

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

Fire Station 2, George Pierce Training Room  
July 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 and family, Deputy Fire Chief James Heinz, Deputy Fire Chief Patrick Howe, Executive Assistant Tracy Freeman, Captain Brian Ryll and family, Lieutenant Seth Kenneway and family, Fire Prevention Officer Chad Putney and family, and members of the department.

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

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

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

*Motion, to suspend the rules and move to New Business, item 19-067 on the agenda, the promotion of Chad Putney to Fire Prevention Officer, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.*

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

Portsmouth City Clerk, Kelli Barnaby, called Chief Germain's wife and parents up to the front as she swore in Fire Chief Todd Germain.

Chief Germain swore in Fire Prevention officer Chad Putney, Lieutenant Seth Kenneway and Captain Brian Ryll.

*Motion, to take a 10-minute recess for pictures, was made by Chairwoman Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gamester and passed unanimously.*

Meeting reconvened at 1830 hours.

**VI. Reports:**

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

*Chairwoman Matthes motioned to discuss Chief's reports 19-062 through 19-066. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gamester.*

Fire Chief Germain reviewed reports with the Commission.

Report (062), 2019 Response Report with Service Activity and Safety message for June 2019. The report shows the department responding to a total of 386 calls for the month: 119 Fire Calls and 267 Ambulance Calls. Both Fire calls and Ambulance calls were slightly down from 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 2275 calls: 630 fire and related service calls and 1645 ambulance service calls. Chief spoke briefly about a natural gas leak on 14 Fairview Drive that a construction crew had broken into a 2 inch gas main with excavation equipment. Once leak was secured, fire crews used gas detection meters to ensure the safety of area homes prior to allowing residents back into their homes. The safety message focused on swimming and pool safety. The Service Activity and Safety Message report was submitted to the Portsmouth Herald for publication in local newspapers. Report (063), Fire and EMS Call Summary Report, shows the department responded to 224 fire calls for the month of June with 129 of the calls being for rescue responses which gets deducted from the total of fire calls. EMS activity was 267 with the top three responses being for alcohol abuse and effects, abdominal pain and weakness without specific cause. There were 3 calls for drug overdose/abuse and 49 non-transports. Report (064), FY19 Budget, Chief Germain reviewed the budget with the Commission and noted the department would see a surplus this year as we wrap up the fiscal year. Some June expenses are still trickling in but have been accounted for. The budget also accounts for salary and overtime chargebacks due to payroll cut offs. Report (065), FY 20 Budget, Chief Germain noted that we are underway in the new fiscal year and due to upfront costs, we generally show a higher spent to date percentage in the first quarter. Report (066), Overtime Analysis, provided a breakdown of how overtime was used in the month of June along with a summary of what was charged to OT-Recall for the month.

*Motion, to accept Chief's Reports 19-062 through 19-066, 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 introduced new hire Firefighter Ryan DiFranza and noted Firefighter/Paramedic Greg Harnois would be starting on July 29<sup>th</sup> and a conditional offer was made today to another Firefighter/AEMT which will fill our current staffing vacancies. Department personnel continued training on

extrication at National Wrecker and on helicopter safety/landing zones at PCA. Security cameras at station 1 have been specked out and National Night Out will be on August 9, 2019.

Deputy Chief Howe reported on Prevention noting various projects happening within the city.

**VII. New Business:**

*Commissioner Gamester made the motion to promote Chad Putney to Fire Prevention Officer. Chief Germain spoke on behalf of this promotion with Putney being a senior firefighter and well versed in fire codes and fire protection and happy to have him as a part of the Fire Prevention Bureau. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.*

Deputy Heinz spoke briefly about the 1KW Coleman gasoline powered generator that was donated to the department from Jim and Nancy Andrews.

*Motion, to accept the donation of the 1KW Coleman generator from Jim and Nancy Andrews with gratitude, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.*

Chief Germain spoke about a couple of purchases he would like to use the Estate of Geraldine Webber funds for.

