

# St. Tammany Fire Protection District No. 1

## Board of Commissioners

### Regular Meeting Minutes March 15, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 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: Paramedic of the Year:** Thomas “TJ” McMillan

**Community Service Recognition:** Joe Geddes, Sr., Joe Geddes, Jr. Bryan Haley, Alan Novak, Cody Moore and Derek Palmer

**E-Mail Recognition:** “Buck” Kleck, Eric Dupuy and Joe Ohlenforst

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

*Commissioner Rich made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 15, 2022 minutes. Commissioner Gay seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**OLD BUSINESS** – (none)

**NEW BUSINESS**

#### 1. Chief’s Report

##### a) Significant Monthly Events

- Ethics Training/ Financial Disclosure
- COVID-19 Update – 1 employee out with COVID side effects
- 2023-2032 Millage Renewal – Chief Kaufmann stated that the signs are out. He further stated that he and Chairman Crowley met with a citizen (based on comments on the Nextdoor app) to educate him on our operations. This individual already voted against the millage; however, after the meeting, he stated that he will vote in favor going forward.

Chief Kaufmann stated he has spoken at Rotary, as well as several Homeowner’s meetings, to educate the citizens and remind them that this is a renewal, not a new tax.

- St. 13/ HQ- UPDATE – Settlement 100% complete
- St. 11 – UPDATE – Chief Kaufmann stated that construction is progressing with an Aug. 15, 2022 projected completion timeframe.
- St. 19- UPDATE – Chief Kaufmann stated that the property closing is complete. He further stated that he is still working with the architect on drawings/ specs and plans to advertise soon.

##### b) **Operations Reports** - Chief of Operations Bruno discussed the “Operations” report (February) which covers YTD call totals, Hydrants Inspected, NFIRS Incidents, Dollar Loss/ Dollar Save

Pursuant to R.S. 42:23, personal recording devices are welcome in every meeting for Fire District No. 1; however, 1 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

(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 (February) which covered preventative maintenances and major repairs performed.
- d) **Fire Prevention Report-** Chief of Fire Prevention Marquette discussed the monthly “Fire Prevention” report (February) which included Inspections, Public Fire Safety & Education Events, Investigations, and Economic Impact.
- e) **Training Report** – Chief of Training Bauer discussed the monthly “Training” report (February) which included Classes, Certifications and Revenues.
- f) **Communications Report** –Chief of Communications Parish discussed the monthly “Communications” report (February) which included call volume and statistics.
- g) **General Comments-** Chief Kaufmann stated that the annual (2021) Accreditation report was submitted and accepted.

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

## 2) SFFA (Slidell Firefighters Association)

*Commissioner Rich made a motion to amend the agenda to move the “Legal” report forward on the agenda. Commissioner Powell seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

Attorney Danenhower presented the below timeline of information with regards to the record request received:

- o February 18, 2022, Concerned Citizens of St. Tammany (CCST), submitted a public records request to each of the commissioners for St. Tammany Fire Protection District No. 1.
- o February 21, 2022, the Board engaged me to manage the response on behalf of the Board, and Commissioner Gay retained his own counsel, Walter Becker, Jr., with Chaffe McCall, LLP.
- o February 22, 2022, on behalf of commissioners Dan Crowley, Jeff McDowell, Tracey Powell, and Mike Rich, I sent a letter to CCST confirming receipt of the request and advised that each of the commissioners was identifying and producing responsive documents.
- o February 22, 2022, through March 4, 2022, I received and reviewed the document production submitted to me and analyzed it for any privileges that might apply and to confirm the documents were “public records.”
- o March 4, 2022, I sent a letter to CCST providing the official response and a link to the document production, subject to redaction of any privileged documents.
- o March 7, 2022, I contacted Rick Franzo to ensure CCST received the response.
- o March 14, 2022 Commissioner Gay responded to the request
- o Unless the District receives any follow-up requests from CCST, this matter should be concluded

Attorney Danenhower stated that in his review of the documents, he wanted to discuss some concerns that he has. He stated that this is a relatively unique attorney-client relationship due to him representing

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

the Board, which is comprised of individuals; however, at times, individuals on the Board may take actions that appear, on the surface, to be adverse to the Board. He further stated that it is his duty to report to the Board, to make sure that the Board, as a whole, is aware. At the same time, with the attorney-client relationship, Attorney Danenhower stated that he has to be comfortable with the idea that the Board, which he represents, is being truthful and honest with him.

