

*State of Louisiana*

***FIREMENS' SUPPLEMENTAL PAY BOARD OF REVIEW  
MEETING***

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***MAY 19, 2021***

***10:00 a.m.***

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**Firemens' Supplemental Pay Board of Review**

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**MAY 19, 2021**

**10:00 a.m.**

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**MEMBERS AND STAFF PRESENT:**

Brien Ruiz, Chairman

Dwayne Thevis

Ronald Schillace

Richard Parker

Charles Morgan Williams

Kay DeBenedetto

Candace Oby

Mark Campbell

Conner Junkin, Esq.

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Ted Sonnier, Chief Scott FD

Patrick Hemphill, Chief Ouachita FD

**INDEX**

Call to order

Roll Call .....4

Review and Approve Minutes February 24, 2021..... 5

New Business:

    Scott Fire Department - New Town. ....6

    Scott Fire Department - New Applicants

        Justin Douet, Jaron LeBlanc, Shane Leger .....15

    Ouachita Parish Fire Department - Tina Young .....17

New Applications Submitted for Approval - 79 ..... 23

Set Time and Date of Next Meeting - August 18, 2021 .....23

Adjourn ..... 24

**Firemens' Supplemental Pay Board of Review Meeting**

**May 19, 2021**

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**ROLL CALL**

**MR. RUIZ:**

All right. I'm going to call the meeting to order for May 19, 2021.

Roll call, please.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

Mr. Ruiz.

**MR. RUIZ:**

Here.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

Mr. Schillace.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

Here.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

Mr. Thevis.

**MR. THEVIS:**

Here.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

Mr. Parker may come back.

Mr. Williams.

**MR. WILLIAMS:**

Here.

**MR. RUIZ:**

1 All right. We have four members here

2 **MR. RUIZ:**

3 We have a quorum.

4 **REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 24, 2021**

5 **MR. RUIZ:**

6 Michelle, I spoke with Mr. Parker. He's going to review them, and then he's  
7 going to get back with Candace or you and let you know if that was actually him  
8 that was speaking, so we can correct the minutes for the August 18 (sic) meeting.

9 Did you hear me, Michelle?

10 **COURT REPORTER:**

11 Yes, sir, I heard.

12 **MR. RUIZ:**

13 Can we have a motion to approve the minutes?

14 **MR. THEVIS:**

15 Dwayne Thevis. I make a motion to approve the minutes.

16 **MR. SCHILLACE:**

17 I'll second.

18 **MR. RUIZ:**

19 All in favor, signify by saying "aye."

20 (All aye.)

21 **MR. CAMPBELL:**

22 Who was it that seconded it?

23 **MR. SCHILLACE:**

24 Ronnie.

25 **MR. CAMPBELL:**

1 Okay.

2 **MR. RUIZ:**

3 You have say your name in case she can't clearly hear our voice, because  
4 some minutes she couldn't clarify who was speaking.

5 **NEW BUSINESS**

6 SCOTT FIRE DEPARTMENT

7 New Town

8 **MR. RUIZ:**

9 Okay. Candace or Mark, what's up next?

10 **MR. CAMPBELL:**

11 Okay. On new business, the first up is Scott Fire Department. A  
12 questionnaire has been entered, but I want to note that the questionnaire to the --  
13 the question to, what is the legal name of your entity, the answer that they put is  
14 City of Scott.

15 And I believe Chief Sonnier is on the phone; is that right?

16 **MR. SONNIER:**

17 Yes, he's there.

18 **MR. CAMPBELL:**

19 Okay. So it says City of Scott, and my discussions with them, it says City  
20 of Scott because the fire department doesn't have any kind of budget or anything  
21 and that the three firemen, paid firemen, are employees of the City of Scott. And  
22 that's the only question that I have.

23 **MR. OBY:**

24 Does the volunteer fire department that only had volunteers and they  
25 recently hired full-time fire office -- firefighters as employees of the city to work

1 at the fire department?

