

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

Fire Station 2

George Pierce Training Room

September 9, 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 Mathes; Chief William McQuillen, Assistant Fire Chief Jason Gonet, Deputy Fire Chief Patrick Howe, City Manager Karen Conard, Finance Manager Nathan Lunney, Administrative Manager Nancy Savini, and many Fire Department personnel and their family members.

III. Oath of Office None.

IV. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Motion, to approve the minutes of August 12, 2025, was made by Commissioner Mathes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

Motion, to suspend rules and bring the Finance Slide Presentation (074), Captain Rick Condon's Retirement (078), and Shane Anderson's Promotion (079) forward, was made by Commissioner Mathes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

Chief William McQuillen presented and read Rick Condon's Retirement letter to the Commission (078).

Motion, to accept Captain Rick Condon's retirement letter, was made by Commissioner Mathes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously. Commissioner Gamester also thanked Captain Condon for his years of service to the City of Portsmouth Fire Department.

Chief William McQuillen presented and read Shane Anderson's Promotion to Lieutenant Recommendation (079).

Motion, to approve the promotion of Shane Anderson to lieutenant effective September 22, 2025, was made by Commissioner Mathes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously

City Manager Conard and Deputy City Manager Nathan Lunney gave a slide presentation (074) on the City of Portsmouth FY27 Budget “Opening the Budget Discussion... Launching the Budget Process”. Topics discussed were as follows:

-FY 27 Budget Launch/Discussion

1. Starting the process earlier this year

2. Welcoming communication

Respectful of the requests of Charter Departments

3. Providing more time to complete the work

Being appreciative of the challenging work to be done

4. Supporting collaboration

Focused on cost efficiencies and service improvements

-FY27 Budget Landscape

Economic Indicator Projections are as follows:

-Social Security (& SSI) COLA at 2.70%

-Consumer Price Index (CPI) at 2.91%

-City 10 year rolling Average (COLA) at 3.05%

-FY27 Budget Timeline

-**September** Budget Kickoff for Departments, Staffing needs requested, CIP Citizen Requests submitted, CIP Department Requests submitted.

-**October** Rolling Stock submitted and CIP Citizen Request review meeting.

-**November** CIP full presentation, review and discussion and Employee benefit changes calculated.

-**December** Department non-salary needs submitted and CIP adopted.

-**January** Department narratives, preliminary budget numbers initially compiled and City Council Guidance.

-**February** Reconciling City Council guidance and department proposals and proposed budget numbers finalized.

-**March** Budget book written and compiled.

-FY27 Budget Expectations

1. Compile a Continuing Services Budget (CSB)

Level staffing with continued suite of programs and services

Impacts from Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA)

Include eligible steps, longevity, stipends, COLA for settled CBAs

Include contingency monies to fund negotiation of expiring CBAs

Contractual increases only in non-salary expenditures

2. Identify reductions if CSB is well beyond economic indicators

Detail reductions with ranked priority to address possible guidance

3. Detail requests for new/expanded staffing or services

List requests with estimated costs in order of priority for needs/wants

Also noted, the Health and Dental rates will be known by December and the NHRS pension rates are on a bi-annual year and will remain the same as FY26.

V. Public Comment Session: None.

VI. Presentation of Written Communications: None.

VII. Reports:

A. Fire Chief's Reports:

Commissioner Gamester motioned to discuss Chief's reports 25-068 through 25-071. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes.

Fire Chief William McQuillen reviewed reports with the Commission.

Report (068), 2025 Response Report for August 2025. The report shows the department responding to a total of 572 calls for the month: 247 Fire Calls with EMS Services and 152 Fire and Related Service Calls and 325 Ambulance Calls. Assistant Chief spoke briefly about some of the activities for the month, noting on 8/19/25 Rescue 7 and Chief 1 responded to York Maine for Mutual Aid at 38 Freeman Street where two patients had fallen from the sea wall and extrication with ropes and litter were required, 8/23/25 Engine 3, Truck 2, Ambulances 2&3, and Chief 1 responded to Pang FD at 301 Newmarket Street for an alert; an international 747 diverted due to engine failure which landed safely and companies cleared and 8/30/25 Truck 2 responded mutual aid to Seabrook on a second alarm apartment building fire remaining on site for an hour and a half before clearing .

The safety message focused on this September being National Preparedness Month. Portsmouth Fire Department along with FEMA and the National Safety Council list recommendations on Ready.gov.

Report (069), Fire and EMS Call Summary Reports, shows the department responded to 247 fire calls for the month of August. EMS activity was 325 with the top three responses being for no apparent illness or injury, weakness , and Injury (head/scalp). There were 9 calls for nausea/vomiting, 9 for sepsis/septic shock, 8 for hip injury, and 52 non-transports. Report (070), FY26 Budget, Assistant Chief reviewed the budget noting that with it being the second month of the new FY26, annual expenses are recorded in period 1 skewing the % expense to date which will even out as we go through the year. Report (071), 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 25-068 through 25-071, was made by Commissioner Mathes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

B. Staff Reports:

Assistant Chief Gionet reported on facilities and operations happening within the department (072) in the month of August: Ambulance 3 is having the engine replaced. Engine 4 received new brakes, shocks and leaf springs. Station 1 and 2 had lighting upgrades. We have three current open positions which will drop to 1 soon with one candidate starting September 15, 2025 and one candidate currently in background check with one interview scheduled. All Officers have completed their online command and control program and will be holding 2 three day in-person classes the first two weeks of October. We will be hosting a National Fire Academy 6 day class the first week of November. EMS IV Pump training has concluded and the new units are in service on all the ambulances. New portable ventilator training will be wrapping up in the next 2 to 3 weeks and will be placed in service once training is completed.

Deputy Chief Howe reported (073) on Fire Prevention activity for the month of August with 36 permits issued, 68 inspections done, 16 prevention related meetings, and 28 approvals (not associated with FD permits). Other items of note, FPOs Wheeler and Putney attended solar systems code training sponsored by the New Hampshire Fire Prevention Society. FPO Wheeler provided fire prevention education to residents of the Keefe House. FPO Wheeler attended a six-day class on electrical fire investigations at the National Fire Academy. We participated in meetings regarding planned work at The Music Hall.

Motion, to accept Staff Reports 25-072 through 25-073, was made by Commissioner Mathes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

VIII. Old Business: None.

IX. New Business:

Keene Fire Department Thank You (075)
North Hampton Fire Dept & Community Thank You (076)
Updated Schedule of City Council Meetings (077)

Motion, to accept New Business 25-075 through 25-077, was made by Commissioner Mathes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

X. Adjournment:

Motion, to adjourn at 1831 hours, was made by Commissioner Hughes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Mathes and passed unanimously.



Jennifer Mosher-Matthes, Clerk