



St. Tammany Parish Fire Protection District No. 11
Board of Commissioners
Minutes of the Special Meeting on November 21, 2017

ROLL CALL

Don Thanars - Present
Eugene Swann - Present
Floyd Trascher – Present
Michele Blackwell - Present

INVOCATION

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MINUTES

Mrs. Blackwell said, we called this meeting together for advertisements for applications of Provisional Chief. Floyd, would you?

Mr. Trascher said, yes ma'am, Madam Chair, if you would indulge me, I would ask that we set page aside of tonight's meeting in our minutes. This is the first meeting that we've had since the passing of Chief Leos, in his memory, that we put a blank page in the minutes for Chief Leos memory. Are there any objections?

Mrs. Blackwell said, no.

Mr. Trascher said, ok, thank you. This is Resolution 2017-024:

WHEREAS, a quorum of the Board of Commissioners (“the Board”) of St. Tammany Fire Protection District No. 11, (“the District”) was present on this date, November 21, 2017, for a properly advertised, special meeting:

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners, acting as the governing authority of the Fire Protection District No. 11 of the Parish of St. Tammany, State of Louisiana (the “District”), find it in the best interest of the Board, employees, citizens and taxpayers, whereby the District will advertise for a Provisional Chief for the St. Tammany Fire Protection District Number 11.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that:

1. The Board of Commissioners wishes to advertise for applications for the position of Provisional Fire Chief for the Fire Protection District No. 11.
2. To the extent that prior resolutions or acts of this Board conflict with this Resolution, those prior Resolutions and actions are superseded by this Resolution.

Mr. Trascher said, the Resolution is necessary with the passing of Chief Leos, we have called for the Civil Service test for Chief so that we can have applicants. But, it's necessary for this Board to appoint an Interim or Provisional Chief of this Department to conduct those operations until such time as the test is given and all of the requirements have been met to fill that position. I would so move that we approve this Resolution and begin the advertising process.

Mr. Swann said, second.

Mrs. Blackwell said, is there any discussion? Mr. Matt, Chief Parish?

Chief Parish said, Mr. Don?

Mrs. Blackwell said, Mr. Don?

Mr. Thanars said, my unreadiness is, why would we go through this process in lieu of appointing a Interim Chief? We have an Assistant Chief that has been effectively running the department while Chief, you know there was a degradation in his health. I mean, that's the simplest route. It makes the most sense to just appoint an Interim Chief who's effectively been operating in that capacity. We've had no issues that would require us to go to this advertisement. We've, already as a Board, requested that the test be provided. So, that process is already on the way for that to happen. I just don't think it's necessary that we have to go through a provisional advertisement for Provisional Chief. And, I was unclear about this whole Provisional versus the Interim and it seems to be, often times, and I googled this just because I was unfamiliar with this. Often times, this whole nature of Provisional sets the

stage that this person is kind of, it's at the door to become the Chief. I just think that that's sets a bad precedence to go through that and I just don't see it as being necessary at this point. I think that we have very competent, capable firemen and women. I think we have a chain of command and you got to understand, I am a military guy. We would not go through this process. We have a number 2 person would just step up and if we have to formalize that process, I would just say that we appoint a Interim Chief and the appropriate person, in my opinion, would be the Assistant Chief, Chief Dockery in this case.

Mr. Parish said, Chief Parish?

Chief Parish said, all I am going to say is pretty much a lot of what he said. When you say provisional on that paper you got to understand. There is a difference between an interim and provisional.

Mrs. Blackwell said, alright.

Chief Parish said, if you do provisional, he's provisional. When you put him in place as a Provisional Chief, all he's got to do is, he or she, is pass the test. That is your Fire Chief. Interim is just that. They are interim until the Civil Service test is given and y'all go through the process in which y'all are going to be doing in a couple of months.

Mr. Trascher said, well, the Civil Service personnel out of Baton Rouge that told us that we needed a Provisional Chief. Because, we needed a substitute Chief when Chief Leos left in the beginning.

Chief Parish said, when we leave here tonight, we cannot leave here tonight without you appointing an Interim Chief. We don't have to have a Chief right now. We have to have to have somebody. There's not an application process to it. Tonight you have to appoint somebody as Interim Chief to run it until you can get your process done because right now we don't have a Fire Chief. But, I don't know who you talked to at Civil Service, call them back and talk to them again. That's the difference between provisional and interim.

Mr. Trascher said, I would be willing to call an Interim Chief then.

Chief Parish said, and that's all I am asking. Just call an interim.

Mr. Trascher said, just change this when we advertise for an interim because the intent of this is not to make a total appointment.

