

The Board of Fire Commissioners
Portsmouth Fire Department

099

Fire Station 2
George Pierce Training Room
November 14, 2023

Portsmouth, NH
1730 hours

I. Call to Order:

Commissioner Hughes called the meeting to order at 1730 hours.

II. Pledge of Allegiance with Attendance:

Commissioner Hughes led the pledge of allegiance.

Motion, to enter into Non-public Session at 1730 hours in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II (a) Request for Leave of Absence and a Personnel Matter under 91-A:3, II (c), was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

Motion, to close and come out of Non-public Session at 1800 hours and return to public session, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

Motion, to seal the minutes of Non-public Session, was made by Commissioner Hughes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gamester. On a roll call vote of 2-0, motion passed unanimously.

Regular meeting reconvened.

Present were Commissioners: Richard Gamester and Michael Hughes; Fire Chief William McQuillen, Assistant Fire Chief Jason Gionet, Deputy Fire Chief Patrick Howe, Administrative Manager Tracy Freeman, Lieutenants: John Goodwin, Duncan Regonini and Brian Wade; and Firefighters: James O'Brien, Nick Haskell, Jack Bouchard, and Ethan Grover.

III. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Motion, to approve the minutes of October 10, 2023, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

IV. Public Comment Session: None.

V. Reports:

A. Fire Chief's Reports:

Commissioner Gamester motioned to discuss Chief's reports 23-087 through 23-091. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes.

Chief McQuillen reviewed reports with the Commission.

Report (087), 2023 Response Report for October 2023. The report shows the department responding to a total of 483 calls for the month: 139 Fire Calls and 344 Ambulance Calls. Calls for Fire and EMS were up this month from last month. Chief spoke briefly about some of the activities for the month, noting two mutual aid calls to Hampton, a car fire on US Route 1 Bypass, mutual aid to Stratham for a 2nd alarm fire, and a call to Patricia Drive for a City street sweeper on fire. The safety message focused on NFPA and cooking fires with the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday which is the peak day for home cooking fires with more than three times the daily average for such incidents. Also noted was the use of turkey fryers and their safe usage. Report (088), Fire and EMS Call Summary Reports, shows the department responded to 139 fire calls for the month of October. EMS activity was 344 with the top three responses being for weakness, abdominal pain/problems and trauma or injury to head/scalp. There were 6 calls for suicidal or self-harm ideation or thoughts, 10 drug overdose/abuse and 68 non-transports. Report (089), Fire Prevention Activity, noting 45 permits issued in the month of October along with 57 inspections done and various meetings attended. Report (090), FY24 Budget, Chief reviewed the budget noting with the recent approval of firefighter and officer bargaining agreements and funding done in salary and stipend, however, not overtime and with the increase in salary is an increase in overtime rate which has impacts on the overtime accounts when leave is taken and shift coverage is needed to fill the vacancy. Staffing has been reduced to a minimum of 13 as of this week and we will continue to watch the budget closely. Report (091), Overtime Analysis, provided a breakdown of how overtime was used in the month of October along with a summary of what was charged to OT-Recall for the month.

Motion, to accept Chief's Reports 23-087 through 23-091, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

B. Staff Reports:

Deputy Chief Howe reported on Prevention and reviewed his activity report with the Commission. October was busy Fire Prevention month which included visits to 11 daycares and 4 schools and providing prevention related materials to 655 children. He noted some classes that Fire Prevention Officers Putney and Wheeler attended, and a Stop the Bleed course taught to 22 teachers and administrators at St. Patrick's Academy.

Assistant Chief reported on facilities and operations happening within the department. Facilities are in good shape. A water treatment system has been added to the new boilers at station 2 to prevent future issues, A3 is having a new fuel tank installed and should be back in service in the next day or so, the fire boat was removed from the river today for the annual PM service and will remain out of the water and stored at the Port Authority however will be able to respond if needed, four new firefighters started their careers with the department in the last 3 weeks and have completed a week long rookie school in addition to their orientation. They have all been assigned to a shift and have begun with their assigned shift. Currently have 3 firefighter vacancies and two candidates were interviewed today and will be moving on to the next phase in the process. The department was able to train in a large space using the Cinemagic movie theater building that is slated for demolition beginning in the next few days.

VI. Old Business: None.

IX. New Business:

Chief McQuillen presented Firefighters Pelletier and Micale letters of resignation.

Motion, to accept Firefighters Pelletier and Micale resignations, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

Chief McQuillen spoke briefly of the Dispatch MOU signed by all parties for our department firefighters and officers to begin working in dispatch again. Rockingham Dispatch will no longer be dispatching for the city within the next couple of weeks. Technology project is moving forward.

X. Adjournment:

Motion, to adjourn at 1830 hours, was made by Commissioner Hughes. 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