

## **CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

MUNICIPAL COMPLEX  
DATE: MONDAY, JANUARY 5, 2026

PORTSMOUTH, NH  
TIME: 7:00PM

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor McEachern called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

### **II. ROLL CALL**

Present: Mayor McEachern, Assistant Mayor Kelley, Councilors Cook, Tabor, Blalock, Bagley, Moreau, Flynn, and Hopkins

### **III. INVOCATION**

Reverend Dr. Jerrell Riggins, of New Hope Baptist Church provided the Invocation this evening.

### **IV. POSTING OF THE COLORS**

Members of the Portsmouth Police and Fire Departments Honor Guard held a procession and posted the colors.

### **IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Students in attendance led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **V. STAR-SPANGLED BANNER**

The Star-Spangled Banner was performed by Angelynne Hinson accompanied by the Portsmouth High School Instrumental Ensemble under Director Eric Gagnon.

### **VI. INAUGURAL REMARKS**

#### **State Senator Perkins-Kwoka**

State Senator Perkins-Kwoka gave offered remarks in acknowledgement of the ceremony this evening and extended her congratulations to all elected officials.

#### **Congressman Pappas Remarks**

Congressman Pappas provided remarks in recognition of the ceremony this evening and extended his congratulations to all elected officials.

#### **Senator Hassan Remarks**

Jennifer Kuzma, on behalf of Senator Hassan, read remarks in honor of the ceremony this evening and extended her congratulations and well-wishes to all elected officials.

## **Senator Shaheen Remarks**

Elizabeth McKenna read remarks from Senator Shaheen in honor of this joyous occasion.

## **OATH OF OFFICE**

City Clerk Barnaby administered the Oath of Office to the following officials who were elected at the November 4, 2025, Municipal Election.

### **A. FIRE COMMISSION**

City Clerk Barnaby announced that Fire Commissioners Richard Gamester and Jennifer Mosher-Matthes are unable to be with us this evening.

### **B. POLICE COMMISSION**

Commissioner Buzz Scherr  
Commissioner Jay Lieberman

### **C. SCHOOL BOARD**

Lisa Rapaport, Steve Adler, Nancy Novelline Clayburgh, Brian French, and Jennifer Shump

### **D. CITY COUNCIL**

1. Councilors Kate Cook, John Tabor, Rich Blalock, Andrew Bagley, Beth Moreau Michelle Flynn, and Annie Hopkins
2. Assistant Mayor JoAnna “Jo” Kelley
3. Mayor Deaglan McEachern recited the Oath of Office administered by City Clerk Barnaby

## **V. INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY MAYOR DEAGLAN McEACHERN**

Mayor McEachern said he really wants to thank City Clerk Kelli Barnaby not just because she gave flowers to his wife and daughters but because everything Kelli and the City Clerk’s Office does to protect our democracy. He said it does not go unnoticed here but in Portsmouth none of this happens without her and her steadfast leadership.

Friends and neighbors,

Thank you for being here today. Thank you to my family, to my colleagues on the council, to our staff, and to everyone who took time to join us. Your presence matters, and I am deeply grateful for it.

As our country enters its 250<sup>th</sup> year, Portsmouth reminds us that America's story has always lived close to home.

On this day, 250 years ago, New Hampshire signed its first constitution, becoming the first colony to write for itself the rules by which it would be governed. Long before freedom was formally declared, people here acted as if it were already their responsibility, not waiting for permission from a distant crown, but asserting that authority begins with people themselves. The ideas were alive, being tested not in far-off halls of power, but in streets and gathering places, by ordinary people deciding what responsibility meant.

When the Declaration of Independence was read in Market Square, then known as King Street, it was not a government order that changed the name of the street. It was a citizen, Thomas Manning, so moved by what he heard that he began calling it Congress Street. Others followed. And the name endured.

That moment tells you almost everything you need to know about Portsmouth.

People listened. They recognized something just. And they acted.

That same spirit brings us together today as we take the oath of office once again.

