



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, November 10, 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

Debra Lehman
Isiah White
Steve Rolando
Bill Thomae
Brooks McGougan
Jackie Stanley
Robert Wright
Leroy Blake

Members Not Present

Terrilyn Durham

Others Present

Ryan Kunitzer, Fire Chief
Kevin Henson, Deputy Fire Chief
Brian Yuncker, Assistant Chief
Ed Singleton, Deputy Fire Marshal
Jason Hanks, Fleet and Facilities Manager
Teresa Vaughn, Human Resource Manager
Krista Brown, Human Resource Specialist
Danielle Chambers, Controller
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 October 13, 2025
 - i. Commissioner Lehman motioned, Commissioner White seconded, none opposed, the motion was carried.

III. Public Comments

- a. N/A

IV. New Business

- a. Auditor's Report
 - i. Emily Sobczak with Greene Finney provided satisfactory feedback from our audit.

V. Chief's Report

- a. Chief Kunitzer shared some photos from an incident that happened last Tuesday on River Road on the 700 block at Simmons Creek around 2:30pm of a vehicle submerged upside down. He reported that he, Chief Prouse, Engine 7, Rescue 7, were there within just a few minutes. He stated upon their arrival they expedited a response into the water with some special equipment. He advised that they were also assisted by Charleston with their new ladder truck and St. Andrews with their rescue resource. He advised that they worked in response mode for about 15. He stated that transitioned from rescue operation to recovery operation and were able to use Rescue 701 winch and the boat that is off of Rescue 301 from St. Andrews, to turn the vehicle over and move it to the side where we were able to confirm that there were two deceased members of our community inside the vehicle. He stated that he could not be more proud of our personnel on that day with their quick actions, dedication to their craft. He added they performed exceptionally well and he is quite proud of them and just wanted to bring this incident to your awareness. He also stated that it is also difficult for our community to lose some family members and it is also important for our community to understand what we respond to and what our personnel go through on a daily basis. We are proud of our team, and we came together with our partners and talked about what we could do better

next time. This also talks to the strength of the auto-aid relationship we have, where we can call on our partners and they are there to help us right away.

- b.** Chief Kunitzer reported that there was talk in a previous HR committee meeting about a new disciplinary policy. He advised that he, Chief Henson, HR Mgr. and HR Specialist will be in Bluffton to attend a class on disciplinary challenges so that they can better refine that policy and better refine that process as well.
- c.** Chief Kunitzer reported that Chief Prouse, and other personnel, are currently in Florida at Pierce, doing the final inspection on Engine 702 for Seabrook Island. He also advised that we've got the first pictures of the new Rescue 701 as their new unit started construction as well.
- d.** Chief Kunitzer reported that he wanted to give kudos to our Fire Marshal Division staff. He stated that they had their Fire Prevention event the weekend before Halloween and it was an awesome night. He said it was an awesome night and they were blown away with how many people were there as they did not anticipate that many people. He thanked Commissioner White and Commissioner McGoogan who were there. He stated that they did something different with the Trunk or Treat and had a really good night.
- e.** Chief Kunitzer reported a couple of promotions he wanted to recognize. He advised with our new pay plan we have also got some corresponding abilities that coincide with that. He stated that Mason Underwood promoted to Senior Captain, Curtiss Breeze promoted to Senior Engineer and Eric Aamhaus promoted to Senior Firefighter. He stated that he also wanted to congratulate multiple personnel that completed their probationary evaluation where they get to burn their yellow shirts – Great Work! He added that they continue to amaze him with their hard work that they're putting in.
- f.** Chief Kunitzer reported that they continue to keep our employee development at the forefront of our mind and we keep working through our succession plan too. He stated we have some officer development coming up that Chief Yuncker and his crew are putting together our people in the position to succeed.
- g.** Chief Kunitzer reported that the six recruits are in EMT class. He added that he wants to give Engineer Shane McCarthy some credit as he has stepped up, while still working his shift schedule every day, is helping with the class.
- h.** Chief Kunitzer reported that he had a message about mental health. He stated that we experienced a loss in this area due to suicide, which has become all too common for the fire agencies in this area. He stated that he sent an email, and although he hates that it was an email, he hopes that the message received is that he cares about you, a lot of people care about you and you need to check in on your friends, more than asking, "are you ok?", you should have a conversation as well. He advised when the situation happened at Simmons Creek, the peer support team and Chief Henson brought in people the next day to talk and or to meet with other people. He added that Trooper Bob came in with Bojangles for the crew as well. He stated to get to the heart of that we are going to continue to do everything we can to help support our people and that sometimes does not come from pain medicine that comes from relationships; how people are treated. He just asked everybody to be nice and to check in on people too.

i. Human Resources Report

Human Resource Manager, Teresa Vaughn, reported the following:

- i. Hiring Activity:
 - BC EMT started 10/13 – BC Training started 10/20
- ii. Open/upcoming postings:
 - Logistics Manager
 - Chief Fire Marshal
 - Posting soon for Certified Firefighters and Engineers
- iii. Separations:
 - 3 separations:
 - 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter, 1 Chief Fire Marshal
- iv. Workers' Comp Time Off:
 - 1 Firefighter was off 1.5 days
- v. Staffing Levels:
 - Ops BC – 6/6
 - Captain – 27/30 (3 floater open)
 - Engineer – 32/33 (1 floater open)
 - Firefighter – 40/54 (6 in EMT School)
 - Paramedic Specialist – 3/3

a. Incident Report November 2025

- vi. Johns Island – 183 incidents
- vii. Kiawah Island – 83 incidents
- viii. Seabrook Island – 28 incidents
- ix. Wadmalaw Island – 34 incidents

VI. Financial Report

a. Monthly Financial Report

- i. Danielle Chambers reported that the Remaining Goal is 67%, the actual is 69.34%.
- ii. The Operating balance as of 10/31/25 is \$6M. The Local Government Investment Pool balance is \$13K.
- iii. October revenue included retiree reimbursements and \$44,500 from the sale of 4 assets.

