

091

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

Central Fire Station
October 16, 2019

Portsmouth, NH
1800 hours

I. Call to Order:

Chairwoman Matthes called the meeting to order at 1800 hours.

II. Pledge of Allegiance with Attendance:

Chairwoman Matthes led the pledge of allegiance.

Present were Commissioners: Jennifer Matthes, Richard Gamester and Michael Hughes; Fire Chief Todd Germain, Deputy Fire Chief James Heinz, Executive Assistant Tracy Freeman, Captain Jason Gionet and Firefighters: Tim Dame, Steve Morse, Eric Detweiler, Connor O'Brien and Matthew Stinson.

III. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Motion, to approve the minutes of September 10, 2019, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

IV. Public Comment Session: None.

V. Presentations of Written Communications: None.

VI. Recognition of Groups or Individuals:

Chief Germain turned the meeting over to Deputy Chief Heinz for the introduction of Firefighter Matthew Stinson who started with the department on September 17, 2019.

VII. Reports:

A. Fire Chief's Reports:

Chairwoman Matthes motioned to discuss Chief's reports 19-085 through 19-088. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gamester.

Chief Germain reviewed reports with the Commission.

Report (085), 2019 Response Report with Service Activity and Safety message for September 2019. The report shows the department responding to a total of 435 calls for the month: 126 Fire Calls and 309 Ambulance Calls. Fire calls

were slightly down from last month however, ambulance calls were slightly higher than last month. Chief also noted that 19% of the calls this month happened at the same time. Total year to date shows the department responding to 3916 calls: 1041 fire and related service calls and 2569 ambulance service calls. Chief spoke briefly about some of the activity for the month noting a motor vehicle accident with entrapment on I-95NB. Station 1 companies and Rescue 7 responded where hydraulic rescue tools were used to extricate one patient from one of the vehicles and was transported as a Trauma Alert with severe injuries. Another motor vehicle accident occurred at 1166 Greenland Road where responding companies found a 3 car MVA with one vehicle fully involved in fire. Three people were transported with minor injuries. A natural gas leak occurred at 697 Islington Street which required all companies to respond. Gas leak was caused by construction equipment which punctured a high pressure line. Evacuations were done and there were no injuries. The safety message focused on Halloween Safety. The Service Activity and Safety Message report was submitted to the Portsmouth Herald for publication in local newspapers. Report (086), Fire and EMS Call Summary Report, shows the department responded to 126 fire calls for the month of September with 15 of the calls being for rescue responses which gets deducted from the total of fire calls. EMS activity was 310 with the top three responses being for weakness, abdominal pain/problems and alcohol abuse and effects. There were 6 calls for drug overdose/abuse and 71 non-transport. Report (087), FY20 Budget, Chief Germain reviewed the budget with the Commission and noted the upfront costs which are paid each year at the beginning of the budget year and noted that the collective bargaining agreements have not yet been applied however, the retro pays have been paid out. He also commented on some of the overtime accounts which now that summer has passed, should taper off a bit and we will see some savings in salaries for uniform personnel with the 3 vacancies within the department right now. Report (088), Overtime Analysis, provided a breakdown of how overtime was used in the month of September along with a summary of what was charged to OT-Recall for the month. Chairwoman Matthes inquired about the Shape the Future class and what that was. Chief Germain stated he wasn't completely sure however, he would find out and let her know tomorrow.

Motion, to accept Chief's Reports 19-085 through 19-088, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

B. Staff Reports:

Deputy Chief Heinz reported on Operations and Training within the department. He noted the various trainings that occurred over the past month which included trench training at the Department of Public Works and an active shooter drill that took place at the Pease Tradeport. The drill went well and we will be meeting with PPD Command Staff to review procedures and develop plans for integrating the two departments when a major event occurs. The department continued to train on extrication using a car and bus donated by National Wrecker. Can't thank National Wrecker enough for their assistance

in helping us with this type of training. Deputy Chief Howe and Captain Gionet both have received recognition of 20 years as NREMT. Currently have 7 probationary firefighters on board and recently held an oral board with hopes of hiring additional firefighters to fill the open vacancies however, only one candidate was selected to move forward in the process and will do a ride-along tomorrow. Deputy Heinz went on to explain the new 4-step hiring process which begins with a resume – then oral board for those who meet our requirements – top 3 candidates are selected from the oral board to do a ride along – then Chief interviews. The ride along allows for the candidate to come in and spend the day with the group to find out more about the position and allows the department to get to know the candidate to see if he/she would be a good fit. Moves it past the process of the oral board where a candidate sits in a room in a suit. Chairwoman Matthes inquired about the interest with our recent advertisement. Deputy Heinz noted that there is some however, there is an overall decrease in the number of people looking to become firefighters. Deputy Heinz went on to note that the North Hampton fire was a difficult fire to fight because it resulted in two deaths, a father and his son. A peer support meeting has been set up in North Hampton next week and everyone who was there will be able to attend.

Deputy Chief Howe was not available due to investigating a fire that took place prior to the meeting.

IX. New Business:

Chief Germain read the letter that accompanied a \$100 donation to the department from Carolyn Marshall.

Motion, to accept the \$100 donation from Carolyn Marshall with sincere gratitude, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.

Chief Germain spoke briefly about the department's Chaplain Program which seems to have been put on a side burner after Fr. Angelo Pappas was transferred to another church outside of the State. Fr. Pappas was very active and involved on a daily basis with our department and helped several members with personal issues they were having. The department appointed Fr. Bob Archon upon Pappas' retirement however, he doesn't seem to have the same dedication as Pappas did and many department members don't even know who he is because we don't see him much. This may be due to other commitments however, not sure because there isn't any open communication. With that said, Chief still feels there is a need here to have a Chaplain on board due to the nature of our calls and PTSD and would like to be sure we have someone available to respond any and all times and make themselves known within the department. Chief went on to say he has met with Jeff Pelkey who also serves as the Police Department's Chaplain. He has been a part of public safety for many years serving as a part time police officer in South Berwick, Maine for the past 33 years and working as a Kittery firefighter for the past 20 years. He is an ordained deacon with the United Church of Christ and a

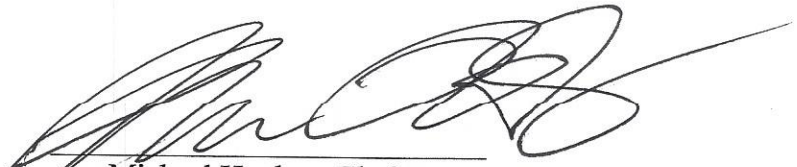
fill-in minister in York County Maine. Chief Germain noted he is very well respected and has a non-denominational approach. He is very excited about this opportunity and looks forward to meeting our members and taking part in union events and such so that everyone can have the chance to get to know him. Chairwoman Matthes felt he would be a great asset to have on board.

Motion, to appoint Jeffrey Pelkey as the new Fire Chaplain with the Portsmouth Fire Department effective immediately. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gamester and passed unanimously.

Chief Germain noted that the grant application for the Narcan Leave Behind Kits has been sent to the advisory committee for review. Once the committee has reviewed it, it will go to the Director for approval.

X. Adjournment:

Motion, to adjourn at 1900 hours, was made by Chairwoman Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gamester and passed unanimously.



Michael Hughes, Clerk