

PORTSMOUTH POLICE COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 15, 2026 MEETING

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

Buzz Scherr, Chair
Francesca Fernald, Commissioner
Gary Dozier, Commissioner

The following people were present at the public session: Commissioners Scherr, Fernald, and Dozier, 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:** The meeting was called to order by Chair Scherr. New Police Commissioner Gary Dozier was introduced. He has been in office since July 31, 2026, and graduated from the 2025 Portsmouth Police Citizens Academy.
- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Led by Chief Mark Newport.
- III. **ACCEPTANCE OF THE 7/14/26 MEETING MINUTES:**
Motion: Commissioner Dozier moved to accept the minutes from the July 14, 2026 Police Commission meeting.
Seconded: Commissioner Fernald.
Vote: Approved (2-0-1). *Commissioner Dozier abstained.*
- IV. **SUSPEND THE AGENDA:**
Motion: Commissioner Fernald moved to suspend the agenda to move to items #1 *Swearing-In Ceremony*, item #2 *Award Ceremony*, and item #3 *Grant and Donation* under the Chief's Report.
Seconded: Commissioner Dozier.
Vote: Unanimously approved (3-0).

Chief's Report:

#1 – Swearing-In Ceremony

Officer Max Shisler was sworn in as the newest Portsmouth police officer. Officer Shisler brings experience from the Lakewood, Colorado Police Department and the Army National Guard.

#2 – Award Ceremony

Life-Saving Awards: Officers Matthew Eusebio and Jack Maloney were recognized for their life-saving medical intervention during a critical juvenile emergency in the spring of 2026.

Letters of Commendation: Officers Joseph Melanson, Nicholas DiGaetano, and Chaplain Jeffrey Pelkey were commended for their support and assistance to the family during the incident involving a critical juvenile emergency in the spring of 2026.

Special Recognition: Police Social Worker Brook Murphy-Corcoran received a letter of commendation for her advocacy in protecting an elderly client from a predatory car dealership loan scheme.

#3 – Grant & Donation

- a. \$14,868 grant award (FY25) from the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance (JAG) Program to fund department rifle upgrades.

Motion: Commissioner Fernald moved to accept the grant award for the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance (JAG) Program for \$14,868 and forward to the city council for their action.

Seconded: Commissioner Dozier.

Vote: Unanimously approved (3-0).

- b. \$50 Panera gift card from an anonymous citizen for the purchase of food for officers at the Chief's discretion.

Motion: Commissioner Fernald moved to accept the \$50 Panera gift card, and forward to the City Council for their actions.

Seconded: Commissioner Dozier.

Vote: Unanimously approved (3-0).

V. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

A. POLICE COMMISSION

a. Flock Camera Presentation by Det. Sgt. Kevin McCarthy

Detective Sergeant Kevin McCarthy and the commission provided an overview of Automatic License Plate Reader (ALPR) technology and New Hampshire state laws.

Key takeaways:

- New Hampshire has very restrictive laws regarding ALPRs, prohibiting the tracking of individuals without a specific investigative purpose.
- Data captured by ALPRs that does not trigger a “hot list” alert must be deleted within three minutes.
- The Portsmouth Police Department does not currently use fixed ALPRs and has no plans to acquire them.

i. Interactive Discussion with the Public

Susan Sterry, Portsmouth Resident: Asked why the issue was being discussed now if the department does not intend to use the technology. She also questioned if cities are required to post notices about ALPR usage and inquired about state-level oversight of departments regarding these systems. **Chair Scherr explained** that ALPRs are in the news nationally and the Commission has received many questions about whether the Portsmouth Police Department is using them. He also confirmed that the Department of Safety oversees ALPR usage statewide.

Nick Hobart, Portsmouth Resident: Thanked the department for their service, asked if they had any firm plans to implement ALPRs, and sought clarification on whether any discussions had taken place regarding future acquisitions.

John McCaw, Lee, NH Resident and Representative from Young Americans for Liberty: Inquired about whether there is any legislative effort to repeal the current New Hampshire law restricting ALPRs and asked for clarification on potential penalties for the abuse of such technology by law enforcement.

Commissioner Scherr confirmed that he and former NH Representative Neil Kurk are proposing cleaning-up the “messy” areas of the law and pushing to make the penalty a misdemeanor for violation of the law.

Susan Sterry raised a follow-up question regarding the accessibility of the technology, specifically asking whether private individuals could easily acquire and use ALPR equipment. She also expressed concerns about potential hacking or misuse of these systems. **Chief Newport confirmed** that while commercial ALPR brands exist, by law they are restricted to law enforcement use and require specialized software to operate. **Chair Scherr added** that ALPR companies will not sell it to individuals in New Hampshire because state laws do not support private use. Additionally, he clarified that standard security cameras that inadvertently capture a license plate are not legally classified as LPRs.

B. CHIEF OF POLICE

- 1. Swearing-In Ceremony – See Section IV**
- 2. Award Ceremony**
- 3. Grant & Donation**

4. Crime Analyst Report

Based on average of 2023-2025 stats (Jan 1 – August 31) compared to 2026 YTD

Calls for Service: ↓ -33.2%	Reportable MV Accidents: ↓-21.8%
Arrests: ↓ -23.5%	Motor Vehicle Stops/Offenses: ↓ -40.6%
Reports Taken: ↓ -9.2%	DUI Arrests: ↓-11.2

The full Crime Analyst statistics chart is posted on the Police Department's webpage.

Deputy Chief Maloney reported statistics from January 1st to August 31st, including 19,036 calls for service and 3,030 motor vehicle stops. The Chief noted that staffing levels are currently impacting proactive patrol numbers.

5. Monthly Traffic Stats (August 2026)

- Motor Vehicle Stops: 368
- Summonses Issued: 13
- Reportable Motor Vehicle Crashes: 35

6. Financial Report

The department is finalizing the FY26 close, tracking at 1.5% below the cap, and beginning the FY28 budget process, starting on the Capital Improvement Plan.

a. Grant Application Update

- Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC): The department is awaiting news on a \$1 million congressional funding allocation requested by Senator Shaheen, which is slated to be split evenly (\$500,000 each) between the department and Fox Valley Technical College.
- IT Infrastructure: The department is also waiting on a \$1 million congressional funding allocation requested by Congressman Pappas to support IT infrastructure and security.
- Real-Time Crime Center: The department has submitted a request for a real-time crime center, coordinated through both Congressman Pappas and Senator Shaheen.
- The department was recently notified about the JAG 2026 grant funds, which total approximately \$13,000.

b. Strategic Plan Update

To be presented at the October 20, 2026 Police Commission meeting.

VII. MISCELLANEOUS/OTHER BUSINESS: None

VIII. NEXT REGULAR MEETING: Tuesday, October 20, 2026. Please check the municipal meetings calendar on the city's website for any important meeting updates.

IX. MOTION TO ADJOURN:

Motion: Commissioner Fernald moved to adjourn at 6:25 PM.

Seconded by Commissioner Dozier.

Vote: Unanimously approved (3-0).

END OF MEETING

Respectfully Submitted by Jacqueline Burnett, Executive Assistant

Commissioner Francesca Fernald, Recording Clerk of the Commission