

PORTSMOUTH POLICE COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 14TH, 2009 MEETING

6:00 PM (Non-Public) – 7:00 PM (Public), Wm. Mortimer Conference Room, PPD

**Gerald W. Howe, Chairman
John C. Russo
John F. Golumb**

- I. CALL TO ORDER:** The chairman called the October 14th, 2009 monthly police commission public session to order at 5:50PM. (*One DVD documenting this meeting is on file for reference*).

Action: Commissioner Golumb moved to go into non-public session as appropriate under RSA91-A.

Seconded by Commissioner Russo.

On a Roll Call Vote: The Board voted unanimously to move to non-public session.

The Commission immediately went into non-public session at 5:50 PM.

Action: Commissioner Russo moved the commission adjourn from non-public session and re-enter public session.

Seconded by Commissioner Golumb.

On a Roll Call Vote: The board voted unanimously to move to public session at 6:55 PM.

Present during the public session: Commissioners Howe, Russo, and Golumb, Chief David Ferland, Deputy Chief Stephen DuBois, Budget Coordinator Karen Senecal, Executive Assistant Kathleen Levesque

- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Deputy DuBois led the Pledge of Allegiance.

- III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:
September 16th, 2009.**

Action: Commissioner Russo moved to accept the minutes and place them on file.

Seconded by Commissioner Golumb.

On a Roll Call Vote: The board voted to accept the minutes of the September 16th, 2009 meeting and place them on file.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

A. POLICE COMMISSION:

1. Personnel Items that require action:

Action: Commissioner Golumb moved to accept the resignation of Officer John Lee and to thank Officer Lee for his service to the City of Portsmouth.

Seconded by Commissioner Russo.

On a Roll Call Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept Officer Lee's resignation with regret and to extend the commission's thanks for Officer Lee's service to the city.

Action: Commissioner Golumb moved to accept the resignation of Animal Control Officer Patricia Tate, with regret and to thank her for her hard work and many contributions to the ACO program at the police department.

Seconded by Commissioner Russo.

On a Roll Call Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept the resignation of ACO Tate and to extend the commission's thanks for Patricia Tate's contributions to the ACO program.

Action: Commissioner Golumb moved to appoint Capt. Tim Brownell to permanent status.

Seconded by Commissioner Russo.

On a Roll Call Vote: The board voted unanimously to appoint Capt. Brownell to permanent status.

B. CHIEF OF POLICE

- 1. Chief Ferland unveiled the official Facebook page** of the Portsmouth Police Department, which went live this morning. The chief explained the department's reasoning in making this decision to go forward with this

project. He then played a compelling YouTube clip that presented a visual/statistical summary of social media demographics.

Commissioner Howe asked about how the demographics given in the clip mesh with the demographics of Portsmouth, which he observed is a population that is growing older. Chief Ferland indicated that in fact, the senior population is one of the fastest growing groups in social media. The chief indicated that later in the meeting, the deputy would be briefing the commission on the upcoming Senior Citizen Police Academy; another way the department is reaching out to this growing community. The chief explained that the FaceBook page is just one of the elements that the department is using to get an unfiltered message out directly to our community and at the same time to reach out to the city and the region. We as a police department are recognizing the shifts and changes going on in our community and are choosing to address them and remain proactive.

Chief Ferland reviewed some of the current elements of the department's Facebook page, and spoke briefly about one of the postings on the department's page, a program to address the special nature of police interactions with people who have autism. We hope to have the information on the people in our community who have autism entered into our database, so that if we have reason to interact with them, we will be aware of their special needs and can give them the best possible service and protection.

Commissioner Russo asked who was going to be managing this Facebook page. The chief explained that there will be five administrators, three will have authority to post info. on the page without prior approval. The two additional administrators will be able to post items with the approval of the chief or the deputy.

Chairman Howe asked to have an update on FB next month.

A brief discussion followed on the kinds of things that will go out on the FaceBook page.

2. Grants

Action: Commissioner Golumb moved to accept a grant in the amount of \$105,000 from the Dept. of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. This grant will be used for radio encryption
Seconded by Commissioner Russo.

On a Roll Call Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept the grant for radio encryption and forward to the city council for their action.

Action: Commissioner Golumb moved to accept a grant in the amount of \$80,000 from the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services for the replacement of our old crime-scene van.

Seconded by Commissioner Russo.

On a Roll Call Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept the grant to replace our old crime-scene van, and to forward same to the city council for their action.

Action: Commissioner Golumb moved to accept a grant in the amount of \$7,170 for the purchase of new and replacement bulletproof vests. As in the past, this is a matching grant amount. The funds are used to replace worn out vests and to purchase vests for new hires.

Seconded by Commissioner Russo.