Chief Parish said, you are still going to the process of the test but if you do it provisional, your locking yourself into that person. So...

Mr. Trascher said, yeah, well, they told us provisional but, I don't have a problem with amending this resolution to Interim Chief and let's see the resumes that we get.

Chief Parish said, you have to have an Interim Chief named tonight. I mean, I don't mean to

do that to you but you need a, even if you have another meeting next week to do another interim that's y'all's ability to do that. Y'all can do that but, for tonight, for right now because we don't have a fire chief, we have to have somebody.

Mr. Thanars said, I am trying to understand. What's the need to go through this whole advertisement process when we have competent capable person who we can appoint as an Interim Chief and be done with it until the whole Civil Service process for the testing for a fire Chief. Then we would obviously begin to review applications at that point to make a decision on who the Chief would be. That's what I am trying to understand.

Mr. Swann said, I guess it just to try and make sure we get the best candidate for this job.

Chief Parish said, that's why it's just an interim not the provisional.

Mr. Trascher said, right. That's all this is. It's that, we've had issues in the past. We've had people that didn't want positions and things like that.

Mr. Thanars said, we keep talking about the past. This is not...

Mr. Trascher said, this is not the past, ok.

Mr. Thanars said, we are talking about today, appointing an Interim Chief. Somebody who can continue to run the department and what I advocate at this point is that the department has been run and has been for the past months, year, plus since the Chief's health degraded. It wasn't an issue and we didn't take issue with it and the department has ran effectively. So, what's the need to go now? And I say this because in the military...

Mr. Swann said, this isn't the military.

Mr. Thanars said, I understand that. It's paramilitary. We can debate that but my contention is that, we have capable, if that was an issue that we have individuals that were incapable of running the department, then this issue would have come up before, you know, and that has not been an issue. So, now I just think that it makes the most sense that we appoint a Interim Chief. We've already, as a Board, requested the Civil Service exam for Fire Chief. Let that process run, we will then get applications for Fire Chief from those candidate's who take and pass the exam. Then we would then make a final decision on who becomes the Chief. I mean, I just see this redundant process to do a provisional Fire Chief and then turn around, if that person just passing, they are by default because then you take away that opportunity to look at any other candidates which is what your saying the best candidate, you take that option off the table. So, that's what you want to do, I would say we appoint an Interim Chief, do that, let that just, the department just to continue to run as it has and then we go through the process of making a final selection for the Chief.

Mrs. Blackwell asked, I'm sorry, what is your name sir?

Mr. Rick Franzo said, my name is Rick Franzo, I am President of the Concerned Citizen's of

St. Tammany.

Mrs. Blackwell said, can you come up so Georgette can get you on video, please? And state your name again, please.

Mr. Franzo said, my name is Rick Franzo and I am President of Concerned Citizen's of St. Tammany. I am here tonight, and I have to agree, I do believe the fire department is a paramilitary organization. I think it's always been looked at like that, not just in Louisiana but throughout the country. I do believe the interim is the right way to go, the right approach because I think you would be boxing yourselves into a corner if you do it the other way. It also makes sense to, like Mr. Don said, that if you have quality people within your organization, it would certainly be more uplifting to bring somebody who has done a good job with the Chief being out such a long period of time. But, no matter what, I think you do need to change the language in the writing and then, if you need to look at other people, then that's fine, but if you do it the way you have it worded there you are going to box yourselves into a corner. Thank you.

Mrs. Blackwell said, thank you. Any other?

Mr. Trascher said, ok, I would be willing to amend the advertising from Provisional Chief to Interim Chief on the Resolution. To change that. I still think that we need to advertise and we probably could make an interim appointment tonight and then still go ahead and advertise for an Interim Chief to see what, if any, talents are there and who would be interested in the position. So, I would amend my motion to change it from Provisional to Interim Chief.

Mr. Swann said, second.

Mrs. Blackwell asked, Mr. Don, how do you vote?

Mr. Thanars said, nay.

Mrs. Blackwell asked, Mr. Eugene Swann, how do you vote?

Mr. Swann said, yes.

Mrs. Blackwell asked, Mr. Floyd Trascher, how do you vote?

Mr. Trascher said, yes.

Mrs. Blackwell said, motion carries.

Mr. Trascher said, with that said, if we follow the line of progression right now, the Chief of Operations, who has been performing most of the duties would be the one that should be in line for the appointment of Interim Chief until we receive the resumes or whatever we have, however long to see what's out there. I would move that we appoint Chief Jack Dockery as Interim Chief...

Mr. Thanars said, second.

