

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

Fire Station 2  
George Pierce Training Room  
October 13, 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: William McQuillen and Jason Gionet; Lieutenants: Peter Gordon and John Goodwin; Firefighter Matthew Stinson and his family, and members of the department.

*Chairwoman Matthes made the motion to suspend the rules and move to item VI, Recognition of Groups and Individuals. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gamester and passed unanimously.*

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

*Motion, to approve the minutes of September 8, 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: None.**

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

Chief Germain swore in Firefighter Matthew Stinson.

*Commissioner Gamester made the motion for a 10-minute recess for pictures at 1810 hours. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.*

Meeting reconvened at 1820 hours with item III, Approval of the Minutes of Previous Meeting.

**VII. Reports:**

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

*Chairwoman Matthes motioned to discuss Chief's reports 20-067 through 20-070. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes.*

Chief Germain reviewed reports with the Commission.

Report (067), 2020 Response Report with Service Activity and Safety message for September 2020. Chief Germain noted that the department responded to a total of 320 calls for the month: 92 Fire Calls and 228 Ambulance Calls. Both fire and EMS calls were considerably down from last month. Total year-to-date shows the department responding to 3288 calls. Chief spoke briefly about some of the activity for the month noting a water rescue with traumatic injury from a person who jumped from the I-95 bridge, a traumatic fall at 213 Gates Street where, the subject had fallen approximately 15 ft. from a scissor lift while working on a house, a grease fire at 56 Market Street and responding to several outside fires involving dry grass, shrubs and landscape bark mulch. The safety message focused on Fire Safety Tips with the seacoast being in a severe drought. Report (068), Fire and EMS Call Summary Report, shows the department responded to 92 fire calls for the month of September. EMS activity was 228 with the top three responses being for alcohol abuse and effect, weakness (no specific cause), and altered mental status. There were 4 calls for drug overdose/abuse and 5 COVID or COVID suspicious calls. Chief noted that we went 30 days without a COVID call and in the last 10 days we have gone to 5. There were 48 non-transports. Report (063), FY21 Budget, Chief Germain reviewed the budget with the Commission and noted that we have included projections for Paramedic and AEMT re-certifications. The FY21 Budget is being watched closely. Staffing is at minimum of 13 and not staffing the 3<sup>rd</sup> ambulance right now. This will be re-evaluated after the EMS re-certifications take place. Report (070), Overtime Analysis, provided a breakdown of how overtime was used in the month of September along with a summary of what was charged to OT-Recall for the month and Shift Coverage for COVID related impacts.

*Motion, to accept Chief's Reports 20-067 through 20-070, 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 spoke briefly about FPO Putney providing elevator training, Lt. Kenneway and Ff. O'Sullivan providing EMS/Ballistic training, Capt. Gionet and several department members participated in a Pease Mass Casualty Drill, Chief Germain continuing to work with department members on the physical fitness program and the live fire training at the PNSY which they will come here and staff our stations while we are there training. Two new firefighters have been offered employment. One starts October 27<sup>th</sup> and the other is going through the process. We have had several PRH ride-alongs this month as well. New gear washer has been installed. Deputy Heinz also took a moment to thank



the commission and noted this being his last meeting with his upcoming retirement at the end of the month.

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 with outside dining and the use of propane heaters. Issues with radio strength testing in some of the new construction has been worked through by adding a system like a repeater within the building to help with dead spots due to density and materials used in the construction of the buildings.

**IX. Old Business:**

Chief noted the return of Tower 5 after being sent to Greenwood for repairs back in May 2020. With the repairs done, we anticipate another 15-years out of it. New Tower arrives late spring early summer.

Chairwomen Matthes inquired about the fitness program and its progress. Chief answered that it was going well. Partnered with Sophie LaChance, owner of Port Crossfit, for guidance and a resource to assist us with the program. Each shift will have the opportunity to go to Port Crossfit, free of charge, to learn the fundamentals of how to use equipment and will receive workout ideas each week along with links to videos. Port Crossfit will also offer a 1-hour, one-on-one, to anyone in the department that has a specific concern. Another coach within Port Crossfit is studying to be a nutritionist and has asked if she could work with us as well as she rolls out her program. Sophie lives in Portsmouth and is offering us the guidance, resources, instruction, nutrition, etc. as a way to give back to the community and is in no way trying to sell us anything. Chief Germain also noted that he has purchased fitness equipment to augment the gym at station 3 using Horlick funding. This will allow all three stations to have like equipment.

