

St. Tammany Fire Protection District No. 1

Board of Commissioners

Regular Meeting Minutes January 20, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

The pledge of allegiance and prayer were given.

Chairman Crowley acknowledged Commissioner McDonald's re-appointment to the Board, as well as Jim Hoying as a new Commissioner on the Board.

ROLL CALL: Chairman Crowley and Commissioners Risley, Brackett, McDonald and Hoying were present.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION-

- Firefighter of the Year- Michael Thiel
- Medic of the Year- Louis Relle
- Roy Provenzano- 10 years of service
- Kevin Kingston- 6 years of Board service- (not present)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner McDonald made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 10, 2014 Special meeting. Commissioner Brackett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS – (none)

NEW BUSINESS –

1. Chief's Report

- a.) **2014 Audit Proposal-** Chief Kaufmann stated that Mr. DiGiovanni solicited bids for the annual audit and one bid was received, from Erickson, Krentel & LaPorte. Mr. DiGiovanni stated that the fee has also been frozen, for the next three years, at last year's rate of \$7,500. (Resolution below)
- b.) **Surplus Reserve Equipment-** Chief of Administration Worchel requested the approval to surplus the Crown Vic and the old Haz Mat truck. (Resolution below)
- c.) **Approval of Handbook, SOP's and SOG's-** A USB was distributed which had the changes to the handbook, SOG's and SOP's. Chief Kaufmann requested that the changes be approved at the February meeting.
- d.) **LUCAS Device Lease Contract-** Chief Kaufmann stated that the purchase of two LUCAS devices was budgeted; however, an option was presented for a no interest lease, with the purchase of four devices. Chief Kaufmann stated that we had \$30,000 in the budget, and the lease will cost approximately \$21,000 (with a three year commitment). (Resolution below)
- e.) **Public Campaign-** Open House-February 28, 2015. Chief Kaufmann stated that all stations will be open to the public.

Chief Kaufmann stated that the poll for the parcel fee has been conducted and that he will be meeting Thursday to get the results and determine the next plan of action (i.e. tri-fold, mail-out).

- f.) **Land & Bldg. Update-** Chief Kaufman stated that a “Future Station” sign has been posted on the Station 18 property. Additionally, we have reviewed the final floor plan, with revisions, and plan to get the RFP advertised, and hopefully break ground in March or mid-April. Chief Kaufmann further stated that we are currently operating a full station out of the Training Academy.

Attorney Ingram stated that we signed the purchase agreement for the property on Robert Rd. He further stated that the agreed upon purchase price is a net of \$420,000. The initial title examination has come back clean, and we proceeded with an appraisal; the property appraised for \$ 430,000.

Attorney Ingram advised that a Phase I environmental study will be ordered.

- g.) **Recruit Class-** Chief Kaufmann stated that recruit class started today, and orientation has been completed on eight new hires. There will be six in the recruit class, and two will go to shift. Chief Kaufmann further stated that three of the recruits are Paramedics.

Chief Kaufmann stated that we are down one employee in Communications, and an exam has been advertised.

- h.) **Maintenance Report-** (none)

- i.) **General Comments-**

- **Bank signature cards-** Chief Kaufmann stated that the bank cards needed to be updated
- **Louisiana Legislative Seminar-** Chief Kaufmann stated that he attended a seminar that was put on by the State Legislative Auditor’s office, relative to the IG Committee that was appointed in the Parish. In lieu of creating the IG position, it was determined that legislation be enacted to “tighten” up the audit process; however, the requirements, and any associated costs, have not yet been identified.

Chief Kaufmann advised that the February meeting is on Mardi Gras, and the meeting will be moved to February 24. He further requested moving the March meeting to March 24, due to the regular meeting falling during the period of time when the department goes before the Accreditation Council.

Commissioner Risley made a motion to accept the Chief’s report. Commissioner Brackett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. PMI Report

- a.) **Employee Benefits**

- b.) **Human Resource**

- 1) 2015-001: BOC Resolution (2014 BOC Resolution Summary)

Commissioner McDonald made a motion to adopt Resolution 2015-001, Relating to 2014 Summary of BOC Resolution (s) for District No. 1. Commissioner Brackett seconded the motion.

Mr. Waniewski explained that this is done annually as a “quick finder” reference, as well as another element of transparency.

The motion carried unanimously.

- 2) 2015-002: BOC Resolution (Surplus Equipment)

Commissioner Brackett made a motion to adopt Resolution 2015-002, Relating to the Surplus of Equipment for District No.1. Commissioner Risley seconded the motion.

Mr. Waniewski advised that minimum bid values have not yet been established. Chief Kaufmann advised that we will see if any other fire departments are interested before going out for public bid.

