

**The Board of Fire Commissioners
Portsmouth Fire Department**

Fire Station 1, Training Room
May 10, 2016

Portsmouth, NH
1900 hours

I. Call to Order:

Chairwoman Matthes called the meeting to order at 1900 hours and led the pledge of allegiance. Along with Chairwoman Matthes, present were: Commissioner Richard Gamester, Fire Chief Steven Achilles, Deputy Fire Chiefs: Carl Roediger and James Heinz; Executive Assistant Tracy Freeman, Chairman of Gilford Board of Fire Engineers William Akerley, Gilford Fire Deputy Chief Bradley Ober, Gilford Volunteer Firefighter Ron Skinner and Portsmouth Fire Department members.

Excused Absence: Commissioner Hughes

II. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Motion, to approve the minutes of April 12, 2016, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.

III. Public Comment Session:

William Akerley, Chairman of the Gilford Board of Fire Engineers, spoke on the reconsideration of an earlier vote to gift the boat to another municipality instead of the Town of Gilford Fire Department. He stated the Gilford Board of Fire Engineers, the Gilford Fire Department, the Town's administration along with many Gilford residents are in favor of acquiring Portsmouth Fire Department's Fire Boat. The Selectmen have endorsed the boat and three public meetings have been held to discuss the receiving of the boat. We have the means to properly transport, store and maintain the boat. A Public Hearing is scheduled for tomorrow night to take input regarding the boat and do anticipate a supportive response. The Fire Board will be voting after the public hearing. This boat would be an asset to the Town of Gilford and to all Lake Winnepesaukee waterfront owners, island residents and others. It would be replacing our current 39-year old boat and enhance our capabilities of fire suppression and water rescues. Last year he stated they had atleast 20 calls.

Commissioner Gamester made the motion to suspend the rules and move to Item VIII. New Business, Fire Boat. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.

IV. Recognition of Groups or Individuals: None.

V. Reports:

A. Fire Chief's Reports:

Commissioner Gamester motioned to discuss Chief's reports 16-038 through 16-041. Motion seconded by Chairwoman Matthes.

Chief Achilles reviewed reports with the Commission.

Report (038), 2016 Response Report with Service Activity and Safety message for April. The report shows the department responding to 75 Fire Calls and 277 Ambulance Calls for the month. To date, the department has responded to 379 fire and related service calls and 1,110 ambulance service calls. This activity is tracked by calendar year. The Safety Message section focused on bicycle safety. The Service Activity and Safety Message report was submitted to the Portsmouth Herald for publication in local newspapers. Report (039), Fire and EMS Calls by Category, noted that there were 23 motor vehicle accidents, 43 EMS calls with injury, 6 minor fires, 11 chest pain calls, 6 overdoses and 40 traumatic injuries such as cuts, fractures and sprains for the month. 18% of the total EMS runs were for patients between the ages of 55-64 with 17% between the ages of 75-84. Report (040), FY16 Budget, Chief noted continued practice of cost saving strategies with 85% spent and 83% into the year. Predicted some long term vacancy coverages that ended up not being needed. The retirement of Captain Hogan had some additional overtime costs projected to cover his shift vacancy until position could be filled however, we were able to fill the vacancy earlier than anticipated. Overall, the department shows a slight surplus at this time. Report (41), Overtime Analysis, provided a breakdown of how overtime was used in the month of April along with a summary of what was charged to OT-Recall for the month.

Motion, to accept Chief's Reports 16-038 through 16-41, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.