Attorney Danenhower stated that he has a couple of issues, relating to what may be an appearance of impropriety. He further stated that none of this is attorney-client privileged and is all public record.

- Commissioner Gay's actions, on the surface, give an appearance of impropriety. He had several text conversations with Attorney Troy Ingram regarding Commissioner Brackett's removal or Commissioner Powell's appointment, before Eric Hessler sent the letter to Parish President Cooper.
  - Dec. 2, 2021- Eric Hessler sent a letter to Parish President Cooper representing a unanimous citizen of this district. In response to CCST's request for documents, relating to Brackett's removal, or Commissioner Powell's appointment, Commissioner Gay withheld several documents as being attorney-client privileged, prior to Eric Hessler even sending his letter to President Cooper.

Attorney Danenhower stated that he published all of the published records today, March 15.

- Document 1- timeline synopsis of events identified through the Commissioner Brackett removal process, which was the subject of the CCST public records request.
- Document 2- response letter sent, on behalf of Commissioner Gay, identifying 24 documents that are attorney-client privileged. The first 7 of the documents occurred between October 6 and November 24. Eric Hessler did not send his letter of representation until Dec. 2. The second set contains attorney-client privilege communications between Commissioner Gay and the Board's attorney, Troy Ingram, after Troy Ingram recused himself on Dec. 22 from representing the Board in the public records request. Upon his recusal, the Board retained Mr. Danenhower to represent them. From Dec. 23- Feb. 18, there were 10 attorney-client privileged text conversations, presumably about Troy Brackett's removal, or Commissioner Powell's appointment. On Dec. 22, the day that Troy Ingram recused himself, he received an e-mail, from Parish Attorney Angel Byrum, indicating that Mr. Ingram had contacted her requesting information about communications between President Cooper and T. Brackett about Brackett's removal. Mr. Ingram then sent the correspondence to Commissioner Gay, and did not send any correspondence to the other Commissioners. On Nov. 24, Commissioner Gay received an e-mail, from John Smith ([techadvisor127@gmail.com](mailto:techadvisor127@gmail.com)), containing an attachment with a draft of the letter that ultimately was sent by Eric Hessler to President Cooper, nine days later. Commissioner Gay had multiple e-mail conversations with President Cooper regarding Brackett's removal that appear to undermine Commissioner Brackett's attempts to be reinstated and Attorney Danenhower's positions that were being advocated on behalf of the Board. On Jan. 17, Commissioner Gay e-mailed President Cooper regarding By-Laws, ethics opinions, and the process for appointing Commissioners. Two days later, Commissioner Gay texted President Cooper requesting the vacated letter. In the text, he indicated, "it is important that I have a copy from a source that I can

disclose”. He later texted President Cooper confirming that Commissioner Gay sent an e-mail to President Cooper, at President Cooper’s request. On Jan. 20, Commissioner Gay sent an e-mail to President Cooper advising Cooper that Brackett was continuing to function as a Commissioner. There is no record of Commissioner Gay corresponding with any other Commissioners regarding this same incident. On Feb. 7, Commissioner Gay sent an e-mail to President Cooper again, instigating a response as to Attorney Danenhower’s letter that asserted that Commissioner Brackett could continue to serve until his replacement was appointed. On Feb. 28, President Cooper responded, “per your request, I am sending you the Parish Attorney response”. On Feb. 11, Commissioner Gay sent a text to President Cooper, “it was worth the wait. I owe you one”. On Feb. 10, Commissioner Powell was appointed and took the oath of office.

Attorney Danenhower stated that there is nothing overtly improper about Commissioner Gay’s communications with President Cooper; however, his concerns are raised to the totality of the circumstances and particularly his representation of the Board, in the event that an investigation needs to be done, or be able to answer questions for the public.

Chairman Crowley asked Commissioner Gay if in the period of Oct. 6- Nov. 24 was Mr. Ingram serving in the capacity as lawyer to the Fire Dist. in the conversations regarding Commissioner Brackett’s removal. Commissioner Gay stated, “you have to ask him that question”.

