

## PORTSMOUTH POLICE COMMISSION

### MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 23, 2023 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 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023 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 police department and the public. \*Commissioner Shaheen attended the meeting via Zoom due to a personal emergency that was unavoidable.

- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Chief Newport 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 “Vesting of Rank & Swearing-In Ceremony” under the Chief’s Report.

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

**Seconded by Commissioner Shaheen.**

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

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

**#1 “Vesting of Rank & Swearing-In Ceremony”**

Chief Newport vested Lieutenant Christopher Kiberd, Detective Thompson “TJ” Potter and Detective Conall Loughlin with the powers and authority of

the new rank they were promoted to in recent weeks. Following the Vesting of Rank Ceremony was a Swearing-In Ceremony for the department's newest hired patrol officer, Zachary Brandt. Zach had left Portsmouth Police Department to pursue a career as a police officer with the Manchester Police Department. Roughly eight months later, he returned to the Portsmouth Police Department.

**IV. ACCEPTANCE OF MEETING MINUTES:**

➤ September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**Action:** Commissioner Coyle moved to accept the minutes of the 9-26-23 Police Commission meetings.

**Seconded by Commissioner Shaheen.**

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

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

**V. PUBLIC COMMENT: None**

**VI. NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. POLICE COMMISSION:**

**1. Facilities Update**

**a. Restoration**

Chief Newport provided an overview of the current projects and deficiencies requiring attention inside the police facility. Remediation efforts are on pause in the Dispatch Center as scheduling the relocation of the Center is logistically challenging.

**b. Public Safety Facility Planning Update**

Commissioner Coyle reported that the working group meets weekly and the next meeting is scheduled for Nov 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023. They plan to meet with the City Council on Nov 13<sup>th</sup>. Site location discussions continue and progress is posted to the City of Portsmouth and police department webpages. Talk continues as to whether the current building should be rehabilitated or if a new location would be necessary for the needs of the department and the city as a whole. A community survey is available for citizens to provide their input. The working group is giving careful consideration to the cost, space needs data and physical location to make the best possible decision – one has not been determined in at this early stage. Commissioner Scherr

emphasized that the existing building is still on the list of potential sites and options.

## **2. Community Priorities**

### **a. Crime Analyst Report**

Deputy Chief Maloney reported on the Crime Analysts statistics that show a comparison of January through October 20, 2023 and 2022 numbers. Each crime category was outlined and included a percentage change from one year to the next to determine which crimes/events had increased or decreased from the previous calendar year. Most notable: motor vehicle stops decreased by nearly 10%, mental health-related calls for service/events decreased quite a bit, as well. This could be attributed to additional community services such as the recent roll out of the 988 Mobile Crisis Response Services in the Seacoast area. DWI arrests had increased by over 6% and the number of calls for service from January through October had increased by 0.17% from the same timeframe in 2022.

Commissioner Scherr added that the Crime Analysts statistics are incredibly valuable for the community to get a sense of the safety of their community. Chief Newport added that he hopes to see the mental health related calls continue to decrease with the implementation of the Social Worker position that has been added to the department's complement of staff. The statistics will be posted to the website, dating back to 2011 stats.

### **b. Update on Social Worker Search**

Chief Newport reported that interviews were conducted last week. The top candidate is currently in the department's background process and should start shortly, barring any issues in their background.

### **c. CAD/RMS Contract and Implementation Update**

Karen Senecal reported that the Central Square CAD/RMS meetings have been scheduled and the department's servers have been upgraded in order to facilitate the implementation process. Chief Newport estimates the new system will be up and running in roughly one year or so. Full implementation will likely be 12-18 months out.

## **3. Upcoming Municipal Election**

Elections will be held on Nov 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023. There are three candidates running for the open spot on the Police Commission. Commissioner Scherr encourages people to get out and vote.

**B. CHIEF OF POLICE:**

1. **Vesting of Rank & Swearing-In Ceremony:** (See Section III)
2. **Grants & Donation**

- a. **A grant from the US Department of Justice in the amount of \$381, 221 for the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force in New Hampshire. This is a continuation**

**Action:** Commissioner Coyle moved to accept the Internet Crimes Against Children grant Supplement 2 in the amount of \$381, 221 and forward to the city council for their action.

**Seconded by Commissioner Shaheen.**

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

Commissioner Shaheen: "Yes."

Commissioner Scherr: "Yes."

Commissioner Coyle: "Yes."

- b. **A grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance Patrick Leahy Bulletproof Vest Partnership in the amount of \$11,437.50. This helps to fund 50% of the cost associated with outfitting new officers and replacing old vests for current officers.**

**Action:** Commissioner Coyle moved to accept the grant in the amount of \$11, 435.50 from the Bureau of Justice Assistance Patrick Leahy Bulletproof Vest Partnership and forward to the city council for their action.

**Seconded by Commissioner Shaheen.**

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

Commissioner Shaheen: "Yes."

Commissioner Scherr: "Yes."

Commissioner Coyle: "Yes."

- c. **An unsolicited donation of a television monitor from The Home Depot. Members of the Police Department and Organized Retail Crime (ORC) Investigators are working collaboratively on an ORC investigation where television monitoring equipment is necessary in the furtherance of this case.**

**Action:** Commissioner Coyle moved to accept the unsolicited donation of a television monitor from The Home Depot for investigative purposes and forward to the city council for their action.

**Seconded by Commissioner Shaheen.**

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

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

**3. Monthly Traffic Stats**

Deputy Chief Maloney reported the statistics from the month of September 2023: 714 motor vehicle stops, 51 summonses issued, and 41 reportable motor vehicle crashes. In the last month, there was one fatal accident and more than one involved serious bodily injury. No specific pattern has been identified; however, distracted driving continues to be one of the leading causes of crashes in Portsmouth. The Seacoast initiative this fall is to focus on DWI saturation efforts in the month of November. Commissioner Scherr asked the Deputy if there were ways the department could address distracted drivers; those on cell phones being the most prevalent. Deputy Chief Maloney responded that the department schedules details in which the department focuses specifically on distracted drivers and plan to continue to educate the public on the dangers of such risky driving violations.

**4. Financial Report**

Business Ops. Manager Karen Senecal briefed the Commission on the current state of the police department’s budget. The department is tracking at 1.6% below the cap. The collective bargaining agreement (CBA) adjustments are not indicated in the financial report. The goal is to have a 3% cushion; however, after the CBA adjustments have been factored, the department should be tracking at 2.5% below the cap. The FY’24 budget process has begun. Karen briefly outlined the police department’s CIP “asks”.

**a. Strategic Plan**

No update.

**b. Grant Applications Update**

A SERT equipment application will be completed by mid-November. This will go before the Commission at a future public meeting.

**VII. PATROL DIVISION:**

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

**VIII. COURT OFFICE REPORT:**

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

**IX. MISCELLANEOUS/OTHER BUSINESS:**

The next Community Policing Facility work session with the City Council is scheduled for Nov 13<sup>th</sup>. The meeting will be recorded and accessible to the public through the City of Portsmouth YouTube channel.

**X. NEXT REGULAR MEETING:**

The next regular commission meeting date is November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023, starting at 5:30 pm. Always check the municipal meetings calendar for any changes to the schedule leading up to the next meeting.

**XI. MOTION TO ADJOURN:**

**Action: Commissioner Shaheen moved** to adjourn the October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023 Police Commission meeting at 6:12PM.

**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**