



# 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, October 14, 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  
Brooks McGougan  
Bill Thomae  
Steve Rolando  
Terrilyn Durham

#### **Members Not Present**

Leroy Blake

#### **Others Present**

Ryan Kunitzer, Fire Chief  
Kevin Henson, Deputy Fire Chief  
Nathan Prouse, Assistant Chief  
Brian Yuncker, Assistant Chief  
Shawn Flanagan, Battalion Chief  
Nate Adams, Battalion Chief  
Teresa Vaughn, Human Resource Manager  
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 September 9, 2024
  - i. Commissioner White motioned, Commissioner McGougan seconded, none opposed, the motion was carried.

### **III. Public Comments**

- a. N/A

### **IV. Chief's Report**

- a. Chief Kunitzer requested to change the November meeting date from the 11th to the 12th, it will be a Tuesday instead of a Monday as we are closed in recognition of Veterans Day. He advised he will have the vote on that in new business.
- b. Chief Kunitzer reported that last week was fire Prevention week and we had our big event on Saturday at Haut Gap at Middle School. He stated it was well attended, and we received several messages on our social media and through emails about how much fun people had at the event and how they so very appreciate the hard work of our fire Marshall Division. Thankful for them for another successful event.
- c. Chief Kunitzer reported that we know quite a bit about the devastation in North Carolina and South Carolina and parts of Tennessee and Georgia as well, but he first wanted to say that he really appreciates our team, our team members, who stepped up and deployed to help serve these areas. He stated they took time away from their family to help those truly in need. He stated that we deployed to a couple areas of Greenville County and the surrounding area. He added that Chief Henson was deployed as part of some incident management team and the good thing about being able to deploy those areas and these events happening, we learned quite a bit because of what can happen here as well.

- d. Chief Kunitzer reported that we coordinated a large community drive and he thinks it was really impressive that within a day's notice, we filled up a 26 foot U-Haul truck from the bottom to the top. He added we had truck full of anything you could think of. He stated that there is more needs that they have up there, particularly with cold weather coming, so we're looking at doing a couple of other things to help support them. He added that he wanted to thank our members who volunteered to drive to a distribution center in Greenville as well as our community for their support.
- e. Chief Kunitzer reported that we purchased a Starlink for every station. He added that in Greenville, Starlinks became the community hubs for the people and the residents to talk to the outside world and update their community members or update their family members. He stated we can be that hub for everybody in our community today.
- f. Chief Kunitzer reported that the high-water vehicle money that Seabrook Island gave us last year to procure a high-water vehicle, the RFP is out right now that is due October 31st. He added we plan to present that to you for decision at the November meeting so we can move forward with a contract for that and get that deployed.
- g. Chief Kunitzer reported that we had several new recruits that finished the Saint Paul Academy, and they all graduated, which is great. Two of our members won awards. Patrick Brown won the order of the Maltese for exemplary leadership and continuous positive attitude, and then also member William Cantalops won the pride of the battalion, which is the battalion award given by the instructors for leadership, integrity determination, good values. He state there were positive comments about all of our all of our personnel that finished. He stated that they are already out on the line, on shift and learning from our Members. Congratulations to them and welcome to St. John's.
- h. Chief Kunitzer reported that we are in the process of scheduling, engineer testing and the next round of captain testing. He also added we will discuss the upcoming finance meeting where we will discuss the audit, but I'll give you just a hint. It was clean again so.
- i. Chief Kunitzer spoke on an issue regarding a Facebook post. Details can be found on our YouTube channel [STJFD Commission Meeting 10.14.24](#) at the 15:33 mark.
- j. **Human Resources Report**
  - i. HR Manager, Teresa Vaughn, introduced the new Human Resource Assistant, Stephanie Neal.
  - ii. She stated that we have a new firefighter (rehire) that starts on the 7<sup>th</sup> and a paramedic starting on the 28th.
  - iii. She reported she and Danielle are still interviewing for the new Accounting Manager position.
  - iv. She we had one separation, one resignation that was effective on October 2nd.

