Chief Newport read the stats from March.

474 motor vehicle stops

51 summonses

37 reportable accidents

Chief Newport reports that we've seen an increase from past months with the warmer weather nearing.

Commissioner Onosko asked Chief how much of the traffic enforcement is motorcycle related? Chief answered that we will have "loud-pipe checkpoints". **Chief Newport mentioned** that we have a "full-court press" going on and are leading with education. Officers will summons those that need to be summonsed. **Commissioner Onosko mentioned** that he has heard that motorcycle noise is one of the community's biggest headaches. **Chief added** that public notification of this motorcycle enforcement will come out soon.

The Chair asked a question regarding the mask mandate – how is this going now that the state has eased up, but the City mandate still in place? Chief Newport commented that the PD has teamed up with the City Manager's Office to publicly remind people that masks are still required. Most people are complying.

The Chair also asked about traffic enforcement, now that school is back to in-person. **The Chief assured** that officers are paying close attention to school zones and will be visible.

6. Financial Report – Karen Senecal

Karen reported that the PD is about 80% through the current fiscal year. We're tracking at about 70% in expenditures (because of Covid). We have so many vacancies right now, so overtime is sitting at 93% expended, but our regular salaries are sitting at about 67%. A potential overage in overtime can be absorbed by the savings in salary.

Karen added that the department is on track to close in the black, so it is anticipated that FY21 will end well.

a. Strategic Plan

b. Grant Application Update

Karen thanked the Commission for approving the VOCA grant, “pending funding”, to ensure we don’t get backed up due to the tight timelines.

Karen mentioned that NHHS contacted the department to say that they have additional funding available. So, they will send our department a “supplemental award” for \$2,900 more for bicycle and pedestrian safety, so our total for that particular enforcement will go up to \$5,800. **The Chair asked** Chief Newport, do we need to do anything more, from a public safety standpoint, with bicycle safety signage? **Chief Newport replied** that the PD is working with the City on signage and public notifications.

Commissioner Onosko asked Karen whether this surplus will be the biggest in her tenure? Karen’s response: Yes, thanks to Covid. The 4.2% budget increase is covered by this year’s budget surplus.

Commissioner Hart commented on all the grants that are coming in – these aren’t just given to a PD. He explains that it’s because of how and why the PD uses it. The grants continue to be awarded to our agency for a reason – Portsmouth PD has utilized them properly. In response to the surplus, the Chair added that she also thinks of all the disruptions within the PD (mold mitigation, renovations, etc.) and how this could have potentially resulted in increased spending. The PD continues to expend their money wisely and responsibly.

c. Facilities Report - (See Section VI, A, 1)

VII. PATROL DIVISION:

A. This report was included in the 4-22-21 commission meeting packet.

VIII. COURT OFFICE REPORT:

A. This confidential report was included in the 4-22-21 commission meeting packet.

IX. MISCELLANEOUS/OTHER BUSINESS: None.

X. NEXT REGULAR MEETING:

The next regular Commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 25th, 2021 via Zoom, with the public session beginning at 5:30 p.m. It is the Commission’s hope that the meetings will go back to in-person as soon as it is safe to do so.

XI. MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Commission, the Chair asked for a motion to adjourn.

Action: Commissioner Onosko moved to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by Commissioner Hart.

On a unanimous roll call vote 3-0, motion passed.

END OF MEETING

Jackie

Respectfully Submitted By Jacqueline Burnett, Executive Assistant

Reviewed By Commissioner Harte, Clerk of the Commission

Tom Hart