He noted the need to upgrade the departments 4-gas meters and PID meters which are 6-10 years old now, along with the purchase of a couple additional ones so that all apparatus would have them available. He made the request to use the Estate of Geraldine Webber to do so along with purchasing a couple CO detectors and ammonia meters to put in the jump kits located on the ambulances at a cost of no more than \$15,237.00

Chief Germain spoke of the need to purchase personal safety equipment for water operations and for Marine 1 at a cost not to exceed \$22,571. He turned the meeting over to Lieutenant Kenneway who has been working with Lieutenant Miller on this. Lt. Kenneway noted that currently we have dry suits which keeps the water off of the person in the suit however, we are in need of thermal protection as well which is like wearing long johns under snow suits. We would be looking to purchase 12 additional suits to include thermal wear, boots, gloves and caps to stay with Marine 1 and would be kept in the storage unit being built at the Port where Marine 1 is kept. The current suits we have would be kept at station 1 should we need to assist the Coast Guard at any time. In working with the US Coast Guard, they recommended purchasing a couple of mesh vests which would go over the suit and hold survival gear. Lt. Kenneway went on to add that the department is also in need of purchasing a couple more personal flotation devices and beacons should a man fall overboard. Commissioner Gamester asked about the life expectancy of the suits. Lt. Kenneway answered stating that the suits and gear would need to be maintained by washing them after use and zippers waxed, etc. but in doing so, they

would last approximately 10-years. Commissioner Hughes asked why the need for 12 suits which Lt. Kenneway stated that with a response of 5 personnel, different sizes are needed to be sure a suit is available to each responder. Commissioner Hughes asked if these suits and equipment are the best that are available right now and Lt. Kenneway replied yes stating the suits and equipment mimic that being used by the US Coast Guard.

Chief Germain spoke of the need to purchase two (2) Stryker Power Loads, for the ambulances at a cost not to exceed \$61,119. The cost he noted also included a 6-year maintenance plan which if purchased upfront would save the department approximately 40% of the total cost if purchased separately. These power loads help to improve operator and patient safety by supporting the cot throughout the loading and unloading process. Captain Gionet spoke further about the power loads noting it would cause less strain on the firefighter's back and safer footing. Commissioner Hughes inquired about use and whether the department has had a chance to try them out. Captain Gionet answered yes stating that the Stryker Rep had been in to show them the equipment and try them out. He also noted that several area departments have these on their ambulances to which many of our members have been able to see them used in person. He went on to add that new ambulances today are being built higher so there is an increased need to have these power loads. The 6-year maintenance agreement will service and replace parts at no additional cost to the department. Commissioner Gamester inquired about the life expectancy of these power loads. Captain Gionet answered that there is a 10-year life expectancy on these and our ambulances have a life span of 6-7 years before they are replaced so they would be rotated in. He also noted that new ambulances are being specked out with these power loads included as part of the purchase.

Commissioner Gamester noted that we will need to figure out a plan on how to purchase this type of safety equipment in the future because we won't always have this money available to us. Chief Germain agreed.

Commissioner Hughes wanted to reaffirm that we would be getting the best available equipment today if we moved forward with approving these purchases. Chief Germain answered yes and went on to add that he was not looking to spend frivolously and that the need is there. Chairwoman Matthes inquired about funding and where these types of purchases are made. Chief Germain answered stating typically done through Capital however, there is nothing planned in Capital to support these items currently and there is a need for them.

*Motion, to approve the Fire Chief to purchase 12 Air Monitoring Gas Meters from the Webber Bequest at a cost not to exceed \$15,237.00, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.*

*Motion, to approve the Fire Chief to purchase Personal Safety Equipment for water operations and Marine 1 from the Webber Bequest at a cost not to exceed*

*\$22,571.00, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.*

*Motion, to approve the Fire Chief to purchase two (2) Stryker Power Loads, with maintenance costs, for the ambulances from the Webber Bequest at a cost not to exceed \$61,119.00, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.*

**VIII. Adjournment:**

*Motion, to adjourn at 1920 hours, was made by Chairwoman Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gamester and passed unanimously.*

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Michael Hughes, Clerk