

St. Tammany Fire Protection District No. 1

Board of Commissioners

Regular Meeting Minutes August 16, 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.

Awards/ Recognition: Troy Brackett
Rescue 11- Preemie Baby (SMH)

Promotions:

Chief of Communications: Matthew Parish

Communications Supervisors: Bridget Battistella, Christina Black, Jacob Boudreaux

Swear-in: Communications Officer: Dustin Kendall (absent)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Rich made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 19, 2022 regular meeting. Commissioner Powell seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS: (none)

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Chief's Report

a) Significant Monthly Events

- COVID-19 Update – Chief Kaufmann stated that we have had a few employees out with the latest variant and one is out on extended sick leave
- 2023 Budget- Chief Kaufmann stated that a draft has been prepared and the Assessor was supposed to send out the latest tax roll; however, it has not yet been sent out. He further stated that when we receive the tax roll, we will meet with the committee and present a draft to the Board.
- St. 11 – UPDATE – Chief Kaufmann stated that construction is progressing with a mid-November projected completion timeframe. As previously mentioned, there have been delays with materials and sub-contractors.
- St. 19- UPDATE – Chief Kaufmann stated that the bid opening was held Aug. 11, and four bids were received. He further stated that a reference and background check was conducted on the lowest bidder and he recommended moving forward, as well as approving the Resolution to allocate additional funds for the project.

Pursuant to R.S. 42:23, personal recording devices are welcome in every meeting for Fire District No. 1; however, they must remain and be maintained in the possession of the individual that brings the device to remove any liability from Fire District No. 1 of any unintentional or accidental mishaps with the device during any such meeting

- b) **Operations Reports** - Chief of Operations Bruno discussed the “Operations” report (July) 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 (July) which covered preventative maintenances and major repairs performed.
- d) **Fire Prevention Report**- Chief of Fire Prevention Marquette discussed the monthly “Fire Prevention” report (July) which included Inspections, Public Fire Safety & Education Events, Investigations, and Economic Impact.
- e) **Training Report** – Chief of Training Bauer discussed the monthly “Training” report (July) which included Classes, Certifications and Revenues.
- f) **Communications Report** –Chief of Communications Parish discussed the monthly “Communications” report (July) which included call volume and statistics.
- g) **General Comments**
 - Staffing Vacancies
 - Suppression- 1
 - Communications-2

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)

3) PMI Report –

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

- 1) 2022-031: BOC Resolution (Approve Additional Funds for St. 19 Project)

Commissioner McDowell made a motion to adopt Resolution 2022-031, Relating to the Approval to Allocate Additional Funds for Station 19 Project for District No. 1. Commissioner Rich seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Waniewski recommended amending the Resolution to reflect the awarding of the bid to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, Sieverding Construction.

Attorney Danenhower stated that he conducted a litigation background check on Sieverding Construction and he sees no issues; as past litigation has been resolved. Chief of Administration Duffaut stated that all of the references he contacted were favorable with regards to previous construction jobs performed.

Commissioner Rich made a motion to amend the agenda to reflect “award the bid to Sieverding Construction, Inc. as the responsive and lowest responsible bidder”. Commissioner McDowell seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

The motion to adopt Resolution 2022-031 as amended carried unanimously.

Pursuant to R.S. 42:23, personal recording devices are welcome in every meeting for Fire District No. 1; however, 2 they must remain and be maintained in the possession of the individual that brings the device to remove any liability from Fire District No. 1 of any unintentional or accidental mishaps with the device during any such meeting

- 2) 2022-032: BOC Resolution (Approve Reclassifying Deductible Self- Insured Fund)

Commissioner Powell made a motion to adopt Resolution 2022-032, Relating to the Approval to Reclassify the Deductible Self Insurance Benefit Fund for District No. 1. Commissioner Rich seconded the motion.

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

The motion carried unanimously.

