



ST. JOHN'S FIRE DISTRICT

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St. Johns Fire District Commission

MINUTES

The regular meeting of the St. John's Fire District Commission was held on, May 12, 2025, 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
Robert Wright
Brooks McGougan
Jackie Stanley
Leroy Blake
Terrilyn Durham

Members Not Present

Debra Lehman
Steve Rolando
Bill Thomae

Others Present

Ryan Kunitzer, Fire Chief
Kevin Henson, Deputy Fire Chief
Brian Yuncker, Assistant Chief
Shawn Flanagan, Battalion Chief
Scott McCullough, Battalion Chief
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 April 7, 2025
- b. Special Meeting of April 28, 2025
- c. Special Meeting of May 1, 2025
 - i. Commissioner White motioned, Commissioner Wright seconded, none opposed, the motion was carried.

III. Public Comments

- a. Chief Kunitzer read the details of an incident that occurred back in May 2024, when units with the St. John's Fire District responded to an incident in the Kiawah River neighborhood for the report of a person submerged up to their waist in a trench. This complicated incident requires technical expertise, immense safety precautions and abundance of resources. Engine 705 arrived to find a construction worker in the trench and unable to extricate themselves. Ladder 702 arrived on scene and began assisting Engine 705 with assessing the patient's condition and situation. Battalion 701 arrived on scene and assumed command. Chief 707 and Battalion 702 arrived to find the patient still entrapped and discussed an incident action plan. Chief 704 assumed incident command and Chief 702 established accountability. Additional resources were requested to respond to this complex incident. Help from our auto aid partners and City of Charleston vacuum trucks. The victim was removed and in good condition after this trench rescue. In addition to Chief Nathan Prouse, who is was to be recognized for his actions, the following personnel are also being recognized for their actions in this incident: Deputy Chief Kevin Henson, Battalion Chief Shawn Flanagan, Battalion Chief Nathan Adams, Battalion Chief Michael Derderian, Captain Josh Madden, Engineer Daniel Lowder, Engineer Brett Baskin, Firefighter Mark Teal, Firefighter Michael Winston, Firefighter Matthew Valbert.
 - i. Chief Kunitzer stated that they will all be awarded a meritorious service ribbon for their contributions to the outcome of this incident. (He presented the award the DC Henson and BC Flanagan who were

in attendance)

IV. Chief's Report

- a. Chief Kunitzer reported that Engineer Quinton Hunter is retiring from the district after serving 19 years. He stated that Eng. Hunter was a great asset to St John's Fire District, had a great attitude, was a smart guy and really flew the flag for St John's Fire District. He added Eng. Hunter has done well getting newer members and younger members under him ready as well, so we recognized him last week and his last day was last week, so we wish Quinton well, we are sad to lose him.
- b. Chief Kunitzer stated he wanted to thank all for attending the special meetings. He thanks them for the purchase of the truck on the last meeting as it is much needed. He advised pre-construction meetings on tenders are coming up soon with our heavy rescue to follow, so we will have 6-8 months influx of apparatus meetings coming in, so we appreciate your help and your willingness to jump on last minute to consider those purchases.
- c. Chief Kunitzer reported that we made an application to the Kiawah State Accommodations Tax Committee, requesting funds for the next fiscal year to supplement our pay for our paramedic specialist program and to tie that in with a milestone for the St. John's Fire District, we have acquired our Advance Life Support License. He stated we are working through some final licensure with the DEA right now on some drugs, but we are an Advanced Life Support Agency as of a couple weeks ago and he really wanted to thank Chief McCullough and several other staff members that have worked hard to get that over the line, as it's something we can't do quickly and they've put a lot of work into that.
- d. Chief Kunitzer reported we have some employee meetings coming up, and we will discuss our pay plan. He added we are doing some final slotting of our employees and working through that.
- e. Chief Kunitzer reported that Chief Prouse led a meeting with the construction team for the Main and 17 Project. He added that Charleston and St. Andrews was also included in the meeting as well.
- f. Human Resources Report
 - i. HR Manager Teresa Vaughn reported that we have hired Deputy Fire Marshal that started on April 21st. She stated we hired an external fire captain that will start on June 7th. She advised we are still in the process with the internals that interviewed of their promotion and hiring decisions.
 - ii. For separations, she advised that we have 2 firefighter resignations for April 9th and April 30th.
 - iii. She added that we now are preparing for engineers, firefighters and recruitment because we are going to have some spots in the academy this August. Chief Kunitzer added, this recruit class, we are working with St. Paul's, and we have up to 10 slots.