B. Staff Reports:

Deputy Roediger reported on prevention and the radio system having gone live. Still working on some weak communication spots due to signal strength. Working with the Historic District Commission on replacement windows and being fire code compliant. Looking into implementing fire alarm systems that will report to the tenant and notify the fire department simultaneously. Chairwoman Matthes inquired about the cost to the owner of these fire alarm systems. Deputy Roediger reported approximately \$4-5K. He noted there would be an open meeting tomorrow with outside contractors and inspectors

to discuss the process. Inspection at the Portsmouth Women's City Club showed there would be a lot of work needed. Would need to secure a fire protection engineer to continue. After an electrical inspection at Fat Belly's, there is an issue with duct work coming off of kitchen. Currently working with the building owner and restaurant owner to find a resolution with hopes of preventing a closing of the restaurant. A meeting on the course of action is planned for next Monday.

Deputy Heinz reported on operations of the department. He talked about the Seabrook Station graded exercise, Lt. Herrholz orientation week, the test drive of a jet ski rescue craft, discussions with Moran Tug Boats and obtaining an MOU for a mutual aid partnership, ongoing discussions with traffic and safety and DPW, site visits for Pierce Island WWTP and the Middle bridge project, Children's Day and the hosting of an ICS 300 Class at Station 2.

VI. Old Business:

Chief Achilles noted that he had received a letter from Local 1313 Union President confirming the Union had ratified the tentative agreement between the City of Portsmouth and Local 1313 and recommends that the agreement move forward for Fire Commission and City Council approval.

Commissioner Gamester made the motion to accept Local 1313 tentative agreement as recommended by Chief Achilles and forward it to City Council for their approval. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.

Chief Achilles mentioned that Local 4039 is still in the works and hoping to get some counter proposals as soon as another meeting can be set up.

Chief provided an update on the Rye Fire Department and the "sharing of services". A letter was written to the Town of Rye's administration noting that the City of Portsmouth was no longer interested in entering into an inter-municipal agreement for administrative services.

VII. Presentations of Written Communications:

Chief Achilles read the thank you notes from National Fire Protection Association Regional Specialist Tim Travers and from David Lafond, the New England Regional Manager of the National Fire Sprinkler Association.

Commissioner Gamester made the motion to accept these thank you notes and place on file. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.

VIII. New Business:

Chief Achilles updated the Commission on the current status of the fire boat. Under grant terms, we can transfer ownership to another New Hampshire agency or return the boat back to the state. The City Council affirmed the transfer of ownership to the Town of Gilford at their last meeting. Approximately two days later, a Selectman from the Town of New Castle reached out to the City Manager stating his concerns of transferring the boat outside of the Piscataqua basin. They, the Town of New Castle, did not want ownership of the boat at that time but would like to see if other neighboring communities would be interested in funding the cost to maintain the boat if the City of Portsmouth kept it. The City Manager relayed that he would not do any soliciting but if the Town of New Castle wished to, they could however, he would need written confirmation from each community guaranteeing the funds and had two weeks to do this. Two weeks passed and funding was not secured.

Chief Achilles went on to read a letter dated May 6, 2016 from the Town of New Castle Select Board (Chair Lorn Buxton, David McGuckin and William Stewart). In this letter it stated the Town of New Castle was interested in taking title to the Portsmouth fire boat and that the Town would use the vessel in the same manner as did the City of Portsmouth Fire Department however, was not successful in enlisting other local municipalities to assist the City with maintenance costs of the boat. The letter also stated the Town of New Castle was not in a position to absorb the maintenance costs alone but the Town had determined that it is in a position to take possession and title of the fire boat.

Chief Achilles stated that he received a letter today from Chief Stephen Carrier of Gilford Fire & Rescue and went on to read it. This letter outlined the process they have taken since receiving word back in March of the possibility of obtaining ownership of the fire boat. Chief Carrier stated he has had three public meetings to discuss receiving the boat and has made two separate trips to view the boat, talk to department members and talk to the mechanics and have spent considerable time assuring that they could properly transport, store and maintain the boat, locally. Chief Carrier's letter went on to say that this boat would be a huge asset to the Town of Gilford and to all Lake Winnepesaukee waterfront owners, island residents, visitors and boaters. It would replace their current 39-year old boat and would immediately quadruple their pumping capacity and improve their water rescue abilities. Furthermore, the boat would be in fresh water, extending its life and reducing maintenance costs. Chief Carrier also noted that it would be put into use 2 to 3 times more often, annually, than it currently responds along the Seacoast. He stated that the Board of Fire Engineers; the Gilford Fire-Rescue administration and membership; the Town administration; and many Gilford residents are in support of this acquisition and did not want to let this tremendous opportunity slip by without attempting to reach out and describe how very important this gift would be to their community and to the great Lakes Region. A

public meeting is scheduled for tomorrow night for input on the fire boat endorsement.