Chairman Crowley stated that there were conversations, regarding Troy Brackett’s removal, six weeks before a letter was received advising the Board that he is ineligible.

Chie Kaufmann, for clarification purposes, asked if Commissioner Gay had a draft of Eric Hessler’s letter nine days prior to the letter being dated and sent to President Cooper to remove Commissioner Brackett. Attorney Danenhower stated that in the records presented, Commissioner Gay received an e-mail on Nov. 24 that contained a draft that is essentially verbatim to the letter that Eric Hessler sent out nine days later. Chief Kaufmann further stated that the letter has an “anonymous client” that he is representing.

Commissioner Powell inquired as to whether there are any communications from any Board members, or anyone, discussing her or requesting that she be appointed, prior to Feb. 2022. Attorney Danenhower stated that he did not see her name until she was actually appointed.

Chairman Crowley stated that from Dec. 21-Feb. 18 there are multiple communications from Troy Ingram relating to Troy Brackett’s removal, after he recused himself. He asked Chairman Crowley why the dialogues were not forwarded to the attorney representing us. Commissioner Gay replied, “I don’t have an answer to that right now”.

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

**3) PMI Report –**

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

1) 2022-004: BOC Resolution (BOC Vice Chairman) – (TABLED on 2/15/22)  
There was no motion, Resolution 2022-004 dies with no action taken.

2) 2022-010: BOC Resolution (Ratify Commissioner T. Brackett Terms of Service)

***Commissioner McDowell made a motion to adopt Resolution 2022-010, Relating to Honoring the Service of Commissioner T. Brackett for District No. 1. Commissioner Rich seconded the motion.***

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

Chief Kaufmann recognized Troy Brackett's 10 years of dedicated service, serving the community, and employees with integrity. He further apologized to him for being a victim of collusion, and doing nothing to be removed from the Board. Chief Kaufmann stated that the membership knows exactly what he did to support the department.

Commissioner Rich stated to Troy Brackett, "well done". Mr. Brackett stated that he would do it again for the members of the department.

***The motion carried unanimously.***

- 3) 2022-011: BOC Resolution (Ratify Parish President BOC Appointment of T. Powell)

***Commissioner Gay made a motion to adopt Resolution 2022-011, Relating to the Ratification of the Appointment of Commissioner T. Powell for District No. 1. Commissioner Rich seconded the motion.***

The floor was opened for public comment.

Troy Brackett stated that he couldn't be replaced by a better person of integrity and she'll do an outstanding job.

Captain Abney stated that if she ever needs help, to reach out.

Chief Kaufmann welcomed her and stated that she had nothing to do with his comments and that she has already displayed her integrity over the past couple months.

Chairman Crowley thanked Commissioner Powell for accepting the appointment, recognizing the challenges over the past month. He further stated that the Board should have utmost integrity and transparency for all of its actions.

***The motion carried unanimously.***

- 4) 2022-012: BOC Resolution (Adopt Employee Handbook Revisions)

***Commissioner Gay made a motion to adopt Resolution 2022-012, Relating to the Adoption of the Employee Handbook Revisions 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.***

- 5) 2022-013: BOC Resolution (Adopt SOP & SOG Revisions )

***Commissioner Rich made a motion to adopt Resolution 2022-013, Relating to the Adoption of Revisions to the Standard Operating Guidelines and Standard Operation Procedures for District No. 1. Commissioner Gay seconded the motion.***

Pursuant to R.S. 42:23, personal recording devices are welcome in every meeting for Fire District No. 1; however, 5 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

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

*The motion carried unanimously.*

- 6) 2022-014: BOC Resolution (Adopt 2021 LLA Audit Questionnaire )

***Commissioner Rich made a motion to adopt Resolution 2022-014, Relating to the Approval of 2021 LLA Audit Compliance Questionnaire 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.*

- 7) 2022-015: BOC Resolution (Rescind BOC Resolution 2022-007 “Vote of Confidence- Legal Services)

***Commissioner Rich made a motion to adopt Resolution 2022-015, Relating to the Approval to Rescind BOC Resolution 2022-007 “Vote of Confidence for Professional Services (Legal Services) for District No. 1. Commissioner Powell seconded the motion.***

Chairman Crowley stated that there was vote of confidence done last month. Since that meeting, an e-mail was sent from Troy Ingram, to another Fire Dist. He is concerned that Troy continues to negatively assassinate Chief’s character and the Board of Commissioners gave him a vote of confidence, unanimously, and that he didn’t think FD3 should have any issues with what he has going on.

