MEETING MINUTES AND ACTIONS OF THE PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL
JUNE 22, 2026, 7:00 PM
MUNICIPAL COMPLEX, 1 JUNKINS AVENUE, PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Mayor McEachern called the meeting to order at 7:22 pm

1. Roll Call

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

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor McEachern asked the Portsmouth High School girls lacrosse and tennis teams to lead the Pledge of Allegiance

3. Acceptance of Minutes

Minutes and Actions of January 20, 2026, February 2, 2026, and June 8, 2026, City Council Meetings

Assistant Mayor Kelley moved to accept and approve the minutes of the January 20, 2026, February 2, 2026, and June 8, 2026, City Council meetings. Seconded by Councilor Cook and voted. Motion passed unanimously.

4 Recognitions and Volunteer Committee Reports

A. Proclamation – Given to Ed Rowe on behalf of the US Postal Service.

American Postal Service Day in Portsmouth

B. Recognitions

• Stephanie Seacord, Public Information Officer

• Portsmouth High School Girls Tennis – NHIAA Division II State Champions

• Portsmouth High School Girls Lacrosse – NHIAA Division I State Champions

• Recognition and thank you to Wilcox Industries and Key Auto Group of Portsmouth for the 250th Anniversary Independence Day Celebration

C. Volunteer Committee Reports

• Public Art Review Committee (PARC) – “Cod and the Mortal Sea” Sculpture Repair and Reinforcement

Councilor Cook moved to release $3,000.00 from the Public Art Trust Fund for the repair and reinforcements for the “Cod and the Mortal Sea” sculpture in Bohenko Park. Seconded by Councilor Tabor and voted. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Public Comment Session

There were 5 speakers.

Dee Forte, Chair of the Cemetery Committee - The Committee will be placing temporary markers on Revolutionary War soldier graves, with signage and map/QR code on the website indicating grave locations and soldier bios

Petra Huda - Audit oversight and the role of the Audit Committee as it relates to the City Charter and the requirements surrounding City Council responsibility

Esther Kennedy – Appreciation for Dee Forte, meeting minutes are better, the cost of the Cod and the Mortal Sea improvements, the cost of living on new teacher wages

*Paige Trace - spoke highly of Deputy Chief Maloney ‘s appointment and employment agreement

Tyler Garzo (via ZOOM) – Requested a response from the City Council regarding his letter (Agenda Item 13.A)

***Councilor Bagley moved to suspend the rules and bring forth Agenda Item 11.A The Approval of Deputy Chief of Police Maloney’s Employment Agreement. Seconded by Assistant Mayor Kelley. Motion passed unanimously.**

Councilor Blalock spoke in support of Deputy Chief Maloney’s contract. Mayor McEachern agreed with Paige Trace’s public comments.

Councilor Tabor moved to approve the Agreement as presented. Seconded by Councilor Blalock and voted. Motion passed unanimously.

Councilor Bagley moved to suspend the rules and bring forth item 15.A Councilors Cook, Tabor, and Bagley - *Municipal Building Blue Ribbon Committee Update/Report Back. Seconded by Assistant Mayor Kelley. Motion passed unanimously.

Councilor Bagley - From his perspective, this is a promising plan that will not burden the city financially or affect our triple A bond rating. It is a detailed plan with a nine-phase approach. Phases 1-5 are the police station updates and repairs that need to happen. The anticipated cost is $42,215,000. Phases 6-9 are the rest of the City Hall renovations. The anticipated cost of these renovations is $58,634,000. There will be shuffling of various departments and staff, but the results will be cost-effective and functional. Staff will move out to DPW for periods of time during renovations. The financials are robust and relocation costs are incorporated into the numbers. If you look at the numbers as a percentage of the total City budget, this is something the city can afford. He thinks the Committee, the architects, City staff and Police Department have done an excellent job so far.

Councilor Cook - The planning process has brought us to a position where there is a joint point of service at the front of the building to provide better access to the public for critical functions of the city. The plan also frees up space for the Police Department. This plan will take place over several years. At this stage, she feels discussions are needed at the City Council level to be sure progression is in the right direction, and the plan is one the City Council is willing to consider before a considerable amount of more work is done.

Councilor Tabor – Over the past 4 or 5 years, he has been a part of discussions for a new police station solution. One suggestion was a new site at the cost of $72M and a non-starter. A second suggestion was a $42M project for a big new wing at City Hall which was not well received. In 2014 there were plans to renovate City Hall and renovate the police station. There are three questions regarding this scale of project. Will it fit? – Yes, with some small additions without a giant wing. Will it be functional? – Yes. There will be a new sally port with safe and secure areas for interviews, booking, and DUI testing. Additionally, there will be improved work areas for patrol, detectives and evidence rooms. Will it be affordable? – Yes. As Councilor Bagley pointed out, the police renovation itself is only $30M. This exceeds initial expectations. This frees up money to create a spacious point of service area for the public. It also gives other departments what they need. So essential its $44M for the police station and another $14M for a City Hall renovation that will improve all work areas with additional conference rooms, better layouts and adjacencies. This is exciting news as some of us have been trying to solve this problem for a very long time. The Police chief and Department have been very patient and we are making progress.