The motion carried unanimously.

- 3) 2015-003: BOC Resolution (2014 Audit Engagement)

Commissioner Risley made a motion to adopt Resolution 2015-003, relating to the Approval of the 2014 Audit Engagement for District No.1. Commissioner Brackett seconded the motion.

Mr. Waniewski stated that we have a three year proposal, at frozen fees, and suggested amending the Resolution to reflect an approval to the audit engagement for 2014, 2015 and 2016.

Commissioner McDonald made a motion to amend the Resolution to add the years 2014, 2015 and 2016.

Commissioner Risley inquired as to whether we can approve another firm, on an annual basis, or if the Resolution locks us in. Mr. DiGiovanni stated that the request (RFP) gave us the option.

Chief Kaufmann stated that he believes, with the legislative changes that will be added to the audit process, that the process will be more efficient. He further stated that it is not uncommon for agencies to use the same auditing firm. Chief Kaufmann recommended that the three year contract be approved.

Commissioner Hoying seconded the motion.

Chairman Crowley called for the vote:

Hoying: aye

Risley: nay

Brackett: nay

McDonald: aye

Chairman Crowley: aye

The motion carried to amend the Resolution.

The motion carried with Commissioners Risley and Brackett voting “nay”.

- 4) 2015-004: BOC Resolution (Physio Control “LUCAS Device” Lease Agreement)

Commissioner Hoying made a motion to adopt Resolution 2015-004, Relating to the Approval of the Physio Control Lease Agreement for Fire District No.1. Commissioner Risley seconded the motion.

Commissioner Brackett made a motion to amend the resolution to reflect “subject to Attorney review and approval”. Commissioner McDonald seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The motion carried unanimously.

- 5) 2015-005: BOC Resolution (Request for Proposal- Cost Recovery Services “Non- resident Motor Vehicle Crash”)

Commissioner McDonald made a motion to adopt Resolution 2015-005, Relating to the Request for Proposal for Cost Recovery Services for District No.1. Commissioner Brackett seconded the motion.

Attorney Ingram advised that the RFP has been prepared for this service and it will be published on 1/22 and 2/12. The bids will be opened at the Feb. 24 meeting.

The motion carried unanimously.

- 6) 2015-006: BOC Resolution (Adopt Employee Handbook Revisions) – **Discussion only**
- 7) 2015-007: BOC Resolution (Adopt SOG (s))- **Discussion Only**
- 8) 2015-008: BOC Resolution (Adopt Operational Policy & Procedure Manual)- **Discussion Only**
- 9) Fire Chief Evaluation – Composite Rating- Chief Kaufmann requested that the evaluation be done in open meeting forum.

Chairman Crowley opened the floor for Commissioner discussion/ comment:

Commissioner Hoying stated that he feels the evaluation period should be completed by the December meeting due to possibly having new members appointed for January.

Commissioner Risley stated that in her ten years on the Board, she has not seen an evaluation this high and congratulated Chief Kaufmann.

Chairman Crowley advised that if anyone had concerns, they should be discussed. He further stated that with regards to succession planning, it should be better documented; as well as Capital plans and Long Range plans.

Commissioner McDonald stated that Chief Kaufmann has done a real good job.

Chief Kaufmann stated that he made a commitment to the Board and is thankful for the opportunity he has been given. Additionally, he stated that he made this commitment to make the Boards job easier, and he hopes this has been the case. Chairman Crowley stated that if there are any basic questions on reports, etc. for the Chief, members can go directly to him; however if there is any tasks (i.e. changes, information, policies, and/or requested data) they should be done through the Chairman.

Chairman Crowley advised that the Chief’s confirmation would be effective, by default, on January 31, 2015.

- c.) **Payroll**
- d.) **FRS (Firefighters Retirement System)**
 - 1) 27.25% Employer Contribution Rate (07/01/2015) – Board Recommendation to PERSAC
- e.) **VFIS Special Risk Insurance & LWCC**

Commissioner McDonald made a motion to accept the PMI report. Commissioner Brackett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3. DiGiovanni & Associates, CPA’s LLC- Mr. DiGiovanni discussed the financial report.

Chief of Administration Worchel discussed new controls and procedures being implemented relative to purchasing.

Chairman Crowley encouraged the Commissioners to attend the Ex-Com meetings to see the oversight that is put into the budget process.

Commissioner Risley made a motion to accept the financial report. Commissioner Brackett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. SFFA Comments- Union President Dekemel reported that \$250.00 was donated, for Christmas, to purchase scooters for Toys for Tots. The Union also officially adopted a family and provided Thanksgiving dinner and Christmas gifts.

