

St. Tammany Fire Protection District No. 1

Board of Commissioners

Regular Meeting Minutes March 19, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

The pledge of allegiance and prayer were given.

Roll Call: Chairman Crowley and Commissioners Risley and McDonald were present.

Commissioners Kingston and Brackett were absent. Mr. Brackett was listening; however, unable to vote.

Chairman Crowley thanked everyone for their patience, over the last month, as he has tried to obtain as much knowledge as possible in an effort to move forward and not having to hold up making decisions.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES-

Commissioner Risley made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 1, 2012 Special Meeting. Commissioner McDonald seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Commissioner McDonald made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 30, 2013 Special Meeting. Commissioner Risley seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Mr. Reardon stated that the past minutes were not posted timely, and requested that the minutes be posted at the same time the meeting is posted.

Chairman Crowley stated that after the meeting, the minutes will be done and sent out for review approval and posted to the website. The minutes will then be voted on at the next meeting.

Commissioner McDonald suggested posting the minutes on the website, prior to the meeting.

The minutes will be posted as "Unofficial", until approved.

Commissioner McDonald made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 19, 2013 Meeting. Commissioner Risley seconded the motion. The motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS-

A) Surplus IT Equipment- A list of surplus IT items was provided last month for approval.

Commissioner McDonald inquired about whether a new Cascade System has been purchased. Chief Kaufmann confirmed that we purchased one and it is installed. Commissioner McDonald stated that he was hesitant to surplus the old one before getting the new one running. Chief Kaufmann stated that the Cascade System that is on the surplus list is damaged and cannot be used. He further stated that the Cascade System at Station 17 is operational.

Commissioner Risley inquired into what will be done with the surplus items. Bobby Worchel stated that in most cases, the items will be disposed of. He further stated that any items of value can be posted to the State Fire Marshall's website.

Commissioner Risley made a motion to adopt Resolution 2013-016, Relating to the Surplus of Inactive Equipment. Commissioner McDonald seconded the motion. The motion carried.

- B) Territory B Notification to Homeowner's-** Chief Hess provided a copy of the letter that was confected for the homeowner's in Territory B. He stated that this is posted on our website, and the Chamber has agreed to posting an e-mail and asking others to pass it on to Homeowner's Associations. He further stated that he wanted the Parish Council to do the same thing.

Chief Hess stated that as the residents and businesses in Territory B were divided, it was determined that it would cost approximately \$1,500 to \$2,000 for a mail-out.

Commissioner McDonald stated that he liked the letter and has been pushing to do this for a while. He further stated that if anyone gets a letter from the Fire Department, they are going to open it and it is a great way to gain the support from them. He stated that he recommended going forward with this mail-out, not to exceed \$2,500.

Commissioner Risley stated that she couldn't support this, as this was not prepared for and budgeted. She further stated that in the future, this could be bundled with something else that may be newsworthy.

Mr. Reardon stated that he feels we should get a better definition of what it is going to cost to do this.

Chief Hess stated that he simply wanted to print the letter on the Department letterhead and mail it out, using the Bulk Mail rate.

Captain Steve Lemoine recommended sending a post card, where postage is half the price. Chairman Crowley stated that there was too much detail in the letter and it would not fit on a post card.

Commissioner McDonald made a motion to authorize the Administration to send a mail-out to the residents in Territory B, not to exceed \$2,500 in cost. The motion died due to lack of a second.

- C) Assessor Reimbursement-** Chief Kaufmann stated that we did not pay two pension deductions in 2011, as previously thought. After reviewing five years of history, 2011 was the only year with a double deduction; however, the deposit happened in January 2012. Chief Kaufmann stated that the pension deductions are taken when large revenue amounts are to be disbursed.

Chief Kaufmann stated that we never receive an invoice for what the pension deduction will be and he inquired into the percentage that we pay. Based on the information he received, the Assessor's Retirement Fund is .25%, the Clerk of Court is .25%, Parochial is .25%, the Sheriff's Fund is .5%, the District Attorney is .2%, the Municipal Employee's Retirement System is .25%, the Registrar of Voters is .0625%, and the Teacher's Retirement System is 1% (totaling 2.7625%). Chief Kaufmann stated that none if the percentages matched what was deducted from the Ad Valorem tax and inquired as to when the deduction comes out of the tax roll (before homestead exemption, or after). He stated that we have funded the Retirement System for the Assessor's Office on homestead exemption money that is never collected. Chief Kaufmann stated that we fund nine Pension Funds, and the percentage of the other eight funds is taken after the net tax roll, after homestead exemption. Chief Kaufmann further stated that we never collect all that is on the tax roll due to uncollected funds (approximately 8%).

