



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, September 8, 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
Terrilyn Durham
Robert Wright
Leroy Blake

Members Not Present

Others Present

Ryan Kunitzer, Fire Chief
Kevin Henson, Deputy Fire Chief
Brian Yuncker, Assistant Chief
Nathan Prouse, Assistant Chief
Shawn Flanagan, Assistant Chief
Ed Singleton,
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 11, 2025
 - i. Commissioner Lehman motioned, Commissioner White seconded, none opposed, the motion was carried.
- b. Special Called Meeting August 20, 2025
 - i. Commissioner Lehman motioned, Commissioner White seconded, none opposed, the motion was carried.

III. Public Comments

- a. N/A

IV. Chief's Report

- a. Chief Kunitzer reported we recently completed an engineer exam. He stated that we had three pass and all three of those were promoted to engineer and they are all filling floater positions at our engineer level.
- b. Chief Kunitzer reported that he wanted to give us an update on St. Johns High School program. He advised that there is a change in leadership of the program at the teacher level. He stated that over the summer, he and the City of Charleston, Chief Curry, met with the new teacher for that program and were really impressed by what she brings and her vision for the program. He added that he was also impressed by the work she already put into it as well. He stated that the program allows their students to achieve Firefighter I and II Certifications when they graduate and turn 18. He states that we are working through the actual sponsorship to that program. He states he feels like, there could be a good pipeline there for local talent to get through and possibly hire them in the future and start at 18 years old.
- c. Chief Kunitzer reported that we have previously talked about some of the mold issues at Station 2. He stated that we went ahead and solicited bids and they started the work there today and the vendor had already let us know that they identified some causes of the issues and they're taking care of those too and working through that.

- d. Chief Kunitzer reported that an RFP is out just based off of our conversation we had at that strategic planning meeting for essentially a soft renovation at Station 7. He advised what we put in that RFP is some new carpet, rip down old sound paneling, fix the walls, and repaint them. He states it is also to paint the interior of the whole station and some other things like window treatments and blinds. He stated that this is just a soft renovation before we make decisions on the long-term future of Station 7, just to give them some immediate help with what that station looks like and give them some extra comfort as well.
- e. Chief Kunitzer reported that they will be going on Friday to the final inspection of the two tenders we ordered. He advised one tender will be replacing the truck on Wadmalaw and the other one will have a plan to
- f. Chief Kunitzer reported we've got kind of a new plan for policy revisions. He states we've got over 200 policies at St. John's Fire District and some of them date back to the mid 90's. He states Danielle's heading up a new big policy kind of revision. He states we're going to kind of start clean and figure out what we actually need, what we don't need. He also stated that it's a huge project but we're going to start chipping away at it quite a bit.
- g. Chief Kunitzer reported that Danielle's also been working on redevelopment of finance policies. He stated that we will talk about one of them tonight and he needed feedback on that. He also mentioned that we have a rough draft of our community risk assessment standard cover document and hope in the next month or two will be able to share with all of us some of the data from that.
- h. Chief Kunitzer reported that we are working through posting for a logistics position. He also stated that we continue to work through different things related to leadership development. He added that we also had those meetings regarding forced overtime we talked about last couple weeks and stated that we are working through items on that.
- i. Chief Kunitzer reported they talked about the long-term capital plan at strategic meeting. He states they are getting that plan together and then sending it to our bond advisers and seeing what that looks like over time. He added that he met with Councilman Boykin last month and they had good conversation talking mostly about money and just future fire protection needs and EMS needs as well too.
- j. Human Resources Report

Human Resource Manager, Teresa Vaughn, reported the following:

- i. Interviews with external applicants were conducted today for the BC EMS position.
- ii. Interviews with external applicants will be conducted on Wednesday for the BC Training position.
- iii. She wants Sarah and Danielle to be involved in the HR Specialist interview panel because the role involves payroll and HR together.
- iv. Hiring Activity - 4 Firefighters start today
- v. Separation – 1, Firefighter resignation
- vi. Workman's Comp – 1 on W/C time off, a couple on light duty

a. Incident Report September 2025

- vii. Johns Island – 199 incidents
- viii. Kiawah Island – 83 incidents
- ix. Seabrook Island – 33 incidents
- x. Wadmalaw Island – 29 incidents

V. Financial Report

a. Monthly Financial Report

- i. Controller Danielle Chambers reported that the Remaining Goal is 83%, the actual is 85.69%.
- ii. The Operating balance as of 8/31/25 is \$9.5M. The Local Government Investment Pool balance is \$13K.
- iii. August revenue included retiree reimbursements.
- iv. The Charleston County wire transfer received was \$68,923 for July collections.
- v. Non-standard overtime for August is \$130,160.
- vi. Capital Projects bank balances as of 8/31/2025.
 - 1. 2022 balance: \$21,718
 - 2. 2023 balance: \$239,336
 - 3. 2024 balance: \$16,766,528
- vii. Dashboard Summary
 - 1. Operating expenditure is \$1.7M, which includes encumbrances.
 - 2. YTD non-standard overtime is \$202K.
YTD salaries including regular and standard overtime is \$1.1M.
YTD vacation/sick pay is \$123K.
 - 3. No COVID-19 related personnel expenses YTD.

