



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, September 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
Leroy Blake
Jackie Stanley
Brooks McGougan
Bill Thomae
Steve Rolando
Terrilyn Durham

Members Not Present

Others Present

Ryan Kunitzer, Fire Chief
Kevin Henson, Deputy Fire Chief
Nathan Prouse, Assistant Chief
Brian Yuncker, Assistant Chief
Chris Whaley, Assistant Chief
David Hardwick, Chief
Scott McCullough, Battalion Chief
Shawn Flanagan, Battalion Chief
Teresa Vaughn, Human Resource Manager
Danielle Chambers, Controller
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 August 12, 2024
 - i. Commissioner Stanley motioned, Commissioner White seconded, none opposed, the motion was carried.

III. Public Comments

- a. N/A

IV. Chief's Report

- a. Chief Kunitzer presented Attorney Donald Howell with a small token (STJFD Plaque) on behalf of the commission to thank him for all his years of service to St. Johns Fire District. He stated he wanted to make sure he had something from St. Johns that recognized what he has done for the district.
- b. Chief Kunitzer confirmed Ramona Brown has left the district and wished her well. He stated he interviewed Danielle (Chambers) and offered her the promotion to Controller, which she's accepted, so as of last week she has been our Controller.
- c. Chief Kunitzer pointed out that each Commissioner should have a Strategic Plan booklet that contains two documents. The first is the overview of the Strategic Plan and how we got there, and the second part is a management document that basically has all the goals and objectives and how to tackle these goals. He advised as an Administration we are going to continue to use the Strategic Plan as our guiding map on what we are doing strategically from an operational standpoint but most importantly what we are doing for our personnel and the people that work at St. Johns and the services we are providing to the community.
- d. Chief Kunitzer reported he wanted to give a shout out to several people that recently completed the Captain's exam. He stated those candidates all did a great job with the exam and he wanted to give kudos to the Professional Standards training staff as they put together a really good exam. He also stated that next up we will be preparing for an Engineer exam this fall to back fill some of those positions.

- e. Chief Kunitzer reported that last month we talked a little bit about the Paramedic Specialist Position and advised we posted the position, and we are going to be having interviews in the next couple of weeks. He added this role is basically paramedics that are specific for certain areas to provide service, and we are hoping to expand the program next year.
- f. Chief Kunitzer reported Charleston County EMS has dedicated an advanced EMT ambulance to Wadmalaw that runs 12 hours during peak hours, and they will be utilizing our Station 3 to use the bathroom, take a rest, etc. He stated that Wadmalaw has a small population, but it's some of our highest acuity patients/sickest patients. He added that his goal in the future is to provide better service to Wadmalaw and areas of Johns Island that need it and have longer response time, so we'll keep working on that.
- g. Chief Kunitzer reported that we completed physicals for all of our members in August. He stated that he wants to emphasize the importance that we place in those physicals as they are very in-depth physicals that check for cancer and all sorts of things. He advised it is very important that we continue to fund those physicals.
- h. Chief Kunitzer reported October is Fire Prevention month and we have a lot of things scheduled. He stated we are going to do our big carnival again this year on October 12th from 4:00pm to 7:00pm at Haut Gap. He said that last year the carnival was pretty well attended as we had clowns, face painting, fire trucks, games and all sorts of good stuff, so he is excited to do that again.
- i. Chief Kunitzer reported throughout the month of October we have several schools scheduled for us to be in and out of teaching fire prevention.
- j. Chief Kunitzer reported that in October we will be meeting with all our employees to give them a larger update on that in our HR Committee regarding some employee handbook changes.
- k. Chief Kunitzer reported that Station 2 had a mold issue. He stated that as soon as we found out about it, we had a company come to take a look at it and they remedied the situation. He also stated we've talked about our longer-term projects and Station 2 is one that needs attention and some work as they have a moisture issue just in general that we have on the radar, but some of the small things that we saw, we took care of them as needed.

l. Human Resources Report

- i. HR Manager, Teresa Vaughn, reported we have one new Firefighter starting September 8th.
- ii. She stated that the first group of recruits from St. Paul's will be back here around the same time. She added that the second group of recruits are in Mt. Pleasant and that they started on the 28th.
- iii. She reported the Accounting Manager position, she and Danielle will be interviewing as they are currently collecting resumes. She stated that they will wait to fill the Staff Accountant position until the new Accounting Manager comes on board so they can have input on selecting the employee that will report to them.

- iv. She reported on the 20th, they will be interviewing the paramedics.
- v. She reported we had 4 resignations due to a variety of things. She stated no one out on Workers Comp.

m. Incident Report August 2024

- i. Johns Island – 218 incidents
- ii. Kiawah Island – 100 incidents
- iii. Seabrook Island – 56 incidents
- iv. Wadmalaw Island – 40 incidents

V. Financial Report

a. Monthly Financial Report

- i. Controller Danielle Chambers reported that the Remaining Goal is 83%, the actual is 84.5%.
- ii. The Operating balance as of 8/31/2024 is \$8.7M. The Local Government Investment Pool balance is \$13K.
- iii. August revenue included FEMA reimbursement, retiree reimbursements, and a \$3,500 check from the Town of Seabrook for a community CPR program.
- iv. The Charleston County wire transfer received was \$110,365.31 for July collections. Accrued to FY24.
- v. Non-standard overtime for August is \$110,356.17.
- vi. Capital Projects bank balances as of 8/31/2024.
 - 1. 2021 balance: \$453
 - 2. 2022 balance: \$26,185
 - 3. 2023 balance: \$440,049
- vii. Dashboard Summary
 - 1. Operating expenditures are \$2.7M which includes encumbrances.
 - 2. YTD non-standard overtime is \$163K.
YTD salaries including regular and standard overtime is \$1.1M.
YTD vacation/sick pay is \$120K.
The staff efficiency for July is 80%.
 - 3. No COVID-19 related personnel expenses YTD.

