

PORTSMOUTH POLICE COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE APRIL 16th, 2024 POLICE COMMISSION MEETING

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

Kate Coyle, Chair
Buzz Scherr, Commissioner
Francesca Fernald, Commissioner

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The April 16th, 2024 monthly Police Commission meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers.

The following people were present for the public session:

Commissioners Coyle, Scherr and Fernald, Chief Mark Newport, Deputy Chief Michael Maloney, Business Manager Karen Senecal, Executive Assistant Jackie Burnett and members of the police department and the public.

- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Commissioner Scherr led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. **MOTION TO SUSPEND THE AGENDA:**

The Chair asked for a motion to suspend the agenda to move to item #1, “Award/Recognition Ceremony”, under the Chief’s Report.

Action: Commissioner Fernald moved to suspend the rules for the purpose noted above.

Seconded by Commissioner Scherr.

On a Roll Call Vote: The motion passed as follows:

Commissioner Coyle: “Aye”
Commissioner Scherr: “Aye”
Commissioner Fernald: “Aye”

Chief’s Report - #1, Award/Recognition Ceremony:

Chief Newport hosted an Award/Recognition Ceremony for several officers for their exemplary police work involving three separate calls for service. The following personnel were honored with the following acknowledgements:

- Officer Kevin Cardno – Life Saving Award (x2 – two separate incidents)
- Officer Jeff Rohde – Life Saving Award

- Officer Megan McBride – Life Saving Award
- Officer Karen Husaini – Letter of Recognition

(1) Officers Cardno and J. Rohde arrived on scene of a medical call in which a male was in cardiac arrest. They immediately began administering CPR until paramedics arrived. If it were not for their quick actions, the gentleman may not have survived the medical event.

(2) Officers Cardno and McBride responded to the High Level I-95 Bridge for a report of a woman sitting on the edge of the railing. She was not responding to the officers' pleas to climb down to safety. Thanks to their patience and training, they were able to get ahold of the woman to pull her to safety. The woman was brought to the hospital for further evaluation and treatment.

(3) Officer Husaini pulled over a vehicle for having a headlight out. Upon approaching the vehicle, he noticed quite a bit of blood on the steering wheel and shirt of the driver. After asking her to step out of the vehicle, he noticed the degree of fresh blood on her and immediately called for paramedics to respond. The woman's speech appeared incoherent during their interaction and he learned that her injuries were self-inflicted. Thanks to Officer Husaini's quick actions, compassion and training, he was able to get the woman transported to the hospital for needed medical evaluation and treatment.

IV. ACCEPTANCE OF MEETING MINUTES:

➤ March 5th, 2024

Action: Commissioner Scherr moved to accept the minutes of the above-noted Police Commission meetings.

Seconded by Commissioner Fernald.

On a Roll Call Vote: The motion passed as follows:

Commissioner Coyle:	“Aye.”
Commissioner Scherr:	“Aye.”
Commissioner Fernald:	“Aye.”

V. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

A. POLICE COMMISSION:

The Police Commission thanked the City Council for renewing Chief Newport's 5-year contract (2024-2029). The contract will be posted to the city's website under collective bargaining agreements.

1. Facilities Update

a. Restoration

Chief Newport reported that things are status quo with projects in the existing police facility. In the near future, the department will schedule mold remediation in the dispatch center.

Dehumidifiers will be utilized in other areas of the building to help reduce moisture levels to try and quell mold regrowth.

b. Community Policing Facility Planning

The Chair reported that the Community Policing Facility Working Group has a meeting scheduled tomorrow to narrow down potential building design options for the plans to build off from the existing police structure. The working group is also preparing to host another meeting with the City Council, with strong emphasis on the public comment session, at the end of May.

2. Community Priorities

Timeline for implementation of a body camera program: the police department has been testing out equipment from different body camera vendors. Implementation would likely begin in early 2025.

Timeline for implementation of the CAD/RMS software: the department is currently in the preliminary phases of the process and is looking to go live in October of 2024. Police department leadership has been meeting regularly with Central Square's onboarding team to participate in the data migration process. In-house training of this new software will occur in October (4-month-long training sessions to get employees up-to-speed on comfortably navigating the new system). The department is in communication with another department who is currently a few steps ahead of Portsmouth in the implementation process with Central Square. The Commission stressed the value of having a system that can efficiently compile data as well as create automated reporting systems for the police to utilize to improve their ability to solve crimes and keep the community safe.