2 **MR. CAMPBELL:**

3 Correct.

4 **MS. OBY:**

5 Okay.

6 **MR. SCHILLACE:**

7 This is Ronnie. I have a question. These firefighters, are they certified?

8 **MR. CAMPBELL:**

9 They are.

10 **MR. RUIZ:**

11 So they have the new applications, Ronnie.

12 **MR. CAMPBELL:**

13 All the applications are attached, and --

14 **MR. SCHILLACE:**

15 Okay. I don't have anything in front of me, so that's why I don't know.

16 **MR. CAMPBELL:**

17 Sure, sure. They all are attached. Their Firefighter I. Now, it's -- they were  
18 all certified on January 12, '20, so they've been certified for a while. I don't  
19 know, Chief Sonnier, if they have been working part time or what is the  
20 situation?

21 **MR. RUIZ:**

22 Hold up. Let's back up. This is the Ruiz speaking.

23 Let's approve Scott as a new town first.

24 **MR. CAMPBELL:**

25 Yes, okay.

1 **MR. RUIZ:**

2 And then let's discuss the three applications that we have.

3 **MR. CAMPBELL:**

4 Okay.

5 **MR. RUIZ:**

6 So we need a motion to approve Scott as a fire department.

7 **MR. SCHILLACE:**

8 I make a motion to approve Scott as a fire department.

9 **MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

10 Can I -- can I ask a question, please?

11 **MR. RUIZ:**

12 Go ahead, Ms. Kay.

13 **MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

14 On the -- on the questionnaire, it asks for a statute or a legal requirement  
15 which set up your paid department. Do y'all have anything?

16 **MR. SONNIER:**

17 No, I wouldn't have the -- he said he wanted a statute setting the fire  
18 department. We have something, you know, from the federal government, a --  
19 establishing the Scott Volunteer Fire Department, but we're starting a transition,  
20 so we were fortunate enough to receive the Safer Grant. So the city, you know,  
21 with call volume increasing and volunteers dwindling, what we did was, we  
22 applied for a Safer Grant, and we were fortunate enough to get it. So the City of  
23 Scott, pretty much, they oversee the manpower and everything and they have the  
24 personnel, but they work on Scott Volunteer Fire Department equipment. And  
25 I'm not sure what --



1 **MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

2 So you're actually paid by a grant and not by the city?

3 **MR. SONNIER:**

4 No, paid by the city.

5 **MR. RUIZ:**

6 Let me help you out. Let me explain that to you, Ms. Kay. This is Ruiz  
7 speaking.

8 Every year, there's a Safer Grant that all fire department around the whole  
9 United States can get to help supplement manpower and each department. And  
10 what he's saying is, the City of Scott applied for the grant. What's going to  
11 happen is, they pay for the -- one year, the grant pays 100 percent. Then the  
12 following year, it goes down. On the third year, it goes down. Eventually, the  
13 City of Scott has to take over paying the entire amount of these firefighters, or if  
14 they don't, they've got to reimburse the government all the money that the  
15 government gave them. Do you understand what --

16 **MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

17 Yeah. I mean, I understand how grants work for sure, but it's not municipal  
18 funds.

19 **MR. SONNIER:**

20 Yes, it is.

21 **MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

22 Or we need some --

23 **MR. SONNIER:**

24 Yes, it is the funds -- with the first grant, the grant we received was before --  
25 right now, the Safer Grant is 100 percent, but we're actually in year two of three,

1 but we are 50 percent. We are only reimbursing -- we're only getting reimbursed  
2 50 percent of what the employee is contributing. And on top of that, the city --  
3 you know, it's all city funding. I think the first year was 90 percent or 80  
4 percent. I'd have to go back through my record, but it -- our grant was never 100  
5 percent from the get-go like it is now with COVID. The last two years has been  
6 100 percent, but right now -- we got the grant like three years ago, and they've  
7 been working for two years. So I think we're at the 50-percent mark, so it is city  
8 funds. They are paying 100 percent and getting reimbursed 50 percent for this  
9 year, and I think next year, it goes down to 25 percent, if I remember correctly.

10 **MR. RUIZ:**

11 Yeah. That's the way it works, and then year four, you've got to pay 100  
12 percent of their salary, or you get penalized and have to pay the money back.

