

St. Tammany Fire Protection District No. 1

Board of Commissioners

Regular Meeting Minutes August 20, 2024

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, Powell, McDowell and Davis were present.

OLD BUSINESS: (None)

NEW BUSINESS:

Swear Ins: Mitchell Arnold, Collin Rost, Andy Garcia, Allen Macuick, Jeremiah Mc Donald

Promotions: Tim Dudenhefer, Joshua Musselman, Brandon Palady

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Powell made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 16, 2024 meeting. Commissioner McDowell seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

1. Chief's Report

a) Significant Monthly Events

- 2025 Budget- Chief Kaufmann stated that we have a "Draft" prepared and will present to the Board in October for approval.
- Assessor Enforced Tax Roll Cushion- Chief Kaufmann stated that letters were sent, from the St. Tammany Fire Chief's Assoc. (STFCA), as well as from Chairman Crowley, and no response has been received. He further stated that the letter from The STFCA was also forwarded to the Legislative Auditor's office and after a brief conversation with Joann Garrison, she advised that she does not oversee the Assessor's office.

Chief Kaufmann stated that the Assessor opened the tax roll for public review last week; however, they officially don't go into place until Aug. 31. He backed up the open roll due to the Parish not voting because they did not have the data in time.

Chief Kaufmann stated that a video was done, with he and Chairman Crowley, to show that we rolled back and accepted the adjusted millage rate, which as the statute reflects, is cost neutral.

The Assessor advertised that our district was going to roll forward 5.7M, which caused heated discussion on social media. Additionally, the Assessor has held two meetings and continues to take zero responsibility and redirects the public to non-elected boards for any tax increases.

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.

Chief Kaufmann stated that we have a parcel fee renewal next year, which nets approx. 1.2M. We pay the Assessor's office to put this on the tax roll, as well as the tax collector for collections. Chief Kaufmann further stated that in his advertisement, he states that Fire Dist. # 1 gets a parcel fee of \$39 which is additional (not included in the revenue listed above). He does also state that the fire districts do not receive sales tax revenue. The parcel fee has nothing to do with the Assessor's job and was a direct attack on us.

Chief Kaufmann stated that he and Chairman Crowley will do a couple videos to explain the millage process. The 2024 mills have decreased by close to ten mills; however, the taxes have increased. The Assessor built a "cushion" (8%-17%) in the rollback number. Chief Kaufmann stated that he feels the "cushion" was to entice people to rollback to avoid getting the "heat" from the reassessment.

Chief Kaufmann stated that some property values increased by 58% and feels that the past reappraisals were inadequate. He further stated that there is a "phase in" for taxes over 50% over a four-year period.

Chief Kaufmann stated that all taxing agencies will have to roll forward, to the voter approved maximum, one time within the four year reassessment cycle to maintain what the voters approved; otherwise, it resorts to the adjusted millage rate for the remaining life of the millage. Chief Kaufmann stated that we will be faced with doing a roll forward in the future.

Chief Kaufmann stated that this year has been the worst as far as the money spent campaigning against only the fire districts. He questioned whether the Assessor is going to own the fact that he raised taxes on the citizens in St. Tammany with no public, parish/city council or governing board vote.

Chairman Crowley stated that we would do a couple more videos to inform the public on our process.

- St. 11- UPDATE- (to be discussed under "Legal")
 - St. 10- UPDATE- Chief Kaufmann stated that there is no update.
 - Training Classroom- UPDATE- Chief Kaufmann stated that the final inspection is tomorrow.
- b) Operations Reports** – Chief of Operations Gross 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 Gross 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 Harrison discussed the monthly "Training" report (July) which included Classes, Certifications and Revenues.

- f) **Communications Report** – Chief of Administration Duffaut discussed the monthly “Communications” report (July) which included call volume and statistics.
- g) **General Comments-**
 - Staffing Vacancies
 - Suppression- 5 (3 in processing)
 - Communications Officer- 1
 - Hancock Whitney Contract renewal (October)

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

- 2) **SFFA (Slidell Firefighters Association) –**
 - Firefighter Memorial, Colorado Springs – Sept.
 - Red Bean Cook-off- second place
 - Fan Up Pep Rally

3) **PMI Accounting-** Mrs. Gaudin discussed the July financial report.

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

- 4) **PMI Report –**
 - a) **Employee Benefits – (none)**
 - b) **Human Resources**

- 1) 2024-032 BOC Resolution (Approve Parcel Fee Levy Exemption for Governmental Entities)

Commissioner Davis made a motion to adopt Resolution 2024-032, Relating to the Parcel Fee Levy Exclusion for Governmental Entities for District No. 1. Commissioner Rich seconded the motion.

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

Chief Kaufmann stated that we had no intention to impose parcel fees or taxes on governmental agencies and non-profits.

The motion carried unanimously.

- 2) 2024-033 BOC Resolution (Approve Surplus of Equipment)

Commissioner Rich made a motion to adopt Resolution 2024-033, Relating to the Approval to Surplus Equipment for District No. 1. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion.

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

The motion carried unanimously.

- c) **Payroll – (none)**
- d) **FRS (Firefighters Retirement System) –(none)**
- e) **VFIS Special Risk Insurance & LWCC-**

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Commissioner Powell made a motion to approve the PMI report. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

5) Attorney's Report-

Attorney Danenhower stated that we will get signatures on the St. 11 settlement agreement tomorrow.

Attorney Danenhower reported that we have had a handful of lawsuits filed, technically listing the district as a defendant; however, we have no liability.

Ladder 11- we hope for resolution to the repairs

Commissioner McDowell 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- (none)

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

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