Chairman Crowley stated that it was his understanding that the vote of confidence was based on the transition between that meeting and his resignation for May 1, not as a representation of all the work done, to date. He further stated that since then, other information has come out that is concerning.

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

Chief Kaufmann stated that he feels the Board did a “courtesy” vote, with no public discussion on 2021 performance. He further stated that for two years, he did a written evaluation on legal counsel’s performance and both years were a vote of no confidence, as Fire Chief of the department. He stated that after seeing the e-mail that was sent to Fire Dist. #3, two days after our Board meeting, he believes that Troy took the vote done by our Commissioners to leave quietly. Additionally, he mentioned Chief Kaufmann’s name as having an influence in Lacombe’s decision, which he takes offense to. He further stated that he doesn’t appreciate him misrepresenting the Board, or him as Fire Chief, when tendering his resignation in the e-mail; that was a choice he made.

Chief Kaufmann stated that at no time was there any discussion on 2021 job performance, and that he has expressed his concerns over the past few years, and he supports the Resolution.

Chief Kaufmann stated that last year, with the direction of the Board, he met with, counseled, and coached, to make this work. He further stated that on more than one occasion, Troy would say, “I agree to disagree”. Chief Kaufmann stated that Mr. Ingram stated that we have over a \$20M budget and that he “nickel and dimes” him. Chief Kaufmann stated that he will continue to “nickel and dime” if he feels we are being over charged or projects are being extended to be completely transparent with taxpayer money.

Chief Kaufmann stated that recently, when he asked to give Troy guidance, Troy stated that he would rather not hear it. He stated that this third party contractor does not want to communicate, or work with his client, and that he doesn't know how it can continue.

Chief Kaufmann stated that he comes to work every day with integrity, and he loves this department. He stated that he is setback that there was not more serious consideration of his recommendation and job performance.

Chief of Administration Duffaut stated that we have done exactly what the Board has asked- created evaluations, documented problems we've had and the good things- with all third party vendors. He further stated that he stands behind his evaluations, and is glad there is a resolution to this.

Chief of Operation Bruno stated that he has sat in enough meetings to know it wasn't going to work- he didn't want to hear anything we had to say, projects were prolonged, and he acted on his own and billed us for it.

Terry King, Advisory Board of CCST, stated that he was involved in sending the public records request previously discussed and after reviewing the records, he can't see an opportunity where CCST won't pursue something further, unless the Board does a true investigation of what's going on with Troy Ingram and the situation with Troy Brackett. He further stated, that after hearing the Chief's hint of impropriety, while looking through the public records and the issue with attorney-client privilege, where he was engaged and acting as an Attorney; however, not billing for his services. He reiterated the Board's need to conduct an investigation. He further stated that when your Attorney is not a good fit for the organization, it can be problematic.

Commissioner Rich inquired as to whether this was a moot point, as the Attorney has resigned. Chairman Crowley stated that he resigned, effective May 1, and it was to discuss continuing his services to May 1; however, he recently sent a letter of immediate resignation.

Commissioner Rich inquired as to whether Troy's performance improved in 2021, according to the guidelines laid out. Chief Kaufmann stated that he gave him credit, in his evaluation, because after his debate with the Board, he did meet the billing timeline. He further stated that the content of the billing is up for debate.

Commissioner Powell stated that she read the letter that was sent to Fire Dist. #3 and doesn't think it is appropriate; however, it was sent with an immediate resignation. The vote of confidence, to carry out duties until May 1, is what she voted on- she will not vote on this because she was not on the Board. She stated that she has seen some documents, and knows that there were communication issues; however she doesn't understand what reversing the vote will do.

