



ST. JOHN'S FIRE DISTRICT

FIRE CHIEF RYAN KUNITZER

COMMISSIONERS

CHAIR, WILLIAM THOMAE
VICE CHAIR, DEBRA LEHMAN
LEROY BLAKE
ISIAH WHITE
STEVE ROLANDO
ROBERT WRIGHT
BROOKS MCGOUGAN
JACKIE STANLEY
TERRILYNN DURHAM



St. Johns Fire District Commission

MINUTES

The regular meeting of the St. Johns Fire District Commission was held on, December 9, 2024, at Headquarters, 1148 Main Road, Johns Island. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Members Present

Isiah White
Debra Lehman
Robert Wright
Jackie Stanley
Leroy Blake
Brooks McGougan
Steve Rolando
Terrilyn Durham

Members Not Present

Bill Thomae

Others Present

Ryan Kunitzer, Fire Chief
Nathan Prouse, Assistant Chief
Brian Yuncker, Assistant Chief
Chris Whaley, Assistant Chief
Shawn Flanagan, Battalion Chief
Scott McCullough, Battalion Chief
Teresa Vaughn, Human Resource Manager
Stephanie Neal, Accreditation Specialist
Danielle Chambers, Controller
Brittany George, Staff Accountant
Christie Palmer, Administrative Assistant
Spencer Wetmore, Attorney

The commission meeting was conducted in-person and virtually through Zoom; all members of the public may observe and participate in the meeting:

Via video conference at:
ZOOM Meeting ID: 630-661-0867
Passcode: 170170

In compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, notices and agendas were emailed/faxed to the Post & Courier and persons requesting notification in compliance with FOIA regulations.

I. Call to Order

- a. Pledge of Allegiance
- b. Roll Call

II. Approval of Minutes

- a. Regular Meeting of November 12, 2024
 - i. Commissioner Wright motioned, Commissioner White seconded, none opposed, the motion was carried.

III. Public Comments

- a. N/A

IV. Chief's Report

- a. Chief Kunitzer reported stated as we head into the holiday season, he wants to wish you and your families a happy holiday.
- b. Chief Kunitzer reported that most of the 125 sets of PPE have arrived and we have issued a lot of those sets out to most of our personnel already, which will allow them to have two sets of gear. He advised the new sets are starting to deploy in the field and that you will see some of the personnel wearing the new black turn-out gear.
- c. Chief Kunitzer reported that we have a couple of things going on, particularly things headed up by our Assistant Fire Chiefs. He stated a big part of our strategic plan was our employee engagement and how we actively have our employees invested in our district and help us make decisions. He added that a couple of different committees have been formed and are off and running, which have been positive so far. He stated one committee is a health and safety committee. Another committee is a training advisory committee, so it is a large group of our personnel that are assisting us and pointing us to the future of what we need to do from their perspective and giving feedback on what works and what does not work. He stated the other one is apparatus and equipment and we have officially formed that committee with more personnel. He added that right now they're looking at some of our equipment needs heading into next budget year and in the future and then we've had some pretty frank discussions on our needs for apparatus and reserve fleet and things as our as the industry we're seeing things we need to keep in consideration for the future as we start developing plans for the future.

