

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

Fire Station 1, Training Room  
March 12, 2019

Portsmouth, NH  
1730 hours

**I. Call to Order:**

Chairwoman Matthes called the meeting to order at 1745 hours.

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

Commissioner Gamester led the pledge of allegiance.

Present were Commissioners: Jennifer Matthes, Richard Gamester and Michael Hughes, Chief Steven Achilles, Deputy Fire Chiefs: James Heinz and Patrick Howe; Executive Assistant Tracy Freeman; Newburyport Fire Chief Christopher LeClaire, North Hampton Fire Chief Michael Tulley, Members of the Department and Family Members.

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

*Motion, to approve the minutes of February 12, 2019, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.*

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

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

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

Chief Achilles swore in the following individuals:

Deputy Fire Chief Patrick Howe, Captain Rick Condon, Fire Prevention Officer Shawn Wheeler and Lieutenant Garrett Miller.

*Motion, for a 10-min recess for pictures with department members and families, was made by Chairwoman Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gamester and passed unanimously.*

Meeting reconvened at 1800 hours:

**VII. Reports:**

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

*Chairwoman Matthes motioned to discuss Chief's reports 19-025 through 19-028. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gamester.*

Chief Achilles reviewed reports with the Commission.

Report (025), 2019 Response Report with Service Activity and Safety message for February 2019. The report shows the department responding to a total of 356 calls for the month: 92 Fire Calls and 264 Ambulance Calls. Fire calls were slightly down from last month however, Ambulance calls were up from last month. Total year to date shows the department responding to 723 calls: 202 fire and related service calls and 521 ambulance service calls. Chief spoke briefly about some of the activity for the month noting a motor vehicle rollover crash in the parking lot of 1465 Woodbury Avenue pick-up versus car in which driver of pick-up was ejected from vehicle. Also noted was a structure fire at 42 Manor Drive and Mutual Aid response to the Town of Hampton for a structure fire. The safety message focused on safety with oily rags. The Service Activity and Safety Message report was submitted to the Portsmouth Herald for publication in local newspapers. Report (026), Fire and EMS Call Summary Report, shows the department responded to 192 fire calls for the month of February with 100 of the calls being for rescue responses which gets deducted from the total of fire calls. Due to a TEMSIS printing issue, the EMS activity report was not able to be processed for February. Report (027), FY19 Budget, Chief Achilles reviewed the budget with the Commission and noted the department is tracking in the good and would see a savings this year in salaries uniform personnel due to retirements after the budget was submitted. With one Lieutenant on disability, we will see an increase in Overtime for Disability. We have a Firefighter currently out on Workers Comp however, we have been able to cover his shifts with on duty personnel. As we approach the last quarter of the fiscal year, we will be monitoring expenditures closely. Report (028), Overtime Analysis, provided a breakdown of how overtime was used in the month of February along with a summary of what was charged to OT-Recall for the month.

*Motion, to accept Chief's Reports 19-025 through 19-028, 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 that fit testing has been completed. Department personnel did some training at PRH on trauma activation alert criteria and the department is working with the school's resource officer and police department in the implementation of a new program called "Run, Hide, Fight" at the Portsmouth High School. More to come. Rescue 7 training is underway and the new fire boat has been completed and has been accepted.



Deputy Chief Howe noted this the prevention department is busy with plan reviews for the AC Hotel, Brewery Lane, Cate Street and West End Yards. He stated he is working with newly appointed Prevention Officer Wheeler and bringing him up to speed on prevention operations.

**VIII. Old Business:**

Chief Achilles presented the department's FY20 Proposed Budget to the City Manager. Request was to reduce overall budget by \$150K and we were able to do that and maintain our initiatives he stated to the Commission. The budget will be going to City Council with a 3.2% increase over FY19 budget but does not include adjustments for COLA's. Those would be calculated separately. The department did meet the request of the City Council's recommendations. CIP was approved last Monday night however, still can have changes as the overall budgets come in and are reviewed.

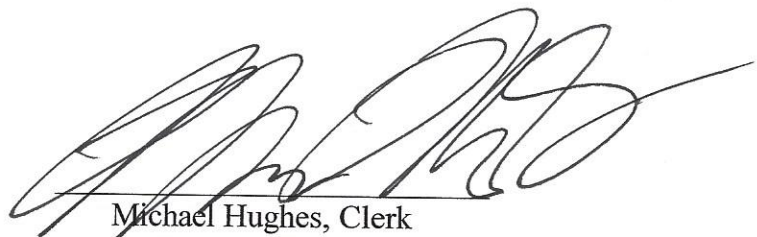
**IX. New Business:**

Chief Achilles spoke briefly about the firefighter vacancies. To keep at 45 we would need to hire two firefighters. Made two conditional offers, one accepted and one declined due to wanting to continue his education. We currently have two firefighters out on military leave but it is anticipated that they both will return to shift in April.

Chief Achilles spent a moment to recognize Firefighter Sutton. Firefighter Sutton was deployed overseas in mid-April last year and has safely returned home. Firefighter Sutton plans to be back on shift around the second week of April. Commissioners were pleased to hear of his safe return and extended their thanks and appreciation for his service.

**X. Adjournment:**

*Motion, to adjourn at 1825 hours, was made by Chairwoman Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gamester and passed unanimously.*



Michael Hughes, Clerk