

PORTSMOUTH POLICE COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 15th, 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 February 15th, 2022 monthly Police Commission meeting was called to order at 3:40 p.m. in the Wm. Mortimer Conference Room of the police department for the purpose of going into non-public session.

The Chair called for a motion to go into non-public session under the provisions of RSA 91-A:3-II (a, b & c).

Action: Commissioner Scherr moved to enter non-public session for the purpose delineated above.

Seconded by Commissioner Coyle.

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

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

The motion passed to go into non-public session at 3:40 p.m.

The public session was called back to order at 5:35 p.m. in the Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers. (An archived video of the meeting is available on the city’s website and the city’s YouTube channel.)

The following people were present: Commissioners Shaheen, Scherr and Coyle, Chief Mark Newport, Business Ops. Manager Karen Senecal, Exec. Assistant Jackie Burnett, members of the Department and the public

II. MOTION TO SUSPEND THE AGENDA:

The Chair asked for a motion to suspend the agenda and move to item #1 & #2 under the Chief's Report, Swearing-In Ceremony and Prosecution Intern Presentation.

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

Seconded by Commissioner Coyle.

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

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

Chief's Report: #1 – Swearing-In Ceremony

Chief Newport administered the Sworn Officer Oath to the department's newest hire, Officer Sarah Stark.

➤ The Commission gave brief pause for the **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**.

➤ **ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD**

ON: January 18th, 2022

Action: Commissioner Coyle moved to accept the minutes of the January 18th, 2022 Police Commission Meeting.

Seconded by Commissioner Scherr.

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

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

➤ **PUBLIC COMMENT:** (The entire meeting can be viewed online by going to the City's website and scrolling down the home page to “Recent Meeting Broadcast”, or “City YouTube Channel...” which is in the blue box just below it.)

There being no individuals wishing to speak, the public comment session has been closed and the Commission moved to #2 under the Chief's Report.

Chief's Report: #2 – Prosecution Intern Presentation

Amanda Tellier, a Masters student at UNH, gave a PowerPoint presentation, using various data tables, before the commission to describe her findings at this

point in time in her internship with the police department. She began her internship in September of 2021 and collected arrest/conviction data from 2017- Amanda compiled and analyzed said data.

Amanda provided a breakdown of the most common offenses of the 187 offenses reported in 2017. The stats were broken down by type, class, sex, race and ethnicity. The data revealed that men committed more crime (felonies class A & B, misdemeanors). The majority of people arrested in cases were identified as white – more white people were charged with felonies and misdemeanors. Also, more white people were charged with top tier offenses.

Amanda found that ethnicity seemed to be a non-factor since the majority of people arrested were listed as non-Hispanic. To learn more about Amanda's findings, please visit the City of Portsmouth YouTube channel or click the following link: <https://youtu.be/ILkwdOSr2rc?t=586>.

Amanda's internship continues; she is currently working on collecting and analyzing 2018 prosecution data. Her goal is to gather 5 years of data and 2016 and 2020 data, if time allows.

Chair Shaheen requested a copy of Amanda's presentation and asked her about demographic data pertaining to her analysis. e. After reviewing the data, the police department and commission will consider whether or not to post it to the website. **The Commission thanked Amanda** for her presentation and continued work with prosecution data compilation and analysis.

Commissioner Coyle asked a question regarding the frequency of the nol pross as it related to charge bargaining or plea deals... is there any collection or analysis on parsing out a nol pross that is the product of a plea negotiation? Amanda responded that if it was nol prossed, she would write down why. A charge is typically nol prossed as part of a plea agreement.

Commissioner Scherr added that data is so valuable and he looks forward to drilling down further.

Chief Newport expressed how impressed he was by her ability to pull the data out of the current CAD/RMS system. **Chief asked Amanda** if she found any disproportionate numbers and **she responded** that controlled narcotic drugs being the main offense in 2017 was the most surprising discovery. Also driving while intoxicated was the number 2 charge.

Following Amanda's presentation, the Chair resumed to the standard agenda, as written.

III. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None.

IV. **NEW BUSINESS:**

A. POLICE COMMISSION:

1. Facilities Update

a. Chief Newport provided a status update on current work taking place within the police facility, to include mold remediation in the Detective's wing. **Karen added** that the new IT office on the second floor is nearing completion.

2. Community Priorities This will be a standing agenda item per Chairperson Shaheen.

a. Mobile Crisis Response Update

Chairperson Shaheen and Stephanie Hausman have met with Dennis Walker to learn more about the Seacoast Mental Health (SMH) mobile crisis response function and their collaboration with Portsmouth Police Department. Dennis Walker has agreed to present before the Commission at a future Police Commission meeting.

