

**PORTSMOUTH POLICE COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup>, 2017 MONTHLY POLICE**  
**COMMISSION MEETING**

**5:30 p.m. Public Session – Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers**

**Brenna Cavanaugh, Chair**  
**Joseph J. Onosko**  
**Joe Plaia**

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017 monthly Police Commission meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. in the Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers. (An archived video of the meeting is available on the city's website.)

**The following people were present:** Commissioners Cavanaugh, Onosko, and Plaia, Chief Robert Merner, Admin. Manager Karen Senecal, Exec. Assistant Kathleen Levesque, members of the public.

- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Commissioner Onosko led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. **MOTION TO SUSPEND THE RULES**

The Chair asked for a motion to suspend the rules to allow for the Swearing-In of Auxiliary Officer Jon Allan during this portion of the meeting.

**Action: Commissioner Onosko moved** to suspend the rules to allow for the Swearing-In of Auxiliary Officer Jon Allan at this time.

**Seconded by Commissioner Plaia.**

**On a Voice Vote:** The motion passed to suspend the rules to allow for the Swearing-In of Auxiliary Officer Jon Allan at this time.

Chief Merner administered the Oath of Office to Auxiliary Officer Jon Allen and Officer Allan became the 15<sup>th</sup> active Portsmouth Police Auxiliary Unit Officer.

**IV. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES**

The Chair asked for a motion to accept the minutes.

**Action: Commissioner Plaia moved** to accept the minutes of the October 19<sup>th</sup>, and October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Police Commission meetings.

**Seconded by Commissioner Onosko.**

**On a Voice Vote:** The motion passed to accept the minutes of the October 19<sup>th</sup> and October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Police Commission meetings.

**V. PUBLIC COMMENT: : (The following is a brief summary of each person's comments and represents the speaker's personal opinion. The entire meeting can be viewed online by going to the city's website and clicking "Channel 22", and then clicking on "Archived 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017 meetings.")**

There was no public comment.

**VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**1. Disposal of Outdated Radio Equipment.**

**Action: Commissioner Plaia moved** to accept the proposal from 2-Way Communications for a \$3,000 credit to the Portsmouth Police Department account for a limited number of Motorola Quantar and ASTRO TAC units for spare parts, and the disposal of the remaining outdated equipment.

**Seconded by Commissioner Onosko.**

**On a Voice Vote:** The motion passed to accept the proposal from 2-Way Communications for a \$3,000 credit to the Portsmouth Police account for a limited number of Motorola Quantar and ASTRO TAX units for spare parts, and disposal of the remaining outdated equipment.

**VII. NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. POLICE COMMISSION:**

No new business.

**B. CHIEF OF POLICE:**

1. Accreditation Update – Chief Merner reviewed a timeline of the Department's accreditation progress to date. The department is 91% compliant with CALEA standards. A copy of this timeline is included in the meeting packet attached to these minutes.

2. Monthly Traffic Data Report: In reviewing traffic stats for the month of November, Chief Merner said that YTD we have stopped over 9,000 vehicle stops.
3. Grants:  
A grant in the amount of \$5,109.81 for the Bulletproof Vest Partnership 2017 Award has been received from the Bureau of Justice Assistance.  
**Action: Commission Onosko moved** to accept the grant in the amount of \$5,109.81 from the Bureau of Justice Assistance for the Bulletproof Vest Partnership and forward to the City Council for their action.  
**Seconded by Commission Plaia.**  
**On a Voice Vote:** The motion passed to accept the grant in the amount of \$5,109.81 from the Bureau of Justice Assistance for the Bulletproof Vest Partnership and forward to the City Council for their action.

#### **VIII. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS:**

Chief Merner respectfully requested the permission of the Commission to purchase two different types of safety equipment, with monies from the donation received by the Department from the Webber Estate.

Chief Merner described the first type of equipment, which would be Public Order equipment. This equipment allows officers to set up a line of separation between opposing opinion groups present at the same event, when there is reason to believe protesters and counter-protesters could clash. The cost of the Public order equipment and training would be \$25,229.75.

The second type of safety equipment is officer badging and hat shields. Chief Merner explained that at the present time, Officers have no single number by which to identify them. Currently they each have a radio number, a hat shield number, and an IMC number (IMC is the police records system). Two of these three numbers change as people are hired or they retire, so these numbers have changed frequently over the last decade. He explained how this sets up a serious officer safety situation, and an accountability gap. For example, when an officer triggers a panic alarm on his or her radio, by Standard Operating Procedures, to cancel the alarm, the officer needs to answer with their correct radio number. Any deviation from this is intended to alert dispatch to the need for emergency assistance.

In addition, the new badging system creates consistent identification throughout all administrative and court platforms. It also provides every officer with clear identification in more than one place on their uniform, so whether it is a traffic stop, or the confusion of an emergency, the public has at least two ways to get an officer's ID number, either on the hat shield, or the uniform.

Standardizing the officer badging system would cost \$14,664.40.

**Action: Commissioner Onosko moved** to bring the request forward for discussion.

**Seconded by Commissioner Plaia.**

**The motion was brought forward for discussion.**

**First Proposal:**

**Commissioner Plaia** said the potential for a Charleston-type event to happen here is just as real as it is anywhere else. Proactive policing is always better than reactive policing. Commissioner Plaia said he is in agreement with Chief Merner.

**Commissioner Onosko** asked if the equipment will be purchased for every officer. Chief Merner said each officer will be trained and have their own set of equipment so that it fits them and will work without adjustments in an emergency.

The Chair called for a vote on the request.

**On a Roll Call Vote:** The motion carried to purchase public order equipment and training for every Portsmouth Police Officer at a cost of \$25,229.75. The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Cavanaugh:	“Aye”
Commissioner Onosko:	“Aye”
Commissioner Plaia:	“Aye”

**Second Proposal:**

Safety of the officers & the safety of the public – Replacing the current officer identification system with a uniform numbered badging system of

visual & administrative identification in accordance with industry standards. Chief Merner explained the justification for this purchase.

The Chair asked for a motion to bring the item forward for discussion.

**Action: Commissioner Onosko moved** to discuss replacing the current system of office identification.

**Seconded by Commissioner Plaia.**

**Commissioner Onosko** said he felt this was an outstanding use of the Webber monies. This project directly impacts officer safety. He sees it as a lasting legacy to Mrs. Webber.

**Commissioner Plaia** felt being able to identify officers readily brings this into the realm of safety equipment, for both the officers and the public.

**Commissioner Cavanaugh** said Chief Merner's example was a good one. The Chair said she supports changing the badges but not the hats. She said she doesn't see how that fits in. She felt the hat shields are an accessory.

**Commissioner Onosko** added he felt that having a second form of identification is indeed a form of public safety.

Chief Merner said the hat shield is often more readily visible in a situation.

The Chair called for a vote:

**On a Roll Call Vote:** The motion passed to replace the current officer identification system with a uniform numbered badging system of visual & administrative identification in accordance with industry standards, at a cost of \$14,664.40. The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Cavanaugh:	“Nay”
Commissioner Onosko:	“Aye”
Commissioner Plaia:	“Aye”

**IX. MOTION TO ADJOURN:**

The Chair announced the next Police Commission meeting is scheduled for December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. in City Council Chambers.

There being no further business before the Commission, the Chair asked for a motion to adjourn.

**Action: Commissioner Onosko moved** the November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Police Commission meeting be adjourned.

**Seconded by Commissioner Plaia.**

**On a Voice Vote:** The motion passed to adjourn the November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Police Commission meeting at 6:15 p.m.

END OF MEETING