

065

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

Fire Station 2  
George Pierce Training Room  
September 8, 2020

Portsmouth, NH  
1730 hours

**I. Call to Order:**

Chairwoman Matthes called the meeting to order at 1730 hours.

*Motion, to enter into Non-public session at 1730 hours in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II (a), Deputy Chief Heinz contract, was made by Chairwoman Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gamester and passed unanimously.*

*Motion, to come out of Non-public session at 1750 hours and reconvene regular scheduled meeting at 1800 hours, was made by Chairwoman Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gamester and passed unanimously.*

**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 Jason Gionet, Lieutenant Garrett Miller and Firefighters: Timothy Dame and Steve Morse.

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

*Motion, to approve the minutes of August 11, 2020, 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 letter he received from Ingrid Newkirk on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) recognizing the firefighters who came to the aid of a cat that had gotten stuck in a car engine on August 23<sup>rd</sup>.

*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: None.**

**VII. Reports:**

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

*Chairwoman Matthes motioned to discuss Chief's reports 20-061 through 20-064. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes.*

Chief Germain reviewed reports with the Commission. Report (061), 2020 Response Report with Service Activity and Safety message for August 2020. Chief Germain noted that the department responded to a total of 478 calls for the month: 142 Fire Calls and 336 Ambulance Calls. Both fire and EMS calls were slightly up from last month. Total year-to-date shows the department responding to 2968 calls. The safety message he noted was focused on Fall Fire Safety tips. Report (062), Fire and EMS Call Summary Report, shows the department responded to 142 fire calls for the month of August. EMS activity was 335 with the top three responses being for weakness (no specific cause), alcohol abuse and effect and psychiatric/behavioral problems. There were 6 calls for drug overdose/abuse and 58 non-transport. Report (063), FY21 Budget, Chief Germain reviewed the budget with the Commission and noted that many of the costs right now are upfront and why the spent to date is higher than the percentage into the year. The FY21 Budget is being watched closely. Staffing has been adjusted as of today going back to minimum staffing of 13 and not staffing the 3<sup>rd</sup> ambulance right now. This will be re-evaluated after EMS re-certifications take place in the fall. Chairwoman Matthes inquired about concurrent calls? Chief replied he wasn't sure of the actual number but believes about 1/3 of our calls are concurrent. Report (064), Overtime Analysis, provided a breakdown of how overtime was used in the month of August along with a summary of what was charged to OT-Recall for the month and Shift Coverage for COVID related impacts. Chief Germain spoke briefly about the PNSY live fire simulated training that the probationary firefighters participated in.

*Motion, to accept Chief's Reports 20-061 through 20-064, was made by Chairwoman Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gamester and passed unanimously.*

**B. Staff Reports:**

Deputy Chief Heinz reported on Operations and Training within the department. He spoke briefly about the Trench training being done at DPW with Inspector Wheeler and Lt. Kenneway providing the instruction. EMS virtual training from PRH continues and department photograph starting tomorrow and will be done in groups this time. In follow-up to Chief Germain's comments on PNSY training, Deputy Heinz reported that previously, FFI and FFII courses followed a curriculum that provided one to two days of live fire training. The on-hand training portion of the course has since been reduced by 40+ hours so it is possible that some firefighters don't actually participate in live fire training when going through the two courses. With that said, PNSY has a live fire simulator that they use to train their personnel and because of the relationships we have built with them, they have invited our department to train with them.

So we had our probationary firefighters participate and we hope to be able to have more members participate in this simulator training soon.

Deputy Chief Howe reported on Prevention noting several projects happening within the city and not seeing a slowdown in permitting for construction. Working with the Health Department on licensing for COVID seating. Working with the schools on fire code and life safety codes as schools begin opening up again. Inspector Putney will be providing elevator training to the department. Making progress on tracking down absentee landlords. Once the inspections start and there are code violations, we have to address it so we are trying to time things accordingly due to the pandemic and understand many are impacted by this.

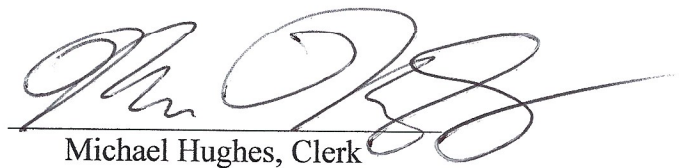
**IX. Old Business:**

Commissioner Gamester inquired about the new Engine 1 and how it was going. Chief noted that all-in-all it is going well. It is a very well thought out and organized truck however has some quirks.

**X. New Business:** None.

**XI. Adjournment:**

*Motion, to adjourn at 1830 hours, was made by Chairwoman Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.*

  
Michael Hughes, Clerk