



Patrick F. Sicard
Fire Chief

St. Tammany Parish Fire Protection District # 3

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Regular Public Meeting of the Board of Commissioners August 14, 2024 *Meeting Minutes*

Called To Order:

Chairman Danny Hall called the meeting to order on Wednesday, August 14, 2024, at 6:00PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

Prayer

Roll Call:

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

Chief Geissler and Assistant Chief Guilliot were present representing the Fire Department.

Chad Danenhowe and Mark Waniewski were present representing PMI.

Secretary Minutes:

Approve minutes of July 31, 2024, hearing and special meeting.

Mr. Casanave made a motion to approve the minutes from July 31, 2024. Mr. Batiste seconded. A vote was taken.

Motion carried.

Employee Recognition:

1) Recognition and appreciation. Mr. Hall stated that one recognition and appreciation came from Mr. Sal Impastato who was not in attendance at the meeting. Mr. Impastato wanted to recognize employees when he had a fall.

2) Life Saving Award. This involves a call from I12 for an ill person which involved several agencies. Chief Geissler stated that the call was upgraded from a seizure to a full cardiac arrest. Acadian and several law enforcement officers were on scene conducting CPR. A pulse was received back three times, and the patient was transported to the hospital with a pulse.

Chief Geissler recognized the following:

St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Deputies:

Captain Trinity Graves, Lieutenant Gary Nunez, Sergeant Roger Gottardi, and Deputy Xavier Ramirez.

Acadian Ambulance EMT's:

Georgie Fatic and Kaylan Dunn.

St. Tammany Fire District 3 personnel:

Captain Paul Sehlinger, EMT MaKayla Lindgren, EMT Dalton Sances, Paramedic Winston LaBranch, EMT Taylor Tassin, and Firefighter Emory Johnson.

3) Employee recognition. Chief Geissler also recognized employees for times of service.

Assistant Chief Mike Guillot – 15 years

Donald Torregano – 3 years of service

Austin Gay – 1 year service

Patrick Periera – 1 year of service and making his confirmation making him a permanent Firefighter/Operator.

Chief Geissler also recognized EMT Sean Marquette and Paramedic Scott Samuel for being on call involving Mr. Impastato.

Mr. Hall also stated that Chief Sicard will have twenty years of service on August 31, 2024.

Treasurer Report:

Mrs. Hutchison stated the following for bank accounts.

- Operating account closed out with \$482,334.44
- Allocated funds closed out with \$1,047,996.04
- Capital Assets closed out with \$2915.45
- Sinking Fund closed out with \$1508.81

Mr. Batiste made a motion to approve the treasurer's report. Mr. Casanave seconded. No further discussion or comments. A vote was taken.

Motion carried.

Chief's Report:

Mr. Hall stated that the Chief's report and the Assistant Chief's will be combined.

1) Call volume. Chief Geissler stated that call volume for July was 135, YTD 1019 calls. Shifts with two ALS units we are up to 94% and out of total EMS call volume, the department was able to handle 96%. Mutual aid was requested five times for EMS. Mr. Hall stated that the goal was 95% within 20 minutes. Chief Geissler stated all five mutual aid requests were because the department was on prior calls.

2) Turn out Gear. Chief Geissler stated that the department has hired a lot of full-time and part-time and turn out gear is needed. The remaining amount in the budget is for turn out gear is around \$12,800.00 which would only purchase 3 sets and 12 sets are needed. This includes helmets, boots,
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gloves, gear bags and 12 full sets of gear. He would like to ask the Board to allocated money that was not budgeted for up to \$30,300.00 for the purchase of the additional turn out gear needed. Currently employees are either borrowing each other's gear or using gear issued to them by their full-time employers. There was discussion of the budget and where the money would be allocated from. The Board stated that the employees need the gear to keep them safe. It could also take up to 4 months to receive once ordered. Mr. Casanave made a motion to approve \$33,000.00 for turnout gear. Mr. Batiste seconded. A vote was taken.

Motion carried.

Chief Geissler stated that he had nothing further to report. Chief Guillot stated that he had nothing further to report.

Mr. Hall stated that he understood that there was a pretty significant call regarding a near drowning of a child. Chief Guillot stated that there was a child that was a near drown and he did make it home. There was a good outcome.

Mr. Hall asked about annual training. Chief Guillot stated that almost everything is up to par. There will be some tower training that will be done towards the end of the year. All other training will be completed by the end of the year.

