

**The Board of Fire Commissioners
Portsmouth Fire Department**

Fire Station 1, Training Room
January 9, 2018

Portsmouth, NH
1730 hours

I. Call to Order:

Chairwoman Matthes called the meeting to order at 1731 hours.

II. Pledge of Allegiance with Attendance:

Chairwoman Matthes led the pledge of allegiance.

Chairwoman Matthes, Commissioners Richard Gamester and Michael Hughes, Fire Chief Steven Achilles, Deputy Fire Chief James Heinz, Executive Assistant Tracy Freeman, Captain Todd Germain and Firefighter Timothy Cole.

III. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Motion, to approve the minutes of December 10, 2017, was made by Chairwoman Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

IV. Public Comment Session: None.

V. Presentation of Written Communications:

Chief Achilles read the thank you note from Grant Turpin, PRH Director of Emergency Management and EMS.

Motion, to accept and place on file, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.

VI. Recognition of Groups or Individuals:

Chief Achilles spoke briefly of the significant cold weather over the past couple of weeks and other than a small fire, no major incidents occurred, however the staff were out all day and night with various calls, shoveling hydrants and handling water main breaks and appreciates their hard work.

VII. Reports:

A. Fire Chief's Reports:

Chairwoman Matthes motioned to discuss Chief's reports 18-003 through 18-006. Motion seconded by Commissioner Hughes.

Chief Achilles reviewed reports with the Commission. Report (003), 2017 Response Report with Service Activity and Safety message for December. The report shows the department responding to 126 Fire Calls and 376 Ambulance Calls for the month which is up 100 or more

than last month. Totals for year to date shows the department responding to 4904 calls: 1319 fire and related service calls and 3585 ambulance service calls. Chief went on to outline some of the activity for the month with an outside fire on the railroad tracks in the area of McDonough Street, three motor vehicle accidents with two being vs pedestrians, and a chimney fire at 2 Rand Court. The Safety Message section provided an overall response activity of the department. The Service Activity and Safety Message report was submitted to the Portsmouth Herald for publication in local newspapers. Report (004), Fire and EMS Call Summary Report, shows the department responded to 285 fire calls for the month of December with 112 EMS calls with injury excluding vehicle accidents, 13 calls for cardiac conditions, 17 calls for psychiatric/behavioral problems and 16 alcohol abuse and effects calls. There were 93 calls that required no transport and 3 drug overdose calls. Report (005), FY18 Budget, Chief Achilles provided status update and noted the department is 49.98% into the fiscal year and 57.18% spent. He explained a few salary and overtime lines that are continuing to tracking high due to shift coverage for two members who are currently out on disability leave and another who is currently on temporary alternate duty. Budget projections have also been made for Firefighter Sutton who is anticipated to be deployed in April for a year. Fire alarm is tracking slightly higher due to the taking down of the city's fire alarm boxes and station 3's construction project. Otherwise, projections are based on how we are spending now and what we have typically spent over previous fiscal years. We will continue to monitor the lines closely he stated but feels financially we are in pretty good shape in keeping up with station needs and vehicle repairs. In March/April will look at the possibility of hiring an additional firefighter to cover Sutton's military leave and do have some indications of retirements that may come about. Report (006), Overtime Analysis, provided a breakdown of how overtime was used in the month of December along with a summary of what was charged to OT-Recall for the month.

Motion, to accept Chief's Reports 18-003 through 18-006, was made by Commissioner Hughes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gamester and passed unanimously.

B. Staff Reports:

Chief Achilles reported on behalf of Deputy Chief Roediger who is out on medical leave. Inspector Howe is covering and working diligently to keep up to date on things until Deputy Roediger's return and has been approved for overtime to cover Deputy Roediger's absence. Firefighter Chamberlain is also helping on inspections. Deputy Heinz and myself are splitting coverage while Deputy Roediger is out he noted.

Deputy Chief Heinz provided a report on Operations and Training within the department noting members from the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard coming in to review submarine operations with department personnel. Lt. Condon provided instruction to department personnel on building construction using State Street fire as reference. Currently working on plans for the USS

Manchester Commissioning Event. Station 3 construction project continues to move forward and training hours have doubled what they have been in the past years with about 6,000 hours in 2017.

X. Old Business:

Deputy Heinz provided an update on Station 3 with phase two being almost done which includes the completion of the bathrooms, officer's, storage and laundry areas. Meeting scheduled for tomorrow, 1/10. Looking to have Lieutenants in their office by mid of next week. Some items will need to be pushed out to spring like outside painting and landscape. Fire personnel have been very accommodating during this project.

Chief Achilles reported on the Joint Budget Committee who met on December 13th. Departments are coming in with about a 3.5% increase in operating budget with no additional personnel or programs. Currently the fire department is under that number. February will have the public hearing on the Fire Department's proposed FY19 budget where we will present a budget for current operations and a supplemental one which will include a 4-year plan to increase staffing levels. With an increased economic growth within the city and council supporting more projects and the implementation of new codes, staffing levels need to be looked at including the need for another fire inspector.

Chief Achilles noted the Capital Improvement projects city wide are substantial this year and may see projects moved out. Currently working with the Finance Department and City Manager to look at different funding options for our department requests which may include spreading projects over multiple fiscal years as we have done on some projects in the past.

XI. New Business:

After a brief discussion on emergency services rates Chief Achilles stated he worked with Deputy Finance Director Andrew Purgiel to establish a fee schedule which closely reflects the going rates as identified by Comstar and what is being charged regionally. Chief Achilles did note that the department has offered abatements for those who fall upon a hardship and are not able to pay their ambulance bill. Commissioner Gamester noted that page 1 of the City Manger's memo did not reflect the current rate column noted on page 2. Chief Achilles would bring this to the attention of the Deputy Finance Director.

Commissioner Gamester made the motion, to accept the recommended Emergency Service Rates as outlined in a memo from the City Manager with the change to the current rates to be updated to reflect what page 2 of the memo shows they are today. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

Chief Achilles read a letter from President & CEO Janice Morse of Newburyport Five Cents Savings Bank presenting our department with at \$500.00 donation in support of the work that we do.

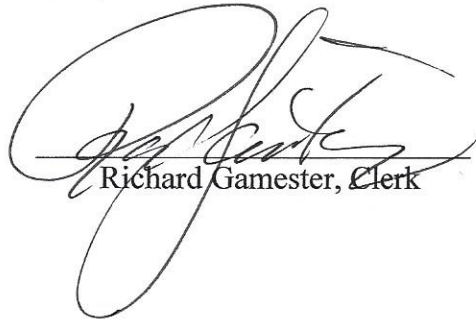
Commissioner Gamester made the motion to accept Newburyport Five Cents Savings Bank donation of \$500.00 with much gratitude. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

In accordance with Chapter 1, Article VIII, Section 1.804 – Code of Ethics - Commissioner Gamester's name was drawn and will represent the Fire Commission on the Board of Ethics.

In following City Charter Amendment A – Fire Commission, the Commission held a brief discussion and elected Jennifer Matthes to continue to serve as Chair and Richard Gamester to serve as Clerk.

XII. Adjournment:

Motion, to adjourn at 1845 hours, was made by Chairwoman Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gamester and passed unanimously.



Richard Gamester, Clerk