

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

077

Fire Station 2
George Pierce Training Room
September 12, 2023

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 William McQuillen, Assistant Fire Chief Jason Gionet, Deputy Fire Chief Patrick Howe, Administrative Manager Tracy Freeman, City Councilors: Andrew Bagley, Kate Cook and Vincent Lombardi; Firefighters: Kaycee Reagan, Zach Strozewski and Madison Simard with their family members along with several members of the fire department.

III. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Motion, to approve the minutes of August 8, 2023, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

IV. Public Comment Session: None.

V. Recognition of Groups or Individuals:

Chief McQuillen spoke briefly about the probationary process for a new firefighter and recognized three candidates who successfully completed their one-year probationary period by swearing in Firefighters: Kaycee Reagan, Zachary Strozewski and Madison Simard.

Chairwoman Matthes made the motion to take a 15-minute recess for pictures. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gamester and passed unanimously.

Meeting reconvened at 1830 hours.

VI. Presentation of Written Communications:

Chief McQuillen read thank you letter received from Salem Fire Chief Best.

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

VII. Reports:

A. Fire Chief's Reports:

Commissioner Gamester motioned to discuss Chief's reports 23-073 through 23-076. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes.

Chief McQuillen reviewed reports with the Commission.

Report (073), 2023 Response Report for August 2023. The report shows the department responding to a total of 431 calls for the month: 120 Fire Calls and 311 Ambulance Calls. Chief spoke briefly about some of the activities for the month, noting a pedestrian struck by a motor vehicle near Prescott Park, a fire in laundry room at 600 Lafayette Rd, car fire leading to building fire at 72 Woodbury Road, water rescue at Fort Stark in New Castle, kitchen fire at Café Espresso at Plaza 800 and a fall from the High/Hanover garage. The safety message focused on developing a home escape plan. Report (074), Fire and EMS Call Summary Reports, shows the department responded to 120 fire calls for the month of August. EMS activity was 313 with the top three responses being for abdominal pain/problems, trauma/injury (head/scalp) and alcohol abuse and effect. There were 4 calls for suicidal or self-harm ideation or thoughts, 6 drug overdose/abuse and 67 non-transports. Report (075), FY24 Budget. Chief reviewed the budget noting the recent approval of firefighter and officer bargaining agreements and funding is in salary and not overtime and with the increase in salary is an increase in overtime rate which will impact the overtime lines. Also mentioned was the Airshow over the weekend which our department participated and costs will not be reimbursable. Will have to watch budget closely and if need be, reduce shift coverage staffing to 14 as done in previous years. Report (076), Overtime Analysis, provided a breakdown of how overtime was used in the month of August along with a summary of what was charged to OT-Recall for the month.

Motion, to accept Chief's Reports 23-073 through 23-076, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

B. Staff Reports:

Assistant Chief reported on facilities and operations happening within the department. Station 2 boiler project complete and temporary roof repairs have been made and will look at using the CIP for replacement. Waiting on NEVO to take the new utility for lights and radios, vehicles are undergoing state inspections at this time, and it appears that a faulty siren brake may have been the cause of the multiple electrical issues in truck 2. Currently have four

firefighter vacancies. Two conditional offers were made and accepted and we have a candidate coming in on Thursday for an observation day. Department provided EMS coverage for the air show this past weekend with several patients treated and three transported to the hospital. Department will also be participating in the Pease Triennial FAA drill this upcoming Saturday depending on the weather.

Deputy Chief Howe reported on Prevention noting several new projects: 1154 Sagamore Ave, 635 Sagamore Ave, 815 Lafayette Road and 581 Lafayette Road. Met with City's Legal department and Building Inspector on apartment inspections and ironing out enforcement mechanisms. Commissioner Gamester inquired about inspections at churches, restaurants, bars, schools, etc. and where we are with that. He also asked about how many do we have and how many have been done. Deputy Howe reported that Place of Assembly permits that fell behind in previous years are now getting done with the hiring of the 2nd fire prevention officer. He went on to add that he provides an annual report with the number of permits issued. Commissioner Gamester wanted to be able to answer questions from the public when they come up and asked Deputy Howe to provide these numbers on a monthly basis and have that report included in our monthly packet. Deputy Chief Howe stated he would do that.

VIII. Old Business: None.

IX. New Business: None.

X. Adjournment:

Motion, to adjourn at 1854 hours, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.



Michael Hughes, Clerk