Chief Kaufmann stated that after speaking with the Sheriff's Office, he was informed that they collect what they are told to collect, based on R.S. 11:82. He further stated that the issue remaining is whether these deductions should be taken after gross or net collections.

Commissioner McDonald commented on the new Assessor taking office and stated that he wonders if he will change the way these deductions are done.

Mr. Reardon commented on the 2% hold back on the January 2011 settlement statement. Chief Kaufmann stated that this hold back is taken for refunds. Mr. Reardon stated that it appears that the budget is amended every month and inquired as to whether the Pension Fund deduction is in the budget. Chief Kaufmann stated that it is not; we only see the deduction on the settlement statement. He further stated that the budget is done after the tax roll is certified, and the budget has a line item to reflect the uncollected funds (8%).

Mr. Reardon inquired into who receives the commission from the parcel fee collections. Chief Kaufmann stated that the Assessor can charge a taxing body for any special taxes and the commission was not supposed to go to anyone; we actually received a refund because no other taxing entity paid these fees.

For clarification purposes, Chairman Crowley stated that the budget is not amended every month. Chief Kaufman stated that an amended budget will be proposed.

D) Vehicle Maintenance Report- Commissioner McDonald stated that he received the maintenance report; however, scheduled vehicle replacements are not included. He also stated that the "up time" is not necessary due to the "down time" being provided. He further stated that he would like to sit down and discuss what the report should consist of.

Bobby Worchel stated that the information provided comes from a data base, and the Administration would have to determine the vehicle replacement schedule.

Chairman Crowley recommended that Commissioner McDonald meet with the Administration and the details of the report can be discussed for approval in the future.

NEW BUSINESS -

A) Board of Commissioners Reports

1.) **Annual Evaluations-** Chairman Crowley stated that after reviewing the handbook, he had some questions on how the annual evaluations are done.

Mr. Waniewski stated that the annual Fire Chief's evaluation is included in the PMI packet. He further stated that if there are no objections to the format, this evaluation could be done after the new Commissioners have sat for 90 or 120 days, or as determined by the Board.

Chairman Crowley inquired into when the Firefighter evaluations are due. Chief Kaufmann stated that they are done by Anniversary date.

Chairman Crowley inquired into when the Fire Chief's evaluation was done. Commissioner Risley stated that only two evaluations have been done, since she has been on the board, and one was done at the end of the year, the other one would be due in January. She further stated that an evaluation was not done last year.

Chairman Crowley stated that there are no specific guidelines in the handbook regarding who is responsible for doing the evaluations. He inquired into the reason that an evaluation was not

done on the Fire Chief last year. Commissioner Risley stated that a couple months ago she and Mr. Waniewski discussed this and with the changes in the Board, the new members would not have enough information to give a fair assessment.

Chairman Crowley stated that he could oversee the process, but the four Commissioners are capable to do what is required for an evaluation. Mr. Waniewski stated that in the past, all five members completed an evaluation and the information is presented as a consolidated report for final review. Chairman Crowley requested recommendations for future evaluations.

Commissioner McDonald stated that he felt comfortable about doing an evaluation due to his being at past meetings and discussions that have taken place.

Commissioner Brackett (via SKYPE) suggested that Board members be on the Board for six months prior to doing an evaluation.

Chairman Crowley stated that a review of the minutes should be done to determine when the evaluation is to be done, and next month time frames will be addressed. From that point, a standard can be determined for going forward.

- 2.) **PIAL Committee-** Commissioner McDonald stated that when he got on the Board, there was a concern about micromanaging and what areas the board oversees and what the Administration oversees. He stated that he was told, and he agreed, that the Board should look into long term future needs.

Commissioner McDonald stated that there is a PIAL Committee; however, there is no one from the Board on the committee. He stated that he felt the Board should run the committee; due to their direct response to the constituents.

