

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

Fire Station 1, Training Room  
August 14, 2018

Portsmouth, NH  
1730 hours

**I. Call to Order:**

Chairwoman Matthes called the meeting to order at 1730 hours.

**II. Pledge of Allegiance with Attendance:**

Chairwoman Matthes led the pledge of allegiance.

Commissioners: Jennifer Matthes, Richard Gamester, Chief Steven Achilles, Deputy Fire Chiefs Carl Roediger and James Heinz, Captain: Todd Germain  
Firefighters: Timothy Dame, Eric Carrier, Garrett Miller, Seth Kenneway and Inspector Patrick Howe with his family.

**III. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting:**

*Motion, to approve the minutes of July 10, 2018 was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.*

**IV. Public Comment Session:** None.

**V. Presentation of Written Communications:** None.

**VI. Recognition of Groups or Individuals:**

Chief Achilles took a moment to recognize Deputy Chief Carl Roediger on obtaining the Fire Marshal designation from Center for Public Safety Excellence. He becomes one of only 139 Fire Marshal designees worldwide. Commissioners congratulated Deputy Roediger on achieving this designation.

Chief Achilles took a moment to also recognize Inspector Patrick Howe on his achievement in obtaining the Executive Fire Officers designation through the National Fire Academy. The NFA's EFO program provides senior fire officers with a broad perspective on various facets of fire and emergency services administration. This is done through a series of four graduate and upper-division baccalaureate equivalent courses taken over a four-year period. Each course is two weeks in length and one must complete an Applied Research Project that

relates to his/her organization within six months after the completion of each of the four courses. Commissioners congratulated Inspector Howe on achieving this designation. Chief Achilles awarded him with a certificate received by the National Fire Academy.

Commission requested a 5-minute recess to allow for pictures at 1740 hours.

Meeting reconvened at 1745 hours.

## **VII. Reports:**

### **A. Fire Chief's Reports:**

*Commissioner Gamester motioned to discuss Chief's reports 18-067 through 18-070. Motion seconded by Chairwoman Matthes.*

Chief Achilles reviewed reports with the Commission.

Report (067), 2018 Response Report with Service Activity and Safety message for July 2018. The report shows the department responding to 436 Fire Calls and 320 Ambulance Calls for the month. Fire calls were slightly down from last month however ambulance calls were slightly up from last month. Total year to date shows the department responding to 2857 calls: 822 fire and related service calls and 2050 ambulance service calls. Chief spoke briefly about some of the activity for the month noting a marine incident in the Piscataqua River, a structure fire at 125 Brewery Lane, a motor vehicle accident involving a motorcycle, and a vehicle fire at 600 Lafayette Road. The Safety Message focused on how to prevent mulch fires since there has been many calls this past month for mulch fires. The Service Activity and Safety Message report was submitted to the Portsmouth Herald for publication in local newspapers. Report (068), Fire and EMS Call Summary Report, shows the department responded to 277 fire calls for the month of July with 146 of the calls being for rescue responses. EMS activity was 320 with the top three responses of psychiatric/behavioral problems, abdominal pain/problems equal amount of calls for syncope/fainting and head trauma. Report (069), FY19 Budget, Chief Achilles provided status update and noted the department is in its first month of the budget with some items paid in full upfront which shows the percentage spent to date higher than the percentage in the year. Tracy is working with Finance on the final numbers of the FY18 budget and we will have a clearer picture this week on encumbrances. Report (070), Overtime Analysis, provided a breakdown of how overtime was used in the month of July along with a summary of what was charged to OT-Recall for the month.

*Motion, to accept Chief's Reports 18-067 through 18-070, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.*

### **B. Staff Reports:**

Deputy Chief Roediger spoke further about the mulch fires and is working through site reviews with planning to remove mulch and having

contractors/landscapers use non-combustible materials. This past month has been really busy with plan reviews with a greater collaboration with other City Department's to look at life safety items. Currently working on tracking data for budgetary purposes to know how and what we do and how much time is devoted for each activity. Tracking activity will include number of inspections, number of retests, number of hours for codes research, ect. More to follow. Inspector Howe and myself are continuing to work with the Prescott Arts Festival and attendance at events and when the department needs to be involved. Events drawing larger crowds than normal may require an EMS crew to be onsite.

Deputy Chief Heinz reported on Operations and Training within the department. He reviewed the following items; MCI at the bus crash in Greenland, PSH Life Skills visit, sending some of our newer firefighters over to the USCG open house to become more familiar with their set up, Tall Ships tours and inspections, tour of Water Country and a cable ship at Tyco. The department has allowed for the EPA to install a Rad Net Monitor on Station 2 for the EPA to take readings from. The EPA has put in 140 of these Rad Net monitors around the country.

#### **VIII. Old Business:**

Chief Achilles provided an update on Station 3's open house which is scheduled for Saturday, August 18<sup>th</sup> from 9am – Noon. The Voc alarm system is up and running. With the removal of the fire alarm system and City's IT network issues, there has been some bugs but they are being worked out for resolution. July 31<sup>st</sup> the last masterbox came down in the city. Still some infrastructure needing to be removed. Last Monday night station 1's renovation project and Engine 6 replacement was approved. Deputy Heinz will be working with the City on scheduling the apron project and the replacement of the back deck. Over the winter months, we will review what other projects are in need of improvement within the station.

#### **IX. New Business:**

Chief Achilles noted a conditional offer was made to Firefighter O'Brien and he has completed the hiring process and will start on September 4<sup>th</sup>.

Chief Achilles also mentioned a conditional offer being made for the part-time Administrative Assistant position. The candidate is currently going through the hiring process and once she has completed it, a start date will be scheduled.

Chief Achilles mention the FY20 budget will be using the Committee of the Whole again as it has done in the past vs the Joint Budget Committee. He also added that he has spoken to both union representatives and met with each shift which lead into a self-assessment and strategic planning meeting to evaluate the department. A survey is being drafted which will look at employee satisfaction and ask for feedback. Once information is collected, a meeting with labor and

management will be scheduled to review and look at areas needing to be improved on. Survey will be anonymous so won't know who answered what.

**X. Adjournment:**

*Motion, to adjourn at 1802 hours, was made by Chairwoman Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.*

  
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Richard Gamester, Clerk