

PORTSMOUTH POLICE COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 20th, 2024 POLICE COMMISSION MEETING

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

Kate Coyle, Chair
Buzz Scherr, Commissioner
Francesca Fernald, Commissioner

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The August 20th, 2024, monthly Police Commission meeting was called to order at 5:34 p.m. in the Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers.

The following people were present for the public session: Commissioners Coyle, Scherr and Fernald, Chief Mark Newport, Deputy Chief Mike Maloney, Business Manager Karen Senecal, Executive Assistant Jackie Burnett and members of the police department and the public.

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

Chief Newport called for a moment of silence to honor a friend and fellow FBI National Academy member who recently lost his battle with cancer.

III. **MOTION TO SUSPEND THE AGENDA**

Action: Commissioner Scherr moved to suspend the agenda to move to items #1 and #2 under the Chief's Report: Swearing-In Ceremony and Recipients of NEACOP 2023 Community Policing Award.

Seconded by Commissioner Fernald.

On a Voice Vote: The motion passed as follows:

Commissioner Coyle:	"Aye."
Commissioner Scherr:	"Aye."
Commissioner Fernald:	"Aye."

1. **Swearing-In Ceremony:**

Chief Newport swore-in three new police officers:

➤ Officer Michael Ellis

- Officer Matthew Leppo
- Officer Myranda Gradney

All three officers came to the Portsmouth Police Department with prior policing experience and will enter a 16-week field training program.

2. Recipients of NEACOP 2023 Community Policing Award:

In 2023, there was a case that rattled the Portsmouth community in which anti-Semitic and racist graffiti was drawn on businesses and homes. Deputy Chief Mike Maloney recognized Det. Sgt. McCarthy and his team of detectives who spent weeks collecting and combing through evidence to try and solve this crime. The Portsmouth Police Department, partnered with other state assets, was able to charge the identified suspect both state and federally. The department relied on the community for information and the community relied upon the police to keep them safe. This is one great example of Portsmouth Police Department's community policing efforts. Chief Newport gave thanks to Deputy Chief Maloney for the extensive work that went into applying for this award. Big thanks to the investigative officers and members of the community who assisted with reporting information that proved essential in solving this crime spree.

IV. ACCEPTANCE OF THE 6/18/24 MEETING MINUTES:

Action: Commissioner Scherr moved to accept the minutes of the above-noted Police Commission meetings.

Seconded by Commissioner Fernald.

On a Voice Vote: The motion passed as follows:

Commissioner Coyle:	"Aye."
Commissioner Scherr:	"Aye."
Commissioner Fernald:	"Aye."

V. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

A. POLICE COMMISSION:

1. Facilities Update

a. Restoration

Chief Newport reported that the focus remains on keeping humidity down within the building as much as possible. There have been a few leaks reported with the recent rain showers.

b. Community Policing Facility (CPF) Planning

The Chair reported that work is on-going. The working group will meet with the City Council in September to discuss the conceptual designs further, with a public input component.

2. Community Priorities

The Chair reported that the CAD/RMS system and body-worn camera project are on the horizon. Deputy Chief Maloney described the timeline for implementation for the new CAD/RMS system, known as Central Square. Training of staff members is scheduled to begin in October and should last several weeks. Chief Newport explained that a contract has been signed for new Body Worn Cameras (BWCs) and tasers. Axon, the body camera and taser vendor, will be onsite to train staff on the new equipment. Tasers will be rolled out in the fall, then BWCs with a tentative rollout timeframe of Spring of 2025. These two projects have modernized the police department to help to make the community a safer place for all.

3. National Night Out

Commissioner Fernald travelled to several neighborhoods with Deputy Chief Maloney and the Mayor. She learned about the officers' involvement within the community – many are coaches and have well-established relationships within the community. National Night Out is a nationwide initiative to strengthen the relationship between citizens and their community's police officers. Big thanks to Det. Sgt. Brian Houfe for his role in assisting with the coordination efforts.

B. CHIEF OF POLICE:

1. Swearing-In Ceremony (See Section III, above)

2. Recipients of the NEACOP Community Policing Award (See Section III, above)

3. Crime Analyst Report

Deputy Chief Maloney reported that Calls for Service were down 20%, and arrests & DWI arrests increased. The number of police reports taken, motor vehicle stops and reportable accidents all decreased. IEAs were up 6.25%, overall mental health calls were down 21% and juvenile-related calls were down roughly 20%. The department is seeing a clear correlation between the implementation of the state's mobile crisis unit as well as the use of the department Social Worker as it relates to decreases in certain calls for service. The Chair added that having these follow-through services available for people is proving very helpful. The new CAD/RMS system will also help to more accurately capture that data.

4. Monthly Traffic Stats

For the month of June 2024: 661 motor vehicle stops, 28 summonses, and 36 reportable crashes.

For the month of July 2024: 644 motor vehicle stops, 21 summonses, and 51 reportable crashes.

Motor vehicle stops being down from previous years could be contributed to lower staffing levels (for various reasons – out sick, paternity leave, military, etc.). This is directly reflected in our proactive, like motor vehicle stops. Regardless of staffing levels, motor vehicle stops are the Portsmouth Police Department's primary focus, as this is a known top concern for citizens.

5. Financial Report

Business Ops. Manager Karen Senecal briefed the Commission on the current state of the police department's budget. The department had a roughly \$300,000 surplus in the FY24 budget, which will be returned to the city to go back into the remaining fund balance. The police department is coming in at 5% below the cap – good way to start the FY.

a. Grant Applications Update

Submitted the Body Worn Camera federal grant. The department is looking at an estimated \$200,000, if approved.

b. Strategic Plan Update

Officer Nicoli has joined forces with Karen to revamp the Strategic Plan.

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 meeting packet.

IX. MISCELLANEOUS/OTHER BUSINESS:

- a.** Reminder: next week is back to school week. The Police Department and Police Commission urge drivers to pay attention to pedestrians, kids on bikes, busses, etc.

X. NEXT REGULAR MEETING:

Tuesday, September 17th, 2024, starting at 5:30 pm. Please always check the municipal meetings calendar for any changes to the schedule leading up to the next meeting.

XI. MOTION TO ADJOURN:

Action: Commissioner Scherr moved to adjourn the August 20th, 2024, Police Commission meeting at 6:11 PM.

Seconded by Commissioner Fernald.

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