

PORTSMOUTH POLICE COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 25th, 2022 POLICE COMMISSION MEETING

5:30 p.m. Public Session – Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers

Stefany Shaheen, Chair
Buzz Scherr, Commissioner
Kate Coyle, Commissioner

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The October 25th, 2022 monthly Police Commission meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers. (An archived video of the meeting is available on the police department's website and the city's YouTube channel.)

The following people were present for the public session:

Commissioners Shaheen, Scherr and Coyle, Chief Mark Newport, Deputy Chief Michael Maloney, Business Ops. Manager Karen Senecal, Executive Assistant Jackie Burnett and members of the public. *Commissioner Shaheen joined via Zoom due to an unexpected emergency which rendered in-person attendance impossible.

- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Commissioner Coyle led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. **ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD**

ON: September 20th, 2022

Action: Commissioner Scherr moved to accept the minutes of the 9-20-22 Police Commission meeting.

Seconded by Commissioner Coyle.

On a Roll Call Vote: The motion passed as follows:

Commissioner Shaheen:	“Yes.”
Commissioner Scherr:	“Aye.”
Commissioner Coyle:	“Yes.”

IV. MOTION TO SUSPEND THE AGENDA:

The Chair asked for a motion to suspend the agenda and move to item #1 under the Chief's Report: "Recognition of K9 Axe's Retirement".

Action: Commissioner Scherr moved to suspend the rules for the purpose noted above.

Seconded by Commissioner Coyle.

On a Roll Call Vote: The motion passed as follows:

Commissioner Shaheen:	"Yes."
Commissioner Scherr:	"Aye."
Commissioner Coyle:	"Yes."

Chief's Report, #1 Recognition of K9 Axe's Retirement:

Chief Newport recognized K9 Axe for his 6 years of dedicated service to the City of Portsmouth. Axe's handler, Master Patrolman Aaron Stacy, has been reassigned to the position of Training Officer under the Administrative Division. The Chief gifted Aaron with a large portrait of K9 Axe. The Commission offered their thanks to Axe and wished him well in retirement.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT:

- **Stephanie Hausman, Morning Street, Portsmouth NH – Ms.** Hausman identified herself as one of the three-person team who collaborated with the commission and police leadership to create the current list of community priorities, AKA RGR recommendations. A [community priorities tracking tool](#) for these initiatives is posted on the police department's website under the "Publications" tab, under "Community Forum Resources". It was added that the tracking tool is difficult to locate on the website. Stephanie also expressed her feelings with regard to the process in which the County Attorney's Office notifies the Portsmouth Police Department of court case outcomes and suggests a policy be created to outline the procedures. Requests were made for the police commission to put future requests to the County Attorney's Office in writing and recommend the commission and/or police department create a policy on case resolutions and notification procedures. Lastly, Stephanie mentioned an agenda for a previous nonpublic session to which Commissioner Coyle provided an explanation to her question.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

VII. NEW BUSINESS:

A. POLICE COMMISSION:

1. Community Priorities:

a. Update on Mobile Crisis Response – Capt. Keaveny

Captain Dave Keaveny of the Investigative Division gave a presentation on the working relationship between the Portsmouth Police Department and Mobile Crisis Response teams. He described their successes and areas of weakness and what's being done to improve these services. The Captain provided real-life examples of past calls for service and described actions taken in which the police responded in collaboration with the mental health professionals. In some of those cases, police response was initially required; however, they were able to transition on-scene control over to the Mobile Crisis team once it was deemed safe and appropriate to do so.

As mentioned by Commissioner Scherr, the phone number to access mental health services appears confusing to the average person and certainly to someone experiencing/witnessing a mental health crisis (988 vs. the mobile crisis center's direct line). Portsmouth Police Department is training dispatchers to identify mental health crisis calls and connect the caller with the appropriate services based on the initial information they are provided.

NH police departments have requested informational material on the Mobile Crisis Response services, i.e. pamphlets, to be able to distribute to their community.