Commissioner Scherr also met with Dennis Walker and Eric at Eason who is working with Beacon Health on eventual implementation of the 988 number for the public to use to call for assistance during any mental health crisis/situation. 988 is not yet active and is currently being run through 911 until the crisis unit dispatchers are adequately trained on procedures. The idea is mental health professionals will respond based on how the dispatcher interprets the nature of the call. **Commissioner Scherr reported** that in July 2022, 988 will go live. He feels it should take up to one year for the seacoast mobile crisis unit to be fully operational and staffed. SMH has plans in place to best manage the regional nature of this service.

Chairperson Shaheen recognized Lt. Keaveny for his work with SMH and to the Chief for his leadership on the collaborative mental health services front.

b. NDA Update

Commissioner Scherr described that he is examining how much info can be made public. Historically, close to no information has been disclosed regarding a lawsuit in which an NDA is signed by one or more involved parties. **Commissioner Scherr continues** to meet with city officials to discuss this matter. A meeting has been scheduled with the lawyer with Primex (PPD's insurance carrier) and City Attorney. An updated will be provided at a future police commission meeting.

3. Discussion of Budget Work Session & Planning

Karen Senecal provided an update on where the PD/City is at in the budget process. There will be a public hearing, tomorrow night at 5:30 p.m., in which Chief Newport will give a presentation on the FY23 budget requests, which include a request for additional personnel and a discussion on the mobile crisis units and body cameras. Budget narratives are due to the city on Friday. There is a meeting with the City Manager on February 23rd, 2022. On February 7th, 2022, the City Council decided to continue the CIP discussions on a number of items. Karen and Chief Newport will also be preparing for a budget work session with the City Council in May. **Chairperson Shaheen urged** the public to tune in tomorrow's public hearing to learn more.

4. Discussion of Recent Grant Opportunities for Body Cameras

Chairperson Shaheen mentioned there have been some grant opportunities at the state level for body worn cameras (BWCs). Vendors have reached out to Chief Newport and Karen to discuss funding opportunities, as well. The police department's goal is to put BWCs into the CIP for next year and incorporate that into the department's strategic plan. This will give the PD time to conduct additional research. **Commissioner Coyle stated** that RSA 105-D:3, effective January 28th, 2022, provides \$50,000 in grant money for the purchase of BWCs. The considerations for the PD and Police Commission is that this would help to balance the cost of cameras with the cost of the BWC infrastructure (software, storage, and management which involves the hiring of additional personnel). **Commissioner Coyle's finds** that storage and management of cameras outweighs the actual cost of the cameras. Next steps are to try to build that into the budget and gain City Council support.

Chairperson Shaheen wanted to remind folks that grant funding is not all that is needed to make this happen. More research is required.

B. CHIEF OF POLICE:

1. **Swearing-In Ceremony – See above**
2. **Prosecution Intern Presentation – See above**
3. **Monthly Traffic Stats**
 - a. **Chief Newport reviewed** the traffic statistics from January 2022. Chief provided an explanation for an increase in motor vehicle stops. The numbers reflect management's push for officers to be more proactive with traffic enforcement throughout the city.

The Chair highlighted that citizens have voiced their concerns about speeding motorists and she's happy to see the patrol officers' focus on increased enforcement efforts.

4. **Financial Report – Karen Senecal**

Karen Senecal provided an update on the police department's current standing with the FY22 budget. This month the police department is 3% below the cap. Overtime is 26% over the cap due to staffing shortages; however, it is being absorbed into the budget.

Chairperson Shaheen commented that this is consistent with what businesses across the country are seeing – challenges with retirements, hiring, etc.

a. **Strategic Plan:** This is a work in progress. The police department will be adding in new initiatives and those initiatives that were delayed due to Covid-19 impacts to the city's overall budget.

b. **Grants:** Karen is still working on the Victims of Crimes Act (VOCA) grant and a second round of Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) ARPA funds (dollar amount TBD).

V. **PATROL DIVISION:**

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

VI. **COURT OFFICE REPORT:**

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

VII. **MISCELLANEOUS/OTHER BUSINESS:**

a. In preparation for tomorrow's public hearing on the budget, the police department has had a long standing request for a new police facility. This has been in the CIP for many years and the commission is hoping to have clear line of sight on how to address department facility needs moving forward. **The Chair pointed** out that the police department still has fewer officers now than it did back in 2007. In comparison to back then, Portsmouth has more public safety needs than it used to and continues to grow exponentially. The Public Hearing on the FY23 police budget: February 16th at 5:30 p.m.

VIII. **NEXT REGULAR MEETING:**

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

IX. **MOTION TO ADJOURN:**

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

Action: Commissioner Coyle moved the February 15th, 2022 monthly Police Commission Meeting be adjourned.

Seconded by Commissioner Scherr.

On a Roll Call Vote: The motion passed to adjourn the February 15th, 2022 monthly Police Commission Meeting at 6:21 pm. The vote was as follows:

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

END OF MEETING

Jackie

Respectfully Submitted By Jacqueline Burnett, Executive Assistant