13 **MR. SONNIER:**

14 Yes, sir, that's correct.

15 **MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

16 Do you have something from the city?

17 **MR. SONNIER:**

18 Meaning what?

19 **MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

20 Something that says that they're going to do that? I mean, I guess my  
21 question is, and -- you know, I'm just an observer here, is that, what happens  
22 when that grant runs out, what kind of assurance do we have that these will  
23 continue to be paid firefighters?

24 **MR. SONNIER:**

25 Because we had to draft out-- from the city that says -- a resolution from the

1 City Council that we're going to continue these firefighters after the grant is  
2 expired and funding has expired from the city.

3 **MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

4 Okay. We just need a copy of that resolution.

5 **MR. SONNIER:**

6 Okay.

7 **MR. RUIZ:**

8 I understand where you're going, Ms. Kay. There's also a penalty if they  
9 don't get paid.

10 **MR. SONNIER:**

11 Correct. If we don't -- if we don't keep them, we have to pay 100 percent of  
12 the funding back, and I know that's not going to happen.

13 And getting back what you're saying, I know that, not only is the city not  
14 going to let them go, but we're actually looking right now into increasing the --  
15 the 24-hour staffing of our career personnel.

16 **MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

17 I'm just saying we need something showing that, that resolution or whatever  
18 that the city has done.

19 **MR. RUIZ:**

20 Ms. Kay, in your opinion, can we approve them without that paper?

21 **MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

22 I'm not the attorney here.

23 **MR. RUIZ:**

24 So --

25 **MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

1 They -- they put on the questionnaire that they're supposed --

2 **MR. RUIZ:**

3 Why can't we make a decision? I say -- I get a motion to approve them, and  
4 I know that the paperwork is all going to be in order because I -- I've dealt with  
5 the Safer Grant. I've dealt to the Safer Grant for St. Bernard numerous times,  
6 and I -- I know how it works. You know, I'm not -- I'm not afraid to approve  
7 them as a new town based on not having their paperwork, because I know  
8 exactly how it works.

9 **MR. SONNIER:**

10 Ma'am, my question to you is, I mean, is your question are we going to let  
11 these guys go and we're not a fire department once the Safer Grant ends? I  
12 mean, I don't understand your question.

13 **MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

14 My question is, we need something from the town saying that they --

15 **MR. RUIZ:**

16 Ms. Kay --

17 **MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

18 -- that this is a legal entity.

19 **MR. RUIZ:**

20 -- correct, Ms. Kay?

21 **MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

22 I'm sorry?

23 **MR. RUIZ:**

24 I can't hear anybody.

25 **MS. OBY:**

1 Nobody is saying anything.

2 **MR. RUIZ:**

3 All right. Candace, I know a lot about the Safer Grant and the only way  
4 these people can even get this money is if they -- is if they agree to continue to  
5 pay them once they leave. I know they're going to submit that paperwork to  
6 y'all, probably can fax it later on today, you know. So -- you know, and it's my  
7 opinion that we can approve the City of Scott Fire Department as a new fire  
8 department.

9 **MS. OBY:**

10 Okay. Yeah. I mean, if y'all want to approve it based on us getting, you  
11 know, the back up -- the copy of the resolution, I'm fine with that. I mean, that's  
12 -- that's up to y'all.

13 **MR. THEVIS:**

14 Dwayne Thevis. I make a motion that we accept Scott Fire Department with  
15 the exception that they provide with the resolution in the near future.

16 **MR. RUIZ:**

17 Do we have a second?

18 **MR. WILLIAMS:**

19 Morgan. Second.

20 **MS. OBY:**

21 Chief, if you could just email us --

22 **MR. SONNIER:**

23 I'm actually on the phone with -- I'm actually on the phone right now with  
24 the city. She's going to pull it up, and I'll send it to you probably within the  
25 hour.

1 **MS. OBY:**

2 Okay.

3 **MR. RUIZ:**

4 Thank you, Chief.

5 All in favor, signify by saying "aye."

6 (All aye.)

7 **MR. RUIZ:**

8 The motion passes.

9 **MR. SONNIER:**

10 Thank y'all very much, and I'll have it to you by the end of the day, probably  
11 within the hour.

12 **MR. CAMPBELL:**

13 Do you have the email address that you're sending it to?

14 **MR. SONNIER:**

15 You tell me where you want to send it, and I'll send it. I can send it to you, I  
16 can send it to all of y'all. You tell me where you want it.

