

PORPSMOUTH POLICE COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 27, 2025 MEETING

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

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

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

I. CALL TO ORDER: The public session was called to order at 5:30 PM by Chair Coyle.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led collectively by the Commission.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE 9/16/25 MEETING MINUTES:

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

Seconded by Commissioner Fernald. Vote: Unanimously approved, 3-0.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Kathleen Slover – Richards Ave: addressed the Commission regarding ongoing ICE operations and the role of the Portsmouth Police Department. She expressed appreciation to the Department for its efforts to maintain community safety and collaboration with partner agencies. Speaking as a representative of *Moms Demand Action (MDA)*, Ms. Slover highlighted the importance of the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, noting MDA's efforts to secure ongoing state-level funding and improve coordination between the 911 and 988 systems. She stated that MDA hopes to continue working with law enforcement in responding to mental health crises, particularly those involving firearms in the home.

The Commission thanked Ms. Slover for her comments and noted that the Police Department has made significant progress in providing a wide range of response options for individuals experiencing mental health crises.

V. NEW BUSINESS:

A. POLICE COMMISSION:

1. Facilities Update

a. Municipal Building Blue Ribbon Committee

Commissioner Scherr reported that at the most recent meeting, the Committee decided to move beyond the initial space need discussion, effectively approving a preliminary draft of the Department's allotted square footage within the existing building. This is a figure that will be reworked, as needed. The Committee is now conducting interviews to further evaluate the space requirements of other city departments. A comprehensive cost estimate for the municipal building project is expected to be available around the beginning of the new year.

b. Dispatch Center Mold Remediation

Chief Newport reported that the Department is working closely with the Fire Department and the Department of Public Works to ensure the Redundant Dispatch Center at Fire Station 2 is fully prepared to handle dispatch operations while remediation work is conducted in the Police Department's dispatch center.

2. Community Priorities

a. Update on Central Square CAD/RMS Implementation

Chief Newport reported that the Department is currently in the second phase of training for the Central Square computer-aided dispatch and records management system (CAD/RMS). The projected go-live date for the new system is November 4, 2025.

Chair Coyle noted that Rockingham County recently implemented the same system within its agency and has had positive results, while also working through some kinks. Commissioner Scherr added that the value of the new system lies in its ability to collect and analyze essential data that will benefit both the Police Department and the community. Chair Coyle stated that the successful implementation of the new CAD/RMS system will mark the completion of the Department's outstanding community priority initiatives.

B. CHIEF OF POLICE:

1. Donations

a. \$687.50 from Flatbread Portsmouth, raised through a Texas Roadhouse Fundraiser, to support the Portsmouth Police Explorers Program.

Action: Commissioner Fernald moved to accept the donation and forward to the City Council their action.

Seconded by Commissioner Scherr. Vote: Unanimously approved, 3-0.

b. An unsolicited \$100 cash donation from an anonymous passerby to benefit the Portsmouth Police Department.

Action: Commissioner Fernald moved to accept the donation and forward to the City Council for their action.

Seconded by Commissioner Coyle. Vote: Unanimously approved, 3-0.

2. Crime Analyst Report

January 1 – September 30, 2025 Stats: (compared to last 3 years)

Calls for Service: ↓ -7%	Reportable MV Accidents: ↓ -8.4%
Arrests: ↑ 1%	Motor Vehicle Stops/Offenses: ↓ -13%
DWI Arrests: ↑ 9.2%	IEA (<i>Involuntary Emergency Admissions</i>): ↑ 9.3%
Reports Taken: ↓ -10.5%	Juvenile Matter Calls: ↓ -25%

3. Monthly Traffic Stats (May 2025):

- Motor Vehicle Stops: 564
 - 199 fewer stops than July 2025 / 42 more stops than August 2025
- Summons Issued: 20
- Reportable Motor Vehicle Crashes: 36
 - 5 fewer crashes than August 2025

4. Financial Report

Business Operations Manager Karen Senecal reported that as of September 30, 2025, approximately 23% of the fiscal year has elapsed. Department spending is currently tracking at 2% below the budget cap. A detailed report will be provided in the future to compare overtime expenditures related to staffing vacancies against savings in salary and benefits.

The Department is in the early stages of developing the FY27 budget. The CIP and rolling stock requests have already been submitted. The Department is also preparing a salary and benefits worksheet in anticipation of hiring a second social worker, ideally funded through a three-year grant focused on opioid response initiatives. The Department is collaborating with the city to identify grant opportunities to support this position.

a. Grant Applications Update

The **\$1.3M federal ICAC grant** is scheduled for review and approval by the Executive Council later this month. The Department has not yet received **state ICAC grant funding** due to the ongoing federal government shutdown; however, once received, the funding will be applied retroactively to August 1, 2025. The **Bulletproof Vest grant** application is due in mid-December for the next fiscal year.

b. Strategic Plan Presentation

Ms. Senecal presented the 2025-2029 Strategic Plan, which outlines the Department's accomplishments and future goals. She highlighted the Department's recent achievements, including the receipt of several awards, the re-establishment of key community programs, and the addition of new positions such as a social worker.

The Strategic Plan identifies several key initiatives: development of a new police facility on the current site, progress toward both state and CALEA accreditation, and continued compliance with the IACP Trust Building

Campaign. Additional priorities include recruitment and training improvements, preparation for large-scale training events, implementation of the new CAD/RMS system, updated to the Department's phone and reporting systems, and enhancements to security and compliance infrastructure.

The Plan also emphasizes the Department's ongoing commitment to community-oriented policing, the planned replacement of an aging K9, continued remediation and improvement of dispatch center facilities, succession planning within the Investigative Division, and the addition of a second social worker to help address community needs.

The Strategic Plan will be posted on the Department's website under the "Publications" tab for public access and review.

VI. PATROL DIVISION:

This report was included in the commission meeting packet.

VII. COURT OFFICE REPORT:

This confidential report was included in the meeting packet.

VIII. MISCELLANEOUS/OTHER BUSINESS:

- Trick-or-treat rescheduled to Wednesday, October 29 from 5pm-8pm.
- The Halloween Parade is scheduled for Friday, October 31.

Chair Coyle also expressed gratitude for the Police Department for its consistent presence and professionalism at the many community events held throughout the year. She noted that it can be easy to take for granted the work officers perform to protect and support these gatherings, and she thanked the Department for its ongoing visibility and event support.

IX. NEXT REGULAR MEETING:

Tuesday, November 18th, 2025, at 5:30 PM.

X. MOTION TO ADJOURN:

Motion: Commissioner Scherr moved to adjourn at 5:54 PM.

Seconded by Commissioner Fernald. Vote: Unanimously approved (3-0).

END OF MEETING

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