Councilor Cook suggested a work session. There was discussion about the timing of the meeting. It would be good to have feedback before the July 29, 2026, committee meeting. She also mentioned that the committee welcomes public comments and feedback.

Councilor Cook moved to have a work session regarding the Municipal Building Update prior to the July 13, 2026, City Council Meeting. Seconded by Assistant Mayor Kelley. Motion passed unanimously.

6. Public Hearings and Vote On Ordinances and/or Resolutions

A. First Reading Regarding Ordinance Amendments to Chapter 7, Vehicles, Traffic and Parking, Article 1 – Parking Meters, Section 7.102 – Parking Meter Rates, relative to fees

Councilor Moreau moved to pass first reading and schedule a public hearing and second reading for July 13, 2026, on the amendments to Chapter 7, Vehicles, Traffic and Parking, Article 1 – Parking Meters, Section 7.102, Parking Meter Rates as presented. Seconded by Councilor Bagley and voted. Motion passed unanimously.

Councilor Moreau explained the minor changes. The ordinance is being updated so that the fees associated with on-street parking will become a part of the Fee Study Committee.

7. City Manager's Items Which Require Action

A. (Agenda Item 11.A taken out of order) Approval of Deputy Chief of Police Maloney's Employment Agreement

B. Players Ring One Year Lease Extension

City Manager Conard explained the Lease Extension and updates the Player Ring will undertake.

Councilor Blalock in favor of this lease extension. He explained they have been excellent stewards of the building and excellent tenants of the city. Councilor Cook added they provide a wonderful service to the community.

Councilor Blalock moved to authorize the City Manager to negotiate and enter into Lease Amendment 5 with the Players Ring in a form similar to attached. Seconded by Councilor Bagley and voted. Motion passed unanimously.

C. Minor Update of Existing City Council Policy on Vending

There are three sites identified for vending including in front of where the holiday tree goes up in Market Square, right outside the parking garage on Hanover Street, and Vaughn Mall. Applications are being accepted. We are in the process of updating the hawkers and peddlers outdated set of policies.

Councilor Bagley moved to adopt the amendments to Policy 2009-04 as presented. Seconded by Councilor Moreau and voted. Motion passed unanimously.

D. Request for First Reading Regarding Ordinance Amendment to Chapter 6, Licenses and Encumbrances, Article I, Encumbrance Permits and Licenses for use of Public Property, Relative to Fees

FY27 fees have changed. This is a housekeeping measure. Fees to come out of ordinance and go to the Fee Study Committee for approval.

Councilor Flynn moved to schedule first reading of the amendment to Chapter 6, Licenses and Encumbrances, Article 1, Encumbrance Permits and Licenses for Use of Public Property, by adding Section 6.111, Fees, at the July 13, 2026, City Council Meeting. Seconded by Councilor Hopkins and voted. Motion passed unanimously.

E. Release of Funds for Nebi Sculpture Contract

Councilor Cook moved to authorize the Trustees of the Trust Funds to disperse funds under the contract as the City Manager directs the Trustees for the remaining phases of the work of $30,000, $20,000 and $7,500. Seconded by Councilor Flynn and voted. Motion passed unanimously.

8. Consent Agenda

A. Pure Barre Portsmouth Community Event Request

B. Active City Encumbrances Report

C. Portsmouth 31st Halloween Parade Community Event Request

Councilor Bagley moved to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded by Assistant Mayor Kelley and voted. Motion passed unanimously.

9. Presentations and Written Communications

A. Tyler Garzo regarding Complete Street Policy

Councilor Hopkins moved to refer to the City Manager for a report back. Seconded by Councilor Moreau and voted. Motion passed unanimously.

B. Email Correspondence

Assistant Mayor Kelley moved to accept and place on file. Seconded by Councilor Tabor and voted. Motion passed unanimously.

10. Mayor McEachern

A. *Establishment of City Manager Evaluation Committee

Councilors must be on the City Council for at least one year. This year, Councilors Cook, Tabor and Moreau will form the committee.

B. Appointment to be Considered

Appointment of Gary Dozier to the Police Commission, until the next municipal election (November 2027), to replace Commissioner Jay Lieberman who has sent notice of his intent to resign the position effective July 31, 2026 (see letter attached). This appointment is made pursuant to the City Charter, Amendment E, which was amended in 2019 to bring it into compliance with State law, and provides that the City Council selects the candidate to fill a vacancy on the Police Commission.

Gary Dozier is the next person to be considered to serve as he was the next highest recipient of votes.

C. Appointments to be Voted

- Appointment of Karyn DeNicola to the Cemetery Committee
- Appointment of Jim Wilson from Alternate to Regular Member to the Cable and Broadband Internet Commission
- Reappointment of Ash Chicooree to the Cable and Broadband Internet Commission
- Reappointment of Jeff Abrams to the Cable and Broadband Internet Commission

Councilor Flynn moved to appoint the following as presented. Seconded by Councilor Hopkins and voted. Motion passed.

