

012

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

Fire Station 1  
January 14, 2020

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, Captains: Jason Gionet and Brian Ryll; and Firefighters: Shaw Terrill, Eric Detweiler, Connor O'Brien and Nathan Lyman.

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

*Motion, to approve the minutes of December 11, 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:**

Chief Germain read the thank you note from Jaci Grote, Trustee of the Peter Beck Trust.

*Motion, to accept and place on file, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.*

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

Chief Germain turned the meeting over to Deputy Heinz who introduced our newest Firefighter Shaw Terrill. Firefighter Terrill spoke briefly of his background and appreciation to be a part of the Portsmouth Fire Department.

**VII. Reports:**

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

*Chairwoman Matthes motioned to discuss Chief's reports 20-004 through 20-007. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gamester.*

Chief Germain reviewed reports with the Commission.

Report (004), 2019 Response Report with Service Activity and Safety message for December 2019. The report shows the department responding to a total of 409 calls for the month: 123 Fire Calls and 286 Ambulance Calls. Fire calls were slightly down from last month however, ambulance calls were slightly up from last month. Total for the year shows the department responding to 4866 calls: 1453 fire and related service calls and 3413 ambulance service calls. Chief spoke briefly about some of the activity for the month noting multiple calls for service during the weather event occurring on December 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. In a span of 48-hours, the FD responded to 42 calls for service with 25 of them to check for hazardous conditions relating to rising water in basements from the extended weather event. The remaining calls during that time period were for routine emergency and medical needs. Also noted, a motor vehicle accident involving a car into a utility pole with live wires that had fallen into the street. End of year activity breakdown showing 3267 EMS responses being in Portsmouth, 85 responses to New Castle and 61 to other mutual aid towns. There were 19 responses for opiate related calls with an additional 56 for other types of suspected drug overdoses. 75% of all responses required some measure of advanced care. The department called for mutual aid service ambulance 66 times last year due to our department ambulances being tied up on other calls. For fire activity, 21 fires occurred in occupied dwellings, 7 were vehicle fires and 42 were "other" fires such as dumpsters, storage buildings, grills and grass/woods. The safety message focused on tips for winter heating safety. The Service Activity and Safety Message report was submitted to the Portsmouth Herald for publication in local newspapers. Report (005), Fire and EMS Call Summary Report, shows the department responded to 220 fire calls for the month of December with 118 of the calls being for rescue responses which gets deducted from the total of fire calls. EMS activity was 286 with the top three responses being for weakness, alcohol abuse and effects and syncope/fainting. There were 3 calls for drug overdose/abuse and 62 non-transports. Report (006), FY20 Budget, Chief Germain reviewed the budget with the Commission and noted that the department is still tracking with a small surplus and is accounting for an anticipated long term officer vacancy due to a disability. Report (007), Overtime Analysis, provided a breakdown of how overtime was used in the month of December along with a summary of what was charged to OT-Recall for the month.

*Motion, to accept Chief's Reports 20-004 through 20-007, 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 and AEMT refreshers, confined space training at station 2 and situational awareness training which Police Officer Jones provided department members with training on firefighter's health and safety when responding to medical calls. Deputy Heinz also spoke of an upcoming school shooter drill at the PHS/PMS. Training for 2019 logged about 6300 hours. Station 1 generator bid has been awarded to the Generator Connection so that is in the process of being replaced. .

Deputy Chief Howe reported on Fire Prevention noting both inspectors having passed their Fire Investigation Technician test with the International Association of Arson Investigators and the first couple of hotels, Hilton Garden Inn and Homewood Suites, are going through the inspection process. As far as some larger projects happening within the City, Deputy Howe noted a 22 home subdivision on Banfield Road being back in the works, a 4-story unit with penthouse on 266-278 State Street, hotel with restaurant/bar/event space at 299 Vaughn in progress, the Westerly located at 2075 Lafayette Road has started their second phase of condo buildings, sprinkler permit issued for 135 Congress Street, 25 Maplewood Avenue fitting out their residential units and the Residence Inn at 1 International Drive has received their CO for their addition. Deputy Howe also noted that more significant enforcement issues have occurred at Connect Community Church, Northeast Dermatology Lab and Café Espresso.

**VIII. Old Business: None.**

**IX. New Business:**

Chief Germain spoke briefly of the State of NH's FFY20 FR-CARA (First Responder, Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Grant Act) application for the NH Project FIRST program. This grant will provide the City of Portsmouth with 100 Naloxone kits to support first responders in their efforts to reduce fatalities through outreach and distribution of these kits to at-risk individuals. He added that once the application is signed by the Commission it will be forwarded to the City Council for their acceptance and then be sent back to the State to move it forward to the Department of Safety's Business Office to continue the review process. Governor and Council will have the final decision on approving the project and may take upwards of 8 weeks and we will be notified of the final decision.

*Commission Hughes made the motion, to accept the State of NH's FF20 FR-CARA Application for the NH Project FIRST program, along with its terms as presented in the agreement, for the purchase of 100 Naloxone kits for \$1,500 in grant funding with an in-kind value of \$8,845 for a combined total award of \$10,345. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gamester and passed unanimously.*



In accordance with Chapter 1, Article VIII, Section 1.804 – Code of Ethics - Commissioner Gamester's name was drawn and will represent the Fire Commission on the Board of Ethics.

Chief Germain spoke of the \$1,000 donation made to the department which was received from new residents to Portsmouth, Paul Gormley & Kimi Lguchi, in appreciation for all that we do.

*Motion, to accept the generous donation of \$1,000 to the department with sincere gratitude, was made by Chairwoman Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.*

Chief Germain read Lieutenant Waite's retirement letter effective February 1, 2020 and his last shift being January 30th.

*Commissioner Gamester made the motion, to accept Lieutenant Waite's letter of retirement with regret and wishing him all the best in his retirement. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.*

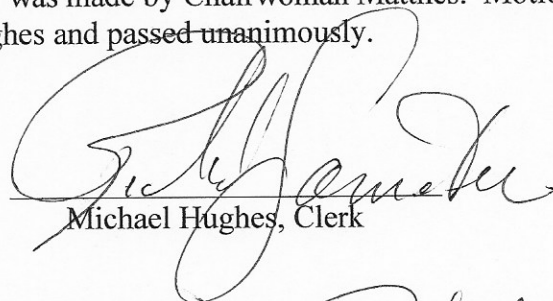
After a brief discussion on emergency services rates, Chief Germain stated he worked with Deputy Finance Director Andrew Purgiel to establish a fee schedule which closely reflects the going rates as identified by Comstar. The new rates consists of a 3% increase over last year's rates and reflects what is being charged regionally. Chief Germain also noted that the department does offer abatements for those who fall upon a hardship and are not able to pay their ambulance bill.

*Motion, to accept the recommended Emergency Service Rates as outlined in the memo from the City Manager, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.*

*Commissioner Gamester made the motion that the officers of the Board of Fire Commissioners continue as they currently are with Jennifer Matthes as Chairwoman, himself (Richard Gamester) as Vice Chairman, and Michael Hughes as Clerk. All members were in acceptance. Motion on the floor was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.*

**X. Adjournment:**

Motion to adjourn at 1945 hours was made by Chairwoman Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

  
Michael Hughes, Clerk

*Richard Gamester*