

St. Tammany Fire Protection District No. 1

Board of Commissioners

Regular Meeting

Minutes

June 21, 2011

The meeting was called to order at 5:42 p.m.

The pledge of allegiance and prayer were given.

Roll Call: Chairman Kline and Commissioners Rich, Risley and Kingston were present.
Commissioner Davis was absent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES-

Commissioner Risley made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 17, 2011 meeting. Commissioner Rich seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS- (none)

NEW BUSINESS -

A) Chief's Report-

- a.) **Recognition Presentation-** postponed
- b.) **EAP Contract- Renewal**

Commissioner Risley made a motion to approve the EAP contract, subject to Attorney approval. Commissioner Kingston seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

c.) **PIAL Questions/ Answers-** moved to agenda item "A"

Chief Hess introduced Mr. Tom Cassisa, former PIAL surveyor and currently a PIAL consultant. Mr. Cassisa has assisted us with better positioning ourselves in improving our PIAL rating. Chief Hess stated that a series of meetings have been held with respect to developing a better defined PIAL strategy.

Chief Hess stated that strategic station location has been an issue in the past and Mike Thiel was present to show, on the ESRI map, how we can locate a station, in a hypothetical location, to show the travel distance.

Chairman Kline inquired about where our PIAL weaknesses are, and ways to improve them. Mr. Cassisa gave a presentation explaining the breakout of the PIAL schedule, stating that the Communications Division section is worth 10%, the Fire Department section is worth 50%, and Water Supply section is worth 40%. Each section is then broken down into subsections. He stated that "training" and "Manpower" were the most difficult items to get credits on. He further stated that in the past, we have had problems with water supply and have tried to find alternate means to correct it. He explained that this is a credit point system based on what the fire department is required to protect in the area. As the last rating was in 2007, some of the deficiencies have been corrected.

Mike Thiel, using the ESRI map, pointed out areas A and B. Mr. Cassisa stated that the grading schedule requires having a fire station within a mile and half road miles of all built upon areas. Mike Thiel demonstrated where the stations are currently within a mile and a half, as well as where stations would be needed to comply with this requirement; if the area was built upon. Based on this demonstration, we would need to have 9 fire stations to be in compliance. Mr. Cassisa explained that road miles or hydrant data can be used, and in the past, the hydrant data was unusable, therefore road miles were used. He also stated the hydrant data has since improved.

Chief Hess stated that in order to improve the hydrant data, the members have marked, using a GPS, each individual hydrant (including dry hydrants), as well as inspected each hydrant.

Chief Kaufmann asked that the ladder companies be explained. Mr. Cassisa stated that a determination is made, on ladder companies (service companies) a community needs, based on two and a half road miles, instead of one and a half miles. He further stated that there is a difference in requirements for an aerial truck versus a service truck, which is based on the height of the buildings in the area, or the fire load required.

Commissioner Risley inquired as to how we get "bonus" points. Mr. Cassisa stated that these points (which only apply in Louisiana) come from Training and Fire Prevention. The training section, in the overall score, is worth 9% of the total. This is based on certifications received over the past three years. The bonus for Fire Prevention is 2 points, which is divided in three areas: fire inspection programs, fire investigation programs, and public education.

Commissioner Risley inquired as to improvements that can be made to training and manpower, as the rating is predominately based on this. Mr. Cassisa stated that typically career departments reflect deficiencies in these areas. The grading schedule states that you get full credit for manpower (worth 15% of the total) for 6 people on duty (around the clock), for each in-service engine company, six people on duty for each in-service aerial truck, and three people on duty for each in-service ladder truck. He further stated that no one operates with that many on duty. With regards to training, career departments typically have a dedicated person to do certain types of training. Mr. Cassisa stated that he feels we should perform very well in this category.

Commissioner Risley inquired as to whether bonus points, for Accreditation, may be added in the future. Mr. Cassisa stated that the grading schedule is being revamped and there has been discussion to add Accreditation; however, there is no definitive evidence. He further stated that typically, Accreditation helps in the rating.

Deputy Chief McInnis inquired as to whether the bonus points for certifications were specific to only IFSAC Certifications. Mr. Cassisa stated that there are twelve certifications, and they are all IFSAC Certifications. He stated that he also believes that some can be obtained by the Department of Defense.