17 **MR. CAMPBELL:**

18 Munpay, M-U-N-P-A-Y, at la.gov.

19 **MR. SONNIER:**

20 Okay. I'll be sending it probably before lunch.

21 **MR. CAMPBELL:**

22 All right.

23 **MR. SONNIER:**

24 And so once y'all receive it, it will be approved and everything?

25 **MS. OBY:**

1 They have to approve the applications now.

2 **MR. SONNIER:**

3 Correct. Okay. I'll have it to y'all in an hour or so.

4 SCOTT FIRE DEPARTMENT

5 Justin Douet, Jaron LeBlanc, Shane Leger

6 **MR. RUIZ:**

7 Okay. Now we've got the three --

8 **MR. CAMPBELL:**

9 The three firemen.

10 **MR. RUIZ:**

11 -- firefighters.

12 **MR. CAMPBELL:**

13 Brien, everything is in order on the applications as far as the PAF from Civil  
14 Service, the social security card, the Firefighter I, everything is there.

15 **MR. RUIZ:**

16 And, Ronnie, for your information, all of them have Firefighter I, and they  
17 all are owed \$2,317.

18 **MR. CAMPBELL:**

19 Correct.

20 **MR. SCHILLACE:**

21 Okay. That's fine. According to Mark's statement, everything is in order.  
22 Therefore, I make a motion to approve these three firefighters with the Scott  
23 Volunteer Fire Department.

24 **MR. WILLIAMS:**

25 Morgan Williams. Second.

1 **MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

2 Mark, do you want to give us the dates, or are they all the same?

3 **MR. CAMPBELL:**

4 They're all the same. They're effective date is January 12, 2021. Their  
5 employment date was January 12, 2020.

6 **MR. RUIZ:**

7 Correct.

8 **MR. SCHILLACE:**

9 Did y'all hear my motion? This is Ronnie.

10 **MR. RUIZ:**

11 Yeah. We got it. I'm just helping Ms. Kay get the information from Mark  
12 that she was asking.

13 I've read everything. I know this.

14 So all in favor of the motion, signify by saying "aye."

15 (All aye.)

16 **MS. OBY:**

17 Do we have a second?

18 **MR. WILLIAMS:**

19 Morgan Williams.

20 **MS. OBY:**

21 Okay.

22 **MR. SONNIER:**

23 She's got the paper. Do you want to send it now, that way, y'all can put it to  
24 rest now? She has it in front of her right now. Do you want her to email it to  
25 you at munpay@la.gov?



1 **MS. OBY:**

2 Yes.

3 **MR. RUIZ:**

4 Yeah.

5 **MR. SONNIER:**

6 Can you send it to that address, Shelly (phonetic)?

7 **MS. OBY:**

8 Okay. Go ahead, Brien.

9 **MR. RUIZ:**

10 Okay. All in favor of Ronnie's motion, signify by saying "aye."

11 (All aye.)

12 **MR. RUIZ:**

13 The motion passes.

14 OUACHITA PARISH FIRE DEPARTMENT

15 Tina Young

16 **MR. RUIZ:**

17 Okay. What's next under new business?

18 **MR. CAMPBELL:**

19 Ouachita Parish Fire Department, the application of Tina Young, fire  
20 communication officer.

21 **MS. OBY:**

22 So the Board needs to, you know, review her job -- her job description is not  
23 a normal one that we would -- you know, we would approve. The Board needs  
24 to evaluate that and make a decision.

25 **MR. RUIZ:**

1 I've read -- this is Ruiz. I read the qualifications of her job description. Is  
2 the fire chief available to talk to us?

