

TO: KAREN S. CONARD, CITY MANAGER

FROM: KELLI L. BARNABY, CITY CLERK

RE: ACTIONS TAKEN AT THE PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2025

PRESENT: MAYOR McEACHERN, ASSISTANT MAYOR KELLEY (via Zoom, left Zoom @ 9:35PM), COUNCILORS TABOR, COOK, DENTON, BLALOCK, BAGLEY, MOREAU, AND LOMBARDI (left meeting at 10:30 p.m.)

1. **Voted** to close the Non-Public Session and seal the minutes.
2. Acceptance of Minutes – October 6, 2025 and October 20, 2025 – **Voted** to approve and accept the minutes of the October 6, 2025, and October 20, 2025, City Council meetings.
3. Public Comment Session – There were four speakers: Roy Helsel (Taxes & Questions); Jim Lee (Wreaths Across Portsmouth); Esther Kennedy (Now Public); and Francis Cormier (Learning from History).
4. Continued Public Hearing – Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) / Adoption of CIP – Continued the public hearing for the Capital Improvement Plan.

Moved to adopt the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) FY 2027-2032 as presented.

On a unanimous roll call 9-0, **voted** to amend Element Sheet BI-26-PW-54 – New Parking Garage to add \$3,000,000.00 under Bond/Lease Parking.

On a roll call vote 3-6, motion to amend Element Sheet VE-25-FD-02 – Vehicle Replacement – Marine #1 and move \$900,000.00 from FY27 to out year FY28 ***failed*** to pass. Councilor Blalock, Bagley, and Mayor McEachern voted in favor. Assistant Mayor Kelley, Councilors Tabor, Cook, Denton, Moreau, and Lombardi voted opposed.

Moved to modify CIP request #BI-26-PL-29 “Microtransit Study” to change funding source from Federal Grant Funds to Capital Outlay General Fund and/or revenues in FY2027 and FY2028 and rename the project/element sheet to Opportunities to Expand Use of Public Transit Study. ***Motion withdrawn.***

Voted to combine the project description with the fund of BI-26-PL-29 with all its components, notes, and requests with BI-26-PW-54 funding and element sheet and rename PW-54 to Parking Garage and Transportation.

Voted to add \$50,000.00 of General Funds to the CIP for FY 28 and FY 30 for Greenhouse Gas Inventories to be completed by contracted professionals.

Councilor Cook requested to update Element Sheets BI-07-SE-15 – School Facilities Capital Improvements, the Elementary School Upgrades, and the Renovation of the Portsmouth Career and Technical Education Center. She indicated that none of them have policy compliance checkmarks and two of the projects trigger the Percent for Arts and all projects trigger the Green Building Policy. She stated that the element sheets need to be updated to reflect those policies, which will not impact the budget.

On a roll call vote 8-0, **voted** to adopt the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) FY 2027-2032 as amended.