Mr. Hall asked about St. 32 driveway. Chief Geissler stated that long term planning would include St. 32 and the driveway. He will be getting quotes for buying gravel to fix the holes in the driveway until the long term planning is complete. Chief Sicard did have him working on having the property asphalted which was expensive. This has been tabled for the time.

Old Business:

1) Employee handbook/manual.

Mr. Hall asked the status of the handbook. Chief Geissler stated that Chief Sicard was working on the manual. PMI provided a manual and he was working on going through that and adjusting it to fit the department. Chapter 7 and 8 were completed and sent out for review. Mr. Hall asked how long this manual had been in a draft state. Chief Geissler stated at least four years. Mr. Hall stated that in discussions with Chief Sicard that it was complete and everything was reviewed and he had got it cleared through PMI. Mr. Waniewski stated that Chief Sicard had sent some revisions, and they were reviewed, corrected and rereleased back to Chief Sicard for issue. Mr. Hall asked that Chief Geissler get with PMI and see what the corrections were and get the manual published.

2) Top-Down Review/Human Resource audit.

Mr. Hall stated that the purpose of the audit was to identify some obstacles for the Fire Department but also strengths within the department. Once the Board understood these things, the Board could develop a plan to best take care of the community, short and long term. The one on one's of this audit has been postponed. The Board felt that since the start date, some matters that have come up needed to be addressed and taken care of before completing the one on ones. The top-down review will be started back up by the fourth quarter, beginning of the year at the latest.

3) Ambulance uncollectable debt.

Mr. Hall stated that for years the department had been allowing the billing company to forgive debt owed. Please see attached power point for discussion.

New Business:

1) Medical billing and collections.

(a) Koronis Revenue Solutions, L.L.C.

Mr. Hall stated that at a previous meeting, the Board approved looking into another billing company. There is a home office in Spring, Tx but there is an office in Baton Rouge. This company was interviewed and asked to come to the meeting. There is a contract that has been reviewed by legal. Mr. Steve Cosby spoke and gave a history of the company and explained their procedures. Mrs. Hutchison made a motion to terminate the contract with Insight Billing and Retail Merchant collections and enter a contract with Koronis Revenue Solutions, L.L.C. Mr. Batiste seconded. No further discussion. A vote was taken.

Motion carried.

2) Resolution 2024-019 (Approve PMI Resource Fee Adjustment – Professional Service).

The Board finds that it is in the best interest of the District, its employees, citizens and taxpayers to implement a program and procedure whereby the District has been determined that it is in the best interest of the District to approve the increase in professional services (i.e., human resource, civil service, payroll administration, etc.) consulting fees of \$12,000.00 per annum effective immediately and retro back to January 1, 2024 for PMI Resource, LLC for District No.3.

Mr. Hall stated that this department has grown and so has the workload of PMI. Mr. Batiste made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-019. Mr. Casanave seconded.

Mr. Waniewski thanked the Board and stated that this was the first pay increase. No further discussion.

A vote was taken.

Motion carried.

3) Resolution 2024-020 (Approve Danenhower Lw Firm Fee Adjustment – Professional Service)

Mr. Casanave made a motion to accept Resolution 2024-020. Mr. Batiste seconded. No further discussion. A vote was taken.

Motion carried.

4) Review of 2024 Tax Reassessment. See attached power point for discussion. No action was taken.

5) Amend Resolution No. 2019-016. “A resolution establishing and implementing a program to charge mitigation rates for the deployment of emergency and non-emergency services by the fire department for services provided/rendered for the St. Tammany Fire Protection District No. 3”.

Discussion took place regarding the mitigation fees. Mr. Hall would like to rescind and change this Resolution to have the ability to do it if there is an extraordinary response but take away the complicated fee schedules. FEMA already has a rate schedule. Mr. Waniewski states that this is normally a pass-through only service. Mrs. Hutchison made a motion to table Resolution 2019-016 until the September meeting. Mr. Batiste seconded. No further discussion. A vote was taken.

Motion carried.

6) Budget development.

Mr. Hall asked for an update on the budget. Chief Geissler stated that he and Chief Guillot have been working on the budget for a couple of weeks. He stated that Chief Guillot has taken on this project and they will work to make sure the budget is completed properly and effectively before the deadline.

7) Strategic Planning.

Mr. Hall stated that in early October, the Department will start the process of strategic planning which will provide direction to develop the Department for the next 3-5 years. Once started, this project never goes away, it is constantly growing.

