

**PORTSMOUTH POLICE COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021 POLICE COMMISSION**  
**MEETING**

**5:00 p.m. Public Session – Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers**

**Joseph J. Onosko, Chair**  
**Stefany Shaheen, Commissioner**  
**Thomas Hart, Commissioner**

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021 monthly Police Commission meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. via the City’s Zoom meeting platform, following the non-public session. (A full recording of this meeting is available on the City’s website & City’s Youtube Channel.)

**The following people were present:** Commissioners Onosko, Shaheen, and Hart, Chief Mark Newport, Admin. Manager Karen Senecal, Exec. Assistant Jackie Burnett, members of the Department and the public.

- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Chief Newport led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Immediately following the pledge of allegiance, **the Commission announced** that Mark Newport has accepted a 3-year contract to become Chief of Police.

**Commissioner Onosko** took a moment to acknowledged Mark Newport’s dedication to the department and understanding of the needs of the community. He has an enormous heart and is dedicated to the profession and his community. **Commissioner Shaheen** stated that they are thankful for his willingness to step into this role and embrace the community. **Commissioner Hart** added that we’re lucky to have Mark and are excited to work with him on moving the department forward.

**III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:**

December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020

**Action: Commissioner Shaheen moved** to accept the minutes of the December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020 Police Commission Meeting.

**Seconded by Commissioner Hart.**

**On a Roll Call Vote:** The motion passed unanimously to accept the minutes of the December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020 Police Commission Meeting. The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Onosko:	“Aye”
Commissioner Shaheen:	“Aye”
Commissioner Hart:	“Aye”

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

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

**V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.**

**VI. NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. POLICE COMMISSION:**

1. Chair and Clerk of the Commission for 2021 –

**Action: Commissioner Onosko moved** to nominate Commissioner Shaheen to serve as Chair of the Commission for 2021.

**Seconded by Commissioner Hart.**

**On a Roll Call Vote:** The motion passed to nominate Commissioner Shaheen to serve as Chair of the Commission for 2021.

Commissioner Onosko:	“Aye”
Commissioner Shaheen:	“Aye”
Commissioner Hart:	“Aye”

**By Roll Call Vote:** Commissioner Shaheen was unanimously voted in to serve as Chair of the Commission for 2021.

**Chair Shaheen** took a moment to commend her predecessor, Commissioner Onosko, on his years of service and leadership as Chair of the Commission. The new Chair stated she will take this responsibility seriously and looks forward to charging forward.

**Action: Commissioner Onosko moved** to nominate Commissioner Hart to serve as Clerk of the Commission for 2021.

**Seconded by Commissioner Shaheen.**

**On a Roll Call Vote:** The motion passed to nominate Commissioner Hart to serve as Clerk of the Commission for 2021.

**Action: The Commission voted** on the nomination of Commissioner Hart to serve as Clerk of the Commission for 2021 as follows:

Commissioner Shaheen:	“Aye”
Commissioner Onosko:	“Aye”
Commissioner Hart:	“Aye”

**By a Roll Call Vote:** Commissioner Hart was unanimously voted in to serve as Clerk of the Commission for 2021.

2. Representation on the City Ethics Committee: As per City Ordinance, Commissioner Onosko was chosen by lot to serve on the City of Portsmouth’s Ethics Committee for 2021.
3. Budget Process Update:  
**The Chair described** the various meetings that have taken place between the Police Department and the Police Commission.  
**Admin. Manager Karen Senecal explained** what’s to come in terms of scheduled meeting with City officials as well as the citywide recommendations for the FY’22 budget.
  - a. The Chair gave special thanks to CM Conard for joining the Commission’s last budget work session on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021.
  - b. Chief states we’re prepared to present a level funded budget.
4. Community Forum Update:  
**Commissioner Onosko provided** an update on the most recent Community Forum discussion with members of the community and in partnership with the “RGR” members, and have come up with ways to gather more data so our department is on the cutting edge. A date and time for the next community forum will be announced in the near future – likely within the next month or two. In the

meantime, the Commission will continue their comprehensive research regarding the community recommendations presented.