Both mental health professionals and police officials evaluate past service calls to determine what worked and what could be improved upon. Future goals of the program: to bring onboard social workers to triage calls.

b. Review of Guidelines for Community Action

Chairperson Shaheen outlined steps taken at the September Police Commission meeting in regard to the community priorities identified. Commissioner Scherr mentioned that the police department's community survey, run by the UNH Survey Center, has been disseminated. Results are estimated to be available by the end of 2022.

2. Facilities Update

a. Restoration

Chief Newport stated that remediation work continues in the basement of the police department. After the basement, contractors will begin work in the Emergency Communication Center and eventually the Court Office.

b. Next Steps for Public Safety Facility Planning

Four companies have submitted proposals for plans to build a new police facility. Three interviews with architectural firms are scheduled for November 10th, 2022 to select a firm. Commissioner Coyle added that all submitted proposals were strong and she looks forward to the interview process.

B. CHIEF OF POLICE:

1. Recognition of K9 Axe's Retirement: See Section III above.

2. Email Domain Transition to .GOV

In an effort to increase the police department's security and safety and to better meet CJIS requirements, the police department has begun the process of transitioning from the "@cityofportsmouth.com" email domain to "@portsmouthnhpd.gov". This project should be completed within the next few weeks. (ex. mnewport@portsmouthnhpd.gov)

3. Thank You's from the Community

- a. Newmarket Police Department sent a letter to thank Portsmouth Police Department for providing their agency with a "mourning bunting" for a fallen officer's funeral.
- b. SAIL Portsmouth's director sent a letter to thank Portsmouth Police Officers and Explorer Cadets for providing traffic control services at the Tall Ships event in August.

4. Monthly Traffic Stats

Deputy Chief Mike Maloney presented the traffic statistics from September 2022. Commissioner Scherr requested that the department break down those numbers along with the standard statistics to show how many stops involved speeding, DWI, etc. Deputy Chief Maloney will provide those numbers at the regular November Police Commission meeting.

5. Financial Report

Business Manager Karen Senecal reported that the department is tracking at 4% below the cap for quarter 1 of FY'23. It is anticipated that the gap will close now that the department is rebounding from a staffing shortage and has hired several new employees in recent months.

- a. **Strategic Plan Update:** 85-95% complete – will have available at next meeting to review and publish.
- b. **Grant Application Update:** Chief Newport provided additional information about one of the initiatives from the Office of Highway Safety grant. The Community Outreach Betterment Program, aka "COB" Program, helps the department educate members of the public on traffic-related issues that are common in specific communities (i.e. Jessica's law, child seat safety, hands-free

law, etc). Portsmouth Police Department has been selected to participate in this pilot program. The goal of this program is to reach marginalized communities and to increase overall communication on traffic-related matters. The Commission expressed its support for the department's participation in this important pilot program.

Karen added that the Federal ICAC grant award should be available by the end of December. The annual grant allocation has dropped by roughly \$40,000 due to their current methodology which is to allocate funds based on statistics prior to COVID (2020). As a result, they are several years behind the current statistics, which have increased exponentially. The Bulletproof Vest Grant is in the pipeline and the department is reviewing other applicable solicitations.

VIII. PATROL DIVISION:

- a. This report was included in the commission meeting packet.

IX. COURT OFFICE REPORT:

- a. This confidential report was included in the commission meeting packet.

X. MISCELLANEOUS/OTHER BUSINESS:

XI. NEXT REGULAR MEETING:

The next regular commission meeting date is November 15th, 2022.

XII. MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Commission, the Chair asked for a motion to adjourn.

Action: Commissioner Scherr moved to adjourn the October 25th, 2022 Police Commission meeting at 6:19PM.

Seconded by Commissioner Coyle.

On a Voice Vote: The motion passed 3-0.

END OF MEETING

Respectfully Submitted by Jacqueline Burnett, Executive Assistant
Commissioner Buzz Scherr, Recording Clerk of the Commission