On a Roll Call Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept the grant for the bulletproof vests and forward to the city council for their action.

3. Bureau of Administrative Services Report

Chief Ferland indicated to the commission that with the exception of the financial update, he did not wish to page through and do a stock review of each of the reports in the commission packet. Instead, the chief said he would like to highlight some of the items that don't make it into the report. Between the report and the chief's and deputy's highlights, the commission would receive a more complete view of the work and activities of the department. Chief Ferland noted the report that is given to the commission is also available to the public upon request. This is a detailed, easily readable, and informative summary of the operation of the police department, and the public is encouraged to review it. The report is provided monthly to both the commission and the city council.

- The chief began by talking about the change in the K-9 team, with Officer Eric Kinsman becoming our newest K-9 officer. He is now working with K-9 Titan and the transition is going very well. Commissioner Howe asked if the change would affect Officer Kotsonis' seniority, Chief Ferland said it would not. Officer Kotsonis was K-9 Titan's previous partner.

- He also spoke about the leadership development and team building course that the entire department has gone through over the past 9 months. We feel that in addition to training them to be good at what they do, we need to develop the leadership potential in our employees. We need to purposefully prepare for supervisory succession in administration and in dispatch as well as patrol, and we are doing that. We have found that our employees are hungry for this type of training and the course is getting high marks with those who have gone through it.
- Oral boards for sergeant will be taking place on October 27th. The commission is acutely aware that we have many positions that we are working to fill, as a result of the numerous retirements that have taken place this year, in addition to a couple of resignations.
- The Portsmouth Ford theft investigations are ongoing. We have several detectives pursuing leads and information on these cases.

Chief Ferland indicated that while he did not wish to review every case being worked, he did want to let the commission know that we continue to work on our unsolved homicide cases. In addition to the regular case load, one specially assigned detective does some work, or reviews some piece of evidence or portion of these cases every week. We remain committed to getting these cases solved. Every time new technology becomes available, we seek to apply it to our unsolved homicide cases.

- We had a police officer hurt by a drunk driver who “T-boned” the cruiser the officer was in. The officer was injured, but is progressing and should be back at work in a few weeks. The incident highlights the nature of the ongoing battle against people who drink and then get behind the wheel of a car and drive. The cruiser sustained heavy damage so we are also without the use of that vehicle as we await the lengthy insurance and repair process.

The Chief then turned the briefing over to Deputy DuBois.

The deputy began by reviewing recent and upcoming events: “Walk-to-School” Day occurred last week on October 8th. The Halloween Parade is

slated for the 31st, and Trick-or-Treating will take place the night before, on October 30th, from 5:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Chairman Howe asked if we would have additional officers on the streets for these events. Deputy DuBois indicated that we would be limiting time off during this event, but felt we would not need to augment scheduled coverage.

The Holiday Parade is scheduled for the 2nd, of December. The Scarecrows of the Port will start popping up in the downtown shortly, starting November 1st.

The department has made a conditional offer to one of several candidates that have been going through the application process for full-time officers. He is scheduled to start with us in December to coincide with the start of the Police Academy. Chairman Howe asked if the new hire was an experienced officer. The deputy replied that he is an experienced certified part-time officer and he has dispatcher experience, but not full-time officer experience.

As Chief Ferland mentioned earlier in the meeting, the Senior Citizen Police Academy will be held next month. We will be taking the academy experience to the seniors, many of whom would not be able to travel to the station. This senior academy has been made possible with left over monies from Seacoast Crimestoppers' generous funding of the regular Citizen Police Academy held earlier this year. The Senior Citizen Academy will include a virtual tour of the PD via a PowerPoint show that has been put together by our interns over the course of several weeks.

We will be holding a meeting on October 26th with the Downtown Restaurant and Hospitality Association here at the police department at 6 PM. Commissioner Golumb will also be attending this meeting.

Capt. Schwartz is also teaming up with the state to bring a program called "Senior Corps" to this region. This is a program that teams up healthy, mobile seniors with those who live alone and need help. He will be attending a meeting on October 23rd in Concord.

September 25th, Lt. McQuate conducted taxi inspections. Four cabs failed. All have been repaired and re-inspected, and all have now passed.

The deputy gave a brief rundown of up-coming training. Two of our detectives will be attending training on VIP security put on by the US Secret Service. Deputy DuBois indicated that he attended this training a few years ago, and it is a great opportunity for us to liaison with the Secret Service and understand how they do things, so that when candidates come through Portsmouth during election time, we are better able to work with them.

This week we have a Reid Technique Interview school here at the PD that we are hosting, Next week we are hosting a tactical dispatch school here, and in mid-November we will be conducting a sex-offender management training here also. As the host of these training seminars, the PD benefits from free training admissions for our personnel to some of these classes. In past years, this has resulted in tens of thousands of training dollars saved in P&T.

