

PORTSMOUTH POLICE COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE JULY 17TH, 2018 POLICE COMMISSION MEETING

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

Joseph J. Onosko, Chair
Jim Splaine
Arthur Hilson

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The July 17th, 2018 monthly Police Commission meeting was called to order at 4:40 p.m. in the Wm. Mortimer Room of the police department for the purpose of going into non-public session.

The Chair called for a motion to go into non-public session under the provisions of RSA 91:A, 3-II (c), “Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person...”

Action: Commissioner Splaine moved to enter non-public session for the purpose delineated above.

Seconded by Commissioner Hilson.

On a Roll Call Vote: The motion passed as follows:

Commissioner Onosko:	“Aye.”
Commissioner Splaine:	“Aye.”
Commissioner Hilson:	“Aye.”

The motion passed to go into non-public session at 4:40 p.m.

The public session was called back 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 Onosko, Splaine, and Hilson (**NOTE: Commissioner Hilson was present via a telephone conference call**), Chief Robert Merner, Admin. Manager Karen Senecal, Exec. Assistant Kathleen Levesque, members of the Department, the public, and the press.

II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Chief Merner led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. **ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:**
The Chair asked for a motion to accept the minutes.

Action: Commissioner Hilson moved to accept the minutes of the May 29th, 2018 meeting.

Seconded by Commissioner Splaine.

On a Roll Call Vote: The motion passed to accept the minutes of the May 29th, 2018 meeting. The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Onosko:	“Aye.”
Commissioner Splaine:	“Aye.”
Commissioner Hilson:	“Aye.”

IV. **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 scrolling down the home page of the City’s website to “Recent Meeting Broadcast”, or “City YouTube Channel...” which is in the blue box just below it.)

Zelita Morgan, 35 Richards Avenue: Ms. Morgan thanked Chief Merner for bringing back policing on bicycles to the downtown. She asked general questions about how many police officers are on duty and where do they police. She requested additional attention to neighborhoods in regards to traffic enforcement, and felt there were many near misses of vehicles hitting pedestrians. Ms. Morgan also felt drivers are speeding on Richards Avenue all the time.

Ms. Morgan said that officers can’t see the drug dealing going on from cruisers, but if we could have cops on the street they will see the drug deals. She wanted to know where beat cops are on our policing plan, and what the strategy was to address this.

There being no further public comment, the Chair closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

V. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None.

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

Action: Commissioner Splaine moved to suspend the rules, and move to items 1-5 under, **“B. CHIEF OF POLICE”**.

Seconded by Commissioner Onosko.

On a Roll Call Vote: The motion passed to suspend the rules and move to items 1-5 under, **“B. CHIEF OF POLICE”**. The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Onosko:	“Aye.”
Commissioner Splaine:	“Aye.”
Commissioner Hilson:	“Aye.”

B. CHIEF OF POLICE:

1. **Life Saving Medal Award – Officer Thompson, ‘T.J.’ Potter**
2. **Promotions – Mark Newport was promoted to Captain, and Eric Kinsman and Josh McCain were promoted to Lieutenant.**
3. **Recognition of Retired Auxiliary Officers Captain Danny Ellis and Lieutenant Robert Ripley, who served the City for 45 and 37 years respectively.**
4. **Recognition of ACO Bonnie Robinson**
5. **YMCA North Woods Camp Project**

The Chair declared a fifteen-minute recess following the recognitions. The meeting recessed at 6:01 p.m. The public session resumed at 6:15 p.m.

The Commission returned to the agenda as written.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. POLICE COMMISSION:

1. Commissioner Onosko:
 - a. **Motorcycle Noise –** The Commissioner asked Chief Merner to report on the training and efforts undertaken by the department to control motorcycle noise in the city.

Chief Merner summarized the steps taken, which included obtaining motorcycle noise monitoring equipment, training of officers in its use, and conducting voluntary information testing at the Masonic Lodge property. Part of the goal is to make both residents and cycle riders aware of the concerns on either side. He said additional voluntary testings are planned. The

Department has also undertaken a wide-scope informational postcard mailing so citizens know what the laws are. If we do find straight pipes after all of this proactive activity, we will be citing the bike owners.

2. Commissioner Splaine:

a. Process for Considering Body & Patrol Car Cameras

The Commissioner said he wants to begin the process of considering how we might go about assessing the complicated matter of body and cruiser cameras. He would like to come back in Sept or October and make a motion as to what kind of fact-finding committee we might have.

Commissioner Hilson said he has thought about cameras in the past, but said there is a big difference between Chicago and Portsmouth. He didn't care to render an opinion at this point; but feels the idea has merit and should be looked at.