- a. **Chief Newport added** that he looks forward to looking into ways of improving upon current processes and procedures.
  - b. **Chair Shaheen described** the amount of behind-the-scenes work that has gone into conducting these forums and meeting with members of the public to help provide recommendations.
5. Building Update:
- a. **Chief Newport provided** the Commission with an update on the progress of second floor mold remediation and resolving past problems with the building. **Admin. Manager Karen Senecal added** that the back lot generator project should wrap up in the Spring.
  - b. **Commissioner Hart asked** if there is a timeline for the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor project. **Chief Newport responded** that they are waiting to see what they come across during the initial phase of the project.
6. Covid Update:
- a. **Chief Newport reported** that several employees have had to quarantine due to family members testing positive. The vaccination process has begun for officers. The second round of vaccinations will start next week. **The Commission continued** with the discussion on the vaccination topic.
7. Review of citizen complaints and how they are conducted:
- a. **The Chair made mention** that this was discussed in-depth during our community forum on January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021.
  - b. **Chief Newport explained** that complaints can be submitted to the department via the following ways: by calling the department and/or Police Commission; by emailing the Chief directly, and/or by coming into the Police Department ask speaking with the Station Officer or Shift Commander. All complaints will be investigated. If the complaint can't be resolved by a supervisor, it will move up the Chain of Command to the officer in charge of conducting Internal Affairs Investigations. If it is felt the compliant would best be handled by an outside agency, the investigation will be forwarded to a qualified outside source.
  - c. **The Commission and Chief Newport** explained circumstances in which handling a complaint internally vs. pushing a complaint to an outside agency is appropriate. **Chief Newport added** that the Commission is briefed on all IAs (formal investigations).

- d. As an aside, **the Chair took a moment** to acknowledge the PPD officers who were deployed through the National Guard to Washington D.C for the inauguration. She expressed how grateful we all are for their service. **Chief Newport added** that we have 3 officers deployed and we look forward to their safe return.

## **B. CHIEF OF POLICE:**

### 1. Thanks and Recognition:

A letter of thanks from a Portsmouth resident regarding several PPD staff members' efforts to help locate his adult son who had become stranded. Officers provided the son with a courtesy ride to the bus terminal so he could make his way to Logan Airport to fly home to Texas in time for Christmas with his family. Those who assisted in this successful call for service were Dispatcher Ed Walsh, Dispatcher Meghan FitzMorris, Dispatcher Amanda Brown, Officer Tim Conroy, Officer Keegan Pearl, Patrol Sgt. Chris Kiberd and Patrol Lt. Dave Keaveny.

### 2. Donation

A donation in the amount of \$2500 in support of the Portsmouth Police Department was received from a couple residing in Boston, MA.

**Action: Commissioner Onosko moved** to accept the \$2,500 donation to the Portsmouth Police Department.

**Seconded by Commissioner Hart.**

**On a Roll Call Vote:** The motion passed unanimously, with great appreciation and thanks, to accept the \$2,500 donation to the Portsmouth Police Department. The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Shaheen:	“Aye”
Commissioner Onosko:	“Aye”
Commissioner Hart:	“Aye”

### 3. Accreditation Update

- a. PPD was certified by the COPs office that we meet DOJ compliance, with use of force-related policies, which makes our department eligible for discretionary grant funding. This certification process was conducted, using CALEA as the middle man to assist in confirming our compliance with federal standards.

- b. We are currently in the process of finding a qualified candidate to fill the vacancy for the Accreditation Manager position.
- 4. Monthly Traffic Stats
- 5. Financial Report – Karen Senecal
  - a. Overall Budget Update: Tracking 5% below cap. Slight uptick in OT; however, we have cost savings due to temporarily unfilled positions, resulting from retirements.
    - i. The Commission asked Karen Senecal whether we were capable of pulling data pertaining to OT use. Karen responded that if asked, for example, to pull Covid-related OT, the Business Office is able to do so.
  - b. Strategic Plan – Currently working on generating cost items for each division. Working more in depth on this between now and the budget hearing.
  - c. Grant Applications Update – None at this time. Karen Senecal is hopeful there are building-related grants available.
  - d. Facilities Report

**VII. PATROL DIVISION:**

- A. This report was included in the 1-19-21 commission meeting packet.
  - 1. Chief Newport comments that there is a slight uptick in alcohol-related calls. The call volume has been up and steady – both residential and business.

**VIII. COURT OFFICE REPORT:**

- A. This confidential report was included in the 1-19-21 commission meeting packet.

**IX. MISCELLANEOUS/OTHER BUSINESS: None.**

**X. NEXT REGULAR MEETING:**

The next regular commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021 via Zoom, with the public session beginning at 5:30 p.m..

**XI. MOTION TO ADJOURN:**

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

**Action: Commissioner Hart moved** the January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Police Commission Meeting be adjourned.

**Seconded by Commissioner Onosko.**

**On a Roll Call Vote:** The motion passed to adjourn the January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Monthly Police Commission Meeting at 5:50pm. The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Shaheen:	“Aye”
Commissioner Onosko:	“Aye”
Commissioner Hart:	“Aye”

END OF MEETING

*Jackie*

*Respectfully Submitted By Jacqueline Burnett, Executive Assistant*

*Reviewed By Commissioner Hart, Clerk of the Commission*

*Tom Hart*