Mrs. Hutchison made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Batiste seconded. A vote was taken.

Motion carried.

Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned at 8:11.

Ambulance Uncollectable Debit

2021 - 2023

Lookback

- We learned that over many years STFD3 was allowing billing companies to “forgive debit owed”
 - As instructed by Department Administration
- After discovery we confirmed with the LLA General Counsel that was not an acceptable practice.
 - LLA provided guidance that we should explore the past three years
- Attempted to gain data from our current billing company
 - Met with some difficulty
- Our legal counsel was able to obtain data sufficient to decide how money was forgiven over the past three years
- We have no clear data to provide to our CPA (PMI) to adequately enter accounts receivables

Medicaid 2001-2023 Data

By the numbers

- Billed - \$843,288
- Paid – \$184,761
- Listed as bad debit - \$979
- Still owed - \$25,492
- Written off - \$632,056

Facts

- The amount we can recover from Medicaid is fixed
- Cannot balance bill the patient
- We should show/track uncollectable as accounts receivable then “write it off”
 - Helps to show the public where their funds are going
 - Data could be used to show profitability of the ambulance

Medicare 2001-2023 Data

By the numbers

- Billed - \$2,729,754
- Paid – \$763,807
- Listed as bad debit - \$13,852
- Still owed - \$21,793
- “Written off” - \$1,866,726

Facts

- The amount we can recover from Medicare is fixed
- We can balance bill the patient
 - To limits allowed by law
- These invoices need to be fully explored to see what if any can be recovered
- We should show/track uncollectable as accounts receivable then “write it off”
 - Helps to show the public where their funds are going
 - Data could be used to show profitability of the ambulance

Veterans Administration 2001-2023 Data

By the numbers

- Billed - \$40,718
- Paid – \$31,551
- Listed as bad debit - \$1,782
- Still owed - \$5,478
- “Written off” - \$1,906

Facts

- The amount we can recover from is fixed
 - To the limits allowed by law
- We can balance bill the patient
- We should show/track uncollectable as accounts receivable then “write it off”
 - Helps to show the public where their funds are going
 - Data could be used to show profitability of the ambulance

All other 2001-2023 Data

(Private insurance, private, pay, “membership”)

By the numbers

- Billed - \$480,482
- Paid – \$238,512
- Listed as bad debit - \$63,577
- Still owed - \$95,894
- Written off - \$146,076

Facts

- We can balance bill the patient
- We should show uncollectable as accounts receivable

In closing 2001-2023 Data

By the numbers

- Total billed - \$4,094,242
- Total paid – \$1,218,631
- Total bad debit - \$80,190
- Total still owed - \$148,657
- Total written off - \$2,646,764

Facts

- We recognize that Medicare and Medicaid collections are limited by law.
- Clearing up the past 3 years is going to be complicated
- We do not have a clear idea of what our accounts receivable need to be
- Appears we will need expert help untangling

A Review of 2024 Tax Reassessment

A look at parcel #74709

Lacombe. LA

New Business #4

Comparison of Lacombe Parcel #74709

(A Side-By-Side Comparison)

2023

- Parish mills = 151.50
- Total taxes paid = \$3,003.64
- Total fair market value = \$273,260
- Taxable value = \$19,826
- STFD3 millage = 34.95 mills
- STFD3 taxes paid = \$692.92

2024

- Parish mills = 142.07 (6% decrease)
- Total taxes paid = \$4,215.23 (40% increase)
- Total fair market value = \$371,701 (36% increase)
- Taxable value = \$29,670 (50% increase)
- STFD3 millage before rollup 32.36 mills
- STFD3 taxes before roll forward = \$960.12 (39% increase)
- STFD3 millage after roll forward = 34.95 mills
- STFD3 taxes = \$1,036.97 (8% increase over the 32.36 mills)
- Effect of the roll forward of 2.59 mills = \$76.85 or \$6.40 per month (8% increase)

Comparison Summary

- While the millage on this parcel went down by 6% the total tax bill increased by 40%.
 - Largely the result of the reassessment value of the property
 - The value of the property increased by 50%
- While the assessor rolled back the millage for fire protection it was still 39% higher than the 2023 tax bill.
- While STFD3 did roll forward the millage for Fire Protection by 2.59 mills it increased the tax bill for Fire Protection by 8% or \$76.85 or \$6.40 per month