

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

Fire Station 2  
November 13, 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 Chiefs: James Heinz and Patrick Howe, Executive Assistant Tracy Freeman, Captain Brian Ryll; Lieutenant Scott Egan and Firefighters: Scott Young, Jim O'Brien, Bruce Gosselin, Eric Carrier, Tim Griswold, Duncan Regonini, Peter O'Sullivan and Clark Brighton.

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

*Motion, to approve the minutes of October 16, 2019, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.*

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

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

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

Chief Germain noted the swearing in of Firefighter O'Brien has been postponed due to a scheduling conflict.

Chief Germain introduced new department Chaplain Jeff Pelkey. Chaplain Pelkey spoke briefly of his background in ministry, funeral home director along with being a firefighter in Maine and what he hopes to bring to the department to include health and wellness.

**VII. Reports:**

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

*Chairwoman Matthes motioned to discuss Chief's reports 19-094 through 19-097. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gamester.*

Chief Germain reviewed reports with the Commission.

Report (094), 2019 Response Report with Service Activity and Safety message for October 2019. The report shows the department responding to a total of 446 calls for the month: 159 Fire Calls and 287 Ambulance Calls. Fire calls were slightly up from last month however, ambulance calls were slightly down from last month. Chief also noted that 18% of the calls this month happened at the same time. Total year to date shows the department responding to 4045 calls: 1200 fire and related service calls and 2845 ambulance service calls. Chief spoke briefly about some of the activity for the month noting a MVA with entrapment along Banfield Road where a box truck had overturned off the side of the road requiring Eversource to come in and cut power to the area to extricate the driver. A structure fire at 171 Union Street was also noted along with an arson-vehicle fire at Prescott Park. After investigation by police and fire officials, an arrest was made for arson and other crimes. The safety message focused on tips for carbon monoxide safety. The Service Activity and Safety Message report was submitted to the Portsmouth Herald for publication in local newspapers. Report (095), Fire and EMS Call Summary Report, shows the department responded to 274 fire calls for the month of October with 132 of the calls being for rescue responses which gets deducted from the total of fire calls. EMS activity was 287 with the top three responses being for alcohol abuse and effects, abdominal pain and anxiety attack/acute stress reaction. There were 3 calls for drug overdose/abuse and 49 non-transports. In working with the police department, there is a belief that responses relating to substance misuse and behavioral issues has been increasing so we are going to monitor this as well to see how EMS is tracking on these. Report (096), FY20 Budget, Chief Germain reviewed the budget with the Commission and noted that the department is still tracking with a surplus and that the department budget has accounted for the collective bargaining agreements of the firefighters and officers however, funds relating to those who are part of PMA will not be added to the budget due to a shortfall after other distributions were made to other departments. According to Finance Dept., it is believed that the savings between former Chief's salary and current Chief's salary will make up for it. Commission discussed this and made note should department come up short later on due to this. Report (097), Overtime Analysis, provided a breakdown of how overtime was used in the month of October along with a summary of what was charged to OT-Recall for the month.

*Motion, to accept Chief's Reports 19-094 through 19-097, 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 Paramedic ACLS/PALS refreshers, training at the indoor pool for new hires, CPR refreshers starting this week, confined space training at

station 2 and ambulance operations on the fire ground. Station 1 generator is in the process of being replaced with a pre-bid meeting held today and we currently have 1 firefighter in the process with another round of interviews happening later this month.

Deputy Chief Howe reported on Fire Prevention noting that he and the inspectors are working on code updates, inspections of hotels with 15 or more beds in the works and many of the larger projects within the city are in the occupancy permit stage. Both Fire Inspectors have successfully past the Fire Investigator class at the State.

**IX. New Business:**

Chief Germain read two letters of intent to retire, one from Firefighter Smith and the other from Firefighter Sylvester. Both are eligible for the buyback of their disability leave up to 150 days.

**X. Adjournment:**

*Motion, to adjourn at 1840 hours, was made by Chairwoman Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gamester and passed unanimously.*



Michael Hughes, Clerk