Commissioner Risley inquired about the temporary housing for Station 18, asking if this was a feasible thing to do if we are not going to get the maximum points, based on the mile and a half criteria. Mr. Cassisa stated that from a rating stand point, it's beneficial due to having a truck there, but not a benefit to assist with the distribution credit. Chief Hess stated that while the idea to house Station 18 at the Training Academy is incremental; he feels that Royal Drive and Airport Road would be the ideal place. Mr. Cassisa stated that what's bad about Station 18 is that it is set so far back, away from the Service Rd. Chief Hess stated that we have possible negotiation options.

Commissioner Risley inquired, with regards to the two bonus points for Fire Prevention, if the Fire Marshall's Office or an Investigator from ATF filled out the paperwork, would we get 1.5 points, as well. Mr. Cassisa stated that there is a questionnaire that has to be submitted to PIAL and it looks at how many people are available to do inspections, arson investigation, cause and origin, public education, and juvenile fire setter initiatives. As there are agencies that do not have a Fire Prevention Bureau, they are able to take advantage of the services offered by the State Fire Marshall's Office for investigations, a small number of inspections, and a minute amount of public education. They earn approximately .14 credits.

Deputy Chief Macke stated that we currently get full points for the Fire Prevention Bureau and inquired about what the impact would be if the Fire Prevention Bureau was re-organized, or abolished.

Chief Hess stated that if everyone went back into Suppression, the points would be reduced by .44, if three went back to Suppression, it would be reduced by .22.

Mr. Fred McDonald asked if the reduction of 1.8 points would be the result of losing Fire Prevention, or cutting Fire Prevention. Mr. Cassisa stated that if the Fire Prevention Bureau was reduced, we probably would not be given full credit of 1.8, due to not having enough people to keep up with the inspections. Chief of Fire Prevention Ricca stated that while full credit is given for a six man engine company, they currently have four man companies, and Fire Prevention are an additional two.

- d.) Discussion- Tender 11 purchase- (Resolution 2011-007)** - Chief Hess advised that this expenditure was previously approved, up to \$240,000. After working with Ferrara and forwarding them the specs, the price was \$261,000. This increase mainly results from the new emissions standards. He further stated that the advantage to purchasing this apparatus if that with regards to PIAL, this will be counted as a pumper.

Commissioner Rich approved the expenditure of up to \$261,000 for the purchase of Tender 11. Commissioner Kingston seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

- e.) Station 18 Trailer-** Chief Hess stated that he would like to provide temporary quarters for employees working at Station 18. He further stated that he received bids and forwarded that information to the Board and is requesting permission to move forward.

Commissioner Kingston asked if has been looked into to purchase something, rather than renting. Chief Hess stated that following the PIAL survey, he is unsure if purchasing is the best option; as we may not get the credits. Chief Hess clarified the \$5,000 set up cost (delivery etc.); it's not a cost for utility set-ups. Chief Hess stated that depending on the PIAL points we receive will determine if we need something permanent.

Commissioner Risley, not in agreement with renting, recommends purchasing; which could be relocated in the future, as needed.

Commissioner Risley made a motion to approve up to \$35,000.00 for the purchase of a portable building. Commissioner Kingston seconded the motion. The motion carried.

- f.) S.B. 108/ Re-engineering Our Revenue Generation-** Chief Hess stated that Senate Bill 108, if passed, states that in November 2011, we will have to renew our millage. As we have no renewal strategy, this bill states that we can only seek the renewal, or go out for a new tax, on a marquee election (statewide).

Chief Hess stated that he wanted to re-engineer the entire revenue mechanism. Chief Hess feels that property taxes are very erroneous and feels we have to do something to do away with them. While we can't do anything to cause an imbalance of financials that result in people paying more in homeowners insurance, Chief Hess would like to have a workshop, much like the budget workshop, for the purpose of discussing how we can re-engineer the way we do revenues. Chief Hess stated that he would love to have lower property tax revenue, maintain the parcel fee, and have something else, like a "public safety fee", which would bring in a larger pool of people.

- g.) Millage Renewal-** Chief Hess will e-mail some dates for a millage renewal workshop to be held at the end of July.

