

045

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

Fire Station 2
George Pierce Training Room
April 13, 2021

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, Assistant Fire Chief William McQuillen, Executive Assistant Tracy Freeman and Lieutenant Duncan Regonini

III. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Motion, to approve the minutes of March 9, 2021, was made by Chairwoman Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

IV. Public Comment Session: None.

V. Presentations of Written Communications:

Chief Germain just wanted to note that he has received numerous thank you cards, emails and phone calls in recognition and appreciation for our on-going efforts in helping to get the COVID19 vaccines out to members of the community.

VI. Recognition of Groups or Individuals: None.

VII. Reports:

A. Fire Chief's Reports:

Chairwoman Matthes motioned to discuss Chief's reports 21-035 through 21-038. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gamester.

Chief Germain reviewed reports with the Commission.

Report (035), 2021 Response Report with Service Activity and Safety message for March. Chief Germain noted that the department responded to a total of 403 calls for the month: 129 Fire Calls and 274 Ambulance Calls. Both fire and

EMS calls took a big jump over last month and seems to be picking up. We are on pace to be at 4500-5000 calls by year-end he noted. Total year-to-date shows the department responding to 1,116 calls. Chief spoke briefly about some of the activity for the month noting six utility poles that were knocked down by a large tree due to high winds on the 2nd. During that same day, the department responded to 23 calls for service in an 18-hour period including responses to 2 mutual aid fires. Also noted a response to a person in the water at Four Tree Island and 2 structure fires, one at 1 International Drive and another at 1 Highliner Ave. Report (036), Fire and EMS Call Summary Report, shows the department responded to 129 fire calls for the month of March. EMS activity was 275 with the top three responses being for psychiatric/behavioral problems, abdominal pain/problems and alcohol abuse and effects. There were 2 calls for drug overdose/abuse and 1 COVID confirmed call. There were 60 non-transports. Report (037), FY21 Budget, Chief Germain reviewed the budget with the Commission and noted that we have included projections for all accounts including overtime through the end of the fiscal year. The FY21 Budget is being watched closely and currently projections show the department with a minimal surplus but again, that's if we don't exceed projected numbers. Staffing is at minimum of 13. Report (038), Overtime Analysis, provided a breakdown of how overtime was used in the month of March along with a summary of what was charged to OT-Recall for the month and Shift Coverage for COVID related impacts and billable amounts for Public Health and State POD Vaccination Clinics that our department has assisted with.

Motion, to accept Chief's Reports 21-035 through 21-038, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

B. Staff Reports:

Asst. Chief McQuillen reported on Operations and Training within the department. He spoke briefly about the administering of COVID19 vaccines to the senior population and the scheduling of the 2nd doses. While that is ongoing, we are also working with the State and the Public Health Network. Asst. Chief McQuillen noted that he has been working with Exec. Asst. Freeman on the billing portion of each clinic and has been successful in getting that done. Station 1 renovation project is now complete. Came out excellent and everyone is pleased with it. Crews are currently training on the forestry, the fire boat, fire hydrants and the use of temporary hydrants, along with outdoor dining access and what challenges those may impose in some locations.

Chief Germain spoke on behalf of Deputy Chief Howe regarding Fire Prevention noting several projects happening within the city and construction projects continuing at a rapid pace. Working with the Health Department on indoor seating along with cafe seating and outdoor seating as we enter into warmer weather. Permitting fees have exceeded our target revenue projections.

Chairwoman Matthes inquired about the Leave Behind Kits and whether or not we were still seeing a need for them. Asst. Chief McQuillen replied that the

Opioid crisis is still ongoing and the kits are still being used. If belief is there, the kit and information is left with patient and or family member(s). Asst. Chief also noted that we continue to train the crews on it and in January we did remote training with the Fire Academy on this and also on Meth training as well since we are seeing an uptick on usage.

VIII. Old Business:

Chief updated the Commission on COVID Operations and vaccine clinics and provided a summary of what has been billed out to the State and PHN through March.

Chief offered his gratitude to the men and women of our department for all of their help in getting the vaccines out and into arms. Fire Commissioners also extended their thanks to all of the staff involved in this effort.

