

## PORTSMOUTH POLICE COMMISSION

### MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 14<sup>TH</sup> 2013 PUBLIC FORUM FOR INPUT ON THE POLICE BUDGET FOR FY '14

6:00 p.m. – Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers, Portsmouth City Hall

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

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The chairman called the January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013 public forum to order at 6:10 p.m.

**Present during the public forum:** Commissioners Golumb, Howe, and Russo, Chief Stephen DuBois, Deputy Chief Corey MacDonald, Admin Manager Karen Senecal, Executive Assistant Kathleen Levesque, members of the public and the press.

- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Deputy Chief Corey MacDonald led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. **INTRODUCTION OF THE COMMISSION**

Chairman John Golumb introduced Commissioner Howe and Commissioner Russo.

IV. **BUDGET BRIEFING FROM THE CHIEF**

Chairman Golumb asked the chief to present an overview of what we are facing for fiscal year 2014.

Chief DuBois read the city ordinance regarding the mandate to hold a public hearing to get input from Portsmouth residents and other interested parties.

The Chief addressed new cost factors exerting pressure on our budget. He explained the recent retirement push down from the state: traditionally the state absorbed 35% of retirement fund increases as they occurred. They whittled away at this percentage over the last few years, making it smaller and smaller. And finally, instead of returning the amount they would pay to 35% as originally promised, the legislature dropped it to zero. This equates to \$267,575 in new financial obligations for the police department. Chief DuBois reiterated that 94% of this police

department's cost is personnel – public safety work is people intensive, pure and simple.

The Chief said when he was sworn in as Chief, he wanted to make certain changes in the next fiscal year to align with some of the input he was getting from his staff, along with the findings from the recent PSSG study. One item was the 11<sup>th</sup> dispatcher (last year we lost two dispatchers). Chief DuBois wanted to finally address that problem and staff the center properly. Being under staffed in dispatch takes a terrible toll on the remaining dispatchers.

He also talked about wanting to explore the possibility of a community relations officer who would work with the citywide neighborhood groups, and other special populations such as the elderly and those issues in our public housing.

The Chief went on to explain other components of the budget formation process and additional factors exerting pressure on our funding. He said the \$267, 575 shortfall from the retirement push down could only be made up in the elimination of programs and personnel. He also illustrated that this isn't the first year we have faced cuts and in fact the department has lost 10 officers over the last ten years in budget cutting. The Chief added that available grant funding has been drying up in recent years as well. He explained that when he referred to a status quo budget, he was referring to providing the same services and programs as last fiscal year with the same people, for the next fiscal year, nothing added.

He said that if we were not burdened with the retirement cost push down from the state, we would have been able to make the 4% ceiling put forth by the city council without making the cuts just discussed.

**V. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mark Brighton, Union Street – expressed concern the 4% is more than twice the rate of inflation which is 1.8%, but at the same time, he stated the city should not be looking to balance its budget at the cost of public safety.

**VI. NEXT STEPS IN THE PROCESS:**

Chief DuBois said he would make a more detailed presentation of the department's budget at the January 23<sup>rd</sup>, regular monthly meeting of the Police Commission.

## VII. ADJOURNMENT

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

**Action: Commissioner Russo moved** to adjourn the January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013 public forum on the police department budget for FY '14.

**Seconded by Commissioner Howe.**

**On a Roll Call Vote:** The board voted unanimously to pass the motion to adjourn at 6:22 p.m.

*Kathe*

*Respectfully Submitted By Kathleen Levesque, Executive Assistant  
Reviewed By Commissioner Howe, Clerk of the Commission*

Gerald W. Howe