Rolling Stock Work Session

Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers
Monday, October 26, 2026, at 7:00 PM

City Council Present:	Mayor McEachern, Assistant Mayor Kelley, Councilors Cook, Tabor, Blalock, Bagley, Moreau, Flynn, and Hopkins
City Staff Present:	Karen Conard, City Manager; Susan Morrell, City Attorney; Michael Tucker, Deputy Finance Director; Nathan Lunney, Deputy City Manager – Finance and Administration

At 6:21 PM, Mayor McEachern called the work session to order.

Mayor McEachern introduced the topic for the work session. City Manager Conard remarked that this work session highlights the decision-making and fine details behind the City's Rolling Stock program, noting this work session is a first on the matter.

Deputy City Manager Nathan Lunney began the presentation. The presentation demonstrated what assets the City owns, how they are managed, purchasing challenges and funding sources, as well as takeaways based on the current fleet and anticipatory needs down the line.

Councilor Hopkins inquired on the number of electric light-duty vehicles in the City's fleet and whether there is a policy in place to incorporate more electric vehicles going forward. Councilor Blalock asked to hear from Ken Linchey, Portsmouth Schools Director of Buildings & Grounds/ Maintenance, on the rollout of the district's new autonomous field paint striper. Linchey noted a drastic cut in labor needed to paint the fields, reallocating staff to more pressing projects. Councilor Cook echoed Councilor Hopkins' inquiry into the City's implementation of electric vehicles. Councilor Cook then asked if and how the City is weighing vehicle maintenance costs against replacement costs. Peter Rice, Director of Public Works, noted that these considerations are regularly being evaluated by the scenes.

Further discussion and questions ensued, primarily around pros and cons of fleet electrification, commending consistent preventative maintenance across assets, and the impact of the City's new side-loading garbage truck on Solid Waste staff. Mayor McEachern noted it would be helpful to break down rolling stock data based on vehicle class and use, verifying costs with other municipalities. He also requested more data on the repair and lifecycle costs of electric vehicles, as well as information from other municipalities with electric vehicles in their fleet.

There were two public speakers: Petra Huda had suggestions on increased vehicle pooling, as well as posing whether outsourcing street sweeping would be cost-effective; Esther Kennedy had questions on the quality of assets the City chooses to purchase, as well as comments on the new Solid Waste Toter rollout.

At 7:05 PM, Mayor McEachern closed the work session.

Respectfully submitted,

Jefferson H. Lane
Interim Recording Secretary

The Portsmouth City Council Work Session meeting of October 26, 2026, can be viewed in its entirety on the City of Portsmouth YouTube Channel.