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

Fire Station 2
George Pierce Training Room
January 14, 2025

Portsmouth, NH
1730 hours

I. Call to Order:

Commissioner Gamester called the meeting to order at 1730 hours.

Motion, to enter into Non-public Session at 1730 hours in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II (a) for Grievance filed by Local 4039, was made by Commissioner Hughes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Matthes and passed unanimously.

Motion, to close and come out of Non-public Session at 1831 hours and return to public session, was made by Commissioner Hughes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Matthes and passed unanimously.

Motion, to seal the minutes of Non-public Session, was made by Commissioner Hughes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Matthes. On a roll call vote of 3-0, motion passed unanimously.

Regular monthly meeting convened at 1840 hours.

II. Pledge of Allegiance with Attendance:

Commissioner Gamester led the pledge of allegiance.

Present were Commissioners: Richard Gamester, Jennifer Matthes and Michael Hughes; Fire Chief William McQuillen, Assistant Fire Chief Jason Gionet, Deputy Fire Chief Patrick Howe, Administrative Manager Tracy Freeman, Lieutenant Eric Detweiler and Firefighters: Timothy Dame, Jonathan Gray and Wayne LaCaillade.

III. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Motion, to approve the minutes of December 10, 2024, was made by Commissioner Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

IV. Public Comment Session: None.

V. Recognition of Groups or Individuals:

Chief McQuillen moved item 25-002, Paramedic Graduates, to next month due scheduling conflicts.

VI. Reports:

A. Fire Chief's Reports:

Commissioner Hughes motioned to discuss Chief's reports 25-003 through 25-007. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Matthes.

Fire Chief McQuillen reviewed reports with the Commission.

Report (003), 2024 Response Report for December 2024. The report shows the department responding to a total of 447 calls for the month: 118 Fire Calls and 340 Ambulance Calls. The department responded to a total of 5,731 for the year, 1,616 Fire Calls and 4,115 Ambulance Calls. Calls for EMS were up this month from last month. Chief spoke briefly about some of the activities for the month, noting a MVA and an emotionally disturbed person on I-95 High Level Bridge which shut down I-95 for three hours, a fire alarm call at 928 South Street for a freon leak, another MVA with entrapment on the High Level Bridge, and mutual aid call to Hampton for a 3rd alarm on High Street and mutual aid to Greenland for a 2nd alarm building fire on Portsmouth Ave. The safety message focused on carbon monoxide poisoning and how to keep yourself and family members safe. Report (004), Fire and EMS Call Summary Reports, shows the department responded to 118 fire calls for the month of December. EMS activity was 341 with the top three responses being for injury to head/scalp, alcohol abuse and effects and syncope/fainting. There were 3 calls for suicidal or self-harm ideation or thoughts, 2 drug overdose/abuse and 89 non-transports. Report (005), Fire Prevention Activity, reported 20 permits issued, 43 inspections and 21 prevention related meetings for the month of December. 2024 activity noted 414 permits issued, 728 inspections done and 241 prevention related meetings attended. Report (006). 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 tracking about 1% to the good and is where we projected to be at this point in the year. Report (007), Overtime Analysis, provided a breakdown of how overtime was used in the month of December along with a summary of what was charged to OT-Recall for the month.

Motion, to accept Chief's Reports 25-003 through 25-007, was made by Commissioner Hughes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Matthes and passed unanimously.

B. Staff Reports:

Assistant Chief Gionet reported on facilities and operations happening within the department. The building security project is still ongoing and waiting for equipment to come in. Bids for station 2's roof replacement came in about \$150K over the \$300K anticipated. Working with DPW on the additional funding which the \$300K was earmarked in their Capital under facilities. Engine 3 still waiting for body repairs at Greenwood. We have two new firefighters starting January 27th which will fill the last two vacancies on the

roster. Firefighters Gregori and Choquette have started paramedic school and anticipate graduation in December. The department has been given the opportunity to utilize the WHEB building for training purposes later this month and through first week of February. This will allow for both basic and advanced training scenarios for all four shifts. Captain Kenneway continues EMS training at the SIM Lab at the hospital for department personnel.

Deputy Chief Howe reported on Fire Prevention noting revenue collected for the year was \$7,036.85 which is slightly higher than we anticipated for the year. He also noted that Prevention Officers Putney and Wheeler attended the Seacoast area Inspectors breakfast and FPO Wheeler spoke to PHA residents at 200 Greenleaf Ave about fire safety

VII. Old Business:

Chief McQuillen updated the Commission on their December 11, 2024 letter to the Police Commission regarding operational issues with the dispatch center and the request to meet to discuss progress, has gone unanswered as of today. Brief discussion followed on options and Commissioner Hughes recommend sending a follow up letter reminding them that we wish to meet.

Motion, to send reminder letter and request answer to December 11, 2024 letter, was made by Commissioner Hughes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Matthes. Motion passes 2-1. Commissioner Gamester will work with Chief McQuillen on sending a reminder letter to the Police Commission.

IX. New Business:

Commissioner Hughes made the motion to draw name from a hat for the Commission representative to serve on the City's Ethics Committee. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Matthes and passed unanimously.

Chief McQuillen had Firefighter Jon Gray put the three names into a hat and had Firefighter Tim Dame select name from the hat. Commissioner Gamester's name was drawn. Commissioner Gamester will serve on the City's Ethics Committee this year.

Commissioner Matthes made the following nominations for Board of Fire Commission Officers for 2025: Commissioner Gamester as Chairman, Commissioner Hughes as Vice-Chair and herself as Clerk. Nominations closed after no further discussion and Commissioner Gamester accepting the nomination.

Commissioner Matthes made the motion, Portsmouth Board of Fire Commission Officers for 2025 to be: Commissioner Gamester to serve as Chair, Commissioner Hughes to serve as Vice-Chair and Commissioner Matthes to serve as Clerk. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes. On a Vote of 3-0, the motion passed unanimously.

Chief McQuillen spoke briefly of the Fee Schedule & Emergency Services Rates for the calendar year 2025.

Motion, to accept the recommended 2025 Portsmouth Fire Department Fee Schedule and Emergency Service rates as outlined in the memo from the City Manager, was made by Commissioner Hughes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Matthes and passed unanimously.

Chief McQuillen spoke briefly about the donation received in December from Paul Gormley and Kimi Iguchi. He went on to say that due to the timing of meetings, the donation request was sent to City Council for acceptance in December.

Motion, to accept the donation of \$1,000 from Paul Gormley and Kimi Iguchi with gratitude, was made by Commissioner Hughes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Matthes and passed unanimously.

X. Adjournment:

Motion, to adjourn at 1905 hours, was made by Commissioner Hughes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Matthes and passed unanimously.



~~Jennifer Mosher-Matthes, Clerk~~

Michael Hughes -