26-126

The Board of Fire Commissioners
Portsmouth Fire Department

Fire Station 2
George Pierce Training Room
October 13, 2026

Portsmouth, NH
1800 hours

I. Call to Order:
Commissioner 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 (via Teams) and Jennifer Matthes; Fire Chief William McQuillen, Assistant Fire Chief Jason Gionet, Deputy Fire Chief Scott Egan, Acting Deputy Fire Chief Chad Putney, Administrative Mgr. Nancy Savini and several members of the Portsmouth Fire Department.

III. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting:
Motion, to approve the minutes of September 15, 2026 (26-116), was made by Commissioner Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

IV. Presentation of Written Communication: None.

V. Public Comment Session: None.

VI. Reports:
A. Fire Chief's Reports:

Commissioner Gamester motioned to discuss Chief's reports (26-117 through 26-120). Motion was seconded by Commissioner Matthes.

Fire Chief McQuillen reviewed reports with the Commission.

Report (26-117), 2026 Response Report for September 2026. The report shows the department responding to a total of 549 calls for the month: 238 Fire Calls with EMS Services and 142 Fire and Related Service Calls and 311 Ambulance Calls.

Chief spoke briefly about the following incidents of interest:

September 10 1451 Hours Truck 5 & Chief 3 Mutual Aid to Greenland, 11 Tuttle Lane building fire. Companies assisted area department with a fire in a residential dwelling with power lines down and still energized. Companies operated for two hours on scene.

September 22 Fire Department participated in separate drills at PSNY for a major emergency and the NH DES for the Piscataqua River Spill Exercise.

September 23 Fire Department and City personnel participated in the graded exercise for the Seabrook Station plants radiological emergency plan for Federal Emergency Management Agency evaluators with the NH HSEM staff.

September 25 1001 hours E1 E3 T2 A1 A2 A4 to 55 Ceres St for a sprinkler head broken off by a worker causing water damage and requiring City Health and Electrical Depts to also respond.

Report (26-118), Fire and EMS Call Summary Reports, shows the department responded to 238 fire calls for the month of September. EMS activity was 311 with the top three responses being for head injury, abdominal pain, and no apparent reason. There were 14 calls for weakness, 11 for cardiac problems, 10 for fainting and 36 non-transports.

Report (26-119), FY27 Budget, Chief reviewed the budget noting FY27 expenses are tracking on budget. Report (26-120), Overtime Analysis, provided a breakdown of how overtime was used in the month of September along with a summary of what was charged to OT-Recall for the month.

Motion, to accept Chief's Reports 26-117 through 26-120, was made by Commissioner Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

B. Staff Reports:
Assistant Chief Gionet reported on facilities and operations happening within the department (26-121) which are as follows:

Apparatus / Equipment / Facilities
1. Truck 2 sent to Greenwood for a coolant system issue.
2. New Command Vehicle: Has been placed in service as Car 1.
3. Station 2 kitchen project has been nearly completed with a few punch list items to finish off.
4. During the Nor'easter storm, there were some leaks detected in the roof at station 2. The city is working with the installer to remedy those issues.

Personnel
1. Staffing Report: 2 FF recently started with 2 conditional offers going out.
2. Interviews: 4 interviews next week hoping to have all vacancies filled in next 3 weeks. This will make a total of 13 probationary FFs.

Other
1. We participated in several drills to include the Pease Triennial Disaster Drill, PNSY Fire Exercise, and the Seabrook Station EOC Drill. All of the drills went well with positive feedback from the evaluators and participants alike.
2. We have received our new PFAS free gear that was part of the FY 27 CIP. It has been inventoried and is being distributed to the personnel.

Deputy Chief Egan reported (26-122) on EMS & Training Initiatives with an overall goal of providing personnel with **practical, relevant training that improves firefighter safety, patient care, and our ability to manage complex incidents.** He is also continuing to identify outside agencies and industry partners who can bring specialized expertise directly to the department, allowing expansion of training capabilities while making the best use of available resources.

He noted some of the Training & Initiatives that have or will be taking place are as follows:

September Training & Initiatives

September was focused on expanding technical rescue capabilities, improving operational readiness, and preparing personnel for specialized incidents.

- **Rope Rescue:** Personnel completed training on the Arizona Vortex Tripod System, focusing on setup, deployment, and its use in technical rope rescue operations.
- **Vehicle Stabilization:** Personnel completed training on the Paratech Stabilizer Strut System, including proper deployment and use for vehicle stabilization during extrication and rescue operations.
- **Bridgehill Fire Blanket**: Personnel were trained on the deployment, use, and disposal of the Bridgehill Fire Blanket. The blankets are designed for one-time use and will require replacement following deployment. National Wrecker has advised that replacement costs can be billed through the vehicle owner's insurance.
- **Mass Casualty Incident Preparedness**: Reviewed our Mass Casualty Incident (MCI) kits and conducted an MCI drill at Pease Tradeport involving a simulated incident with approximately 100 patients. This provided an opportunity to evaluate our equipment, personnel response, and overall ability to manage a large-scale casualty event.

October training will focus on expanding the ability to respond to specialized patient populations and emerging public safety concerns. To include the following:

- **Sensory Backpacks**
- **Human Trafficking Awareness**
- **Ventilator Training**

November Training will focus on the following courses to strengthen advanced life support capabilities and ensure personnel maintain the skills necessary to manage critical adult and pediatric medical emergencies.

- **Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS)**
- **Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS)**

Moving forward, he noted he will continue to develop additional training opportunities that will directly support firefighter safety and operational readiness.

Deputy Chief Putney reported (26-123) on Fire Prevention activity for the month of September with 37 permits issued and 43 inspections done. Revenue collected for September 2026 was a little under $10K.

Other Notable Items are as follows:
- FPO Scholtz spent 11 days at the Fire Academy in Fire Investigator School.
- FPO Wheeler is steadfastly preparing for Fire Prevention Week
- Joint Loss Committee building walks were completed with both locals.
- Thermo-Fisher Aircraft hangar on the flight line had its fire protection systems commissioned with next generation foam.

Motion, to accept Staff Reports 26-121 through 26-123, was made by Commissioner Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

VII. Old Business: None.

IX. New Business:

MOA between Local 4039 and City of Portsmouth (26-124) referring to a temporary amendment to Section V.4 of the current CBA to allow the realignment of steps to place Lt Tim Cole at the proper step.

Chairman Gamester called for a vote. Commissioner Matthes motioned to accept MOA as written. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously. Form was signed by Chairman Gamester and forwarded to City Council to be placed on their agenda.

The Chief presented the Capital Plan Report (26-125). He spoke briefly about the rolling stock plan to replace vehicles, trailers, and staff cars with the Ambulance and Fire Truck replacement moved under bonding process. He noted there will be a CIP work session scheduled for 10-26.

Motion, to enter into Non-public Session at 1840 hours in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II (a) for Chief to inform the commission of a couple pending personnel items, was made by Commissioner Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

Motion, to close and come out of Non-public Session at 1952 hours and return to public session, was made by Commissioner Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

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

X. Adjournment:

Motion, to adjourn at 1953 hours, was made by Commissioner Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

Jennifer Mosher-Matthes, Clerk