

St. Tammany Fire Protection District No. 1

Board of Commissioners

Special Meeting Minutes January 25, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 8:22 a.m.

Roll Call: Chairman Crowley and Commissioners Risley, Kingston, Brackett.

Also Present: Carolyn Gilmore, Attorney Troy Ingram, Mark Waniewski, and Chief David Kuhn

Chairman Crowley stated that the interview process, for today, was determined at the Regular Board Meeting, held on January 21.

Attorney Ingram stated that R.S. 42:17 prohibits any discussion about candidates outside of an open forum.

Chairman Crowley stated that scoring disparities will not be discussed. It was determined that any discussion regarding this would be done in open forum.

Commissioner Brackett stated that he wanted to make sure that everyone was comfortable with him being at the interviews, as he was unable to be at the original ones.

Mr. Waniewski stated that there was a Resolution, on the agenda, to offer conditional employment, as well as set a base salary for the new Chief.

Attorney Ingram stated that an inquiry regarding letters of recommendations had come up; however, Mr. Waniewski stated that there was a deadline of November 18 to receive them.

Commissioner Kingston made a motion to go into Executive Session, for the purposes of conducting Fire Chief Interviews. Commissioner Risley seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Executive session convened at 8:36 a.m.

The meeting reconvened at 2:42 p.m. There was no action taken in Executive Session.

Chairman Crowley stated that the scores will be tallied and the scores will result in the top three, plus anyone scoring within 5% of the third candidate.

Total scores:

S. Ball	527
R. Boudreaux	582
W. Dane	419
C. Kaufmann	577
M. Robinson	516

Chairman Crowley stated that there were four candidates for consideration, due to W. Dane falling below the 5%. He opened the floor for public comment on the potential candidates.

Chief Kuhn stated that within the past five months, he and Chief Kaufmann worked quite well together. He stated that Chief Kaufmann is a huge asset to the department.

Chief Kuhn stated that after reviewing resumes, and seeing the size of the departments that the candidates come from, it would be a huge challenge for them to come to this department. Additionally, the invested time at the department could be a contributing factor.

Attorney Ingram stated that from what he has observed, Chris Kaufmann is a very loyal individual.

Mr. Waniewski inquired as to which candidate best embodies a C.E.O. and would be embraced most by the community. Chairman Crowley stated that he is confident that the four candidates interviewed have that capability.

Mr. Waniewski stated that based on the letters of recommendation received, Chris has lots of community support.

Chairman Crowley stated that they will go into Executive Session again. Once out of Executive Session, there will be no open discussion. He stated that the Commissioners will be tasked with ranking, 1 through 4, how the candidates ranked. Prior to releasing the ranking, Chairman Crowley stated that he will inquire as to whether anyone has any cause for concern.

Chairman Crowley stated that there will be no discussion regarding ranking or preference during Executive Session, only professional character and competence.

Commissioner Kingston made a motion to go into Executive Session, for the purpose of discussing the character and professional competence and fitness of the remaining four candidates. Commissioner Brackett seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Executive Session convened at 3:05 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 3:14 p.m. There was no action taken in Executive Session.

Chairman Crowley stated that the purpose for coming out of Executive Session was to clarify the potential liability/ legality of handling discussion of candidates, and concerns, within Executive Session.

Attorney Ingram stated that there is a statute that specifically states, "a public body may hold an executive session pursuant to R.S. 42:16 for one or more of the following reasons:

- (1) Discussion of the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of a person, provided that such person is notified in writing at least twenty-four hours before the meeting and that such person may require that such discussion be held at an open meeting. However, nothing in this Paragraph shall permit an executive session for discussion of the appointment of a person to a public body."

Chairman Crowley stated that the process will not change; only it will be discussed in open meeting.

Commissioner Risley expressed concern with Marshall Robinson, and the potential conflict with moving forward in the same direction.

Chairman Crowley stated that while Richard Boudreaux and Chris Kaufmann both came to the top, in his opinion, there are challenges with both of them. He stated that change is good and that he is unsure if we want to change and go in another direction, or, with everything going on, we have someone with the knowledge.

With regards to Richard Boudreaux, there was discussion regarding his outside activity, and if he wants to make a lot of changes, there will be a lot of time involved. Chairman Crowley stated that outside activity could be beneficial to the department; however, he did not have as many relationships, locally, that we should be able to take advantage of. Commissioner Kingston stated that he has the same concerns, as well as the size of the department he comes from. Chief Kuhn expressed his feelings regarding PIAL, and the ways Mr. Boudreaux addressed his ideas of funding for PIAL needs.

Chairman Crowley stated that he has been told that our department comes off as arrogant, and “doesn’t play well with others”. He stated that the next Chief will have to make it a priority that those perceptions disappear. Chairman Crowley stated that he doesn’t feel this could be accomplished if someone new is brought in.

Commissioner Risley stated that objectively, Mr. Boudreaux was very impressive and in her opinion, his outside resources is a huge benefit. She further stated that while she evaluated the candidates, she was looking to see who would be a good CEO, just as if this were a business.

Chief Kuhn stated that he wished he had contacted the Fire Marshal to verify, but he understood that there were issues between the Fire Marshall and Mr. Boudreaux. He further stated that throughout the entire process, it was never implied that Chris Kaufmann was going to be the next Chief. Chief Kuhn commented, stating that Chief Hess came in from the outside, and Chris Kaufmann has always been supportive and loyal to whoever his boss is, and is always willing to work with them.

Chairman Crowley, before tallying the scores, inquired into concerns as to whether anything, that has happened so far, compromised anything to this point. Commissioner Kingston stated that he feels the process went well, and commended Chairman Crowley for all of his efforts. Commissioner Risley agreed, and stated that she voted based on the way the questions were answered. Chief Kuhn stated that the process was very transparent and thorough.

After tallying the scores, the results, from lowest, were as follows:

C. Kaufmann	6
R. Boudreaux	8
S. Ball	11
M. Robinson	15

Commissioner Kingston made a motion to conditionally offer Chris Kaufmann the Fire Chief position. Commissioner Brackett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Brackett made a motion to set the Fire Chief salary at \$95,000. Commissioner Kingston seconded the motion. The motion carried.

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Chief Kaufmann accepted the salary.

Chairman Crowley spoke on command structure, and the need for a Chief of Operations. It was determined that this would be discussed at a later time.

Commissioner Brackett made a motion to make the new Chief position effective on February 1. Commissioner Kingston seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Commissioner Brackett made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Riskey seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 3:59 p.m.