The SFFA also provides turkeys/hams for on-duty personnel for Christmas.

President Dekemel invited the Board members to their meetings.

President Dekemel stated that there are currently 111 members in the Union.

The Union will be participating in the Gumbo Cook-off on February 28. Additionally, there will be a few members attending the PFFA Conference Feb. 25-28. The golf tournament will be held on March 20. Additionally, the Union will be participating in the Crawfish cook-off in April.

Chief Kaufmann stated that he meets with the Union quarterly. He further stated that the partnership with the Citizen’s Academy proved beneficial, and he plans to do it annually. Chief Kaufmann thanked the Association for its community involvement.

Chief Kaufmann state that the HOYST Program will receive proceeds from the upcoming gumbo cook-off.

5. Attorney’s Report-

a.) **Station 13 Property Acquisition-** (discussed above)

Attorney Ingram discussed the “legal services” budget line items, stating that some line items were combined. He further stated that he was under budget for the year.

Commissioner McDonald made a motion to accept the Attorney report. Commissioner Risley seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

6. Executive Session:

- Discuss the Character and Professional Competence of an individual (s) - All Third Party vendors opted to have this conducted in open meeting.

Commissioner comments below.....

- DiGiovanni & Associates

Commissioner McDonald: Commissioner McDonald stated that he appreciates the work that has been done and that Mr. DiGiovanni offers an extra explanation of things.

Commissioner Brackett: Commissioner Brackett stated that he appreciates all he does.

Chairman Crowley: Chairman Crowley stated that he appreciates all he does

Commissioner Risley: Commissioner Risley stated that she appreciates all he does, as well as his voice at the table

Commissioner Hoying: no comment

- PMI

Commissioner McDonald: Commissioner McDonald stated that he is appreciative of the advanced agenda

Commissioner Brackett: Commissioner Brackett stated that he appreciates the expertise

Chairman Crowley: Chairman Crowley stated that he appreciates the expertise

Commissioner Risley: Commissioner Risley stated that while occasionally things are “slipped in” for discussion, she prefers the advance notice; however, she appreciates all that is done

- Troy Ingram

Commissioner McDonald: Commissioner McDonald stated that Attorney Ingram has been busier and has brought a lot more to the table and he appreciates all that he’s done. He further stated that there has been a big improvement from two years ago

Commissioner Brackett: Commissioner Brackett stated that he appreciates all that is done and the expertise involved

Chairman Crowley: Chairman Crowley stated that he appreciates all that is done and the expertise involved

Commissioner Risley: Commissioner Risley stated that she is very pleased with this year’s performance

Chief Kaufmann stated that he has gotten anything that was asked of Attorney Ingram and has been very satisfied over the past twelve months.

Chief Kaufmann thanked the Third Party Administrator’s for their passion and involvement with the Accreditation process.

- Board Chairman Evaluation

Commissioner McDonald: Commissioner McDonald stated that he feels he answers to the people that appointed him (City Council). Furthermore, he feels that if he votes someone in, they would answer to him.

Commissioner McDonald stated that we have Board of Commissioner meetings, not Fire Dist. Meetings. He stated that he has asked to see the agenda, prior to posting, for any adjustments/amendments. He further stated that he has asked the Chairman to make sure that this doesn't happen, but it continues to happen.

Commissioner McDonald stated that he feels that the By-Laws may need to be adjusted; however, they must be followed until they are changed.

Commissioner McDonald stated that Special meetings are approved by the board, prior to the meeting. He stated that a Special meeting was called and he submitted dates that he was available, and inquired into the reason for the Special meeting, and through the e-mail process, the Chairman advised that the meeting was due to Commissioner McDonald not being present at a meeting. Attorney Ingram stated that there is legislation in place that said that we had to have a Special meeting 15 days before the end of the fiscal year. Commissioner McDonald stated that he didn't have a problem being "called out" in e-mails with the Commissioners; however, there were others in the e-mails.

Commissioner McDonald stated that he is on the "vehicle maintenance and PIAL committee, and he requested meeting with these committee members. He further stated that while he e-mailed the Chief and copied the Chairman, there is no process whereby approval needs to be given, by the Chairman, before talking to the Chief.

Commissioner McDonald stated that there have been times that people in the public has misconstrued comments that he has made and Chairman Crowley did not correct them, nor let Commissioner McDonald comment and try to correct them. Commissioner McDonald stated that he wants to make sure that he doesn't get misrepresented.