Chairman Crowley stated that since the last Board meeting two things have come up- the information in the records request showing the activity from Oct. 2021 where he was actively working behind the scenes to impact the make-up of the Board; the one person who gave a vote of no confidence last year is no longer sitting on the Board. Secondly, there was an extreme amount of pressure put on him, and in a letter he sent, when I asked him why is it that he swore in the new Commissioner and didn't advise the Board, in addition to turning over documents to Commissioner Powell, which were e-mailed documents that only the Board was on, which he had to have gotten from someone on the Board. His response what that there was nothing illegal done, unless you can say there is. He further stated that the vote of confidence is the result of his actions behind the scenes. They were not discussed last month due to his resignation. He stated that he is good with the vote last month; however since then, actions have taken place- there was active participation to change the impact of the Board's make-up, and the pressure to get Commissioner Powell to vote which is unacceptable.

Commissioner Powell stated that when she was approached by CCST, she asked them to send a public records request. She stated that she loves the department and is transparent, and she wants to get the Board past this issue.

Chairman Crowley stated that the question, to the Board, is if they are still comfortable with the vote of confidence after all that has happened. Commissioner Gay stated that his vote of confidence was based on Troy's seventeen years of service to the district.

Commissioner McDowell stated that he feels that anyone that has an attorney relationship where the attorney does not satisfy the relationship, the attorney should not be there anymore.

Chief Kaufmann stated that he confirmed that Troy has not billed us for context included in the record request; therefore, he wasn't representing the department; he was working against the Board that contracted with him. He further stated that he has only worked with him for seventeen years, and he knows him well. He agreed to have Troy leave silently, until he was attacked twice. He stated that he has to stand up for his integrity.

***Chairman Crowley called for the vote:***

***Commissioner McDowell: Yea***

***Commissioner Rich: Yea (reluctantly)***

***Commissioner Powell: Yea***

***Commissioner Gay: Nay***

***The motion carried.***

- 8) 2022-016: BOC Resolution (Approve Termination of Professional Services-Legal Service)

***Commissioner Powell made a motion to adopt Resolution 2022-016, Relating to the Approval to Terminate Legal Services for District No. 1. Commissioner McDowell seconded the motion.***

Chairman Crowley stated that a letter was sent, in response to an e-mail that Chief Kaufmann sent to the Board stating that we received another bill with inaccuracies on it, as well as charges for unauthorized work and that he doesn't have confidence in working with him through May 1. Chairman Crowley stated that he then sent a response saying that Chief has the authority to manage day to day operations. Chief Kaufmann sent Troy an e-mail advising him that he didn't need him to attend the E x-Com meeting and not to do any work, unless authorized by him. Attorney Ingram sent an e-mail stating that Chief Kaufmann has marginalized his role with the department and that he was resigning immediately.

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

***The motion carried unanimously.***

- 9) 2022-017: BOC Resolution (Approve Vote of Confidence/ No Confidence-BOC Commissioner) – DISCUSSION ONLY

Chairman Crowley stated that he forwarded two letters that he received from senior officers that discussed concerns on how Commissioner Gay conducts himself, or how they perceive

his actions while in board meetings. Also, as the information was coming in from the public record requests, there was concern for the need for him to obtain private legal counsel.

Commissioner Rich stated that he'd like to hear from Commissioner Gay about what is his understanding of the timeline that was presented tonight by Attorney Danenhower. Commissioner Gay stated that the timeline is based on the e-mails that he received, which were given to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Gay stated that he would like to know which fiduciary responsibilities he failed to do. Chairman Crowley stated that the broadest thing is that the definition of fiduciary responsibility is if you have some knowledge or information, and are part of a Board, you have the responsibility to make the Board aware of it. He further stated that when a process was put in place to select a new Chairman, and for a period of six months, Commissioner Gay read some information and sent for an ethics opinion. It wasn't until time for the vote that the information was presented. Commissioner Crowley stated that based on information presented today, Commissioner Gay also received a "draft" version of the letter that Eric Hessler sent to President Cooper, nine days after he received it. Chairman Crowley stated that Commissioner Gay had a fiduciary responsibility to let the Board know that one of the members was being challenged about their legitimacy to serve on the Board.

Chairman Crowley noted an ethics concern when he text President Cooper saying, "it was worth the wait, I owe you one". Chairman Crowley inquired as to what was meant by that, and Commissioner Gay stated that he'd prefer not to comment on that at this time and that his goal tonight is to collect information as to what charges are being brought against him. Chairman Crowley stated that there are no charges here.