a. Incident Report May 2025

- iv. Johns Island – incidents
- v. Kiawah Island – incidents
- vi. Seabrook Island – incidents
- vii. Wadmalaw Island – incidents

V. Financial Report

a. Monthly Financial Report

- i. Controller Danielle Chambers reported that the Remaining Goal is 16%, the actual is 22.61%.
- ii. The Operating balance as of 04/30/2025 is \$15M. The Local Government Investment Pool balance is \$13K.
- iii. April revenue included retiree reimbursements, a Kiawah Island paramedic payment, and \$92k from sale of assets.
- iv. The Charleston County wire transfer received was \$212,113 for March collections.
- v. Non-standard overtime for April is \$79,616.
- vi. Capital Projects bank balances as of 04/30/2025.
 - 1. 2021 balance: \$0
 - 2. 2022 balance: \$23,518
 - 3. 2023 balance: \$335,815
 - 4. 2024 balance: \$16,939,884
- vii. Dashboard Summary
 - 1. Operating expenditure is \$1.5M, which includes encumbrances.
 - 2. YTD non-standard overtime is \$801K.
YTD salaries including regular and standard overtime is \$7.1M.
YTD vacation/sick pay is \$545K.
 - 3. No COVID-19 related personnel expenses YTD.

VI. Attorney's Update

- a. Attorney Spencer Wetmore reported that we have wrapped up the two big projects that everyone here has been working on. She stated that she's just really doing some smaller things at this point, some federal compliance work and some old records requests. She advised things like that have all been relatively small compared to the lease and the settlement agreement, so knock on wood, keep things relatively small.

VII. Unfinished/Old Business

- a. N/A

VIII. New Business

- a. Chief Kunitzer made a request to consider a motion to enter a real estate contract with the Perry Family for the acre adjacent to Station 5*
 - i. Chief Kunitzer added that even though we are not voting tonight, Commission Lehman and Commission Rolando, they are in favor, and he wants that to be noted in the minutes.*

IX. Committee Report

a. Building Committee

- i. Chief Kunitzer reported with Station 5 we agreed upon the lease with Charleston County; we are just waiting some contract language going back and forth with the developer for our Kio River the architect for our Kio River Fire Station and our manager we should have that contract signed and start kickoff meeting with that architect Cord Atkins here in the near future um as well too on
- ii. Chief Kunitzer stated on April 23rd we held a building committee meeting from the Station 5 perspective it was just discussed some geotechnical reports they were going to come to us with a a preliminary site plan which we discussed um the need for engineered septic system on site there was also a meeting was not a building committee but it was a meeting with the architects on the 7th last week we discussed an initial site plan like we discussed tight fit the need to cut down some grant trees river road buffer uh sizing requirements for our training purposes things like that um and that was about that meeting so that is where
- iii. Chief Kunitzer reported the next Building Committee meeting will be May 21st at 1:30 p.m.

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 McGougan

- i. I heard the names that the Chief read off and it does my heart good to see people like Chief Flanagan and some of the others, they've stuck with it, they've moved up, obviously, very well led, and I want to thank them for doing a good job for us. I appreciate the chief pulling that wagon. Thanks.

b. Commissioner Wright

- i. I would just like to say thank you to the firefighters and to the support staff for what you provide to the community. Thank you.

c. Commissioner Blake

- i. I would like to say thank you guys for all that you do, especially the group that saved the guys life in the trenches. Thank you for working the way that you train and doing a great job.

d. Commissioner Stanley

- i. I echo what everyone's said on the commission. The crew and personnel on the staff, definitely doing an excellent job. From us, tell everybody thank you and good job.

e. Commissioner White

- i. I'd just like to add with this, a little bit on top of what everyone else said, but you know, once you become in the fire service you're part of a family even though you retire and move on when you see the guys you left behind you see them advancing those who took the time to show and then they are now training those individuals to bring the rear up it does my heart a great service. Living here on the island all my life and seeing you guys around doing what you need to do under chief leadership, I really appreciate it. Just keep on doing the best you can, and everything will be all right. Thank you.

f. Commissioner Durham

- i. I would like to say thanks to all the firefighters and support staff for going above and beyond the call of duty and continue to stay safe.

Commissioner White made a motion adjourn. Commissioner Wright seconded. All in favor, none opposed, the motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 5:33 pm.