

PORTSMOUTH POLICE COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 27th, 2026 MEETING

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

Buzz Scherr, Chair
Francesca Fernald, Commissioner
Jay Lieberman, Commissioner

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

I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Meeting was called to order by Commissioner Scherr.

II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Led by Commissioner Fernald.

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

Motion: Commissioner Fernald moved to suspend the agenda to move to item #1 *Swearing-In Ceremony* under the Chief's Report.

Seconded: Commissioner Lieberman

Vote: Unanimously approved (3-0).

Chief's Report: #1 Swearing-In Ceremony

Chief Newport swore-in the following officers:

- Officer Anthony Santana
- Officer Matthew Eusebio
- Auxiliary Officer Marn Speidel

IV. **ACCEPTANCE OF THE 12/16/25 MEETING MINUTES:**

Motion: Commissioner Fernald moved to accept the minutes of the above-noted Police Commission meeting.

Seconded: Commissioner Lieberman

Vote: Unanimously approved (3-0)

V. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

VI. **NEW BUSINESS:**

A. POLICE COMMISSION

1. Appointment of Commission Chair and Clerk

Motion: Commissioner Fernald moved to elect Buzz Scherr as Chair of the Commission.

Seconded: Commissioner Lieberman
Motion passed (2-0-1).

Motion: Commissioner Lieberman moved to appoint Francesca Fernald to serve as Clerk of the Commission.

Seconded: Commissioner Scherr
Motion passed (2-0-1)

2. Representative on the City's Ethics Committee

Commissioner Buzz Scherr's name was selected to serve on the Ethics Committee at a Drawing by Lot.

3. Facilities Update

a. Municipal Building Blue Ribbon Committee Progress

Commissioner Scherr reported that the next committee meeting is scheduled for February 11th at 3:00pm in Conference Room A. Members of the public are encouraged to attend and provide input.

b. Dispatch Remediation Plan

Chief Newport reported that the Police Department is awaiting final cost figures and anticipates beginning the remediation project within the next 2-3 weeks. To date, approximately \$300,000 has been expended on remediation and re-remediation, as several areas required additional corrective work.

Central Square update: Chief Newport reported that the department is addressing minor operational issues; however, the system is functioning as intended overall. All major departmental functions continue to operate without disruption. Legacy system data has been migrated into the new software; while some migrated data may lack clarity, the legacy system (IMC) remains accessible for reference. The new system includes enhanced data analytics capabilities, and staff training is ongoing. Remaining logistical items include implementation of e-tickets, e0crash reporting, and e-complaints. Nashua PD and Salem PD have visited the department to review the implementation process, including lessons learned.

Body-Worn Cameras (BWCs): All officers have been issued body-worn cameras, which have been well received.

B. CHIEF OF POLICE

1. Swearing-In Ceremony (see Section III.)

- a. Officer Anthony Santana
- b. Officer Matthew Eusebio
- c. Auxiliary Officer Marn Speidel

2. Donation

An unsolicited donation of \$1,000 was received by Portsmouth residents Paul Gormley and Kimi Iguchi for the Police Department general fund.

Motion: Commissioner Fernald moved to accept above-noted donation and forward to the City Council for their review.

Seconded: Commissioner Lieberman

Vote: Unanimously approved (3-0)

3. Crime Analyst Report

Calls for Service: ↓ -11.6%	Reportable MV Accidents: ↓ -10.0%
Arrests: ↓ -3.9%	Motor Vehicle Stops/Offenses: ↓ -18.6%
Reports Taken: ↓ -12.7%	

Discussion followed regarding the decline in motor vehicle offenses. The Deputy Chief confirmed staffing shortages as a primary contributing factor and explained the impact of minimum manning requirements. Commissioner Fernald inquired about staffing vacancies; it was reported that there are three current openings, with two candidates in the background investigation process.

4. Monthly Traffic Stats (December 2025)

- Motor Vehicle Stops: 422 (76 fewer than in November)
- Summonses Issued: 16 (4 more than in November)
- Reportable Motor Vehicle Crashes: 39 (12 fewer than in November)

5. Financial Report

At the midpoint of the fiscal year, expenditures are tracking approximately 1.85% below the cap. The FY26 budget will be adjusted to reflect the PMA contract settlement, including funding for impacted employees and allocations outlined in the Ranking Officer's MOU.

Work on the FY27 budget is ongoing; Police Commissioners have received the draft, and discussions will begin in advance of the public hearing scheduled for February 11 at 5:00 PM.

The FY27 budget anticipates the addition of a social worker position that will be 100% grant funded; otherwise, the budget reflects level services.

a. Grant Application Update

- Federal ICAC grant approved at the federal level

- Bulletproof Vest grant submitted; decision expected in spring
- Grant through Representative Pappas' Office to offset IT costs for the new Police Department facility renovation, estimated at approximately \$1 million
- ICAC funding of \$1 million through Senator Shaheen's Office, shared with Fox Valley Technical College 50/50, anticipated pending required documentation for Police Commission approval

b. Strategic Plan Update

The strategic planning process is in preliminary stages for FY27, with a draft expected within the next few months.

The Chair reported that a team of City stakeholders, including Chief Newport, traveled to Concord to seek additional opioid-related grant funding. A two-year grant was approved to cover the full salary and benefits per year to support the additional social worker position, with a focus on substance use support. The team was commended for securing this external funding.

VII. MISCELLANEOUS/OTHER BUSINESS:

- A.** Public Hearing on the Proposed FY27 Budget for the Police Department: Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at 5:00 PM in the School Board Conference Room at City Hall.

VIII. NEXT REGULAR MEETING: Wednesday, February 18, 2026. Please check the municipal meetings calendar on the City's website for updates.

IX. MOTION TO ADJOURN:

Motion: Commissioner Fernald moved to adjourn at 6:02 PM.

Seconded: Commissioner Lieberman

Vote: Unanimously approved (3-0)

END OF MEETING

Respectfully Submitted by Jacqueline Burnett, Executive Assistant
Commissioner Francesca Fernald, Recording Clerk of the Commission