3 **MS. OBY:**

4 Yes. The fire chief is on.

5 Mr. Hemphill, can you unmute your phone, please? Mr. Hemphill?

6 **MR. CAMPBELL:**

7 You still show him on, huh?

8 **MS. OBY:**

9 Yeah, he's on here.

10 **MS. OBY:**

11 What's his first name, Paul?

12 **MR. CAMPBELL:**

13 Patrick.

14 **MS. OBY:**

15 Patrick. So, Patrick, can you unmute your phone so we can talk with you?

16 There you go.

17 **MR. HEMPHILL:**

18 Okay. Can you hear me now?

19 **MS. OBY:**

20 Yes, we can hear you.

21 **MR. HEMPHILL:**

22 Okay. Thank you very much.

23 **MR. RUIZ:**

24 This is Chairman Ruiz speaking. I reviewed this person's application job  
25 requirements, and normally, we have questions for you. Is there -- in fire

1 qualifications, it says that she performs any related duties as assigned. So in  
2 order for her to receive supplemental pay, we always ask a few questions. And  
3 the main question is, does she respond to fires if she's needed? She's got this  
4 part that says any related duties assigned. That's a broad -- that's a broad  
5 statement there. So every communication officer that we approve, we ask  
6 questions, does she have bunker gear, does -- if that person is needed to go to a  
7 fire, is she able to go to a fire and assist?

8 **MR. HEMPHILL:**

9 Absolutely. What we have -- we have some of our communications officers  
10 who we deem qualified to go to a fire scene as needed, even major incidents.

11 **MR. RUIZ:**

12 Okay. That's the only -- I think that clears up the questions that I had.

13 Do any of y'all have any questions about the application?

14 **MR. THEVIS:**

15 No, sir, I'm good.

16 **MR. SCHILLACE:**

17 How many hours a week does she work? This is Ronnie.

18 **MR. HEMPHILL:**

19 Oh, let's see. She works four twelves.

20 **MR. SCHILLACE:**

21 Okay.

22 **MR. HEMPHILL:**

23 It's the -- of our shifts.

24 **MR. SCHILLACE:**

25 Okay.

1 **MR. RUIZ:**

2 That's puts her over the top, Ronnie?

3 **MR. SCHILLACE:**

4 Oh, yeah. I would think so.

5 **MR. RUIZ:**

6 Okay.

7 **MR. SCHILLACE:**

8 Based on the statement from the fire chief and the fact that she's Firefighter  
9 I and she works at least 35 hours a week, then I meet -- I feel she meets the  
10 qualifications for supplemental pay.

11 **MR. RUIZ:**

12 Is that a motion?

13 **MR. SCHILLACE:**

14 I so move.

15 **MR. RUIZ:**

16 Can I have a second, please?

17 **MR. THEVIS:**

18 Dwayne Thevis. I second.

19 **MR. RUIZ:**

20 Any further questions?

21 **MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

22 Date, Mark?

23 **MR. CAMPBELL:**

24 Let's see. She started on, the application says, July 2, 2019. Her Firefighter  
25 I is not until April 15, '21.

1 **MS. OBY:**

2 She will be effective April 15, 2021. So she'll get a little over \$500.

3 **MR. CAMPBELL:**

4 Yeah. \$267 for April, \$500 for May, \$767.

5 **MR. RUIZ:**

6 That's what I had added up.

7 Okay. All in favor, signify by saying "aye."

8 (All aye.)

9 **MR. RUIZ:**

10 The motion passes.

11 Thank you very much, Chief.

12 **MR. HEMPHILL:**

13 Thank you. Y'all have a good day.

14 **MR. SCHILLACE:**

15 Brien, this is Ronnie. Do we have an attorney on this Zoom?

16 **MR. RUIZ:**

17 No.

18 **MR. SCHILLACE:**

19 Okay. The reason why I asked, I was just checking to see if the chief and  
20 the other gentleman prior needed to be sworn in.

21 **MR. RUIZ:**

22 I -- swear them in, but if they're going to purge themselves.

23 **COURT REPORTER:**

24 This is Michelle. Under my court reporter license, I have authority to swear  
25 people in if y'all wanted to do that ever.

1 **MR. SCHILLACE:**

2 Yeah. Well, I know we're kind of putting the -- kind of going a little bit  
3 backwards here. So any further from here on, if you would, Michelle, maybe  
4 swear them in prior to them giving a statement.