Chief Achilles noted that he spoke with the City's attorney on the disposal process and he stated ultimately the City Council has the authority on disposal with a recommendation from the Fire Commission. Chairwoman Matthes inquired if anyone from New Castle was present tonight to answer some questions? Chief replied no but felt it may be in part due to a Town meeting being held tonight. Was the fire boat used at the Tarbell fire inquired Matthes. Chief answered no. Matthes also asked if it was known whether or not New Castle has a fire boat. Chief had Deputy Roediger respond to the question in which he stated they have a small vessel, 22' Boston Whaler with a portable pump.

Commissioner Gamester stated he received an email from Dennis Dinsmore who is Chairman of the New Castle Fire Wards. Dinsmore stated he is attaching a letter addressed to the Portsmouth City Council and the Portsmouth Fire Commission, stating they do not believe that this asset has been fully approved or accepted by the residence of New Castle and wishes that we reconsider providing it to New Castle until they have been informed. In Dinsmore's letter he states, "the Fire Wards voted unanimously to not validate the New Castle Select Board's decision to take possession and title of the Portsmouth Fire Boat and rejects the Select Board's statement that the Town of New Castle is in a position to take possession and title of the fire boat without fully vetting the decision with the residence of the town".

Commissioner Gamester found there to be inconsistencies in the request received by the Town of New Castle whereas they are not in a position to absorb the maintenance costs alone but that the town has determined that it is in a position to take possession and title of the fire boat. Commissioner Gamester believes, in his opinion, that the fire boat may not be maintained in the proper fashion and that there are not enough firefighters on duty at any given time in New Castle to operate this boat which may hinder the mutual aid aspects of ownership. Chairwoman Matthes agreed and felt that it may put us and others at risk if the boat is not properly maintained when called upon by mutual aid. Commissioner Gamester added that the Portsmouth Fire Commission wishes to make it clear that we have no interest in the boat, either financially or operationally in the future.

Commissioner Gamester made the motion to deny the request of the Town of New Castle Select Board and to reaffirm the Commission's previous vote to transfer ownership to the Town of Gilford and to notify the Town of New Castle of this decision and notify the City Council of the same as they may have the final decision on the disposition of the fire boat. The motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.

Chief Achilles noted he would write a memo to the City Manager and City Council outlining the Fire Commission's decision and attach all correspondences

received and the minutes from this meeting for a vote by the City Council at their next meeting which is scheduled for May 16, 2016.

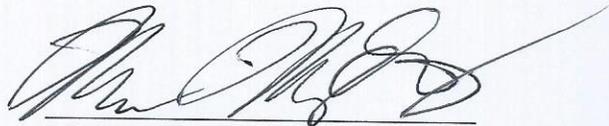
In other new business, Chief Achilles provided a brief report on the City Council Work Session that took place on Saturday, May 7th. No major concerns he stated on the department's proposed 2.93% budget increase. Councilor Spear brought up the study again however it did not have much support. City Council has their Public Hearing on the FY17 Proposed Budget tomorrow night.

IX. Public Hearings: None.

X. Non-public Session: None.

XI. Adjournment:

Motion, to adjourn at 2015 hours, was made by Commissioner Gamester. Motion was seconded by Chairwoman Matthes and passed unanimously.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Hughes", written over a horizontal line.

Michael Hughes, Clerk