

PORTSMOUTH POLICE COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 20th, 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 September 20th, 2022 monthly Police Commission meeting was called to order at 6:05 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.

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

- III. **MOTION TO SUSPEND THE AGENDA:**

The Chair asked for a motion to suspend the agenda and move to items #1 and #2 under the Chief’s agenda: “Vesting of Rank & Swearing-In Ceremony” and “Recognitions”.

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

Chief’s Report, #1 Vesting of Rank and Swearing-In Ceremony:

Chief Newport vested the following police department leaders with the rank they were recently promoted to:

- Deputy Chief Michael Maloney
- Lieutenant Nicholas Small (Patrol Division)

The Chief also swore in three newly hired police officers, all lateral transfers from New York:

- Officer Kareem Husaini
- Officer Daniel Cattani
- Officer Kevin Cardno

Chief Newport recognized some important career milestones for the following personnel:

- K9 Axe Retirement – 7 Years of Service
- Det. Rochelle Jones – 20 Years of Service

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

ON: July 28th, 2022

Action: Commissioner Scherr moved to accept the minutes from the 7-28-22 Police Commission meeting.

Seconded by Commissioner Coyle.

➤ **On a voice vote, the motion passed 3-0.**

V. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

➤ **111 New Castle Ave, Ms. Marta Hurgin**

Ms. Hurgin stated that she and Ms. Stephanie Hausman are in support of the police commission and police department's non-disclosure agreement draft policy. Marta also commented on the police department's website; she feels it has improved.

VI. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None.

VII. **NEW BUSINESS:**

A. POLICE COMMISSION:

1. Acknowledgements: See Section III

2. Community Priorities:

a. Mobile Crisis Response Update

Dennis Walker, VP of Clinical Operations for emergency services and intake, shared progress of the ongoing partnership between Seacoast Mental Health and the Portsmouth Police Department to provide mobile crisis response services to the Portsmouth community. The state has developed an "Access Point", which is a hub, staffed by Beacon Health Options personnel who are Master's-

trained clinicians. Realizing that law enforcement requires a speedy response by mental health clinicians, mobile crisis response teams worked diligently to increase their response time to calls for service. Mr. Walker shared that there were 16,029 contacts received by the “access point” statewide since January of 2022 - 4,041 of those contacts have led to mobile deployments. Roughly 90% of the mobile deployments in the state did not involve the police. There is a belief that police involvement with crisis response calls may be reduced over time. Currently, the mobile crisis response team is facing several obstacles: staffing challenges, increased advertising needs, confusion surrounding the phone number to call, etc. The mobile crisis response team is aware of the need for improvement and is hard at work to address those matters.

IMPORTANT TAKEAWAY:

New Hampshire residents in need of immediate mental health services should call 833-710-6477 in order to connect directly with the access point for NH resources. Those calling from a 603-number who dial 9-8-8 will also connect with the NH access point; however, those calling from a phone with an out-of-state area code may or may not be connected with a New Hampshire-based call center. There is work underway to train 9-1-1 operators to direct callers to the access point.

b. Review of Guidelines for Community Action

The Chair reported that the police department has narrowed down the potential vendors for new CAD/RMS software. Chief Newport added that as the department nears its final decision, there will likely be one last request for a demo of the product before officially selecting the company. Chief estimates a decision will be made within 2 months.

c. NDA Policy Review and Vote

Commissioner Scherr described the purpose of implementing an NDA policy and stressed that this shows significant strides toward transparency.

Action: Commissioner Coyle moved to approve the policy regarding non-disclosures agreements effective July 1st, 2022.

Seconded by Commissioner Scherr.

➤ **On a voice vote, the motion passed 3-0.**

3. Facilities Update

a. Restoration

Chief Newport reported that the restoration project continues in the basement area of the police department, the location of the

men's and women's locker rooms, gym, firing range, evidence storage space, and several storage rooms. The remediation company originally hired for this job has halted all work, as they recently applied for bankruptcy. The city and police officials are working hard to secure another company to pick-up where the other left off. Once the basement is finished, work will be directed to the Emergency Communication Center and the PD Court Office.

b. Next Steps for Public Safety Facility Planning

The Chair announced that an informal working group has been assembled to identify the architecture and design team to help push the public safety facility planning work forward. This group includes City Councilor John Tabor, Police Commissioner Kate Coyle, Chief Newport, Deputy Chief Mike Maloney, DPW Director Peter Rice and Facilities Manager Joe Almeida. In later phases of this process, it will be determined whether the informal working group will be broadened to include others (citizen participation and other expertise).

Commissioner Coyle vowed to provide updates on anything that comes out of the working group.

B. CHIEF OF POLICE:

1. **Vesting of Rank & Swearing-In Ceremony** See Section III above.
2. **Recognitions** See Section III above.
3. **Grants & Donation**

a. Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) grant: \$25,025

This grant helps to fund 45% of the Victim Witness Advocate's salary and includes a cash match contribution, per grant guidelines, from the police department.

Action: Commissioner Scherr moved to accept the VAWA grant in the amount of \$25,025 from the NH Department of Justice to help partially fund the department's Victim Witness Advocate position and to forward it to the City Council for their action.

Seconded by Commissioner Coyle.

➤ On a voice vote, the motion passed 3-0.

b. Office of Highway Safety grant: \$53,510.66

There are 13 total highway safety initiatives. New to the list of initiatives is funding for new speed equipment and additional community policing efforts (includes a 20% match).

Action: Commissioner Scherr moved to accept the Office of Highway Safety Grant in the amount of \$53,510.66 from the NH Department of Safety for 13 different highway safety initiatives and to forward it to the City Council for their action.

Seconded by Commissioner Coyle.

➤ **On a voice vote, the motion passed 3-0.**

c. **Donation to the Police Explorers Program: \$240**

The Barrington Fireman Association donated \$240 to the Portsmouth Police Explorers Program as a “thank you” for those Explorers who volunteered to assist at the Barrington Tricentennial Parade. This donation was unsolicited.

Action: Commissioner Scherr moved to accept the donation in the amount of \$240 from the Barrington Firemen Association for the Portsmouth Police Explorers Program and to forward it to the City Council for their action.

Seconded by Commissioner Coyle.

➤ **On a voice vote, the motion passed 3-0.**

4. **Letter of Recognition from SAIL Portsmouth**

Tabled until the regular October Police Commission meeting due to time constraints.

5. **Monthly Traffic Stats**

Deputy Chief Mike Maloney recapped the traffic statistics from the months of July and August of 2022.

6. **Financial Report**

Business Manager Karen Senecal reported that the police department returned \$291,773 (or 2.75%) back to the city due to a number of vacancies for officers and dispatchers last fiscal year. In the fiscal year 2023, the department is tracking 2% under the cap for this period.

a. **Strategic Plan Update:** Karen will provide an update at the October Police Commission meeting.

b. **Grant Application Update:** The department received an invitation to apply for the Federal ICAC grant.

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 October 18th, 2022.

XII. MOTION TO ADJOURN:

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

Action: Commissioner Coyle moved to adjourn the September 20th, 2022 Police Commission meeting.

Seconded by Commissioner Scherr.

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