

PORTSMOUTH POLICE COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 19th, 2004 MEETING

Noon (Non-Public) 1:00 PM (Public)
Portsmouth Police Department - Wm. D. Mortimer Conference Room

John D. Kelley, Chairman
William F. Devine
Gerald W. Howe

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The Chairman called the October 19th monthly Police Commission Meeting to order at 1:07 PM. (*One cassette tape documenting this meeting is on file for reference*).

Present during public session: Commissioners Kelley, Devine, and Howe, Chief Michael Magnant, Deputy Chief Young, Captain Bill Irving, Captain John Yerardi, Captain Jim Tucker, Lieutenant Tim Brownell, Sergeant Mike Ronchi, Sgt. Steve DuBois, Detectives Tim West, Chris Roth, John Peracchi, Tom Hart and Mike Leclair, Chaplain Angelo Pappas, Herald reporter Doug Guarino, Budget Coordinator Karen Senecal, IT Manager Felicia Donovan, Executive Assistant Kathe Hoyt

- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Captain Bill Irving led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Action: Commissioner Howe moved to suspend the agenda and move directly to **V. Section B, Item 1.** of the Chief's report, 'Letters of Commendation'.

Seconded by Commissioner Devine

On a Roll Call Vote: The board voted unanimously to suspend the agenda and move directly to **V. Section B, Item 1.**

B. CHIEF'S REPORT:

1. Letters and Certificates of Commendation and Appreciation

Letters of Commendation were given to Detectives West, Roth, Hart and Leclair and to Officers Chris Cummings and Eric Kinsman for their excellent work in investigating and solving a string of burglaries in several seacoast towns.

Action: Commissioner Howe moved to return to the published agenda.

Seconded by Commissioner Devine

On a Roll Call Vote: The Board voted unanimously to return to the published agenda.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:

Action: Commissioner Howe moved the Board accept the minutes of the meeting held on September 21st, 2004.

Seconded by Commissioner Devine.

On a Roll Call Vote: The Board unanimously voted in favor of the motion to accept the minutes and place them on file.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

V. NEW BUSINESS:

A. POLICE COMMISSION:

1. Chief Magnant asked whether or not the Police Commission would hold its November meeting at the high school, as previously discussed. Commissioner Howe reported he had been trying unsuccessfully to speak with Principal Ransdell. Chairman Kelley asked Commissioner Howe to reach out to the high school principal's office one more time. If he was then unsuccessful, the Chairman indicated he would get in touch with Dr. Tracy's office.

B. CHIEF'S REPORT:

2. Financial Report

a. Budget Coordinator Karen Senecal reviewed the status of the budget. Expenditures are actually under the norm. While we are at a very good 24.2% expended through the end of September, the Chief cautioned the fiscal year is young, and we still have the bulk of it ahead of us.

3. Grants and Donations

a. The Portsmouth Police Honor Guard received a donation of \$25.00 from Mr. & Mrs. Robert A. Hall of Portsmouth.

Action: Commissioner Howe made a motion to accept the donation and forward it to the City Council.

Seconded by Commissioner Devine.

On a Roll Call Vote: The Board voted unanimously to accept the Honor Guard donation and forward it to the City Council for action.

4. Division and Team Reports

a. Information Systems

b. Records Division Report

Action: Commissioner Howe made a motion to accept the Division and Team reports as presented and place them on file.

Seconded by Commissioner Devine.

On a Roll Call Vote: The Board voted unanimously to accept the Division and Team reports and place them on file.

5. Letters of Thanks and Appreciation from outside the Department

- a. A thank you letter was received from IRS Team Manager Kathleen E. Brown for Detective West's excellent presentation on Identity Theft.
- b. A thank you letter from Chief Marshall Dan Pauley of Telluride, Colorado for the courteous, professional, and extremely helpful contact with Officer Tim Black while the Chief Marshall, who did not identify himself to Officer Black, became lost while visiting Portsmouth.

C. PATROL SERVICES BUREAU:

1. Log Activity Reports

Commissioner Howe noted a substantial increase in "false pretense swindling". Deputy Young indicated this figure usually represents a 'spree' of multiple hits, i.e. credit card theft or bad checks, by the same person or group.

2. Communications Center Report

The Deputy reported that Dispatcher Hank Cavaretta has resigned to pursue a career as a pilot of commercial aircraft.