11. City Council Members

A. (Agenda Item 15.A taken out of order) Councilors Cook, Tabor, and Bagley

*Municipal Building Blue Ribbon Committee Update/Report Back

B. Councilor Cook

Councilor Cook moved to request that the Planning & Sustainability Department, in collaboration with the Housing Committee and Planning Board, review already pre-approved ADU plans used by other communities to determine whether the City of Portsmouth can adopt any existing plans to be approved for use in the City of Portsmouth. Seconded by Councilor Bagley. Motion passed unanimously.

Councilor Cook explained her reason for this recommendation. She would like for the City to stay ahead of the trend. She explained that the Housing Blue Ribbon Committee is currently working on their Housing Action Plan and is asking for this to be included in that process and that the Planning & Sustainability and Legal Departments look at this in conjunction with the Housing Committee and the Planning Board. Councilor Moreau suggested we ask for a report back from the Legal Department regarding the use of other communities' pre-approved plans. Councilor Tabor would like more explanation about how the plans fall within historic district guidelines. Outside the Historic District, the process and cost of approving an ADU is beneficial. Councilor Bagley mentioned this would make things more available by right of home ownership. The more things we can allow our residents to do by right, the easier it may be for them to stay in their homes. In addition to reaching out to other communities with established ADU plans, he mentioned reaching out to Cole Peterson from Portland, Oregon, a guru regarding ADUs for the past 20 years.

C. Councilor Tabor

Community Power Presentation and communication plan

Councilor Tabor moved to approve the communication plan recommended by the Energy Advisory Committee to increase transparency and awareness of the best electric rates for residents. Seconded by Assistant Mayor Kelley. Motion passed unanimously.

Councilor Tabor stressed the need to get the word out that you can opt out and select Eversource at any time. Rates are getting more competitive. Discussion ensued following the presentation in the packet. The next rate period is coming up. Eversource is asking for a 14.009 rate increase. Power rate may be settled by the end of the week. Councilor Bagley asked if 743 residents will get a postcard that they are getting refreshed? Will mailers be going out at every rate period? Will EDDM (every door direct mail) be used? EDDM may not be cost effective. Alternative methods of notification should be considered – website, email, Channel 22, newsletter etc. Can we do a test on the best way of getting the word out? Councilor Bagley said we should not refresh new residents. What is the legality of using reverse 911 for this type of notification to our residents?

D. Councilor Moreau

• Audit Committee Recommendation – three-year extension of the contract with outside auditing firm, CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA)

Councilor Moreau explained the background information regarding this contract extension.

Councilor Bagley explained, in the City Charter, conducting an external audit, which is done by independent auditors, is approved by the City Council. The Audit Committee's job is to evaluate the contract proposal from the auditors and recommend or not recommend the contract. The Audit Committee also looks at the audit to see if there are red flags and to ask follow-up questions.

Additional comments in support of this recommendation were provided by Councilor Cook, Mayor McEachern, and Councilor Morreau. It was noted that the next meeting of the Audit Committee is set for December 16, 2026 at 4 pm.

Councilor Moreau moved to authorize the City Manager to execute a contract with CLA for an additional three years. Seconded by Councilor Bagley. Motion passed unanimously.

E. Councilor Hopkins

• Parking and Traffic Safety Committee Minutes

Councilor Hopkins moved to accept the action sheet and minutes of the June 4, 2026, Parking and Traffic Safety Committee meeting. Seconded by Councilor Moreau. Motion passed unanimously.

12. City Manager's Informational Items

A. *FY28-32 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) – Submissions from Residents and Boards/Commissions/Committees – City Manager Conard shared that the process for the FY28-32 CIP is already underway, with a schedule to be shared shortly. She specifically noted that the deadline for all citizen requests to the upcoming CIP (which includes requests from Boards, Commissions, and Committees is September 18, 2026.

B. *Pease Development Authority Board Meeting Update – City Manager Conard provided a recap of the June 16, 2026 Board Meeting, which included information on the FY26-32 CIP for the Division of Ports & Harbors, an update on the status of Pease Golf Course activity for the first 2 months of the 2026 season, information relative to the planned, temporary (45-day) shutdown of the Air Traffic Control Tower at Portsmouth International Airport, and the arrival of the first in a series of American Cruise Lines vessels.

C. Report Back on Artist Live Work Studio Study Eligibility for Below Market Rate Housing Trust Funds – City Manager Conard informed the Council that the Trustees of Trust Funds met and confirmed the eligibility of Below Market Rate Housing Trust Fund monies for the Artist Live Work Studio Study.

13. Miscellaneous Business Including Business Remaining Unfinished At Previous Meeting

Councilor Flynn acknowledged the great work DPW is doing cleaning up the aftermath of the storm last week.

14. Adjournment

Councilor Moreau moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:11 pm. Seconded by Councilor Bagley. Motion passed unanimously.

*Indicates verbal report with no attachments

Prepared by:	Approved by the City Council
Sally A. Kellar	
Sally A. Kellar	
City Clerk	Date: July 13, 2026

The Portsmouth City Council meeting of June 22, 2026, can be viewed in its entirety on the City of Portsmouth YouTube Channel.