

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

MUNICIPAL COMPLEX
DATE: TUESDAY, JANUARY 2, 2024

PORTSMOUTH, NH
TIME: 7:00PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor McEachern called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor McEachern, Assistant Mayor Kelley, Councilors Tabor, Cook, Denton, Blalock, Bagley, Moreau and Lombardi

III. INVOCATION

Reverend Jennifer Mazor of the North Church provided the Invocation this evening.

POSTING OF THE COLORS

Members of the Portsmouth Police and Fire Departments Honor Guard held a procession and posted the colors.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – IAN COOK, EAGLE SCOUT CANDIDATE

Eagle Scout Candidate Ian Cook led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

○ STAR-SPANGLED BANNER

Performed by the Portsmouth High School Singers under the Direction of Nate Wotton.

Congressman Pappas Remarks

Congressman Pappas provided remarks in recognition of the ceremony this evening and extended his congratulations to all elected officials.

Senator Hassan Remarks

Senator Hassan gave remarks in honor of the ceremony this evening and extended her congratulations and well wishes to all elected officials.

Senator Shaheen Remarks

City Clerk Barnaby read remarks from Senator Shaheen in honor of this joyous occasion.

OATH OF OFFICE

City Clerk Barnaby administered the Oath of Office to the following officials who were elected at the November 7, 2023 Municipal Election.

A. FIRE COMMISSION

Commissioner Michael Hughes

B. POLICE COMMISSION

Commissioner Francesca Marconi Fernald

C. SCHOOL BOARD

City Clerk Barnaby announced that School Board Member Elect Christiana “Pip” Clews is ill this evening and unable to be with us.

Patricia “Tish” Campbell, Byron Matto and David Leigh Hudson

D. CITY COUNCIL

1. Councilors John Tabor, Kate Cook, Josh Denton, Rich Blalock, Andrew Bagley, Beth Moreau and Vincent Lombardi
2. Assistant Mayor JoAnna “Jo” Kelley
3. Mayor Deaglan McEachern recited the Oath of Office administered by City Clerk Barnaby

V. INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY MAYOR DEAGLAN McEACHERN

Thank you, Kelli, for this evening and for all that you do in preserving democracy here in Portsmouth. Your efforts embody the spirit of our community.

Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed guests, and my cherished fellow citizens of Portsmouth.

As I stand before you today, embarking on another term as your Mayor, alongside a council committed to our city’s welfare, I am filled with a profound sense of pride and optimism. We gather not just to mark the beginning of a new term but to honor and continue a legacy that spans an incredible 400 years. This legacy of resilience, community, and shared progress is one that each of us is a part of and responsible for carrying forward.

This historic moment is made even more special by the re-election of our entire council. I am privileged to continue our work alongside Assistant Mayor Kelley, Councilor Tabor, Councilor Cook, Councilor Denton, Councilor Blalock, Councilor Bagley, Councilor Moreau and Councilor Lombardi. Their wisdom, experience, and unwavering commitment to Portsmouth set the stage for another two years of impactful service.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to Congressman Pappas, Senator Hassan, and representatives for Senator Shaheen. Your presence today underscores the robust collaboration we value at all levels of government, and I am personally grateful for everything you do for Portsmouth.

To my family, whose boundless love and support make this journey not only possible but deeply meaningful: Lori, your advice and strength are my guiding light; Tiernan and Aurelia, you are the embodiment of why we work so hard, our future; and Mom, your legacy of love for people and hard work, shared with Dad, continues to inspire me every day. I trust Paul would be proud.

Karen Conard, our city manager, and the unsung heroes of our city staff, your resilience and dedication are nothing short of the heartbeat of Portsmouth. Today, the simple yet profound act of assembling indoors is a testament to your tireless efforts in overcoming the adversity of Covid and keeping our community healthy and strong. Portsmouth is indeed fortunate to have such incredible staff.

As we open our doors tonight, our city's motto, 'the city of the open door,' resonates with unprecedented power. It embodies the spirit of inclusivity, hard work, and innovation that defines Portsmouth. As we embark on the next 400 years, we are acutely aware that keeping our doors open means addressing the challenges we face head-on, particularly the housing crisis and the urgent threat of climate change.

The dream of affordable housing is at the heart of our vision for a community where every citizen, regardless of their economic background, has a safe and affordable place to call home. It is quite simply the character of Portsmouth, more than any brick or cobblestone could be. Our unwavering commitment to affordable housing will see us partnering with the PHA, engaging with the business community, and implementing zoning reforms that ensure sustainable, affordable living for all. This is not just an economic imperative but a moral one, ensuring that the 'city of the open door' remains a haven of hope and opportunity.

Equally pressing is the challenge of climate change, a reality that endangers the very fabric of our seaside community. Our mission is clear: Portsmouth will not only adapt but lead in environmental stewardship. We will implement a comprehensive climate action plan that champions sustainable practices, reduces our carbon footprint, and safeguards our environment for future generations. The actions we take today will define the legacy we leave for tomorrow, and I am committed to ensuring that legacy is one of hope, resilience, and responsible stewardship of our planet.

In this spirit, I speak directly to each of you, the citizens of Portsmouth, about the power and importance of your involvement. Our city thrives on the participation of each individual. Every voice in Portsmouth is a thread in the rich tapestry of our community. When you engage, speak up, and volunteer, you're not just contributing; you're leading. You're shaping the very soul of our city. Your involvement is the lifeblood of our democracy and the key to our collective success.

Therefore, I urge you, citizens of Portsmouth, to embrace the spirit of our motto. Open doors for new ideas, for dialogue, for progress. Volunteer in our schools, speak in this chamber, support local businesses, and engage in our community. Be the neighbor who listens, the citizen who acts, the individual who cares. Your involvement is what makes Portsmouth not simply the open door to our great state, but home for all.

Together, let's build a future where every open door leads to a story of hope, progress, and community—a future where our children and grandchildren can say with pride, 'We are Portsmouth, a city of open doors, open hearts, and open minds.'

Thank you, citizens of Portsmouth, for your unwavering spirit and commitment. Let's step into our next chapter with courage, unity, and an unshakeable belief in the power of working together. Here's to a future as bright and bold as the people who call Portsmouth home.

Thank you, and let's make history together!

Mayor McEachern announced that there will be a reception with light refreshments following the ceremony.

VI. BENEDICTION

Rabba Kaya Stern-Kaufman of Temple Israel provided the benediction for this evening.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:50 p.m., Assistant Mayor Kelley moved to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Moreau and voted.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelli L. Barnaby". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

KELLI L. BARNABY, MMC/CNHMC
CITY CLERK