



St. Tammany Parish Fire Protection District # 3

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Patrick F. Sicard
Fire Chief

Regular Public Meeting of the Board of Commissioners March 13, 2024 *Meeting Minutes*

Called To Order:

Chairman Danny Hall called the meeting to order on Wednesday, March 13, 2024, at 6:00PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

Prayer

Roll Call:

Danny Hall, Murphy Arsenaux, Leo Casanave, Raymond Batiste, and Jeanne Hutchison were present.

Chad Danenhower is present for PMI.

Chief Sicard, Assistant Chief Geissler, and Mrs. McCarthy were present representing the Fire Department.

Secretary Minutes:

Approve minutes of February 14, 2024

Mr. Casanave made a motion to approve the minutes from February 14, 2024, regular meeting. Mr. Batiste seconded. A vote was taken.

Motion carried.

Treasurer Report:

Mrs. Hutchison discussed the February transaction breakdown, which explains more than the bank statements. Statement of Cash Flows was discussed, with an end of period of \$2,759,930.55. Mr. Hall made a motion to approve the treasurer's report. Mr. Casanave seconded.

Ms. W. Williams submitted the bank contract and the fees which were discussed at the February meeting.

A vote was taken.

Motion carried.

Chief's Report:

1) YTD incidents: Chief Sicard stated that there are 369 calls to date but did not have any breakdown information of types of calls. Chief Geissler explained that CAD had crashed at Dispatch so there is no further run information until that system is back up and running.

Assistant Chief's Report:

Chief Geissler gave an update on the Administration building. Renovation has started, there is termite damage in the Chief's office, electrical work has been done which includes lights inside and outside. The contractor stated that with the additional termite damage and the electrical issues, the estimate has already been met.

Committee Report:

1) **Apparatus Committee:** Chief Sicard stated that he met with BonAdventure. He will meet with US Fire Pump tomorrow, March 14th. He is waiting to hear back from Pierce and Ferrera. He has been told that depending on which trucks will be changed out, it could take 18 months to 2 years to have something built. Three of these companies are on state contract, and US Fire Pump is on HGAC. He also stated that he would be interested in Demo trucks.

2) **Ambulance Billing Committee:** Mr. Hall deferred to new business.

3) **District Chief hiring committee:** Chief Sicard stated that he had not started with this committee yet. Discussion took place of various options. It has not been determined to hire at this time. A discussion of the committee's name change for clarity also took place.

Old Business:

1) **Hiring and Retention.** Mr. Arsenaux discussed the Nation's workforce crisis. There will be things done in-house to help with retention. He stated that Assistant Chief Geissler will be more head of operations and handling the basic day to day operations. When needed, issues would be taken up to the Chief's position. Mr. Hall asked if Chief Sicard was ready to discuss Chief Geissler's role. Chief Sicard stated there would be operational changes. Assistant Chief Geissler will be handling day-to-day operations where Chief Sicard will be handling policy making and reviews and other business. He stated that this would also be discussed at the Officer's meeting on the 14th. Mr. Arsenaux also suggested that training should be held at LSU or go to training school two days a week and then the Captain's train while on duty. Discussion of other options were discussed to include remodel of the training building.

New Business:

- 1) Ambulance Billing committee report, (discussion of Resolution 2024-007 (Approve ALS Balance Billing or Debt Forgiveness). Mr. Hall discussed that the committee met a couple of times. He stated that there is a perceived gap with legitimate reasons. Medicare and Medicaid pay a fixed amount. Medicare pays a fixed amount but by law 20% could be balance billed. Only 10% is private pay which can be balance billed. At this time, there is no balance billing for residents of the District. At this time the billing company is making the decision to forgive the balance not billed. Resolution 2024-007 – Relating to the Approval to Either Eligible Balance Bill or Forgiveness of ALS/EMS Patient Fees for District No. 3. Mr. Hall would like to establish a process that would forgive debt. Discussion took place regarding a process to put in place with Insight Billing company. Mr. Arsenaux made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-007. Mr. Casanave seconded. No further discussion. A vote was taken.

Motion carried.

- 2) Ambulance rate changes. 2024-006: BOC Resolution (Approve ALS fee schedule). Discussion of raising the current fee schedule rate. Insight billing suggested for the Board to increase the rates. Their proposal is reasonable and comparable to other places in the state. The rates should be raised \$250.00 across the board. Exhibit A attached to minutes. Mr. Casanave made a motion to adopt Resolution 2024-006. Mr. Batiste seconded. No further discussion. A vote was taken.

Motion carried.

- 3) Ambulance Feasibility study. Mr. Hall would like to form a committee to explore the cost of running an ambulance service and compare to the revenue received. Discussion took place regarding different areas to look into such as maintenance, salaries, and benefits. Mr. Arsenaux made a motion to establish a committee to look at ambulance feasibility. Mr. Casanave seconded. No further discussion. The committee will be Chief Sicard, Assistant Geissler, Capt. Guillot, and Mr. Hall.
- 4) 2024-005: BOC Resolution (Ratify Appointment of Commissioner D. Hall) Mr. Danenhower stated that this Resolution ratifies Mr. Hall as the Board Chairman. Mr. Casanave made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-005. Mr. Arsenaux seconded. Mr. Hall being the approved chairman of the Board will also be added to the checking account for signature as needed. Previous Board chairman will be taken off. No further discussion took place. A vote was taken.

Motion carried.

- 5) Employees working overtime outside of job description. Mr. Hall stated that he spoke with legal specific to firemen doing overtime outside of their job duties. Mr. Danenhower stated that it is permissible as long as the employee is not pressured to do the work. Most Districts allow employees to do some work while on shift. If an employee works overtime, they are entitled to their overtime. The Board should consider if it is possible to be abused and potential liability, which would be worker's compensation if injured. Damage to property should be considered. This should be considered on a project by project basis. There is also potential to circumvent Louisiana public project laws. It is ok to continue with how it is currently being handled. Mr. Hall would like to have limitations. Establish guidelines for overtime. If project is too big and will take too long it should be hired out instead of the firefighters doing the work but should be left in the Chief's hands. Further discussion took place regarding the renovations at St. 31 and the Administrative building and the possibility of St. 32 and the training building. Mr. Hall asked that in the future not to have projects that last 3 months or more. The Chief should also give updates in the monthly Chief's report.
- 6) Treasurer's report format. Mr. Hall stated that he had a discussion with legal to make sure the criteria was being met. Mr. Danenhower stated that the District has been doing more than enough. The typical practice in most Districts is the credit card report and activities. All expenditures should be reviewed monthly and the treasurer would report to Board. After that, the monthly financials would be reviewed when there is a 5% or greater variance. This is only

done on new entries that would meet that threshold. Discussion of a shorter version of the treasurer's report was discussed and Mrs. Hutchison agreed.

- 7) Discuss millage levying procedure after reassessment. Mr. Danenhowe stated that this is a reassessment year. Discussion took place regarding the process.
- 8) Firemen's Social. Mr. Arsenaux would like to try and do a firemen's social to bring people together. Location to be determined. This is to help bring the Department together. This will also be discussed at the Captain's meeting. He would like to have it this spring. A date and location will be determined, he would like the firemen to get together to decide.
- 9) PMI report:
 1. A. 2024-008: BOC Resolution (Approve 2023 LLA Audit Compliance Questionnaire). Mr. Arsenaux made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-008. Mrs. Hutchison seconded. No further discussion. A vote was taken.

Motion carried.

Adjournment:

Mr. Casanave made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Arsenaux seconded. A vote was taken.

Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:16.