IX. New Business:

Chief Germain spoke briefly of Vernon Boardman who passed away recently with some of his friends wanting to make a donation to the fire department.

Motion, to accept the donation from the "Vernon's Girls" in memory of Vernon Boardman for \$150.00, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

Asst. Chief McQuillen spoke briefly about the request to purchase a SCBA Accountability System from the Estate of Geraldine Webber. The accountability system features a 3M Retro-Reflective and photo luminescent (glow in the dark) material that is molded together to withstand the harshest environments. This product would be attached onto the SCBA cylinder tensioner band using NFPA compliant Nomex material, then secured with commercial grade, fire resistant Velcro. This allows for each tag to be removable and interchangeable as necessary. When we have multiple units operating on scene, this system will allow the incident commander and other units know which unit is which. This will also provide increased firefighter safety on a fire scene.

Motion, to approve the Fire Chief to purchase a SCBA Accountability System from the Webber Bequest at a cost not to exceed \$3,600.00, was made by Chairwoman Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

Asst. Chief McQuillen spoke about the request to purchase a Portable Command Post from the Estate of Geraldine Webber. Currently, the Fire Department utilizes "fixed" command posts in the back of a Chief Officer's car or the Utility. These vehicles have mounted radios and pull out draws with the command boards and passport systems. This mobile incident command post will have the ability to collect passports as well as track the locations and tasks of crews on the fire-ground. This would provide the ability for a command post to be established if vehicle could

not get close to an incident. During mutual aid calls it is difficult to account for our folks and this would assist in accountability.

Motion, to approve the Fire Chief to purchase a Portable Command Post System from the Webber Bequest at a cost not to exceed \$2,100.00, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

Asst. Chief spoke briefly about the request to purchase 3 FAST Boards and 4 FAST Straps from the Estate of Geraldine Webber. The firefighter FAST board is designed to remove a downed firefighter from inside a smoke filled environment in a quick and easy way as possible. These boards are designed to be carried by one firefighter and have a fully geared up firefighter placed on the board and moved in under a minute. The department was able to bring in a demo model where the crews were able to practice with the board and was able to haul a firefighter up two sets of stairs in less than two minutes. Looking to purchase 3 of these to equip each front line apparatus for now. To note, these FAST Boards can also be used in a variety of rescue operations. The FAST Straps he noted are used for carrying vent saws up ladders and on roofs.

Motion, to approve the Fire Chief to purchase 3 FAST Boards and 4 FAST Straps from the Webber Bequest at a cost not to exceed \$9,000.00, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.

Chief Germain noted that after the approval of these requests, the balance in the account would be \$133,650.10.

With the Public Safety – Fire & Police Public Hearing on FY22 Budget Review/Listening Session being held on May 11th, Chief Germain stated we will need to reschedule our May meeting. After brief discussion, it was decided on May 18, 2021 for the next Fire Commission meeting. Exec. Freeman will send out calendar update.

Chief Germain provided the Commissioners with a revised FY22 Budget Proposal that was not noted on the agenda. This revision was prepared by the finance department and reduces our proposed budget by \$100K. This was done through a recalibration of the Health stabilization account which decreased the Fire Department's amount by \$200K but increasing the Leave at Termination account by \$100K. Chief also noted he increased the overtime for training account by \$20K to cover more time for firefighters to attend training, which they haven't been able to do for the past 15-months. Commissioner Hughes asked if we can run a department on this budget and Chief replied yes. Chairwoman Matthes inquired about any other concerns that the City Manager may have? Chief replied no and that we are not increasing anything we have control over except for this addition to training overtime. Currently we have three vacancies with the possibility of one more. Some from the previous list are still interested but need to pass CPAT. Some are also paramedics but need their fire certification. HR uses a program that we can