Chairman Crowley recommended that a Board member be designated to work with the existing PIAL committee. This member will then be responsible for bringing the information to the other Board members.

Commissioner Brackett (via SKYPE) commented, stating that as subject matter experts (SME), they (Administration) should lead the committee. He further stated that he doesn't feel anyone on the Board is a SME; therefore he doesn't feel the Board should lead the committee.

Commissioner McDonald stated that the reason he feels it should be run by the Board is that the Board members are appointed by the City and Parish Council, to represent the people. He further stated that the purpose of PIAL is to improve the rating for the constituents.

Chairman Crowley stated that he personally feels that it is a tough argument to say the current committee is not working, as the PIAL rating was recently reduced.

Chief Kaufmann stated that he chairs the PIAL committee, and is not the subject matter expert. The committee has eighteen people on it and meets during the day. Chief Kaufmann stated he has no concept on how this could have been accomplished if it was run by someone from the Board. Chief Kaufmann further stated that PIAL oversight is part of his job description; however, he welcomes Board involvement and input.

Chief Hess stated that the board is already in charge of PIAL, as they approve the budget that is confected, in part, to address PIAL growth. He stated that he, too, would love to have a Board member on the committee.

- 3.) **Breakdown of Salary and Benefits by Department-** (to be covered under “Human Resources”)

B) Chief’s Report-

- 1.) **Awards and Recognition-** Robert Worchel- 25 years of Service, Neil Ricca- retired with 23 years.
- 2.) **Station 14 & 17 Update** – Chief Kaufmann stated, with regards to Station 14, we are delayed, approximately 90 days, due to the rezoning process. He stated that he has met with the Parish Planning Director and Parish Councilman Gene Bellisario at the site, and it appears that there is a plan in sight regarding the green space issue. He further stated that he will attend a Board of Adjusters hearing, on April 2, regarding the appeal. Chief Kaufmann stated that the plans are 99% complete and we are working on the bid specification package.

Commissioner Risley inquired into whether we would have these issues if we scaled the project back and rebuilt what we had before. Chief Kaufman stated that there would be compliance issues with the driveway (i.e. green space). He further stated, that due to the building being in excess of 50% damaged, we will need to comply with the current regulations. Additionally, we would still need to be rezoned.

Chief Kaufmann stated that Station17 is at the foundation stage. He further stated that it is two to three weeks behind schedule.

Chief Kaufmann stated that the dismantle process, at Station 17, may start in approximately three months. He stated that new quotes were obtained, due to the other quotes being over a year old. The new quotes are higher, and Chief Kaufmann stated that he may need to request additional funds from the board for this project.

- 3.) **Advertisement for Civil Service Board Vacancy-** Chief Hess stated that Peggy Devalcourt will be resigning from the Civil Service board, effective April 28. As she was appointed by the Board, a new replacement will need to be sought. Mr. Waniewski stated that there is some urgency needed in order to have a three person panel on the Civil Service Board.
- 4.) **Consideration to Relocate Meeting Venue-** Chief Hess requested consideration in relocating the meeting venue to the Training Academy, where there is accessibility to administrative tools (i.e. copy machine, internet, etc.).

Chairman Crowley stated that the venue was changed for transparency and accessibility. He inquired about what (transparency and accessibility) would be lost if we moved back to the Academy. Chief Hess stated that we haven’t seen a gain in transparency or participation.

Commissioner McDonald stated that he was in the audience, when the meetings were held at the Training Academy, and it was Richard Reardon and himself in attendance. He confirmed that there was not a lot of attendance for twelve months; however, in June 2012, the Tower’s Building was crowded. Commissioner McDonald further stated that the most crowded meetings are when millages and Fire Prevention are discussed; therefore, he feels it is more transparent and accessible when the meetings are at the Tower’s Bldg.

Chairman Crowley inquired into what Commissioner McDonald felt would be lost if it the meeting were moved back to the Academy, and Commissioner McDonald stated that it’s about the accessibility. Commissioner Risley was in agreement with Commissioner McDonald and

inquired into whether the meeting time should be changed, or if the building doors can be locked earlier.

Commissioner Brackett stated that he liked the idea of moving the meetings back to the Training Academy.

Commissioner McDonald made a motion to accept the Chief's Report. Commissioner Risley seconded the motion. The motion carried.