- a.) **Payroll** – ACT No. 199 (2022 Regular Session): SSP \$1,200 Lump Sum Payment (Letter submitted to SSP for clarification wage and overtime determination) – projected to be paid in December
- b.) **FRS (Firefighters Retirement System)** – SSP \$1,200 payment not subject to FRS
- c.) **VFIS Special Risk Insurance & LWCC-** (none)

Commissioner McDowell 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 July financial report.

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

5) Attorney's Report-

a) Legal Activity Report

- Attorney Danenhower stated that the millage packet has been submitted to the Assessor and was accepted. The Assessor will submit to the LLA for final approval.
- Attorney Danenhower stated that he has a non-resident complaint that he is working on. He further stated that Chief of Administration Duffaut handles public record requests and only involves him when necessary.
- Update on vote of confidence letter sent to the Parish Council re: Commissioner Gay- Attorney Danenhower stated that Commissioner Gay has responded to the Parish Council regarding the letter that he sent. Attorney Danenhower stated that it is his expectation, after a few responses he received, that there will be a few smaller committee meetings held in order to identify the particular details and he suspects that they will reach out to a representative of the department, as well as Commissioner Gay, in order to address the request.
- Attorney Danenhower stated that another issue is to identify Troy Ingram's role in this matter. He further stated that the Board needs to make a decision as to whether or not they want to act on Mr. Ingram's behavior. He stated that it is clear that Mr. Ingram had a conflict of interest that was not disclosed to the Board and personal representation to Commissioner Gay while representing the district. He further stated that the most concerning things are that Mr. Ingram was representing Commissioner Gay, prior to the district learning about Mr. Hessler's letter and the allegations raised

Pursuant to R.S. 42:23, personal recording devices are welcome in every meeting for Fire District No. 1; however, 3 they must remain and be maintained in the possession of the individual that brings the device to remove any liability from Fire District No. 1 of any unintentional or accidental mishaps with the device during any such meeting

against Commissioner Brackett. Mr. Ingram continued to represent Commissioner Gay after he recused himself from representing the district.

Attorney Danenhowe stated that evidence suggests that either Commissioner Gay, or Mr. Ingram, is Mr. Hessler's "anonymous" client, which Commissioner Gay has adamantly denied.

Attorney Danenhowe stated that the issue is that if Mr. Ingram wasn't going to represent the district, why would he continue to represent Commissioner Gay. He further stated that this was evident in the response to the CCST record request that was specifically tailored to any communications relating to the removal of Commissioner Brackett, or the appointment of Commissioner Powell, wherein Commissioner Gay identified several communications as Attorney-Client privileged.

Attorney Danenhowe stated that the problematic concern is that during the special meeting that was held, Commissioner Gay stated that Mr. Ingram told him, prior to receiving Eric Hessler's letter, to expect an interesting letter. Shortly thereafter, an "anonymous" source sent an e-mail to Commissioner Gay and Parish President Cooper, which was a "draft" copy of the Eric Hessler letter.

Attorney Danenhowe stated that the proper procedure would not be litigation, but a Board complaint to the Louisiana State Bar Association to inquire as to whether Mr. Ingram violated any of his duties to the district. He suggested that this be placed on the agenda for next month. He further stated that he wouldn't mind letting him know, and he can come answer any of the questions that the Board may have. Commissioner Rich agreed with the recommendation to discuss next month. Commissioner Powell stated that anyone can file a bar complaint, and she believes that there are serious things that need to be addressed; however, she doesn't feel that the Board, as a whole, needs to spend lot of time on this. Chairman Crowley stated that he feels that it is important that the Board vote as a united front and get a majority agreement on whether to take any action.

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

6) Board of Commissioner Comments

- BOC Action Items Review
 - By-Laws Review Update (Commissioners Gay and Rich) – Commissioner Rich distributed copies of the final draft and asked that the Commissioners, and administration, do a final review and forward any comments.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:17 p.m.