5 **MR. RUIZ:**

6 Thank you, Michelle.

7 **MR. CAMPBELL:**

8 Yeah. We didn't know that.

9 **COURT REPORTER:**

10 Chief Hemphill may still be on. I know retroactively, if he is still here, I can  
11 swear him in.

12 **MR. RUIZ:**

13 Is he there?

14 **MR. HEMPHILL:**

15 I'm still here.

16 **MR. RUIZ:**

17 Okay. Well, let's do it.

18 **COURT REPORTER:**

19 Yeah. I'll go ahead and swear you in, Chief Hemphill retroactive to the  
20 statements you made previously.

21 (Chief Hemphill sworn.)

22 **MR. RUIZ:**

23 Thank you, Michelle.

24 With that, that makes you feel better? It makes me feel better.

25 All right. Thank you, Michelle. I'll remember that and make that note that

1 you can swear people looking forward.

2 **COURT REPORTER:**

3 Yes.

4 **NEW APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL - 79**

5 **MR. RUIZ:**

6 Next on the agenda, Mark.

7 **MR. CAMPBELL:**

8 Yeah. The next item is the application list submitted for approval. There is  
9 79 applicants listed on the spreadsheet.

10 **MR. THEVIS:**

11 Dwayne Thevis. I make a motion to accept the applicants.

12 **MR. SCHILLACE:**

13 I second the motion. This is Ronnie.

14 **MR. RUIZ:**

15 Any further questions? This is Ruiz.

16 (No response.)

17 **MR. RUIZ:**

18 Hearing none, all in favor, signify by saying "aye."

19 (All aye.)

20 **MR. RUIZ:**

21 The motion passes.

22 **SET TIME AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

23 **MR. RUIZ:**

24 Set time and date for the next meeting. The time that they show is

25 Wednesday, August 18, 2021. Does anybody have a problem with that date?

1 **MR. SCHILLACE:**

2 Ronnie. No.

3 **MR. RUIZ:**

4 August 18, 2021.

5 **MR. SCHILLACE:**

6 At 10:00 a.m. Hopefully, we can meet in person at that time.

7 **MR. RUIZ:**

8 We're probably have an option in person or Zoom.

9 **MR. SCHILLACE:**

10 Okay.

11 **MR. RUIZ:**

12 All right. So, I mean, we can Zoom if we can. If you feel uncomfortable  
13 coming in person, you can Zoom. If you feel comfortable coming in person, you  
14 can come in person. Candace and I will discuss that prior to the meeting.

15 **ADJOURN**

16 **MR. SCHILLACE:**

17 I'll make a motion to adjourn.

18 **MR. RUIZ:**

19 I didn't hear everybody.

20 **MR. THEVIS:**

21 Second.

22 **MR. RUIZ:**

23 All right. Everybody is good.

24 Okay. Now, do I have a motion to adjourn.

25 **MR. SCHILLACE:**



1 This is Ronnie. I make a motion to adjourn.

2 **MR. RUIZ:**

3 Do I have a second?

4 **MR. THEVIS:**

5 Dwayne Thevis. Second.

6 **MR. RUIZ:**

7 All in favor, signify by saying "aye".

8 (All aye.)

9 **MR. RUIZ:**

10 The motion passes.

11 Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for attending our meeting today.

12 Michelle, I'm glad to know you can swear people in for us. I appreciate that  
13 information.

14 I wish everybody a good rest of the day, and hope this rain gets out of here.

15 **MS. OBY:**

16 Thank you.

17

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CERTIFICATE

I, MICHELLE S. ABADIE, Certified Court Reporter in and for the State of Louisiana, as the officer before whom this hearing was reported, certify that on May 19, 2021, a meeting for the Firemens' State Supplemental Board was held, that this testimony and matters were reported by me, was prepared and transcribed by me, and that the foregoing pages, numbered 1 through 25, inclusive, is a true and correct transcript to the best of my ability and understanding; that I am not related to counsel or to the parties herein, nor am I otherwise interested in the outcome of this proceeding.

---

MICHELLE S. ABADIE, CCR #24032  
CERTIFIED COURT REPORTER

---

BRIEN RUIZ, CHAIRMAN

---

DWAYNE THEVIS, VICE-CHAIRMAN

MICHELLE S. ABADIE, CCR  
CERTIFIED COURT REPORTER