

# **PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED FY27 PD BUDGET**

## **MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 11, 2026 PRESENTATION**

**5:00 p.m. Public Session – School Board Conference Room, City Hall**

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The February 11, 2026 Public Hearing on the Police Department’s proposed FY27 budget was called to order at 5:00 p.m. in the School Board Conference Room at City Hall.

**Present:** Commissioners Scherr, Fernald and Lieberman, Chief Mark Newport, Deputy Chief Michael Maloney, Business Ops. Manager Karen Senecal and Executive Assistant Jackie Burnett.

**Members of the Public:** Petra Huda, Esther Kennedy

II. **PRESENTATION OF THE PROPOSED FY27 BUDGET:**

Chief Newport presented an overview of the departmental accomplishments and outlined key priorities and challenges for the upcoming fiscal year.

**Accomplishments:**

- **ACCREDITATION:** Continued pursuit of becoming the first police department in the state to achieve dual accreditation through both the state program and the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA).
- **SYSTEM UPGRADES:**
  - A) Computer Aided Dispatch/Records Management System (CAD/RMS): Replaced legacy IMC software with the Central Square system.
  - B) Phone System: Upgraded from copper-line infrastructure to a modern VoIP phone and recording system.
- **BODY-WORN CAMERAS:** Implemented in May 2025 following comprehensive policy development to ensure compliance with state and federal standards.
- **REDUNDANT DISPATCH CENTER (RDC):** Upgrades equipment and IT infrastructure at the back-up dispatch center at Fire Station 2.

- **SECOND SOCIAL WORKER POSITION:** Plans to hire a second Police Social Worker, funded through the State Opioid Abatement Grant (100% grant-funded).
- **E-BIKE SAFETY CAMPAIGN:** Launched an education, awareness, and enforcement initiative addressing e-bike and similar modes of transportation.

**Ongoing and Upcoming Initiatives (FY26-FY27):**

- **RECRUITMENT:** Continued focus on hiring lateral, experienced officers to reduce training time, while also recruiting qualified non-certified candidates.
- **30 X 30 INITIATIVE:** Ongoing effort to increase female police officer representation within the department to 30% by 2030. The department is approximately 1/3 of the way toward this goal.
- **NEW POLICE FACILITY:** The Mayor's Blue Ribbon Committee is reviewing the Police Department and City Hall complex. An architectural firm has been engaged and is in the preliminary phase of developing a more efficient layout for city services.
- **INTERVIEW ROOM RECORDING SYSTEM UPGRADE:** Scheduled replacement of the Detectives Division's audio and video recording system, utilizing the current vendor, to ensure reliable documentation of police interviews.
- **SECURE POLICE PARKING LOT:** Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) funds have been allocated to address security deficiencies in the rear parking lot housing the police fleet and staff vehicles. A recent Protected Critical Infrastructure evaluation identified the unsecured lot has non-compliant with best practices.
- **RE-EVALUATION OF BEAT BOUNDARIES:** In accordance with a recent staffing study, the department will review and adjust patrol beat boundaries, as needed, to optimize deployment and operational efficiency.
- **ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION MAPPING WITH DRONES:** The department will assess the feasibility of incorporating accident scene mapping into the existing drone program to expedite roadway reopening and enhance evidence collection.
- **IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT IN CITY ON POLICE SERVICES:** Continued residential growth, including the addition of numerous condominiums and apartments, has increased demand for police services and will require ongoing resource assessment.

Chief Newport presented an FY27 budget that includes no new positions and no new programs. The primary drivers of the increase are contractual obligations. Health insurance costs rose by \$203,000, workers' compensation by \$51,600, and dental insurance by \$10,000.

A second significant impact is the financial cost associated with the new CAD/RMS system. The service and maintenance agreement—including required software interfaces—exceeds \$200,000, in addition to price increases across other related agreements. This figure remains subject to adjustment as FY27 pricing is finalized. Additional standard increases total \$96,700 and include phone services, recruiting, training, and other routine operating expenses.

The adjusted budget also reflects anticipated collective bargaining and MOU-related costs to be incorporated into the FY26 base. It is important to note that the overall increase would be higher absent \$388,000 in grant awards.

The Police Department budget is primarily composed of salary and benefits costs. "Other Operating" expenses represent approximately 9% of the total budget, and overtime accounts for 5%. Additional police-related funding is supported through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and rolling stock accounts.

### **III. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- a. Petra Huda, Portsmouth, NH: Requested clarification regarding year-to-year budget increases. She also recommended discussing with City Finance whether service agreement costs could be returned to the General Fund, as is typical practice. Ms. Huda expressed appreciation for the explanations provided and commended the department's overall budget management.
- b. Esther Kennedy, Portsmouth, NH – Inquired about year-to-year budget changes, specifically a significant increase in the training budget. It was explained that the increase reflects a new gubernatorial executive order mandating an additional 20 hours of annual training per officer, necessitating additional funding for compliance. Ms. Kennedy also commended the department on its overall budget management.

*Following the meeting, it was discovered that a malfunction occurred with the recording equipment and no video record was captured. As a result, these minutes have been prepared in a more detailed and descriptive manner to fully capture the presentation and key discussion points.*

END OF MEETING

*Respectfully Submitted by Jacqueline Burnett, Executive Assistant*