Mr. Trascher continues, until these advertisements are in and the Board can make a decision.

Mrs. Blackwell said, we have a second by Mr. Thanars.

Mr. Trascher said, Chief Dockery?

Chief Dockery said, yes.

Mr. Trascher said, are you willing to accept the Interim Appointment.

Chief Dockery said, I am willing to accept the Interim Appointment.

Mrs. Blackwell said, Mr. Don Thanars, how do you vote?

Mr. Thanars said, yea.

Mrs. Blackwell asked, Mr. Eugene Swann, how do you vote?

Mr. Swann said, yes.

Mrs. Blackwell asked, Mr. Floyd Trascher, how do you vote?

Mr. Trascher said, yes.

Mrs. Blackwell said, motion carries.

Mr. Trascher said, ok, so, with that tonight Chief, we will, I guess we will put an advertisement in the paper and maybe post notices at the Town Hall and fire stations and we will see what...

Chief Dockery said, ok, it would have to be after Thanksgiving to get it in the paper.

Mr. Trascher said, to get it in the paper, right. As long as we have it, we will look at it at our December, regular December meeting and at the December meeting we will be able to see what's there or something like that.

Chief Dockery said, ok.

Mr. Franzo said, can I ask one more question. Is there something, how do you set a Interim Chief? Is there a time frame that you are going to work within as far as looking at applications? Are you going to have a cut off date?

Mr. Trascher said, like I said just now, I would like to have them by our December meeting, which is the second...

Mrs. Blackwell said, just a second and I will tell you the date.

Mr. Trascher said, the second Tuesday in December.

Chief Dockery said, the 14th I believe.

Mrs. Blackwell said, December the 12th.

Mr. Franzo said, thank you.

Mr. Trascher said, and I do understand, Chief Parish, like you were saying about the Interim appointment because Civil Service told us that we needed to make a substitute appointment the day that Chief Leos left.

Chief Parish said, that's right.

Mr. Trascher said, so we should have made a substitute appointment in August but didn't know about it, you know, didn't now...

Chief Parish said, not in August because he was on sick leave.

Mr. Trascher said, well, the day he left this department, we needed to make, whatever day it was his leave began.

Chief Parish said, sick leave, there's a difference. It would have been him, he would have been upgraded. So, the day that he went out on extended sick leave, technically, we should have upgraded Jack to the Fire Chief's...

Mr. Trascher said, well, we were told that he went on extended sick leave in August.

Chief Parish said, whenever the, if that was the date, I don't know.

Mrs. Blackwell said, it was like so many shifts. If he don't...

Chief Parish said, 30 days, 30 days is sick leave.

Mrs. Blackwell said, it wasn't 30 days, it was like two or three shifts. That's what Civil Service told us

Mr. Trascher said, that's not what in the personnel policy. It's like if you miss three shifts.

Chief Parish said, I will be happy if you would like to have a meeting with Civil Service. I will be happy to sit in with y'all. I've been in Civil Service a long time. 30 days is extended sick leave and as a matter of fact...

Mr. Trascher said, is that what our personnel policy says?

Chief Parish said, it does, yes sir, because the State law, you can ask our Civil Service person here to research that for us because he's got that nice new manual. It's in his book, it's in his book, so.

Mr. Trascher said, and Chief Dockery, I asked for the leave policy for the department and I think it said if your out three shifts.

Chief Dockery said, if your out three shifts you have to go see our doctor.

Mr. Trascher said, yeah, to come back in, that's when extended leave would begin.

Chief Dockery said, it's different from extended leave. Extended is 30 days.

Chief Parish said, that's a revised statute.

Mr. Trascher said, ok, well we didn't get any dates of when the Chief left or anything. We really didn't know, so that's why nothing was done.

Chief Parish said, Mr. Floyd, your absolutely right, you didn't, I mean...

Mr. Trascher said, what we are trying to do is move forward now and get those situations corrected.

Chief Dockery said, yes sir.

Mr. Thanars said, move for adjourn.

Mr. Swann said, second.

Mrs. Blackwell said, all in favor, Mr. Don Thanars, how do you vote?

Mr. Thanars said, yea.

Mrs. Blackwell asked, Mr. Eugene Swann, how do you vote?

Mr. Swann said, yes.

Mrs. Blackwell asked, Mr. Floyd Trascher?

Mr. Trascher said, yep.

Mrs. Blackwell said, motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

This Page is in Honor of

Chief Johnny Leos

He Will Always Be Remembered by:

St. Tammany Fire Prevention District No. 11

We Thank him for his Service and

Dedication

