

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

229

Fire Station 2
George Pierce Training Room
March 11, 2025

Portsmouth, NH
1800 hours

I. Call to Order:

Chairman Gamester called the meeting to order at 1800 hours.

II. Pledge of Allegiance with Attendance:

Commissioner Gamester led the pledge of allegiance.

Present were Commissioners: Richard Gamester, Michael Hughes and Jennifer Matthes; Fire Chief William McQuillen, Assistant Fire Chief Jason Gionet, Deputy Fire Chief Patrick Howe, Administrative Manager Tracy Freeman, Captain Mark Herrholz, Lieutenants: Peter Gordon and Brett Nelson; Firefighter Thomas Choquette and his family along with members of the department.

III. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Motion, to approve the minutes of February 11, 2025, was made by Commissioner Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

Commissioner Matthes made the motion to suspend the rules and move to Item VI. Recognition of Groups or Individuals. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

IV. Public Comment Session: None.

V. Presentation of Written Communications:

Chief McQuillen read three thank you letters he received: Kittery Fire for providing mutual aid assistance for an MCI at a daycare; quick response to Meineke Car Care for a fire; and heartfelt gratitude for fire response by Ms. Kahl of Hampton.

Commissioner Matthes made the motion to accept and place letters on file. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

VI. Recognition of Groups or Individuals:

Chief McQuillen swore-in Firefighter Choquette who successfully completed his 1-year probationary period with the department.

Commissioner Hughes made the motion for a 5-minute recess for pictures. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Matthes and passed unanimously.

Meeting was reconvened at 1807 hours with Item IV. Public Comment Session.

VII. Reports:

A. Fire Chief's Reports:

Commissioner Hughes motioned to discuss Chief's reports 25-025 through 25-028. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Matthes.

Fire Chief McQuillen reviewed reports with the Commission.

Report (025), 2025 Response Report for February 2025. The report shows the department responding to a total of 540 calls for the month: 208 Fire Calls with EMS Services and 111 Fire and Related Service Calls and 332 Ambulance Calls. Chief spoke briefly about some of the activities for the month, noting a building fire at 420 Pleasant Street which went to a 2nd alarm, a fatal MVA at the intersection Mirona Rd and Lafayette Road, multiple calls coming in simultaneously due to a power surge while 2 more EMS calls came in unrelated to the power surge, mutual aid response to Kittery for an MCI related to a CO incident at a daycare facility, and a building collapse due to snow/ice load at 90 Maplewood Ave. The safety message focused on car fires. Report (026), Fire and EMS Call Summary Reports, shows the department responded to 208 fire calls for the month of February. EMS activity was 332 with the top three responses being for weakness, abdominal pain/problems and injury to head/scalp. There were 5 calls for suicidal or self-harm ideation or thoughts, 4 drug overdose/abuse and 75 non-transports. Report (027), FY25 Budget, Chief reviewed the budget noting savings within the salary lines due to the difference in pay rates from retirements of senior firefighters to new hires along with several military deployments over the past year. We are still tracking about 1% to the good and have projected expenses to fiscal year end. Report (028), Overtime Analysis, provided a breakdown of how overtime was used in the month of February along with a summary of what was charged to OT-Recall for the month.

Motion, to accept Chief's Reports 25-025 through 25-028, was made by Commissioner Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

B. Staff Reports:

Assistant Chief Gionet reported on facilities and operations happening within the department. The building security project required some doors and trim needing to be painted at station 1 so that was completed this past week, Engine 3 is at Greenwood for repair work, new ambulance still on schedule for delivery at the end of March, staffing is currently filled with applications on file, PNSY will be having a large-scale drill at the end of the month which we have been invited to participate with them, and Life Flight of Maine provided a specialized EMS class with the focus on pediatrics. Firefighter Safety survival class is planned for the first week in April.

Fire Commission Minutes of March 11, 2025 continued:

Chairman Gamester asked about the WHEB training and how it went. Asst. Chief answered stating it went very well and allowed personnel to practice many drills for the improvement of firefighting skills along with providing training on new techniques. Very valuable training.

Deputy Chief Howe reported on Fire Prevention activity for the month with 30 permits issued and 49 inspections done. Other items of note, the completion of the fire investigation at 420 Pleasant Street with the cause determined to be a contractor attempting to thaw pipes with a heat gun, Prevention Bureau participated in PDA's Technical Review Committee for a proposed hangar on Flightline Ave, FPOs Wheeler and Putney participated in the NH Fire Prevention Society's Board of Director's meeting, CMMP for 2 Russell Street and permitting for outdoor dining kicking off.

VIII. Old Business: None.

IX. New Business: None.

X. Adjournment:

Motion, to adjourn at 1825 hours, was made by Commissioner Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.


Jennifer Mosher-Matthes, Clerk