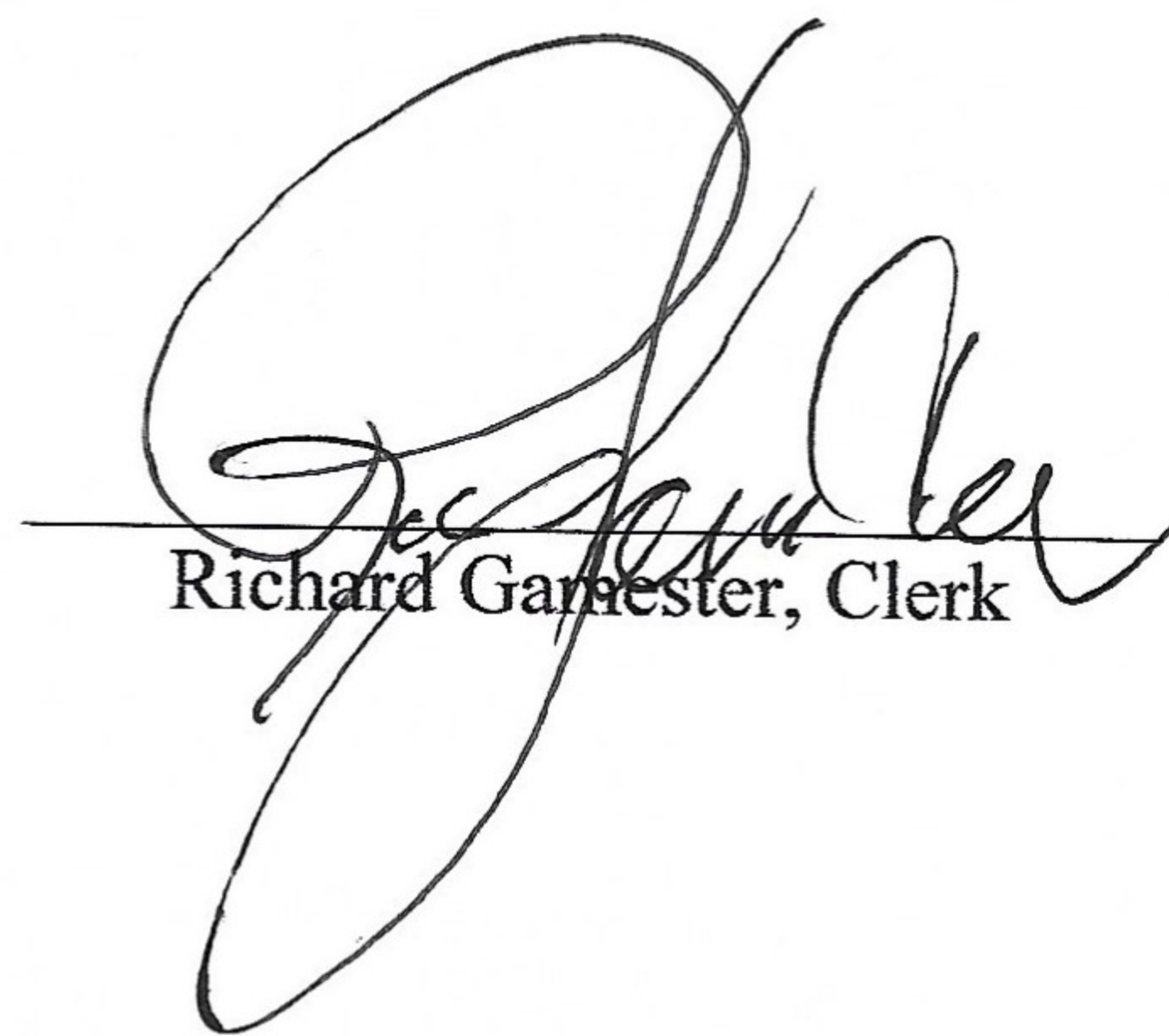
send out emails to interested candidates and allows for us to see what certs they have and as they obtain them, they can update through this application and we can see that as well.

Southern Maine Community College has a Fire Science Program which Chief Germain participated in a round table discussion with students and other Fire Chiefs within the Maine area. He felt it was beneficial and also provides prospective graduates with a contact when they are looking to get into a department.

Commissioner Hughes inquired about any known retirements coming up within the department. Chief Germain replied stating that nothing has been submitted officially but possibly four who are looking at their numbers.

X. Adjournment:

Motion, to adjourn at 1900 hours, was made by Chairwoman Matthes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hughes and passed unanimously.



Richard Gamester, Clerk