- d. Chief Kunitzer reported that we have been working on the restructuring of our pay plan and we have sent a bunch of data to the consultant over the last month. He added that they are starting to get some work and framework on that, and he expects after the first of the year we will probably have some more concrete things come in so we can start organizing that for the next fiscal year. He also added that we will start our mid-year review earnestly in January to look at where we are for mid-year.
- e. Chief Kunitzer reported that last month he mentioned we have been doing a “Fall Classic” where he wanted to have an important training ground evolution, but also make it competition based too. He requested to have Assistant Chief, Brian Yuncker, tell us a little bit about that.
 - i. AC Yuncker stated for the past six months he has been evaluating our working in the field, trying to identify areas that we need to improve or enhance our capabilities. Designed a programmed evolution and by program it's they're given the scenarios. There are no real variables. It's really to show or demonstrate their competencies related to job performance. So, each position firefighter, engineer and captain have to function appropriately and complete their task effectively. You have an overall successful crew performance. So, we put together some clips here, basically convinced it, and you'll see what we're trying to put. It's a multi-level building, very similar to what you see now in Kiawah, Seabrook, that your entrance is actually on the second floor. And so that's something that our personnel have to learn how to navigate or become more proficient at. We're getting away from single level ranch style homes. Everything's elevated with the floodplain and this is trying to test that capability. It allows us to assess some of our equipment and bring that back to Chief Prouse and evaluation of what we're doing in the field. And identify future training as we go forward. So, a lot of good stuff we've seen. This is really a testament to all of the hard work that our personnel have been doing out in the field in preparation for this and preparing to mitigate, you know, incidents as they come.
 - ii. After the video, Chief Kunitzer stated that the trio that had the fastest time was engine 704-C Shift and they are going to have a custom logo created.
 - iii. Chief Kunitzer stated great job by those crews and great job by Chief Yuncker, Chief Flanagan and Chief McCullough, who has been helping with that as well. He added our training department is excellent and they are doing a great job.
- f. Chief Kunitzer reported that we have live burns this month at the performance center. He added the EMT class and Advanced EMT class are all ongoing and our staff are also completing their annual appraisals as those are coming around.
- g. Chief Kunitzer reported that we have TV's that each of our stations is going to get mounted in their area. He advised that what we've invested in is called First Arriving Dashboards. He stated that we can control them here from headquarters, but when it's a TV dedicated to NOT TV, they won't be able to watch TV on it. He added that as soon as the call drops, the screen will populate with all the CAD information maps. He added that it does weather and we can put any message up

there we want and that it works with 150 different programs, some of them that we use, some of them that will never use, but it's really another communication piece for how we better communicate with all of our employees.

- h.** Chief Kunitzer reported that he wanted to give his administrative staff some kudos. He states we had our holiday party last night and some of our Commissioners were in attendance. He thanked them. He added that the food was good, they had a large turn out and the shift that was on yesterday had lunch delivered from Martin's Barbecue on James Island. He also stated that he will look at dates for next year to see how the shift schedule falls so that every shift gets a chance to participate.

- i. Human Resources Report**

- i. HR Manager, Teresa Vaughn, reported all positions are full. We stated that 2 paramedics will start in January 6th. She also stated that the lead diesel mechanic position has been filled.
 - ii. She introduced the new Staff Accountant, Brittany George, as well as Stephaine Neal, the newly appointed full-time Accreditation Specialist.

- j. Incident Report December 2024**

- i. Johns Island – 24 incidents
 - ii. Kiawah Island – 58 incidents
 - iii. Seabrook Island – 33 incidents
 - iv. Wadmalaw Island – 26 incidents

V. Financial Report

- a. Monthly Financial Report**

- i. Controller Danielle Chambers reported that the Remaining Goal is 58.34%, the actual is 58.04 %.
 - ii. The Operating balance as of 11/30/2024 is \$6M. The Local Government Investment Pool balance is \$13K.
 - iii. November revenue included retiree reimbursements and GovDeals proceeds from sale of F-350 truck for \$7,000.
 - iv. The Charleston County wire transfer received was \$1,447,721 for October collections.
 - v. Non-standard overtime for November is \$102,360.
 - vi. Capital Projects bank balances as of 10/31/2024.
 - 1. 2021 balance: \$83
 - 2. 2022 balance: \$25,735
 - 3. 2023 balance: \$413,762
 - 4. 2024 balance: 16,991,929

- vii. Dashboard Summary
 - 1. Operating expenditure is \$1.4M which includes encumbrances.
 - 2. YTD non-standard overtime is \$414K.
YTD salaries including regular and standard overtime is \$3.5M.
YTD vacation/sick pay is \$319K.
 - 3. No COVID-19 related personnel expenses YTD.

VI. Attorney's Update

- a. Attorney Spencer Wetmore advised the attorney representing St Johns Water was out of the office with a family emergency. No progress there on that settlement. Their board has signed off on some numbers we discussed in the executive session, but no progress with the agreement. She will be back with us with that in January.