B) PMI Report-

- 1. Employee Benefits**
- 2. Human Resource**
 - a.) 2013-015: BOC Resolution (Official Publication)- Recordkeeping**

Commissioner McDonald made a motion to suspend the rules to amend Resolution 2013-015, Relating to the Selection of the Official Journal (from The Times Picayune to the St. Tammany Farmer) for District No.1. Commissioner Risley seconded the motion.

Chairman Crowley stated that the intent is to have the St. Tammany Farmer as the official publication, but also run advertisements in The Times Picayune; based on requirements pertaining to circulation.

Commissioner Risley made a motion to amend Resolution 2013-015 to have the St. Tammany Farmer as the official journal for publication. Commissioner McDonald seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Commissioner McDonald made a motion to approve Resolution 2013-015, as amended, that recognizes the St. Tammany Farmer as the official publication journal for District No.1, as well as The Slidell Independent and The Times Picayune as secondary publication journals. Commissioner Risley seconded the motion.

- b.) 2013-016: BOC Resolution (Surplus Equipment- IT)- approved above**
- c.) 2013-017: BOC Resolution (2010 STFPD No.1 Resolution Summary- Verbal Resolutions Numbered for Recordkeeping)**

Commissioner Risley made a motion to adopt Resolution 2013-017, Relating to Recognition of 2010 Verbal Resolutions for Recordkeeping Purposes for District No.1. Commissioner McDonald seconded the motion. The motion carried.

- d.) 2013-018: BOC Resolution (2011 STFPD No.1 Resolution Summary- Verbal Resolutions Numbered for Recordkeeping)**

Commissioner Risley made a motion to adopt Resolution 2013-018, Relating to Recognition of 2011 Verbal Resolutions for Recordkeeping Purposes for District No.1. Commissioner McDonald seconded the motion. The motion carried.

- e.) 2013-019: BOC Resolution (Whitney Bank Signature Authorization)**

Commissioner McDonald made a motion to adopt Resolution 2013-019, Relating to the Adoption by Resolution Whitney Bank Accounts and Authorized BOC Member Signatures for District No.1. Commissioner Risley seconded the motion. The motion carried.

3. Payroll

- a.) **2013 FRS Contribution Rate: 28.25% ER & 10% EE/ 30.25% ER & 8% EE base on poverty line testing- effective July 1st, 2013**
- b.) **2010, 2011 & 2012 Compensation Analysis-** Mr. Waniewski provided, and explained, the 2010, 2011 and 2012 compensation and benefit analysis, with the breakdown by department (Suppression, Administration, Training, Fire Prevention, and Communications).

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)**

5. VFIS Special Risk Insurance & LWCC-

- a.) **VFIS Depreciation Valuation (Temp Housing, Transportation, Set-up & Pole Barn)- Station 14 (\$46,430)**
- b.) **VFIS Renewal Questionnaire (Released)**
 - 1. **Increase Property Values to \$125/ sq. ft.**
 - 2. **Increase Non- Member Liability from 5K to 10K**

Mr. Waniewski stated that we settled our second largest outstanding Worker's Compensation claim; reducing our reserves by approximately \$100,000.

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

- C) **DiGiovanni & Associates, CPA's, L.L.C-** Mr. DiGiovanni stated that we did receive the refund for the parcel fee collection (\$ 62,000.) in November 2012.

Mr. DiGiovanni stated that July 15th is the deadline for advertisement on the intention of the rolling forward/ rolling back of our millage. He stated that there should be discussions in order to educate the new members on this process and discuss the effects of this decision.

Mr. DiGiovanni stated that a millage seminar, that he was planning to attend, was recently cancelled. Commissioner Risley stated that in the event that the seminar is rescheduled, she would like Mr. DiGiovanni to inquire about clarification specific to the ability to role the millage up and then back, to a certain percentage, within a certain timeframe. Commissioner McDonald stated that the current law states that you have to collect the maximum to protect the maximum. He further stated it would be important to find out if the new Assessor will be doing a new assessment next year.

Chairman Crowley suggested that the Commissioner's be educated, through a Special Meeting, by May 1.

Mr. DiGiovanni discussed the financial report.

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

- D) **Attorney's Report- (no report)**

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

03/19/13

Commissioner Risley made a motion to adjourn. Chairman McDonald seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.