5. **Voted** to suspend the rules to bring forward Item XV. E.1. – Sunset Archive Committee.
6. Sunset Archive Committee – **Voted** to sunset the Mayor’s Blue Ribbon Task Force to Study the Establishment of a Private/Public partnership to Properly Archive Historical Documents relating to the City of Portsmouth (Commonly known as the Archive Committee).
7. PUBLIC HEARING AND SECOND READING of Ordinance amending Chapter 1 – Administrative Code, Article IV – Commissions and Authorities, Section 1.414 – Establishing a Permanent Energy Advisory Committee – Held a public hearing. **Voted** to pass second reading and hold third and final reading at the December 22, 2025. **Voted** to suspend the rules to bring forward third and final reading. **Voted** to pass third and final reading of the ordinance as presented.
8. Third and Final Reading of Ordinance amending Chapter 6 – Licenses, Article I – General Provisions, by amending the title of Chapter 6 to Licenses and Encumbrances and replacing Article I in its entirety, with Article I - Encumbrance Permits and Licenses for Use of Public Property, Sections 6.101 – 6.110- **Voted** to pass third and final reading of the ordinance as presented.
9. Third and Final Reading of Ordinance amending Chapter 7 – Vehicles, Traffic and Parking, Article I – Parking Meters, Section 7.114 – Construction Permit be deleted in its entirety – **Voted** to pass third and final reading of the ordinance as presented.
10. Third and Final Reading of Ordinance amending Chapter 8 – Encumbrances and Injurious Practices in Streets, Article I - Encumbrances, Section 8.101 – Encumbrances, General, Section 8.105 – Digging up a Street, Section 8.106 – License to Obstruct Street, Section 8.114 – Awning and Signs, Section 8.120 – Displaying Merchandise on Sidewalk be deleted in its entirety - **Voted** to pass third and final reading of the ordinance as presented.
11. Third and Final Reading of Ordinance amending Chapter 11, Sidewalks, Sewers, Layout of Streets, Subdivision of Land, Article VI – Referrals to Planning Board, Section 11.602 A 1, Referral and Report be amended to delete the word - **Voted** to pass third and final reading of the ordinance as presented.

12. Rescission of City Council Policy 2009 – 03 Projecting Sign Policy – **Voted** to rescind City Council Policy 2009-03.
13. Rescission of City Council Policy 2010 – 01 Policy regarding Flags Projecting Over City Property – **Voted** to rescind City Council Policy 2010-01.
14. Request for a Water/Sewer Rate Model Study Work Session – **Voted** to schedule a work session regarding the Water/Sewer Rate Model Study on January 14th at the previously schedule time of 6:00 p.m.
15. Parking Lot Usage and Maintenance Agreement with St. John's Masonic Lodge – **Voted** to authorize the City Manager to negotiate and enter into a Parking Lot Usage/Maintenance Agreement with St. John's in a form similar to the attached document contained in the City Council packet.
16. Consent Agenda – **Voted** to adopt the Consent Agenda.
 - A. Letter from Mike Peabody, Millennium Running, requesting permission to hold the 2026 New Castle 10k on Sunday, April 26, 2026 (***Anticipated action – move to refer to the City Manager with Authority to Act***)
 - B. Letter from Jennie Halstead, My Breast Center Support, requesting permission to hold the Celebrate Pink 5k Walk & Run on Sunday, September 27, 2026 (***Anticipated action – move to refer to the City Manager with Authority to Act***)
17. Email Correspondence – **Voted** to accept and place on file.
18. **Voted** to suspend the rules to continue the meeting beyond 10:30 p.m.
19. Installation of Marker in Prescott Park – Moved to refer to the City Manager to negotiate the terms and conditions of a license for the acceptance and placement of an historic marker.

Voted to suspend the rules to allow Curtis Herman, Sons of the American Revolution, to speak and he indicated that they would work with Prescott Park on the location and placement of the historic marker.

Motion passed.
20. Acceptance of Resignations – Max Ward from the Sustainability Committee – **Voted** to accept with regret the resignation of Max Ward from the Sustainability Committee.

