

**PORTSMOUTH POLICE COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 18<sup>H</sup>, 2009 MEETING**

6:00 PM (Non-Public) – Wm. Mortimer Conference Room, PPD  
7:00 PM (Public) – Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers, City Hall

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

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The chairman called the November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009 monthly police commission public session to order at 7:03 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, Officers Goodwin and Mercer, Training Officer Peter Sheldon, Evidence Technician James Gaskell

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

- III. **ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON: October 14<sup>th</sup>, 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 October 14<sup>th</sup>, 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:** None.

**Action:** Commissioner Golumb moved to accept Lt. Dante Puopolo's letter of retirement.

**Seconded by Commissioner Russo.**

**On a Roll Call Vote:** The board voted unanimously to accept Lt. Puopolo's letter of retirement and place it on file. The board thanked Lt. Puopolo for his many years of protecting and serving the people of Portsmouth.

## **B. CHIEF OF POLICE**

- 1. Det. Aaron Goodwin** was recognized for his voluntary attendance at all six Sobriety Checkpoints this year and for his aggressive DWI and DRE work. NOTE: Det. Goodwin was not present; Chief Ferland summarized the content of his letter for the commission and recognized his work.
- 2. Officer Nicole Mercer** was recognized for her DWI and DRE work. Officer Mercer leads the department in overall arrests, and in DUI arrests in particular. NOTE: Officer Mercer was not present; Chief Ferland summarized the content of her letter for the commission and recognized her work.
- 3. Crime Analyst Krista Comrie** was recognized for her work to develop, design and launch the department's FaceBook page. NOTE: Krista could not be present because of a prior commitment.
- 4. Evidence Technician James Gaskell** was recognized for his successful PropertyRoom.com project, which has opened a valuable and money-saving resource to assist the department in disposing of surplus property. Chief Ferland noted that PropertyRoom.com was a ground-up idea and is a good example of the many ideas that come forward from both sworn and unsworn employees. Chief Ferland said that both he and Deputy DuBois place a high value on these contributions and feel an obligation to make sure ideas are heard and vetted.
- 5. Training Officer Peter Sheldon** briefed the commission on the role of the training officer at the PD. Officer Sheldon explained the mandatory training required by the state and the additional training required by our department. He covered the detailed records-keeping that is necessary, as officer training can have a bearing on court cases. By describing each type of training and the number of hours required for each type of training, Officer Sheldon gave the commission a good sense of the extraordinary level of expertise required of Portsmouth Police Officers. People may not realize that many of the specialized skills needed by a police officer are perishable and require ongoing in-service training for officers to maintain high skill levels.

Det. Goodwin joined the meeting while Officer Sheldon was briefing the commission. Officer Sheldon's briefing having concluded, Chief Ferland

asked the commission if he could ask Det. Goodwin to approach the podium to receive his Letter of Recognition. Chief Ferland then read the letter into the record. Detective Goodwin thanked the Chief and the Commission and explained that he was on a police matter at the beginning of the meeting, and could not be present.

Chief Ferland returned to the subject of tasers and addressed the commission's questions on taser deployment to the patrol force. The Chief cited a marked decrease of injuries to both officers and suspects concurrent to the expanding deployment of tasers to the officers. Chief Ferland reminded the commission that it was Deputy DuBois who recognized the potential value of having the taser as a less-than-lethal option for our officers, and conducted the extensive research and training development to bring the weapon on board.

With the commission's consent the Chief changed the order of the agenda and asked Karen Senecal to review the financial records, and certain line item entries. Chief Ferland noted that with the extensive revision of the monthly reporting document, we are able to zero in more on where costs are fluctuating, and we are alerted to changes and trends very quickly.

**6. Bureau of Administrative Services Report**

- a. Financial Reports, by line item
- 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

Chief Ferland then briefed the commission on the following items:

The Chief said the Senior Citizen Police Academy held the first of three sessions in the Levenson Room at the public library on November 12<sup>th</sup>. The second session will take place tomorrow, and interested seniors can still attend.

The Chief reported that we are nearing completion of the ambitious Goals & Objectives undertaking. We have reviewed the nearly complete document

with the patrol officers' union and should have a finished product for the commission's review no later than next month.