**k. Incident Report September 2024**

- i. Johns Island – 198 incidents
- ii. Kiawah Island – 66 incidents
- iii. Seabrook Island – 45 incidents
- iv. Wadmalaw Island – 36 incidents

**V. Financial Report**

**a. Monthly Financial Report**

- i. Chief Kunitzer reported that the Remaining Goal is 75%, the actual is 75.34%.
- ii. The Operating balance as of 9/30/2024 is \$7.4M. The Local Government Investment Pool balance is \$13K.
- iii. August revenue included retiree reimbursement.
- iv. The Charleston County wire transfer received was \$106,756 for August collections.
- v. Non-standard overtime for September is \$77,768.
- vi. Capital Projects bank balances as of 9/30/2024.
  - 1. 2021 balance: \$83
  - 2. 2022 balance: \$25,735
  - 3. 2023 balance: \$434,423
  - 4. 2024 balance: 17,014,145
- vii. Dashboard Summary
  - 1. Operating expenditures are \$1.3M which includes encumbrances.
  - 2. YTD non-standard overtime is \$241K.  
YTD salaries including regular and standard overtime is \$1.8M.  
YTD vacation/sick pay is \$175K.
  - 3. No COVID-19 related personnel expenses YTD.

**VI. Attorney's Update**

- a. Attorney Spencer Wetmore advised that she was able to obtain copies of our 1959 Enabling Act and the 1970's ERA Amendment to that as well as her Roberts Rule. She stated that she has an update for the commission, which would be appropriate to go into executive session and update on the negotiations with St. John's Water settlement. She added we are making things easy, so thank you.

**VII. Unfinished/Old Business**

- a. N/A

## **VIII. New Business**

- a. Chief Kunitzer made a motion to approve the proposal to utilize McGrath Human Resources Consultant at the fee of \$12,255. Commissioner Leahman motioned. Commissioner Rolondo seconded. All in favor, none opposed, the motion passed.
- b. Commissioner Thomae motioned to change the November meeting from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> in observance of Veteran's Day. Commissioner Wright motioned. Commissioner McGougan seconded. All in favor, none opposed, the motion passed.

## **IX. Committee Report**

### **a. Building Committee**

- i. Commissioner Thomae reported they did not have a building committee meeting this month. The portion of the time in the past few weeks has been spent by our consultant David Myers, and putting together request for proposals, request for RFQ's from architects for the rebuilding of Station 5 so that RFQ Request is out, and the proposals are due on October 29th. At that time, we will have a building committee meeting and review all those proposals and then have interviews.

### **b. Finance Committee**

- i. Commissioner Lehman reported they did not have a finance meeting, but they are going to have an audit meeting on Wednesday, October 30th at 10:00 am here at headquarters.

### **c. Human Resources Committee**

- i. N/A

### **d. Strategic Planning Committee**

- i. N/A

## **X. Firefighter Comments**

- a. N/A

## **XII. Commissioner Comments**

### **a. Commissioner White**

- i. Thanks to the Chief for keeping us informed of what's going on. Thanks to all personnel who went out and helped our neighbors in North Carolina. Welcome aboard and welcome to the new employees that just got hired.

### **b. Commissioner McGougan**

- i. I too would like to commend the chief for coming forward on this issue and being approachable. His transparency is refreshing.
- ii. I certainly appreciate Chief Henson taking the cruise up there, spending that time. St. John's does have a history of reaching out to our neighbors and I'm sure they appreciate it. Welcome aboard. Let's keep up the good work.

- c. Commissioner Wright
  - i. I echo both Brooks and Ike's comments. I think sending the crew up to Greenville is necessary. People were devastated.
- d. Commissioner Durham
  - i. I too would like to piggyback on all three of them as well and like to say congratulations and welcome our new Members and our fully staff and thank everyone for their services during this storm.
- e. Commissioner Stanley
  - i. I like to echo everyone. I definitely want to commend the Chief and the staff on the hiring the new personnel. For years here we have had at least 10-20 openings. It's amazing that we have no openings. Y'all are doing something right and we need to maintain that. That's a good thing. Welcome and have fun. These guys will treat you right.
- f. Commissioner Rolando
  - i. I also would like to echo everything that's been said and welcome.
- g. Commissioner Lehman
  - i. Welcome, Stephanie. It'll be fun. I'm wrapping up my 9th year and in the nine years I've been here, we've never had all the firefighters, so not only am I impressed that they're filled, but the quality of the firefighters. Winning awards, I'm just really impressed. So again, obviously you're doing something right, so thank you. I'm impressed with the Chief. He's doing a great job. He's brought on a lot of quality team members, and we are moving in the right direction.
- h. Commissioner Thomae
  - i. I can't add to those comments that have already been made. So, it's a tough act to follow. I agree with everything that's been said.

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

***Commissioners reentered session.***

***Commissioner Blake motioned to adjourn, Commissioner Rolando second. All in favor, none opposed, the motion passed.***

***Meeting adjourned at 5:52 pm.***