The Chair took a moment to welcome the new social worker, Brooke Murphy, who started April 1st, 2024. She added how great it is for the community that the police department can offer a new level of services.

B. CHIEF OF POLICE:

1. Award/Recognition Ceremony See section III, above.

2. Crime Analyst Report

Deputy Chief Maloney briefed the Commission on statistics from the previous month (March): 10,785 Calls for Service, DWI arrests increased by 35%, reportable motor vehicle crashed decreased by 15%, and arrests increased by 21% (243 total). Police reports and motor vehicle stops remained consistently the same. Involuntary Emergency

Admissions (IEAs) decreased by 31%, mental health calls decreased by over 50% and juvenile-related calls also decreased by 41%.

The department fielded a number of calls within the last couple of weeks and leaned heavily on the Crime Analyst to help solve crimes – ex: car thefts, break-ins, gun-related calls, etc. After completing copious amounts of training, Crime Analyst Casey Graham is now being utilized to assist investigators by providing them with analytical research to directly help solve crimes. She has been able to help identify “hot spots” and trends to help police and investigators with their open cases. This is an important step for our community to try to get to the root cause of criminality and calls for service types – especially mental health calls. Chief added there has been an uptick in crime over the last few weeks. A suspect in recent car thefts has been identified and taken into custody. There is also an increase in reports of hate crimes in the community. The Chair mentioned that the investigative work from the PD have been exceptional. Lots of suspects have been apprehended and prosecuted for these hate crimes. The Commission thanked the chief for his department’s hard work standing against such crimes.

3. Monthly Traffic Stats

Deputy Chief Maloney reported the statistics from February 2023: 510 motor vehicle stops, 27 summonses issued and 30 reportable motor vehicle crashes (decrease from the previous month). The Deputy Chief reminded the public to drive safely and share the road with bicyclists.

4. Financial Report

Business Ops. Manager Karen Senecal briefed the Commission on the current state of the police department’s budget. The department is tracking 4.5% under the cap. Fourth quarter projections are ending in the black. The department anticipates a significant surplus being returned to the City (est. \$200,000-\$300,000). On May 13th, the City Council is hosting a work session consisting of an all day workshop on the FY25 budget, as well as a public hearing at 6pm that same day.

a. Grant Applications Update

- \$11,000 SERT Homeland Security grant.
- Submitted a request to Representative Pappas for the soft cost of IT for a new police building – \$1.5m in funding is available.
- \$1 million ICAC funding request was submitted through Senator Jeanne Shaheen’s office.
- Working on a body camera funding request. Once a quote is obtained, the request will be submitted.

- The department is continually searching for funding opportunities to offset costs and/or enhance the overall functions and serviceability of the PD for the benefit of the Portsmouth community.

b. Strategic Plan Update

Police leadership has met with department/program managers to discuss and outline the current and future needs of each area of operation and administration within the police department.

VII. PATROL DIVISION:

- a. This report was included in the commission meeting packet.

VIII. COURT OFFICE REPORT:

- a. This confidential report was included in the meeting packet.

IX. MISCELLANEOUS/OTHER BUSINESS:

May 13th – City Council work session re: the FY 25 budget & a public hearing at 6pm in the Council Chambers.

X. NEXT REGULAR MEETING:

The next regular commission meeting date is May 21st, 2024, starting at 5:30 pm. **The Commission plans to reschedule the May meeting to Tuesday, May 28th, 2024, at 5:30pm.** Please always check the municipal meetings calendar for any changes to the schedule leading up to the next meeting.

XI. MOTION TO ADJOURN:

Action: Commissioner Scherr moved to adjourn the April 16th, 2024, Police Commission meeting at 6:09 PM.

Seconded by Commissioner Fernald.

On a Voice Vote: The motion passed 3-0.

END OF MEETING

Respectfully Submitted by Jacqueline Burnett, Executive Assistant
Commissioner Buzz Scherr, Recording Clerk of the Commission