3. FTO Report

4. Auxiliary Monthly Activity Report

Commissioner Devine asked to confirm the termination of Ed Levesque as an auxiliary officer. The Deputy confirmed that termination.

5. Special Events in the City

A number of road races and fundraisers have taken place in the last month, as per usual. The Halloween Parade is scheduled for Sunday, October 31st.

6. Officers Out Sick or Injured

Officer Chris Kiberd is back on full duty. He had been out with an ankle injury.

C. CITY PROSECUTOR REPORT

Commissioner Kelley asked about the effective date of the Governor's judicial appointment to Portsmouth District Court, if confirmed by the Executive Board. The Chief stated he believed it would be effective immediately.

E. BUREAU OF INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES

Commissioner Kelley asked about the unsolved homicides. The Deputy indicated they are still open and being worked by assignment in the Bureau of Investigations. They remain a priority for us.

Commissioner Devine asked if we were continuing our liquor law compliance checks. The Deputy responded that they are continuing, and in fact we just conducted a series this past week. Deputy Young said he feels they have been very effective in influencing downtown merchants to be vigilant and compliant. The number of merchants who do sell to minors is down dramatically. We feel the compliance checks are definitely part of that awareness.

VI. MISCELLANEOUS OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Kelley expressed some concern about how anticipated growth in the number of hotel rooms and conference hosting facilities over the next three years will impact demands for service from the police department. The Chief indicated we will see an impact, particularly in congestion of both people and automobiles in the downtown. The cycle is already in motion. We are steadily getting complaints about traffic volume in the downtown area. The merchants continue to have concerns that the sidewalks are too narrow for the volume of people, which in turn lead to requests to close off city streets, which in turn leads to more people coming to town, which in turn leads to more calls for service from the police department.

The Chief said it is important to understand that occasionally, the police department finds itself criticized over the number of officers we have, compared to the population of the town. The Chief then stated he doesn't believe this is a fair criticism, because one needs to look at the workload. Policy decisions have been made in the past in order to draw tourism to the community, for the economy. These policy decisions have an effect on services, especially on the police department. One of the city's tourist attractions can draw upwards of fifteen thousand people into this community in a single day. That means the police department is out there dealing with thefts from cars, accidents involving these people, domestics, drugs, sexual assaults, etc. The Chief stated we have been involved in all of these in connection with the visiting population. He cited the

example of Woodbury Avenue, which used to be a sleepy tree-lined street. Now it is a commercial boulevard; again, the result of policy decisions. Now the police department is out there responding to shoplifting and conducting labor intensive accident investigations.

The Chief stated, "I think it is important to go on the record and say 'yes', these types of policy decisions do have an impact on the police department; on the calls for service, particularly in the area of the level of fear." He went on to explain. "If you recall, when the downtown really started to boom several years ago, we started hearing over and over again that people were really starting to be afraid to go downtown because of all of the kids and the gang-type groups that were there. This led us to put our SROs, that's two additional police officers every night of the week, downtown to reduce that level of fear, and it was very effective. But it definitely had an impact on the police department."

Chairman Kelley stated it is then clearly a budgetary consideration for us. The Chief indicated very much so. Chairman Kelley observed the citizens of Portsmouth need to be cognizant of this aspect of city policy growth decisions. The Chief summed up by noting that when the police department is obliged to shift or deplete resources from one area, they are unavailable in another area.

Chairman Kelley said at one time he had heard that although the resident population of Portsmouth was about twenty-one thousand, the day service population was close to seventy thousand. The Chief indicated he had seen two separate figures. One published in the mid nineties that showed we had a journey-to-work population of around forty-five thousand. The figure he was aware of, and was attributed to Planning Director David Holden, was that sixty to sixty-five thousand people come into Portsmouth daily. This figure includes both tourism and work populations.

In connection with the issue of traffic congestion, there was some discussion about plans to connect the route one by-pass to Market Street at some future point. The Chief indicated such plans were only at the discussion stage at this time.

VII. MOTION TO ADJOURN

There being no further business before this Commission,

Commissioner Devine moved the October 19th meeting be adjourned.

Seconded by Commissioner Howe.

On a Roll Call Vote: The Board unanimously voted in favor of the motion at 1:35 P.M.

VIII. NEXT MEETING: *Scheduled for November 16th, 2004***

****Time and date could change if plans to hold the November Police Commission meeting at the high school develop.**

*Respectfully Submitted By Kathleen Hoyt, Administrative Aide
Reviewed By Commissioner Gerald Howe, Clerk*