- h.) Fire Prevention Consultant- Discussion-** Chairman Kline stated that a committee was formed at the last meeting; however, they have not met. There were conversations regarding going forward with the committee and in one of the conversations, it was agreed upon that best direction, given the emotions surrounding this issue, is that we get a consultant to do an analysis, and provide recommendations for the Fire Prevention Bureau. Chairman Kline has composed a message that he

wants to send to some consultants. He has given this to Commissioner Davis; however, there has not yet been a determination to proceed with this. Chairman Kline stated that in the interim, Commissioners Kingston and Commissioner Davis met with the Public Policy Committee for the Chamber of Commerce. There was expression, from the Public Policy Committee, to participate in these discussions. He also stated that there were a few others that have requested to participate. Chairman Kline reiterated his feeling on wanting an expert to do the research and provide recommendations.

Chief of Fire prevention Ricca stated that he submits Chief Hess as an expert in the fire service. Chairman Kline stated that given the emotions and magnitude, he wants someone from outside of the department.

Inspector Joffrion inquired into what Chairman Kline was looking for. Chairman Kline stated that he doesn't know at this point, but wants it looked into from a manning and fiscal standpoint.

Louise Mace- Ms. Mace stated that she agreed with having someone from the outside, but feels that business leaders and citizens of the community should be included. Chairman Kline stated that he feels that should be part of the process. Ms. Mace stated that while we are looking at cutting costs, is it worth it to spend the money for a consultant, or is there a better way that it can be done.

Jack Francioni- Public Policy Committee, Chairperson- Mr. Francioni stated that the Parish is looking into consultants for fire departments and inquired if this could be incorporated, to save the district some money. Chairman Kline stated that he is amenable to that. Mr. Francioni also stated that he would like the Public Policy Committee to be involved, as there is an economic development impact that this could have.

Chairman Kline stated that he would like to proceed, with the Board's permission and participation, to come up with an RFP to get to the consultants for costs involved to conduct a survey. He would also like to talk with the people involved with the consolidation project to see if we could enjoy some benefit through that. He further stated that he would keep everyone up to date and informed as things happen.

Commissioner Risley stated that she feels it is important to move forward with this study. Chairman Kline agreed, stating that he is going to go forward with it.

Captain Kenneth Smith inquired into what the consultant would be asked to do. Chairman Kline stated that he envisions something like what McGrath had done on the structuring and economics on the best way for our fire district.

Commissioner Kingston made a motion to accept the Chief's Report. Commissioner Rich seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

B) PMI Report-

1. Employee Benefits

a.) **Benefit Template-** still working on this

2. Human Resource

- a.) **2011-008: BOC Resolution (Referred to Civil Service (OSE))**
- b.) **2011-009: BOC Resolution (Referred to Civil Service (OSE))**
- c.) **2011-011: BOC Resolution (Relocate Public Meetings to the Towers)- pending**
- d.) **2011-012: BOC Resolution (Medical Director's Contract- Renewed)**
- e.) **2011-013: BOC Resolution (BOC Fire Prevention Committee)**

- f.) **Employee Handbook Revisions-** tabled
- g.) **Fire Chief- Annual Evaluation Form-** collected
- h.) **Legislative Watch**

3. Payroll

4. FRS (Firefighters Retirement System)

- a.) **FRS Back Pay Audit- Pay off balance (Outstanding)**
- b.) **FRS 2006- Outstanding Audit Acknowledgement (Filed as not in agreement with FRS determination)**
- c.) **FRS Actuary 2011 Projected ER Rate: 21.5%**

5. VFIS Special Risk Insurance & LWCC

Commissioner Risley asked Chief Hess if he would like a Special Meeting to discuss his annual review. He stated that it can be done in the meeting next month. Chairman Kline verified that Executive Session would not be needed. Chief Hess confirmed that it would not be necessary.

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

C) DiGiovanni & Associates, CPA's, L.L.C-

Mr. DiGiovanni discussed the financial report.

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

- D) Attorney's Report-** Mr. Ingram reported, with respect to the CVS RFP, that some modifications were done for the station configuration and it should be ready for advertisement in the near future.

Chief Hess stated that in the event that the Board rolls forward to 35 mills, he feels the public should know what is being spent to support the roll forward, and he will provide a list on those things (i.e. relocate Dispatch, build Station 18, expand Station 14).

Commissioner Risley stated that since there has been PIAL discussion and location of the station, she inquired if it is where it needs to be to get maximum points. Chief Hess stated that we get zero points now, for that area, so it would be a great capitalization opportunity.

Commissioner Kingston made a motion to approve the Attorney's report. Commissioner Risley seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.