We were part of a meeting with the downtown hospitality industry at the 100 Club, in conjunction with Commissioner Brode of the NH Liquor Commission. The meeting went well; Commissioner Brode covered the direction the commission is going in regarding new laws, changes in laws, and the administration that surrounds those laws. We followed this up with our own Downtown Hospitality meeting, which was very well attended. Commissioner Golumb was also part of the meeting. the primary purpose of getting this group together was to debrief the summer; find out what worked well, where weak areas might still exist, and to just reinforce our working relationship with the downtown restaurant and bar owners.

Chief Ferland then turned the meeting over to the Deputy to review the next several items.

Deputy DuBois began with Personnel & Training, and the status of current hiring efforts. We have just hired two officers who will be starting at the beginning of December and will be attending the January academy. We have four people in the background process, so hopefully one or more of those candidates will successfully complete the process. We conducted interviews today to fill the part time animal control officer's position; and we have received grant funding through Internet Crimes Against Children to hire an ICAC support specialist. This position requires a strong command of Access statistical software, and the ability to work in this difficult field along with the investigators. We also have nearly finished the hiring process for the accounting clerk hired to fill Tammy's Maio's position. The last hurdle is a medical exam, and that should take place on Monday.

The next area covered was our presence on social media. Our FaceBook page has been very successful. We have acquired 799 fans in one month. We also have a Twitter account now; any information posted on FaceBook will now also go out to Twitter. This medium affords us the ability to get our message out directly to the public. I'm not only talking about feel good information, but also timely information. A good example is the activity that surrounded the Cabot Street Market robbery a few weeks ago. The FaceBook page was periodically updated with developing information. FaceBook fans in the affected neighborhoods were able to stay informed

about what was happening in their neighborhoods and knew why there were police in their neighborhoods; this proved to be an effective tool for us.

Next, the Deputy briefly reviewed a couple of the cases represented by the stats in the Bureau of Investigations report. The first was the Portsmouth Ford Thefts. Deputy DuBois described how the investigation of this case has generated new leads and information on two other cases, and has taken investigator to law enforcement agencies in two other states.

Copper thefts are once again back on the radar. There was a surge in these kinds of thefts a year or so ago, as the price of this metal skyrocketed, and we find we are dealing with them again. Both patrol and detective are working together pursuing leads and developing the cases on these thefts.

We also had a child abuse investigation that came in last week that detectives have been working on all week.

Switching to events in the city, the deputy said both the Film Festival and Halloween were large events but went off well. One of the things done this year, and it is something of a trend across the country, was to conduct in-person visits to registered sex offenders prior to Halloween trick or treating. Detective Bernier went out with Probation and Parole and checked up on the locations of all of our registered offenders. We currently have 29 offenders registered as living in the city.

The next item on the Deputy's list was his attendance at the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) conference in Denver, in October. Chief Ferland allowed the deputy to attend this annual conference in his stead. This is an international event, attended by chiefs from around the world. They come together to share ideas, exchange information and new ideas in law enforcement. All types of courses are offered at the conference; Deputy DuBois attended courses in social media, preparing for school shootings, leadership mentoring, and crowd management planning. He also had the opportunity to attend a town hall-style meeting hosted by PERF, Police Executive Research Forum, and was pleasantly surprised to see the exchange of information and problem solving ideas that occurred there. The attendees were chiefs of major US cities that you would be likely to see in the nation media; cities such as Miami, Los Angeles, and Boston. It was interesting to hear them discuss what they are seeing in developing crime trends and talk about how they are responding to these challenges. The

opportunity to see and hear about the responses and protocols developed by larger cities strengthens our ability to respond effectively. It is generally true in the northeast that what we may begin to see and deal with in terms of crime generally starts elsewhere in the country.

The Deputy also said there were about 800 vendors there for anything and everything connected to law enforcement or police work. He was able to develop a resource list of equipment and programs, current products, and solutions.

Regarding the Accident Investigation Team, the Putnam's accident is going forward for prosecution through the Rockingham County Attorney's office. The commission is already aware of the DUI accident where a cruiser was T-boned and the accident team was called out to assist.

Completing this portion of the meeting, the Deputy turned the meeting back over to the Chief.