VII. Unfinished/Old Business

- a. N/A

VIII. New Business

- a. Holiday Bonus.
 - i. Commissioner Rolando made a motion to award \$500 net bonus to each employee, district wide, for a total of \$76,124.55. Commissioner Leahman seconded the motion. All in favor, none opposed, the motion passed.
- b. Election of Commission, Chair and Co-Chair.
 - i. Attorney Wetmore called for nomination for Chair position. Commissioner Stanley nominated Commissioner Leahman. No other nominations were provided. Votes counted and officially confirmed. Commissioner Leahman as our new Chair.
 - ii. Attorney Wetmore called for nomination for Vice-Chair position. Commissioner Rolando nominated Commissioner White. No other nominations were provided. Votes counted and officially confirmed. Commissioner White as our new Vice-Chair.

IX. Committee Report

a. Building Committee

- i. Chief Kunitzer reported there was a meeting on November 22nd. They had four presentations from local architects for the Station 5 project. The group had decided on Liollo Architecture to do that project. Currently, LCK or David Myers, our consultant, is negotiating their fee right now. We would anticipate coming back likely in January for you to approve a fee related to that.
- ii. Chief Kunitzer reported that at the building committee meeting he approached the committee about the possibility of purchasing part of that property next to us at Station 5. He stated he approached the property owners who are interested in selling part of this to us. He reported he

advised the committee that we really want to make a complete training grounds at Station 5. It would give us plenty of room to build a fire and this training ground would give us some room for future growth.

- iii. Chief Kunitzer reported that he has the RFQ for the architecture firm for Kiawah River Fire station. He stated that he does not think we have an update on the actual lease itself, but that RFQ for the actual architecture will go out in early January.

b. Finance Committee

- i. N/A

c. Human Resources Committee

- i. N/A

d. Strategic Planning Committee

- i. N/A

X. Firefighter Comments

- a. N/A

XI. Commissioner Comments

a. Commissioner White

- i. Training station is an excellent idea. It will help with the morale. For the rest of the department, again that I really appreciate what you all are doing here in our district. Be safe when the holiday and let your family know we care about them too.

b. Commissioner McGougan

- i. I concur with what Ike said. Prior to coming up here I was speaking with Councilman Boykin, he has assured us that we have his full support. He thinks we're doing a good job. He's getting good feedback from the community about the professionalism, and he just wanted to say, good job.

c. Commissioner Durham

- i. Congratulations to Brittany and Stephaine. Welcome aboard. You stay safe as well. As well, congratulations Chief Yuncker and your team for the awesome training that has gone forth and you stay safe as well and everyone happy holidays.

d. Commissioner Wright

- i. I just wish everybody a Merry Christmas. The performance of the department continues to be outstanding. Last month I had a medical emergency in the house and called 911, they were there and that was important. Also welcome the new hires. Keep up the good work.

e. Commissioner Blake

- i. I will make this very brief. Ditto to everything everyone else has said. I

want to wish everyone a marvelous and happy holiday season. Please, please, please drive safely and drive like your lives depend on it, because it does.

f. Commissioner Stanley

- i. I'd like to welcome new staff personnel. Seeing things running smoothly. That's very good. And to the personnel, keep up the good work and happy holidays.

g. Commissioner Rolando

- i. Ditto to what everyone said. Happy holiday season.

h. Commissioner Lehman

- i. Stephanie, congratulations on coming on full-time. And Brittany, welcome. That's a great place to work. So, we appreciate all the positions being filled. I really enjoyed the training video too. It was nice to see. I don't know if you'll do any in the future, but you know, for US Commissioners, especially me, that I'm not a firefighter, retired firefighter. That was very interesting to watch. So, thank you. And I just want to wish you a happy holiday and I was counting on Leroy to tell you how safely he should drive. So, I Ditto that because these roads around here can be pretty scary.

Commissioner Leahman requested a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss contractual matters. Commissioner Stanley made a motion, Commissioner Wright seconded. All in favor, none opposed, the motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 5:39 pm.