This concluded the deputy's report. There being no questions from the commission, he turned the meeting back over to the chief.

Chief Ferland reported that as of Friday, we will be without an Animal Control Officer and have begun the process to fill this position. We have a contingency plan in place to cover animal calls while we are without an ACO; however, we are obliged to restrict the number and type of calls that we respond to during this period.

The business office assistant position has been posted and that hiring process has also begun. The chief reported that we continue to work on our master plan for one-, three-, and five-year goals and objectives.

Chairman Howe paused the chief's report to ask if the ACO position would be filled as a part-time position. Chief Ferland indicated that it would.

Continuing with the update on goals and objectives, he indicated that he hoped to have the master plan to the commission for its review by the end of the year.

The chief indicated that Deputy DuBois has just returned from the International Chief's of Police Conference and he is preparing a report for the commission for the November meeting.

The detective testing process has begun. As you know, the list has expired, and by contract, we have to have an eligibility list of patrol officers who have qualified to be considered for promotion into the detective division as openings occur. The written test has been completed, and the oral board and practical portion of the testing process will take place next week or the week after.

Chairman Howe asked how many officers have taken the test. The chief thought there were nine or ten officers that had passed the written test.

Since our last commission meeting, Somersworth PD has been added to our cross-agency list. The number of participating agencies now stands at ten as this data access network expands across the region.

Chief Ferland informed the commission that Detective Jones is in her seventh year with this police department and in those seven years, she has never, taken one sick day – not one sick day in seven years. This is an extraordinary record, and speaks to Detective Jones' drive and dedication.

In court matters, the state has made a fundamental change in class 'A' and class 'B' misdemeanors. With the exception of domestic violence cases and those with enhanced penalties attached to them, the court is directing all police departments in New Hampshire to charge all misdemeanors as class 'B' misdemeanors. It is hoped that this will streamline and expedite the processing of these cases. This change began October first, and we were notified of the change around the second week in September. We have been using the time to put the administrative adjustments in place. This does make a small addition to the paperwork on our end, but should expedite things on the court end. So far, there have been no problems for our court office.

Officer Pearl and K-9 Wess have returned from Des Moines, IA. They were out there for the National Police Dog Field Trials. This is the first time they have competed in the national arena. We are proud to say that they certified at the national level. Usually, this does not happen the first

time a team competes at this level. We are very proud of Scott and K-9 Wess. This represents many, many hours of training and preparation.

The next item was a copy of “American Police Beat” with a picture of Deputy DuBois on the cover. This is a national police tabloid-format magazine. The cover photo of the deputy was taken during the presidential visit to Portsmouth last August 11th.

Chief Ferland ended his portion of his report by sharing some e-mails and other thank you’s received from the public that were not part of the commission’s packet. This completed the chief’s report.

Budget Coordinator Karen Senecal reviewed the financial report portion of the commission’s packet.

- a. Financial Reports
- b. Overtime Report
- c. Attendance Report
- d. Personnel and Training Report
- e. Information Systems Report
- f. Records Division Report
- g. Fleet Report
- h. Communications Center Report

C. PATROL SERVICES BUREAU:

- 1. Offense Report
- 2. Program/Self-Initiated Activity/Directed Patrol Report
- 3. Animal Control Report
- 4. Special Teams/Programs report
 - a. K-9 Program
 - b. Seacoast Emergency Response Team
 - c. Accident Investigation Team
 - d. Field Training Program
 - e. Auxiliary Unit
 - f. Community Relations
- 5. Personnel Out Sick or Injured – One officer out injured
- 6. Update on Special Events

D. CITY PROSECUTOR REPORT

E. BUREAU OF INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES

VII. MISCELLANEOUS OTHER BUSINESS:

Chairman Howe asked if there were any questions from anyone in the room. He then asked for a motion regarding the division and team reports.

Action: Commissioner Golumb moved to accept the division and team reports and place them on file.

Seconded by Commissioner Russo.

On a Roll Call Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept the division and team reports and place them on file.

Chairman Howe announced the date, time, and location of the next commission meeting as being November 18th, with the public session beginning at 7 PM, in the Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers in Portsmouth City Hall.

VIII. MOTION TO ADJOURN

There being no further business before the commission, the Chairman asked for a motion to adjourn.

Action: Commissioner Russo moved the October 14th, 2009 meeting be adjourned.

Seconded by Commissioner Golumb.

On a Roll Call Vote: The board voted unanimously in favor of the motion at 7:53PM.

IX. NEXT MEETING: - Wednesday, November 18th, 2009, Eileen Dondero Foley Conference Room

*Respectfully Submitted By Kathleen Levesque, Executive Assistant
Reviewed By Commissioner Russo, Clerk*