21. Acceptance of Resignation - Phyllis Eldridge from the Zoning Board of Adjustment – **Voted** to accept with regret the resignation of Phyllis Eldridge from the Zoning Board of Adjustment effective January 1, 2026.
22. Appointments to be Considered – The City Council considered the appointment of Robert P. Sullivan as a regular member and Mike Lucas as an alternate member to the Zoning Board of Adjustment. These appointments will be voted upon at the December 22, 2025, City Council meeting.
- Appointment of Robert P. Sullivan as a Regular Member to the Zoning Board of Adjustment
 - Appointment of Mike Lucas as an Alternate Member to the Zoning Board of Adjustment
23. Appointments to be Voted – The City Council voted the appointments outlined below:
- Appointment of James (Jim) Wilson as an Alternate to the Cable and Broadband Internet Commission until April 1, 2028
 - Appointment of Wendy Courteau-Clement to the Economic Development Commission until October 1, 2029
 - Appointment of Daniel Finan to the Safe Water Advisory Group until 12/31/2027
 - Reappointment of Thomas Nies to the Zoning Board of Adjustment until 12/1/2030
24. End of Year Report of African Burying Ground Memorial Park Stewardship Committee – Assistant Mayor Kelley will bring this report forward at the December 22, 2025, City Council meeting.
25. Adding Muslim Holy Days of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha to the City Calendar – **Voted** to add the Muslim Holy Days of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha to the City Calendar, including not scheduling meetings the night before Eid al-Fitr during the breaking of the Ramadan fast. Councilor Tabor voted opposed.
26. Request for Work Session with School Board regarding School Buildings and Grounds Improvements – **Voted** to request a work session with the School Board on School Buildings and Grounds Improvements that should be included in the CIP Budget in out years.
27. Request Report Back on all Private Parking Space Contracts for all City-owned Parking – **Voted** to request a report back on all Private Parking Space Contracts for all City-owned parking or reasonably presumed City-owned spaces in the Worth Lot and adjacent surface lots / street area, including holders' names, locations, term/expiration, and options to return these spaces to public use. Request that this list be published annually on the City website in a prominent location as long as such contracts are in force.
28. Approval of Homeland Security Grant Award to purchase ballistic helmets for the Seacoast Emergency Response Team - \$27,383 – **Voted** to approve and accept the Grant as presented.

29. Approval of Grant Agreement between the Granite United Way and the City of Portsmouth for the Opioid Abatement Community Grant Award - \$11,388 – **Voted** to approve and accept the Grant as presented.

30. Approval of Moose License Plate Conservation Grant - \$9,929.95 – **Voted** to approve and accept the Grant as presented.

31. City Manager's Informational Items:

Report Back on Green Burials – City Manager Conard reported that the City of Portsmouth does not currently own or manage any cemeteries with active burials. She said the City-owned and managed cemeteries are all historic in nature with no new internments available. She stated the City is currently investigating possible locations for a new cemetery or other local options for the burial of Portsmouth residents. She advised the City Council that caskets are buried at various depths, often depending on the presence of ledge and water tables.

Report Back on Resident Access Parking Program – City Manager Conard said staff has worked hard on a one-year pilot policy. She said we are leaving it with the City Council and residents to consider and will come forward at the next City Council meeting with a further report back. She reported that this program would include all residents that have a vehicle registered in the City and would go in effect early 2026.

Councilor Moreau suggested that Rock Street be considered as part of the program.

Pease Development Authority Board Meeting Update – City Manager Conard reported the following:

- Golf course is closed
- Fourth year in a row there were 70,000 rounds of golf
- In-door golf simulator is in full swing
- Breeze Airlines started flying to Raleigh Durham, North Carolina
- Richard Hartley started as the Director of the Divisions of Ports and Harbors
- Friday, December 19th is Permit Day at the Dover DMV from 9:00 a.m. – Noon for commercial boaters
- American Cruise Lines is looking into a multi-year contract with the Port

Update on Tax Bill Status – City Manager Conard reported that Deputy City Manager of Finance and Administration Lunney and the Finance Team has sent all the materials required for setting the tax rate. She stated we are now waiting on the State of New Hampshire to set the tax rate. She advised the City Council that the State has three people setting the rates for the entire state. She also said that Deputy City Manager of Finance and Administration Lunney will be having a discussion with the State this week which will then set in motion the process by which we will prepare and send out the tax bills.

32. Miscellaneous Business Including Business Remaining Unfinished at Previous Meeting – Mayor McEachern thanked the Public Works, Police, Fire and Recreation Departments for all their work with another successful Holiday parade.

33. Adjournment – At 10:55 p.m., **voted** to adjourn the meeting.

Submitted by:

Kelli L. Barnaby, MMC/CNHMC
City Clerk