**X. New Business:**

*Commissioner Gamester made the motion, to accept Deputy Chief James Heinz letter of resignation with regret and wishes him well. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.*

Chief Germain spoke briefly about the promotional exam of the Assistant Fire Chief which included an oral board panel of himself, Chief Mark Cotreau of Rye and Commissioner Hughes. All four Captains participated in the oral board with Captain McQuillen receiving the highest scores. Chief Germain recommended that Captain McQuillen be promoted to Assistant Chief and added that he will provide us with an all-star team in the front office and will help us to keep the department moving forward and has complete confidence in him. Commissioner Hughes noted that the questions were not easy and to have all four captains apply, who all did an outstanding job, says a lot of the culture here and the commitment to wanting to stay here.

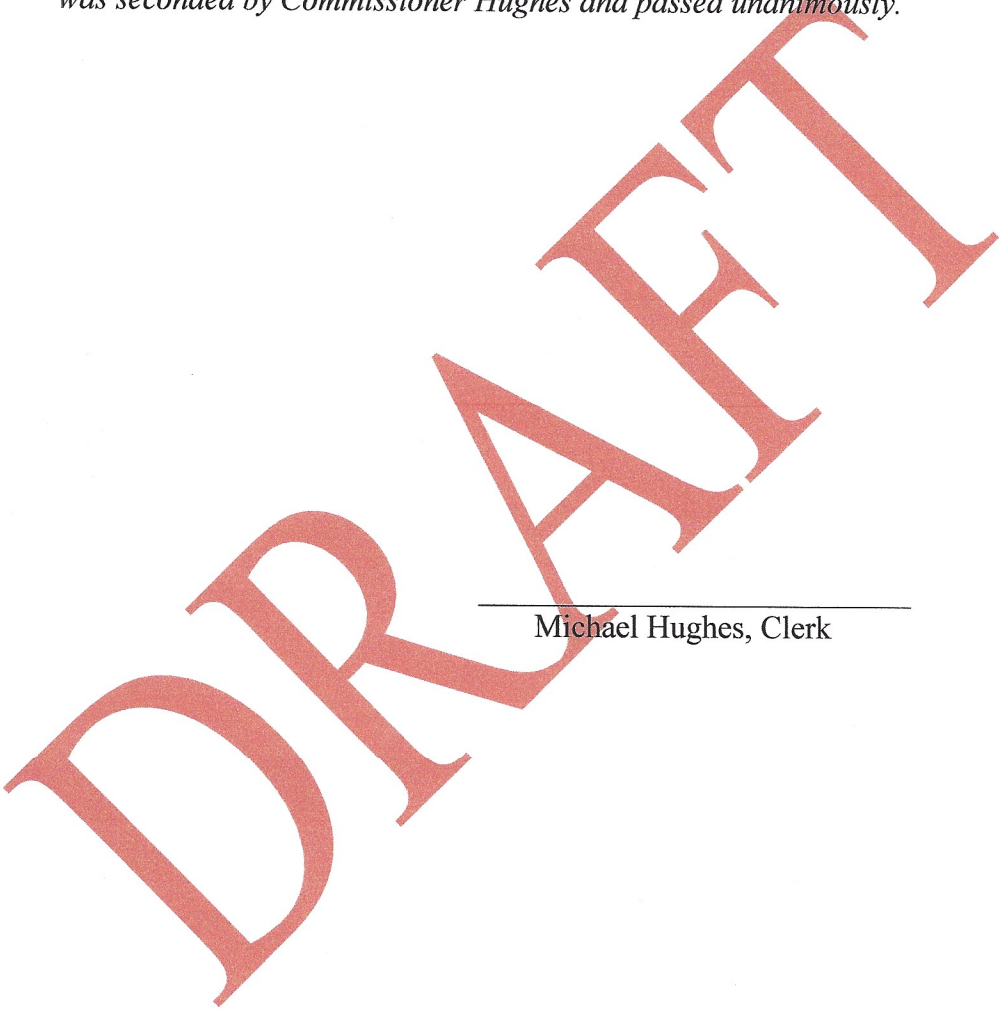
*Fire Commission Minutes of October 13, 2020 continued:*

*Commissioner Hughes made the motion, to promote Captain William McQuillen to Assistant Chief effective November 1, 2020. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.*

Chief Germain noted that the Fire Captain promotional exam will be held November 13, 2020. Application process has already closed with four people applying however, 3 being eligible. List will stand for 1-year.

**XI. Adjournment:**

*Motion, to adjourn at 1850 hours, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.*

  
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Michael Hughes, Clerk