Commissioner Onosko said he also feels the idea of looking at this has merit. He said the forthcoming proposal would be procedural.

B. CHIEF OF POLICE, cont'd:

6. Grants & Donations:

a. Acceptance of the NH Dept. of Safety Opioid Grant Award:

Action: Commissioner Hilson moved to accept the grant in the amount of \$35,000 and forward to the City Council for their action.

Seconded by Commissioner Splaine.

On a Roll Call Vote: The motion passed to accept the grant in the amount of \$35,000 and forward to the City Council for their action. The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Onosko: "Aye."

Commissioner Splaine: "Aye."

Commissioner Hilson: "Aye."

b. Acceptance of \$300 from the law firm of Donahue, Tucker & Ciandella, PLLC in support of the Portsmouth Police Explorer Cadets.

Action: Commissioner Hilson moved to accept the donation in the amount of \$300 from the law firm of Donahue, Tucker & Ciandella, PLLC in support of the Portsmouth Police Explorer Cadets and forward to the City Council for their action.

Seconded by Commissioner Splaine.

On a Roll Call Vote: The motion passed to accept the donation of \$300 from the law firm of Donahue, Tucker & Ciandella, PLLC in support of the Portsmouth Police Explorer Cadets and forward to the City council for their action. The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Onosko:	“Aye.”
Commissioner Splaine:	“Aye.”
Commissioner Hilson:	“Aye.”

- c. Acceptance of a donation in the amount of \$100 from the Wentworth-Coolidge Commission, Inc. in support of the Portsmouth Police Explorer Cadets.

Action: Commissioner Splaine moved to accept the donation of \$100 from the Wentworth-Coolidge Commission, Inc. in support of the Portsmouth Police Explorer Cadets and forward to the City Council for their action.

Seconded by Commissioner Hilson.

On a Roll Call Vote: The motion passed to accept the donation of \$100 from the Wentworth-Coolidge Commission, Inc. in support of the Portsmouth Police Explorer Cadets and forward to the City Council for their action. The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Onosko:	“Aye.”
Commissioner Splaine:	“Aye.”
Commissioner Hilson:	“Aye.”

7. Letters of Thanks and Appreciation:

- a. Chief Merner read several letters of thanks and appreciation received by the Department for the work of individual officers.
- b. Chief Merner recognized the strong performance of both Portsmouth Police K-9 Teams in the recent US Police Canine Association Regional competitions. The Chief said Portsmouth is looking at hosting this event next year.

- c. Chief Merner said that Rosalyn Baldwin, of RosalynLoves.com, will be visiting Portsmouth this coming Thursday.
- 8. Accreditation Report
- 9. Traffic Stats
 - a. Chief Merner noted that traffic enforcement activity has increased tenfold since 2016. He said we are still directing officer activity out to areas where we have the most citizen feedback. We have sent two officers down to Boston for tactical bicycle training and have been putting these officers in the downtown and in the neighborhoods. We are putting them out as often as manning and staffing allow.

We're using motorcycles and a second low visibility cruiser for traffic enforcement. We have and will continue to attack this from every angle. This issue continues to be 60-70% of the complaints we get. He said the Department is working with Public Works toward purchasing additional speed signs.
- 10. Financial Report:
 - a. We are in the midst of closing out the fiscal year. We will be starting FY '19 with a \$45,000 deficit as a result of changes to the final city budget. We will start our year with cuts to our basic operating budget.

C. PATROL DIVISION:

- a. This report is included in the Commission packet.

VII. COURT OFFICE REPORT

- a. This report is included in the Commission packet.

VIII. MISCELLANEOUS/OTHER BUSINESS: None.

IX. NEXT REGULAR MEETING:

NOTE: (Since the 7-17-2018 Police Commission Meeting, the next scheduled meeting date has changed as follows.) The next Commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 21st, 2018 with the public session beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers.

X. MOTION TO ADJOURN:

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

Action: Commissioner Hilson moved the July 17th, 2018 Monthly Police Commission Meeting be adjourned.

Seconded by Commissioner Splaine.

On a Roll Call Vote: The motion passed to adjourn the July 17, 2018 Monthly Police Commission Meeting at 6:49 p.m. The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Onosko:	“Aye.”
Commissioner Splaine:	“Aye.”
Commissioner Hilson:	“Aye.”

END OF MEETING

Kathe

*Respectfully Submitted By Kathleen Levesque, Executive Assistant
Reviewed By Commissioner Hilson, Clerk of the Commission
Arthur L. Hilson*