

PORTSMOUTH POLICE COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE June 13th, 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 June 13th, 2022 monthly Police Commission meeting was called to order at 5:38 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, Captain Michael Maloney, Business Ops. Manager Karen Senecal, Exec. Assistant Jackie Burnett and members of the public. *Chair Shaheen joined via Zoom as her physical attendance at the meeting was not practical.

- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Commission led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. **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, Swearing-In & Recognition Ceremony.

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 Newport swore-in new hire Blaine Johnson III, a certified police officer from New York City. Chief Newport transitions to the Recognition Ceremony to acknowledge the valiant efforts of Detective Rochelle Jones, Dispatcher Ed Walsh and Dispatcher Victoria Bemis in their handling of a call for service on

the Piscataqua bridge on May 5th, 2022. Det. Jones was honored with a Life Saving Award, Dispatcher Ed Walsh was honored with a Letter of Recognition and Dispatcher Victoria Bemis was honored with a Letter of Commendation.

IV. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD

ON: May 17th, 2022

Action: Commissioner Scherr moved to approve the minutes from the 5-17-22 Police Commission meeting.

Seconded by Commissioner Coyle.

➤ **On a unanimous roll call vote, 3-0, motion passed.**

V. PUBLIC COMMENT:

There being no individuals wishing to provide comment, the public comment session was closed.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

VII. NEW BUSINESS:

A. POLICE COMMISSION:

1. Acknowledgements: The Chair thanked Chief Newport for the previous employee acknowledgements.

2. Facilities Update:

a. Restoration

Chief Newport provided an update on the progress of the current restorative projects that have been ongoing within the police facility. Mold remediation efforts are wrapping up in the Detective Wing of the building. What remains is to clean, re-cable and move Detective work stations from the temporary location back into their original space.

Planning and coordination continues with the next phase of the mold remediation project which will occur in the basement.

b. Next Steps for Public Safety Facility Planning

The Chair asked for a motion to send a request to the City Council and City Manager to form a working group to move the planning process forward in the next steps of the Public Safety building planning process.

Action: Commissioner Scherr moved to make a recommendation to the City Council to form a working group to move forward with the next steps in Public Safety facility planning.

Seconded by Commissioner Coyle.

➤ **On a unanimous roll call vote, 3-0, motion passed.**

3. Community Priorities

a. Review of Progress

Tracking Tool: Commissioner Coyle reported that the tracking tool has been posted to the police department’s website for the community to be able to access at their leisure. The goal is to update the document monthly.

Commissioner Scherr has been working closely with the city’s Legal Department, Portsmouth Police Department officials and the Portsmouth Police Commission to create a draft policy pertaining to the use of non-disclosure agreements (NDAs). He added, “There is a preference for transparency and not having a blanket policy where there’s always an NDA in settlement agreements involving the police department.” The draft of the NDA policy will be posted to the police department’s website in the near future. **Commissioner Coyle and Chairperson**

Shaheen expressed their support of the draft that was generated.

The Chair provided an update on the progress of the launch of Seacoast Mental Health’s (SMH) Mobile Crisis Response Unit, which is roughly at its midway point. Another update will be provided at the July Police Commission meeting. **Chief Newport shared** that the police department has a strong relationship with the SMH Crisis Team and looks forward to strengthening it moving forward. **Commissioner Scherr added** that as of July 1st, 2022, the 988 phone number to access the SMH Mobile Crisis Team will become active.

4. Discussion of Budget Work Session:

The Commission thanked the City Council for the commitment made to the police department. **Special thanks was offered** to Acting Chief Michael Maloney and Business Manager Karen Senecal for their work to secure the budgetary “asks” of the police department, most notably the 4% salary increase for sworn officers outside of contract negotiations in addition to the COLA.

Chief Newport offered his thanks to Acting Chief Maloney and Karen for their hard work to secure a solid FY23 budget during his absence.

The Commission took a moment to congratulate Chief Newport on completing the FBI National Academy.

B. CHIEF OF POLICE:

1. **Swearing-In & Recognition Ceremony** (See section III above)
2. **Letters of Recognition from the Community**
 - a. **Postcard from Elizabeth Gaskell:** Recognized Officer Loureiro for assisting a distressed elderly woman who was locked out of her apartment. She is eternally grateful for his help.
 - b. **Letter from Lisa Wolford:** Thanked Det. Jones for her efforts with the Piscataqua bridge incident in May.
 - c. **Email from Bob Lister:** Expressed his great appreciation for Acting Chief Maloney & Capt. Cummings for their assistance in preparing for a public bench ceremony at the High School.
 - d. **Email from a parent re: Letter in Response to Uvalde School Shooting:** The parent expressed his pleasure with the department for issuing a joint statement with the City to assure members of the Portsmouth community, in particular those with involvement in the school system, that the Portsmouth Police are trained and prepared if ever an emergency were to arise at one of the schools. **The Chair read** a letter she had received from a parent of a first-grader at New Franklin Elementary School. The parent expressed her satisfaction with Portsmouth PD's response and visibility at the schools following the horrific Uvalde school shooting. It showed the PD's commitment to keeping our school children safe.
3. **Donation**
 - a. **A donation was made by an anonymous donor in the amount of \$5,000 for Portsmouth Police Department's Honor Guard.**
Action: Commissioner Scherr moved to accept the unsolicited donation in the amount of \$5,000 for the Portsmouth Police Department Honor Guard, and forward to the City Council for their actions.
Seconded by Commissioner Coyle.
➤ **On a unanimous roll call vote, 3-0, motion passed.**
4. **Monthly Traffic Stats (addressed prior to #3, Donation)**
Chief Newport reported traffic statistics from the month of May 2022: 647 motor vehicle stops, 34 summonses, 59 in-custody arrests, and 29 reportable motor vehicle crashes.
5. **Financial Report**
Karen Senecal reported that the PD is currently 4% below the cap and is confident the department will be able to return funds to the city at the close of FY22. Karen explained that returned funds at the end of the fiscal year does not mean the department improperly managed their

budget. There are a number of different variables that need to be accounted for each year, such as unexpected changes in staffing, equipment coming in lower than originally quoted, etc. The City Council approved the restoration of three positions that had been cut from the budget in years past; those positions being two sworn officers and one crime analyst.

a. **Strategic Plan:** Nearing completion.

b. **Grant Application Update:** The paperwork recently arrived for \$700k in Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) ARPA funds. The new federal ICAC grant is slated to come out in a month or so. The dollar amount for that grant is currently unknown, but is likely close to what was allotted last year.

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:

1. The Chair wishes to engage the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force regarding current schemes and scams. ICAC is known to provide training and presentations to teachers, parents and businesses alike. The Chair thought it might be helpful for the department to post some of that useful information on the PD's website.

XI. NEXT REGULAR MEETING:

The next regular commission meeting date is TBD. It was originally scheduled for July 19th, however, due to a scheduling conflict the Police Commission will reschedule the meeting to the following week (July 26th is a possibility).

XII. MOTION TO ADJOURN:

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

Action: Commissioner Scherr moved the June 13th, 2022 monthly Police Commission Meeting be adjourned.

Seconded by Commissioner Coyle.

Police Commission Meeting
June 13, 2022

On a Roll Call Vote: The motion passed 3-0 to adjourn the June 13th, 2022 monthly Police Commission Meeting at 6:16 pm.

END OF MEETING

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