When this country was founded, it was not enough to break free from the rule of a distant crown. The Declaration did not stop at naming our inalienable rights. It demanded a government by and for the people to protect the rights we hold to be self-evident. A government is not above the people but in service to the people.

That is what an inauguration marks. A recognition that freedom carries responsibility. My responsibility to serve you and your responsibility to honor the generations who built this city and our nation by serving one another.

Those earliest generations came here because of the water. They came to fish, to trade, to build. This harbor connected New Hampshire to the wider world and shaped how people earned a living. That legacy is still with us, visible even on our state flag in the USS Raleigh, a reminder that Portsmouth helped guide the destiny of New Hampshire.

That spirit shows up in the work of countless people whose names never made a plaque. From our harbor, ships and submarines have been built, launched, and are still refitted today in service of our nation. From this community, aircraft have taken flights in times of global conflict, as they still do today. And in 1905, Portsmouth helped bring nations together to end a war, reminding the world that strength is measured not only by how we defend freedom but by how we help secure peace.

When the mission at Pease changed, Portsmouth did what it has always done. We adapted. We rebuilt. And we turned that place into an economic engine for the entire state, carrying that same sense of service forward.

Across centuries in Portsmouth, when something needed doing, people here did it to strengthen our city, our state, our country, and our world.

That is still true today.

Like generations before us, we face real challenges. And like generations before us, we are meeting them with action.

We did not just talk about housing. We changed the rules holding it back. Portsmouth approved more new housing units faster than any other community in New Hampshire, helping drive the first reduction in two-bedroom prices in more than a decade.

We built the first dedicated Housing Trust in the Seacoast, turning policy into a permanent tool to protect affordability for the next generation, and brought two new affordable housing projects to life with the Portsmouth Housing Authority.

We modernized city government, investing in technology to expand services while holding staffing flat and keeping budget growth below the state's, all while continuing to invest in the core services people rely on every day, including roads, water, public safety, and schools.

We expanded tax relief for seniors and veterans to the highest levels in the state, so those who built this city and served this country can remain in the homes they earned.

And we invested in climate resilience not as ideology, but as risk management, protecting neighborhoods, infrastructure, and taxpayers from the rising costs of inaction.

Units approved. Dollars saved. Bills stabilized. Relief delivered. That is what progress looks like when a city decides to act.

This progress does not happen on its own. It takes each of us working together, and the work continues.

Thank you for trusting me with a third term as Mayor.

As we embark on this next chapter, Portsmouth and communities across New Hampshire face a familiar challenge. Rising costs and decisions made farther from the people who felt their impact most directly. As responsibilities are pushed downward without the tools to manage them, we are reminded of a basic truth from our founding. Government exists by the consent of the governed, and that consent is earned when power serves the people, not when burdens are imposed without relief.

In times like these, as in times before, it is right to question whether authority is aligned with those who sustain it, and to insist on systems that allow our people to remain rooted in the communities they built.

Portsmouth has led before and will lead again, guided by the ideals that gave rise to this country. The belief that people are born with inalienable rights. That government exists to secure them. And that when it falls short, it is the responsibility of citizens and their leaders to act.

We draw strength from those who came before us, not to repeat their answers, but to carry forward their courage and their sense of obligation.

That work will take all nine of us on this council. It will take our boards and commissions. But above all, it will take citizens who stay engaged, who hold us accountable, and who continue to show up.

As our country enters its 250<sup>th</sup> year, the best way to honor the Declaration is not by reciting it, but by living it. By building a government that answers to the people. By practicing leadership as service. And by remembering that self-government endures only when citizens remain at its center.

Thank you for the trust you have placed in me.

Let us get to work.

**X. BENEDICTION**

Reverend Dr. Jerrell Riggins, New Hope Baptist Church gave the benediction.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

**At 7:50 p.m., Assistant Mayor Kelley moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Councilor Moreau and voted.**



KELLI L. BARNABY, MMC/CNHMC  
CITY CLERK