The next item was upcoming events in the city. The Chief reported the film festival at the Music Hall went off without any difficulties. The Holiday Parade and Tree Lighting is coming up in two weeks; the Explorer Post is doing the Fisher Cats tickets fundraising effort again this year, having purchased a discounted block of tickets that they will sell to support the post.

The Chief updated the commission on the list of recently completed in-service training, including a week with a homicide unit in Queens, New York for four Portsmouth detectives.

The Chief and the Deputy recently attended a confidential de-brief on the Rochester hostage incident that took place at Hillary Rodham Clinton's campaign office during the 2008 elections.

School Resource Officer Rochelle Jones remains active at the high school. I-Pod registrations are on-going, nine truancy investigations were conducted over the course of the last month and 43 parent/child staff meetings, among her other activities and responsibilities with the school.

The Chief indicated that as chair of the subcommittee on law enforcement training, he continues to work with the Chief Justice's task force on mental

health. Along with our board position on the county's mental health council, this helps us to attend to the growing mental health issues in our greater community.

Also in November we hosted a briefing for the new US Attorney for New Hampshire, John Kacavas, regarding the Internet Crimes Against Children work in New Hampshire. The FBI and the US Marshall's office were also in attendance. Portsmouth is the state headquarters for the New Hampshire ICAC task force. Attorney Kacavas met the investigators here who do this work; he was here for about two hours, and it was a very good meeting.

Chairman Howe asked Chief Ferland to explain what ICAC is for the benefit of the public. The Chief explained that ICAC stood for "Internet Crimes Against Children"; Portsmouth was among the first law enforcement agencies in the country selected to establish an Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, and we remain an active leader in New England in this area. The U.S. Attorney chose to come to Portsmouth to be briefed because of our leadership role.

The Police Explorers continue to win awards and honors in Exploring. They swept the awards at this year's Exploring Awards Banquet. Det. Munson and Cadet Kyle Brake took the Silver "E" Award, The Spurgeon Award went to retired Chief Mike Magnant, an award well earned, and the community service award went to the post as a whole. As soon as they won that service award, they went out and hosted their annual spaghetti dinner for senior residents in one of Portsmouth's public housing complexes.

The community notification "Reverse 911" project continues to move along. This will allow a great deal of specificity in keeping residents informed via telephone calls initiated by the city. The city has the equipment capability now, we just have to do the internal training for the dispatchers and emergency responders, for us to be ready to go live with this.

Chief Ferland informed the commission that he is now officially a Rotarian.

Portsmouth PD was well-represented at the Manchester foot race for fallen officers earlier this month.

K-9 Officer Scott Pearl and K-9 Wess received the United States Police Canine Association Scent Award for the track at the Quik Stop Market. This is a first for the Portsmouth Police Department K-9 Unit.

Congratulations to Detective Bernier as the recipient of the Sexual Assault Support Services "Porch Light Award". Det. Bernier received the award for her work with the sexual offender registry.

**7. Letters of Thanks & Appreciation From Outside The Department:**

- a. Letter of Thanks from the Portsmouth Community Out of Darkness Walk for Suicide Prevention.
- b. Letter of Thanks from D. Morford for the actions of Officer Christina Meyer on the evening of November 1<sup>st</sup> in helping a friend in distress.
- c. Letter of Goodwill to the City Manager from Mr. Frank Mastan complimenting the police department and Chief of Police Dave Ferland.
- d. Certificate of Appreciation for completion of threat assessment survey

In addition to the above, Chief Ferland detailed several other more informal notes and e-mails that he has received commending our officers for their work or expressing gratitude for help and consideration extended above and beyond the call of duty in these people's personal interactions with Portsmouth officers.

**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:**

**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.

Commissioner Howe and Commissioner Russo thanked the public for their votes that reappointed them to the commission.

### **VIII. MOTION TO ADJOURN**

There being no further business before the commission, the Chairman announced the date for the next commission meeting, and asked for a motion to adjourn.

**Action: Commissioner Russo moved** the November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009 meeting be adjourned.

**Seconded by Commissioner Golumb.**

**On a Roll Call Vote:** The board voted unanimously in favor of the motion at 8:06 PM.

### **IX. NEXT MEETING: - Wednesday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2009, Eileen Dondero Foley Conference Room**

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