- iv. The Charleston County wire transfer received was \$88,045 for September collections.
- v. Non-standard overtime for October is \$169K.
- vi. Capital Projects bank balances as of 10/31/2025.
 - 2022 balance: \$21,218
 - 2023 balance: \$208,773
 - 2024 balance: \$15,699,638
- vii. Dashboard Summary
 - 1. Operating expenditure is \$2.1M, which includes encumbrances.
 - 2. YTD non-standard overtime is \$507K.
YTD salaries, including regular and standard overtime, is \$2.8M.
YTD vacation/sick pay is \$287K.
 - 3. No COVID-19 related personnel expenses YTD.

VII. Attorneys Update

- a. Attorney Spencer Wetmore reported that she has been busy with STJFD's policy revisions. She has been looking at employment policies, finance policies and personnel policies.
- b. She stated that she is going to handle our subdivision in combination application to the County in house as well as our rezoning application to move along our project as Station 5 more timely.

VII. Unfinished/Old Business

- a. N/A

VIII. New Business

- a. Station 1 Fuel Tank Discussion
 - i. Fleet and Facility Manager Jason Hanks spoke to the Commissioners about the issues and recommendations with the underground fuel tanks at Station 1.
 - ii. Commissioner Lehman motioned to approve expenditure up to \$20,000 for Station 1 fuel tanks, Commissioner Rolando seconded, none opposed, the motion was carried. If the soil comes back needing additional funds then we will meet again to discuss.
- b. Schedule meeting to discuss updates to By-Laws
 - i. Chief Kunitzer advised he and Attorney Wetmore suggested it would be a good idea to review the by-laws and recommend setting up a meeting to have a general discussion on them.

- c. Change order – Station 7 renovation - \$7,500 for extensive mold cleanup
 - i. Commissioner Lehman motioned to approve change order to \$7,500, Commissioner Wright seconded, none opposed, the motion was carried.

IX. Committee Report

a. Building Committee

- i. Commissioner Thomae reported they had five meetings in October. Four of the regular meetings with architects and contractors and one of those meetings was with Charleston County. He stated that Charleston County proposed that they tag their EMS/Sheriff Building with ours financially and then they would reimburse us. We agreed to that and David Meyers, Danielle and Chief agreed. Chief explained that the District would move forward with our project and the County's project is a couple years behind. The County has funded the project, but they are asking to come onto our contract for the architect and contractor, and they would pay their portion so that the projects can go on side by side. It would be one contract with a MOU but this has not been presented yet. The County has funding that they need to spend.
- ii. Commissioner Thomae reported they have negotiated a contractor for Station 8 and that is the same contractor for Station 5.

b. Finance Committee

- i. N/A

c. Human Resources Committee

- i. Commissioner Rolando reported that they had 3 discussion topics. One being the policy implications of THC and marijuana. The second being the discipline policy and how it needs to be developed. The third being FLSA considerations. He advised that no decisions or motions were made.

d. Strategic Planning Committee

- i. N/A

X. Firefighter Comments

- a. N/A

XI. Commissioner Comments

a. Commissioner McGougan

- i. Welcome to Chief Miles-Miller. I heard great things on the call of the car in the creek. The Trunk-or-Treat was a great turnout. I am very pleased about the District adding funding to mental health and preventive medical procedures.

b. Commissioner White

- i. Thank you everyone for your hard work and we care about everyone and your families. The District responded to the call of the car in the creek very well. I commend Chief on your hard work.

- c. Commissioner Wright
 - i. I second what Ike said, welcome to Chief Miles-Miller and thank you Jason. I think it is important as this department continues to grow that we recognize the capabilities of our firemen and they are involved in something that is saving people. Thank you and have a good holiday.
- d. Commissioner Blake
 - i. Welcome Chief Miles-Miller. Please remember the Veterans on Veterans Day and Chief thank you for hiring Air Force men.
- e. Commissioner Stanley
 - i. Thank you to the guys that got promoted and thank everyone for the great job they are doing.
- f. Commissioner Rolando
 - i. I agree with everything everyone said. I suggest that the Commission discuss an end of year bonus. Thank you everybody.
- g. Commissioner Thomae
 - i. Welcome aboard to new EMS Chief. Kudos to all those involved in the rescue of the recovery of the vehicle in the creek. Quite an impressive task. Fine job
- h. Commissioner Lehman
 - i. N/A

Commissioner Lehman made a motion to go to executive session to discuss personnel matters with the board. Commissioner White seconded. All in favor, none opposed, the motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 6:22 pm.