

PORTSMOUTH POLICE COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 24TH, 2019 POLICE COMMISSION
MEETING

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

Joseph J. Onosko, Chair
Jim Splaine
Stefany Shaheen

NOTE: The Commission came out of non-public session at 9:50 a.m. At the direction of the Chair, the public session was continued until 5:30 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The September 24th, 2019 public session of the monthly Police Commission meeting was called back to order at 5:30 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 Shaheen, Chief Robert Merner, Admin. Manager Karen Senecal, members of the Department, family members, and the public.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Karen Senecal led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. MOTION TO SUSPEND THE AGENDA:

The Chair asked for a motion to suspend the agenda, and move to item #1 under the Chief's report, 'Vesting of Rank & Swearing-In Ceremony'.

Action: Commissioner Splaine moved to suspend the agenda, and move to item #1 under the Chief's report, 'Vesting of Rank & Swearing-In Ceremony'.

Seconded by Commissioner Shaheen.

On a Voice Vote: The motion passed to move to item #1 under the Chief's report, 'Vesting of Rank & Swearing-In Ceremony'.

Chief Merner vested the following newly promoted officers with the authority and responsibilities of their new rank:

- Captain Darrin Sargent
***Chief Merner also presented Capt. Sargent with the special insignia worn on the uniform for 20 years of service to the Department.
- Captain Michael Maloney
- Lieutenant John Peracchi
- Lieutenant David Keaveny
- Sergeant Eric Benson
- Sergeant Nicholas Small

Chief Merner then administered the Sworn Officer Oath to our newest officer, Alex McMillen. Officer McMillen is an experienced police officer.

There was a brief intermission while the officers and their families had photos taken.

IV. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:

The Chair asked for a motion to accept or amend the minutes of the August 27th, 2019 meeting minutes.

Action: Commissioner Shaheen moved to accept the minutes of the above captioned meeting as written.

Seconded by Commissioner Splaine.

On a Voice Vote: The motion passed to accept the minutes of the above captioned meeting as written.

V. 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.)

There being no one wishing to speak, the Chair closed the public comment section.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

VII. NEW BUSINESS:

A. POLICE COMMISSION:

1. Commissioner Onosko:

Body Camera Sub-Committee Report – Jen Murray, a citizen panel member of the sub-committee, presented a summary of the panel’s research, findings, and recommendations. The report represents nine months of work and meetings by the sub-committee.

Professor Albert ‘Buzz’ Scherr, Chair of the sub-committee, who requested time to present the minority opinion regarding the findings, followed the presentation by Jen Murray.

The Chair asked for a motion on the findings of the sub-committee.

Action: Commissioner Shaheen moved to adopt the sub-committee’s recommendation to not proceed with body-camera implementation at this time.

Seconded by Commissioner Splaine.

The Chair asked for discussion. Commissioner Shaheen said although she was not yet a commissioner at the start of the project, she can vouch for the thoroughness and detailed analysis that went into this process.

The Commissioner went on to say she invested a considerable amount of time on-boarding after being appointed by the City Council to fill the vacant seat. She said her thorough onboarding made it clear the Portsmouth Police Department has other pressing physical needs. The Departments physical building has been outgrown and is in disrepair. The IT infrastructure that supports all communications and IT is aged and not up to the demands currently required of it.

Commissioner Shaheen felt we definitely need to continue to evaluate Geo location needs and GPS within cruisers as this is a significant officer and citizen safety issue.

Commissioner Splaine said he agreed with everything just summarized by Commissioner Shaheen. He also felt the committee's reporting was well-balanced.

The Chair asked for a vote on the Motion.

On a Voice Vote: The Motion passed to adopt the sub-committee's recommendation to not proceed with body-camera implementation at this time.

B. CHIEF OF POLICE, cont'd:

2. Grant Acceptance:

- a. **Action: Commissioner Splaine moved** to accept the grant in the amount of \$20,425 from the NH Department of Safety for ten different highway safety initiatives, and forward to the City Council for their Action.

Seconded by Commissioner Shaheen.

On a Voice Vote: The motion passed to accept the grant in the amount of \$20,425 from the NH Department of Safety for ten different highway safety initiatives, and forward to the City Council for their Action.

3. Letters of Appreciation:

- a. Chief Merner received a note of appreciation from a couple visiting Portsmouth who were involved in a motor vehicle accident. They thanked Officers Sean Evans and James Noury for their professional and courteous manner. The writer said their presence and demeanor provided him with a feeling of reassurance in the midst of a very emotional and stressful event.

4. Financial Report

- a. The Police Department will be returning over \$125,000 to the city as we close the FY '19 Fiscal Year.

NOTE: Commissioner Splaine requested thank you letters go out to each of the sub-committee participants.

VIII. PATROL DIVISION:

- a. This report was included in the 9-24-19 Commission meeting packet.

IX. COURT OFFICE REPORT:

- a. This confidential report was included in the 9-24-19 Commission meeting packet.

X. MISCELLANEOUS/OTHER BUSINESS:

XI. NEXT REGULAR MEETING:

The next commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 30th, 2019, with the public session beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers.

XII. MOTION TO ADJOURN:

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

Action: Commissioner Shaheen moved to adjourn the September 24th, 2019 monthly Police Commission Meeting.

Seconded by Commissioner Splaine.

On a Voice Vote: The motion passed to adjourn the September 24th, 2019 Monthly Police Commission Meeting at 6:58 p.m.

END OF MEETING

Kathe

Respectfully Submitted By Kathleen Levesque, Executive Assistant

Reviewed By Commissioner Splaine, Clerk of the Commission

Jim Splaine