Chairman Crowley addressed Commissioner McDonald's concerns, stating that the agenda is posted after the Ex-Com meeting, and the recent agenda that was posted didn't contain anything catastrophic. Additionally, with regards to the e-mail with another individual on it, he has already apologized for that error. Chairman Crowley further stated that in the past, there was so much information going back and forth and many different requests; therefore, the Board agreed that everything would collectively be defined and the Chairman would request it from the Administration. Lastly, Chairman Crowley stated that with regards to the comments vs. arguments, he recalls a specific incident where a constituent was speaking, and it was quickly turning in to an argument. He further stated that when conducting a meeting, by Robert's Rules of Order, you have a chance to speak, someone has a chance to comment, and there's the opportunity to rebut- all of that had already taken place; therefore, there's no arguing back and forth. Chairman Crowley advised that his job is to conduct the meeting in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, and he will do that going forward.

Chairman Crowley stated that he can appreciate the Board's frustration toward him, however, his frustration comes from times when things are guessed on, or speculated on, and he expects the Commissions to be well informed on the matters at hand.

Chairman Crowley stated that he appreciates working with Commissioner McDonald and that he adds great value to the Board.

Commissioner Brackett: Commissioner Brackett stated that he has been happy with the ways things have gone and that the comments going back and forth have been constructive. He further stated that he feels some personal feelings may have gotten in the way, which should not be happening amongst the organization or Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Brackett commended the hard work and efforts of the Chairman.

Commissioner Risley: Commissioner Risley stated that she feels that Chairman Crowley has done an outstanding job in conducting the meetings, and the level of professionalism far exceeds her expectations.

Commissioner Risley stated that Chairman Crowley is tasked with managing a diverse group, and while women think differently than men, women make lots of decisions based on feelings. She further stated that she would like to see a better job done with managing the differences of opinions, and it not be taken as personal.

Chairman Crowley stated that his frustration of the past couple years is that people are making decisions based on opinions, instead of the facts presented. He further stated that his passion is not whether an opinion is one way or the other, rather that he has facilitated a well-informed vote. Chairman Crowley stated that he has the full intention to be candid and open and honest with the Commissioners, never making it personal, and only stating the facts.

Chairman Crowley stated that while sitting at the Board table each month, he doesn't feel that the Board is being 100% up front and honest about feelings on issues; he finds out about things behind the scenes and there's no discussion in the meeting. He further stated that his only intent, going forward, is to do right for the District, the Administration, the Commissioner's and the constituents.

Commissioner Hoying: no comment

Chief Kaufmann: Chief Kaufmann stated that he has spent more time with Chairman Crowley than any other Commissioner over the past year and a half. He further stated that he is amazed at the passion and commitment and there has never been so much organization, or structure, as there is now.

Chief Kaufmann stated that he never wants to stop anyone from being informed; however, he does not want there to be a breakdown in the infra-structure that has been put in place; as there has to be trust and integrity on the Administrative side with the Board of Commissioners. Chief Kaufmann stated that this past year has been great and he

commends the Commissioners, as well as past Commissioner Kingston, for the insight of what the future should look like going forward.

Chairman Crowley stated that he cares about what he does and he owes it to the Commissioners to have the knowledge to answer the questions presented.

Attorney Ingram stated that since it was discussed that there have been behind the scene discussions, the premise for the open meeting law is that any discussions that affect a vote should be done in open forum. He further stated that we don't want accusations of "walking quorums", etc. He stated that he sees a tremendous difference in the Board's approach and there is a clearer vision of what is being asked of the Administration.

Chief of Operations Kuhn addressed Commissioner McDonald stating that before he was a Commissioner, he appeared to be critical of the Board, as well as the Fire Dept.; however, after becoming a Board Member, Commissioner McDonald has become more of an advocate. Additionally, he thanked Commissioner McDonald for his involvement with the maintenance and PIAL committees. This involvement has made it easier for the Board to understand what the department is trying to accomplish.

Chief of Operations Kuhn stated that when he was Acting Fire Chief, Chairman Crowley challenged him to take the "I feel/think" out of the answer; therefore, not having to justify decisions. He further stated that Chairman Crowley has been very professional and he appreciates his dedication to the department and the Board.

7. Board of Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Hoying stated that he hopes he doesn't frustrate anyone with questions that he may have. He stated that he has a genuine interest in being a good steward to those who appointed him, as well as a partner to the Board members and the department.

Commissioner McDonald stated that with regards to Fire Prevention, it's good that public education has increased, and fire investigations have decreased. He commended the Fire Prevention division, stating that they are doing a great job.

Chief Kaufmann requested that the Commissioner's do what they can, on the appointment side, to bring education/ information back the appointing bodies. Additionally, he stated that he will continue to reach out to the elected officials.

8. Adjournment

Commissioner Risley made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Brackett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.