VI. Attorney's Update

- a. Attorney Spencer Wetmore thanked us for the opportunity to be here with us. She advised she was getting up to point with Donald and Chief Kunitzer on our bylaws and bond paperwork and our statutes. She stated she met with the Chief a couple of times and look forward to working with us.

VII. Unfinished/Old Business

- a. N/A

VIII. New Business

- a. N/A

IX. Committee Report

a. Building Committee

- i. Commissioner Thomae reported they had a meeting Wednesday August 21st. He stated the main purpose of that meeting was to meet with David Meyers, who's our construction consultant for the next two projects coming up. He stated one is a rebuild of Station 5 and building a new fire station on Kiawah River in the Kiawah River Development. He added Station 5 will include a new storage building and a new training facility and the old storage building, and the old training Tower will be demolished, and the existing fire training container structure will remain but may be relocated if necessary and hopefully we can use some of the property that's behind that area in woods right now but might be able to expand into that.
- ii. Commissioner Thomae reported we chose to do a construction management at risk type of contract and the next step right now is David Myers will write an RFP or an RFQ for each building and submit it to us for review and then we'll send that out for to advertise for architectural firms for bidding and qualifications and then we'll conduct interviews to select the best firm for each building. He stated we did decide to do separate architects for each building rather than putting both buildings together under one architect.
- iii. Commissioner Thomae reported Kiawah River update is the conveyance of the property to Charleston County is in progress. He states Kiawah River ARB, Architectural Review Board, does have some requirements that will affect the external design of a station there and the lease agreement is yet to be developed by Charleston County.

b. Finance Committee

- i. Commissioner Lehman reported they did not have a finance meeting, but she and Commissioner Thomae will be signing the bond paperwork, and the 17th is the closing. She stated that we have nine interested parties so the bids came in really well and we're in align with our Consultants, so it sounds like it's good timing.

c. Human Resources Committee

- i. Commissioner Rolando reported that they met on September 5th were they discussed health insurance updates. They also discussed reviewing the Donated Sick Leave policy. He stated they reviewed general updates to the standard of conduct and employee handbook. He stated they will meet with all employees to go over that.

- ii. Chief Kunitzer reported that the last couple meetings they have had at the HR level have been productive. He stated the request for proposal is for a consultant to assist us with a compensation restructuring plan particularly for our Operations Division. He added he will come to them in October for an approval of that contract that way they can start working because we will really need to go this route of the new play plan to get this done by this the beginning of the year and start mending that into next year's budget. He added we need to start moving a little bit and a couple of the Consultants he worked with said if we get started in October he would come back and have an internal staff committee that will help guide the consultant in and put that all together and then come back to HR committee and the commission and say this is the plan that we think works best for us. He stated the big scope is just the compensation restructure recommendations, the equity assessment, checking for issues of compression and how we implement this and then kind of the final report. um on that as well

d. Strategic Planning Committee

- i. Commissioner White reported that it goes back to the building and finance committee because it rolls all into one. He stated that they are in the beginning stages of their project and as they come along he will be getting back to us periodically and updating.

X. Firefighter Comments

- a. N/A

XII. Commissioner Comments

a. Commissioner White

- i. Thanks to all the employees, Danielle and the all the crews down the road. Good job, thank you.

b. Commissioner McGougan

- i. I'm hearing just nothing in particular but random good news from some of the neighbors how good and proud they are of our fire department and how you know they need something they make a call they get it. Certainly appreciate everybody's hard work. Keep it up.

c. Commissioner Durham

- i. I would like to say congratulations to Danielle as well and welcome again, Attorney Spencer and to all of our firefighters, stay safe.

d. Commissioner Wright

- i. N/A

e. Commissioner Blake

- i. Ditto, ditto, ditto.

f.

- g.** Commissioner Stanley
 - i. Same, congratulations to Danielle. I think it's well deserved. Congratulations to Ryan getting that medic unit set up on Wadmaw. I think that's a need for that island for years. Chief, to the personnel on the fires-kudos for doing a good job. David, you did a good job investigating.
- h.** Commissioner Rolando
 - i. Congratulations to Danielle.
- i.** Commissioner Lehman
 - i. N/A
- j.** Commissioner Thomae
 - i. Danielle, welcome and congratulations and Spencer, welcome to your first meeting and hopefully there will be many more.

Commissioner Thomae requested a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss contractual matters. Commissioner Brooks made a motion, Commissioner Stanley 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 5:57 pm.