

St. Tammany Fire Protection District No. 1

Board of Commissioners

Regular Meeting Minutes May 17, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

The prayer and pledge of allegiance were done.

ROLL CALL: Chairman Crowley and Commissioners Rich, Gay, McDowell and Powell were present.

Retirement: Eric Abney

Awards/ Recognition:

- Chief Kaufmann read an appreciation letter from an incident at Home Instead which involved Mark Cambre, Chris Canning, Danny Herod, Alex Munoz and Caleb Weaver
- Chairman Crowley commended the Training staff on the recruit graduation ceremony.
- Red Angels & SFFA- Community Award presentation to Nathan Lousteau (Eden Isles Fire)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Powell made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 19, 2022 minutes. Commissioner Gay seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS – (none)

NEW BUSINESS

1. Chief's Report

a) Significant Monthly Events

- COVID-19 Update – no one out with symptoms
- HB 854 and other legislation – Chief Kaufmann stated the he, Mark Waniewski and Chief's Ory and Moore are actively involved with this bill, which had an workers compensation exposure in excess of \$500K, if it had passed in its original language. He stated that they worked with LWCC and the state Union president and spoke in the House Chambers to present revisions to the bill. This bill covers a retiree, up to age 65, and provides coverage for 10 years after retirement for a cancer diagnosis.
- St. 11 – UPDATE – Chief Kaufmann stated that construction is progressing with an Oct. 17, 2022 projected completion timeframe. There are still some delays in receiving materials.
- St. 19- UPDATE – Chief Kaufmann stated that the plans have been submitted to the Fire Marshal's Office. He stated that we are moving forward with natural gas being supplied to the property. We will advertise once the Fire Marshal approves the project.

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- b) **Operations Reports** - Chief of Operations Bruno discussed the “Operations” report (April) which covers YTD call totals, Hydrants Inspected, NFIRS Incidents, Dollar Loss/ Dollar Save (by Station location), Average Response Time (by Station) and EMS Call Type and Number of Incidents.
- c) **Maintenance Report**- Chief of Operations Bruno discussed the “Maintenance” report (April) which covered preventative maintenances and major repairs performed.
- d) **Fire Prevention Report**- Chief of Fire Prevention Marquette discussed the monthly “Fire Prevention” report (April) which included Inspections, Public Fire Safety & Education Events, Investigations, and Economic Impact.
- e) **Training Report** – Chief of Training Bauer discussed the monthly “Training” report (April) which included Classes, Certifications and Revenues.
- f) **Communications Report** –Chief of Communications Parish discussed the monthly “Communications” report (April) which included call volume and statistics.
- g) **General Comments**
 - Slidell Women’s Republican Assoc.- department overview presentation
 - Ambulance Shortages- Chief Kaufmann stated that there are ambulance shortages and we are meeting with the four major hospitals with a goal to mitigate the gap with ambulances staying on the wall with patients due to ER overflow.

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

- 2) **SFFA (Slidell Firefighters Association)** – Union President Berns stated that the union participated in the crawfish cook-off. He further stated that they plan to attend the National Fallen Firefighter’s ceremony.

3) PMI Report –

- a.) **Employee Benefits** - (none)
- b.) **Human Resources**

- 1) 2022-017: BOC Resolution (Approve Vote of Confidence/ No Confidence- BOC Commissioner)

Commissioner Powell made a motion to un-table Resolution 2022-017, Relating to the Approval for a “Vote of Confidence/ No Confidence” for District No. 1. Commissioner Rich seconded the motion.

The motion carried with Commissioner Gay abstaining.

Commissioner Powell made a motion to postpone Resolution 2022-017, Relating to the Approval for a “Vote of Confidence/ No Confidence” until the next meeting. Commissioner McDowell seconded the motion.

The floor was opened for public comment. There was no public comment.

Union President Berns stated that this has been going on since October and inquired into getting this resolved and avoid the obvious; as the information presented at the Special Meeting was overwhelming and a decision should be made to avoid wasting time and money.

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Commissioner Rich stated that they were told that there is some information that will be released to the Board for review which will help in making a decision to get this resolved.

Commissioner Powell stated that she would also like to see all of the information in order to make an informed decision.