Commissioner Gay inquired into what actions he took that caused the removal of Commissioner Brackett. Chairman Crowley stated that it's hard to answer because his attorney redacted most of the information, claiming attorney-client privileged communications. Chairman Crowley asked Commissioner Gay if Troy Ingram was his lawyer from Oct. 2021- Feb. 2022. Commissioner Gay stated that he is not prepared to answer that question. Chairman Crowley asked if Troy, at any time during that time period, acted on behalf of the district as a lawyer on his behalf. Commissioner Gay stated that he'd have to ask Troy that question. Chairman Crowley stated that he had dialogue/discussions about Troy Brackett's removal six weeks before the Board even got a letter notifying them that he may not be eligible. He then asked what the dialogue from Oct. – Dec., with Troy Ingram, was in reference to. Commissioner Gay stated that he was not going to answer the question at this time. Commissioner Gay referred to the By-Laws, Article 3, Section 4, "Causes and Procedures for Removal". Chairman Crowley stated that the Board does not have the authority to remove him. Commissioner Gay stated that if the motion passes, it would be requested that he be removed, and Section 4 lists three reasons for removal and none of them apply. Chairman Crowley stated that the Board has the ability to do a vote of confidence and forward to the appointing body. Chairman Crowley stated that with everything presented, he has concern that there was active involvement, by Commissioner Gay and Troy Ingram, to execute the removal of Troy Brackett, and there was some tone to get Chairman Crowley removed, ultimately to keep a third party vendor in place and to continue to assassinate the character of the team. Chairman Crowley stated that this is evident in the Fire Chief evaluation, as well. Commissioner Gay thanked Chairman Crowley for the input and stated "we will see how this plays out".

Commissioner Powell asked Commissioner Gay who [techadvisor127@gmail.com](mailto:techadvisor127@gmail.com). Commissioner Gay stated that he did not have a clue, and that he received an e-mail but doesn't have a clue where it came from and he has never communicated with that person. She then asked him if he had any communications, with anyone, about the contents in the letter from Eric Hessler, specifically Troy Ingram. Commissioner Gay stated, "tonight I am

not prepared to talk to anybody about that". Commissioner Powell stated that a lot of people believe that he, and Troy Ingram, have a lot to do with the letter. Commissioner Gay stated that he had nothing to do with the letter. Chairman Crowley stated that there are no charges, just a lot of things have come to light and he's affording Commissioner Gay the right to fix it, without any judgement. Commissioner Gay stated, "I choose not to comment on any of this tonight".

Chief Kaufmann addressed Commissioner Gay, stating that Commissioner Brackett voted no last year, Chairman Crowley has been attacked, and that his evaluation is in complete retaliation, from Commissioner Gay to him, for doing his job, his fiduciary responsibility, notifying the Board of his evaluation, in writing, for third party performance using taxpayer money. Chief Kaufmann stated that Commissioner Gay has tied Dan Crowley, himself and Troy Brackett into the letter and communications with President Cooper.

10) 2022-018: BOC Resolution (Surplus Equipment)

***Commissioner Rich made a motion to adopt Resolution 2022-018, Relating to the Approval to Surplus Equipment 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.***

11) Fire Chief Evaluation- Composite Rating **4.57 out of 5**

Chief Kaufmann thanked the Board for their comments. He further stated that he feels compelled to bring up Commissioner Gay's evaluation, stating that while Board members made comments in the comment boxes, Commissioner Gay gave exhibits, as if an attorney put the attachments on his evaluation. Chief Kaufmann stated that he has had less contact with Commissioner Gay than any other Board member, and he repeatedly offered to meet. Chief Kaufmann stated that he takes complete offense to the "1" score(s) on the evaluation from Commissioner Gay, and the document is whistleblower retaliation.