VI. Attorney's Update

- a.** Attorney Spencer Wetmore reported she did submit the zoning application that we approved at the special meeting. She advised that she emailed a number of community groups that the county had asked her to reach out to on the John's Island front just to let them know when the signs go up. She added that this is a downzoning and nothing to worry about. She advised she also talked with Councilman Boykin and the application kicks off five meetings that she gets to attend. She stated that the first is on October 13th where she'll be appearing in front of the planning commission on the district's behalf.
- b.** She advised that she continues to talk to the county about the Kiawah River Estate Lease. She states that they are still working with the beach company.

VII. Unfinished/Old Business

- a. N/A

VIII. New Business

- a. Review Authorized Spending Limits Policy
 - i. Commissioner Lehman made a motion to accept the changes to the spending limits in the Policy. Commissioner Blake seconded, none opposed, the motion was carried.

IX. Committee Report

a. Building Committee

- i. Commissioner Thomae reported they had four meetings in the month of August. Three with Liollo for Station 5 and one with Court Atkins for Station 8. He advised with Station 5 we're at a stage where we're actually picking colors and materials for the outside of the building. He states The interior of the building has been pretty much established. He stated that for Station 8, Court Atkins is just beginning with interior design. He also added that we have two meetings scheduled in September, on the 9th and 24th which will be a full building committee meeting.

b. Finance Committee

- i. Commissioner Lehman advised that they had a committee meeting with strategic and they didn't make any decisions. She stated they just went over some future purchases and talked a little bit about the bond issue. She added they want to finalize some information and send it to our bond consultants before they determine going forward with a bond issue. She also stated that we do have approval from Charleston County for an additional 5 million that we took into consideration when we were looking at all the different scenarios, but we would still need to request an additional bond issue at some point. We just don't know if that's going to be this year or the beginning of next year. So, we have to figure that out. So, stay tuned on that one.

c. Human Resources Committee

- i. N/A

d. Strategic Planning Committee

- i. Commissioner White reported that they did cover some items on the Station 5 project strategically to change some things to get us within our budget. He also advised that he was impressed when he spoke with the assistant chief about all the construction work going on here at 17, that he along with St. Andrews, have a plan. If something did happen out there, they work together. If someone went into the marsh, a heavy equipment situation, they have a plan where they can go in there and take care of that situation.

X. Firefighter Comments

- a. N/A

XI. Commissioner Comments

a. Commissioner White

- i. I would like to welcome the new hires that just came in. Also, we got a text last week about some of our personnel that sat with and that gave comfort to some civilians and what happened on the call. That's pretty impressive that you care about people in the public and that you will stick with them in a hardship situation. I would like to congratulate the new engineers. I really like the fact that we could train within, hire within, and keep the ball rolling. We should always think about replacing yourselves with information with people coming in underneath you we can continue to build a really good fire department in the future to come. Thank you.

b. Commissioner Blake

- i. I'd like to say good evening to everyone. I really appreciate our group on being proactive on looking forward to all the growth that's going on John's Island and purchasing the new equipment to make sure that we can fight the fires when they happen. And living so close, at least once a week, I get a 3:00 wake up of the guys going and they really do a good job. They hit it just hard enough to let me know they're leaving and then when they get on the road, they turn it off. So, I appreciate that, you know, but yeah, please everyone stay safe. Thank you.

c. Commissioner Stanley

- i. I'd just like to thank the staff. Everybody else, be safe. Thank you.

d. Commissioner Rolando

- i. No Comment

e. Commissioner Thomae

- i. I'd like to give kudos to all the firefighters in how they handle themselves and dealing with public in during the emergencies. The empathy and professionalism and being sympathetic to the needs of the people is just outstanding. I've personally been involved in three of those situations and uh two for my wife and one for me over the years and been very impressed in all three of those times. So, thank you all for doing what you do.

f. Commissioner Wright

- i. No Comment

g. Commissioner McGougan

- i. I just want to say that I agree with my fellow commissioners, and I am delighted with the direction that the fire department's going led by our administrative staff and I encourage all firefighters to stay safe.

h. Commissioner Durham

- i. Congratulations to all in their prospective positions and increase and continue to stay safe.

i.

- j. Commissioner Lehman
 - i. No Comment

Commissioner Lehman made a motion adjourn. Commissioner Rolando seconded. All in favor, none opposed, the motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 5:38 pm.