Attorney Danenhower stated that he would reach out to Commissioner Gay's attorney and establish a schedule/timeline to review the documents.

Commissioner McDowell stated that it is important that this gets handled fairly and properly.

Chairman Crowley stated that there was a public meeting last night and there was a difference of opinion of what was understood on how it was asked for and what the intent was. He further stated that he feels if that was clarified ahead of time, they would have had access to the information sooner. He reiterated that it is the Board's intention to make the most informed decision, by the next meeting.

The motion carried with Commissioner Gay abstaining.

- 2) 2022-025: BOC Resolution (Approve Surplus Equipment)

Commissioner Rich made a motion to adopt Resolution 2022-025, Relating to the Approval to Surplus Equipment for District No. 1. Commissioner Powell seconded the motion.

The floor was opened for public comment. There was no public comment.

The motion carried unanimously.

- 3) 2022-026: BOC Resolution (Ratify Canvass & Special Election Returns BOC Resolution 2022-020)

Commissioner Gay made a motion to adopt Resolution 2022-026, Relating to the Ratification of BOC Resolution 2022-020 for District No. 1. Commissioner McDowell seconded the motion.

The floor was opened for public comment. There was no public comment.

The motion carried unanimously.

- c.) **Payroll** – (none)
- d.) **FRS (Firefighters Retirement System)** – (none)
- e.) **VFIS Special Risk Insurance & LWCC**

Commissioner Rich made a motion to accept the PMI report. Commissioner Powell seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

- 4) **Duplantier Hrapman Hogan & Maher, LLP-** Mrs. Cunningham discussed the April financial report.

Chief Kaufmann stated that we received a "zero findings" audit for 2021. He further stated that we have begun the internal process for the 2023 budget and will schedule a budget meeting in the near future.

Commissioner Gay made a motion to approve the April financial report. Commissioner Rich seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

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- 5) **Attorney's Report**- (Chad Danenhower) – Discussion on consideration of Commissioner Gay's request to appoint Chafee McCall as "conflict counsel".- Attorney Danenhower stated that on 4/27/22 he received a letter from Chaffe McCall requesting to be appointed as "conflict counsel", on behalf of Commissioner Gay. The request identifies Article 4, Section 5, of the By-Laws which does allow for indemnification of the Commissioner; however, he believes that the By-Laws indicate indemnification in the case of lawsuits, which there are no current legal actions with Commissioner Gay.

Chairman Crowley stated that the Board does not bring allegations or charges, and that they are only fact finding for clarity. He further reiterated that the Board cannot make a vote to remove anyone, it is up to the appointing authority. The special meeting was for an informal hearing for an opportunity to provide information for a vote of confidence/no confidence.

Commissioner Powell reviewed the By-Laws and agrees that it doesn't apply, and is against appointing "conflict counsel", at this point. Commissioners Rich and McDowell agreed.

Commissioner Powell made a motion to approve the Attorney report. Commissioner McDowell seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

6) **Board of Commissioner Comments**

- o BOC Action Items Review
 - By-Laws Review Update (Commissioners Gay and Rich) –Commissioners Rich and Gay reviewed and made some comments on the By-Laws and requested that the Board review the changes and submit any comments over the next month.
 - Succession Planning (Commissioner Gay) – to be incorporated into the By-Laws
- o Commissioner McDowell stated that with all that has been taking place lately, it has not been an easy process to watch and participate in. He further stated that he is proud to be on the Board and he feels that each Board member can agree that Fire Dist. #1 is one of the most uncontroversial and effective subdivisions of government in St. Tammany Parish.

Commissioner Mc Dowell stated that the Board's job is to provide the employees with the facilities, equipment, training and leadership to get the job done. He stated that the members serve at the discretion of their appointing authority, and his appointing authority charged him to use his best judgement and always try to the best for the firefighters. He also wanted to remind everyone that the contractors serve at the Boards discretion and the senior leadership has to have confidence with them.

Commissioner McDowell challenged the Board members to improve communications, be collegial and follow all processes.

- o Commissioner Powell stated that on July 30, there will be a "Wills for Heroes" event at the Training Academy.

Commissioner Rich made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Powell seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.