- c.) **Payroll** – (none)
- d.) **FRS (Firefighters Retirement System)** – PERSAC Confirmed ER Contribution Rate- 33.75%
- e.) **VFIS Special Risk Insurance & LWCC**- VFIS renewal questionnaire was submitted

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

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

***Commissioner Rich made a motion to accept the February financial report. Commissioner Gay seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.***

**Attorney's Report**- (Chad Danenhower) – (above)

5) **Board of Commissioner Comments**

- o BOC Action Items Review

Pursuant to R.S. 42:23, personal recording devices are welcome in every meeting for Fire District No. 1; however, 10 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

- By-Laws Review Update (Commissioners Gay and Rich) – Commissioner Rich stated that Commissioner Gay has forwarded him his comments; however, he has not had a chance to review them. He will have it for the April meeting.
- Succession Planning (Commissioner Gay) – to be incorporated into the By-Laws
- Fire Chief Evaluation Process- adding mandatory comments for a score of a “1” or “5”
- Legal Discussion (Chairman Crowley)- resolved above

Chairman Crowley stated that he was approached, by someone in the audience, who requested to speak about the Resolution that was for discussion only and to be voted on in April. Chairman Crowley inquired as to whether the Board wanted to entertain have a public discussion, relating to Commissioner Gay.

Dr. Joan Archer stated that she has taught Leadership Northshore for 30 years, which is communication skills. She stated that she is a little disturbed about what she heard tonight, and this is the first time she’s watched a fire board meeting in a long time. She stated that she is a communications expert, and listened with a different kind of ear tonight. She stated that she was uncomfortable with the tenor of the conversations that went on about Mr. Ingram and Mr. Gay. Mrs. Archer praised the fire department services, and stated that her comments are to the leadership. She stated that when leading, you need to be able to put your ego aside and move forward without making assumptions about intent, until you really talk to that person. Mrs. Archer stated that the Board is the voice of the people and their constituents, and the administration is the Board’s employees.

Mrs. Archer stated that she knows Mr. Gay fairly well and when she was president of the Rotary he worked on the board. She stated that he was one of the best board members she’s had. Chairman Crowley inquired as to what makes up a good Board member. Ms. Archer stated that he was resourceful and a problem solver; however, he is a deep seeded introvert. Chairman Crowley inquired as to whether he was responsive. She stated that he was; sometimes she would have to ask him first. She further stated that she never had any stonewalling from him or improper behavior and that he will not speak until he does research and this can sometimes be misinterpreted.

Chairman Crowley stated that since the last meeting, he has called, sent e-mails and reached out to Commissioner Gay with no responses. He further stated that there weren’t attempts in this meeting to converse with the Board. Mrs. Archer stated that she feels things escalated into a big conflict. Chairman Crowley stated that he was going to contact Mrs. Archer about some concerns that she had about treatment of Julie and Commissioner Gay and invite her to talk with the Chief and himself, stating that with every situation, there is the rest of the story- and a whole lot of that has not been brought up.

Chairman Crowley stated that the only information that Mrs. Archer has today is what was provided by Commissioner Gay. He stated that he wanted to have a conversation to share the rest of the story, as there have been things going on, for many months, which have taken place behind the scenes and have come to fruition. Mrs. Archer asked that everyone step back a bit and understand the talent that we have with the Chief and the Board. Chairman Crowley assured her that they do it every day. She stated that there is no reason that this can’t move forward in a productive way for all.

Chairman Crowley addressed Mrs. Archer and stated that if there was a sense of frustration tonight, it's because despite reaching out in an attempt to get resolution there were no responses; therefore, he is unable to help him. Chairman Crowley suggested that she give Commissioner Gay some advice on how to help him. Chief Kaufmann inquired as to whether Commissioner Gay has been through her Leadership class, she advised that he hasn't. He stated that he was class president in his Leadership class, and that he is a communicator.

SFFA President Berns stated that with everything that has taken place over the past few months, he, too, is ready to move forward. He stated, to Commissioner Gay, "I would like to just challenge you to do a little self- reflection, over the next few weeks, and ask yourself the question- why are you sitting on this Board". He further stated that the men and women he represents are the men and women that the Board is ultimately responsible to. He stated that Commissioner Gay's responsibility, as a Board member, is to make sure everything is running smooth, the finances are handled properly, and that the men and women of Fire Dist. #1 have the tools and equipment, leadership and training, to be able to conduct the business we need to conduct. He further asked that he put aside any allegiances that he had with Troy Ingram and stated that it's obvious that Commissioner Gay has some type of friendship/partnership with him. Commissioner Gay stated that he would think about it.

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

***The meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.***