

FIRE SUPPLEMENTAL PAY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

May 9, 2023

A regular meeting of the Municipal Fire Fighters Supplemental Pay Board of Review, May 9, 2023 at Louisiana Department of Public Safety, Management and Finance Office.

Brien Ruiz called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL:

The following members and staff present:

Board Members

Brien Ruiz
Richard Parker Jr.
Ronnie Schillace
Dwayne Thevis
Charles Williams

Staff

Natalya Besse
Candy Diez
Sharon Tennent
Marlon C. Battley, Esq.

Visitors

Capt. James Boheman, Marrero Ragusa Volunteer Fire Company #3
Chief Manuel Joel, Ville Platte Fire Department

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Ronnie Schillace made a motion to approve minutes for February 7, 2023 meeting.
Dwayne Thevis seconded the motion and the motion passed.

APPEALS:

None.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

Brien Ruiz allowed Capt. James Boheman from Marrero Ragusa Volunteer Fire Company #3 to address the board with their overpayment issue.

Firefighters Joseph Andre Willhoft Jr. and Joshua Alexander Paolini inadvertently received overpayment due to an incorrect date on Fire Fighter 1 certificates provided by FETA that was used in calculating supplemental pay eligibility effective dates. Since then, FETA issued corrected certificates. Marrero department will provide a scanned copy of the new certificates along with the FETA letter of acknowledgement of their error. Firefighter Willhoft Jr. states he can pay the full amount back. Firefighter Paolini states he is unable to pay the full amount back, because he already spent the money. Capt. James Boheman asked the board for a direction for how to recoup these funds.

Natalya Besse said that the office would review both records and notify the department about the installment plan.

Ronnie Schillace said that firefighter Paolini should receive a reprimand letter for spending state money, knowing that he should not have received them. That is a serious matter, and the firefighter should face some consequences.

NEW DEPARTMENTS:

Ronnie Schillace made a motion to approve below departments. Richard Parker Jr. seconded and the motion passed.

Alsen/St Irma Lee FD for Joe Williams III pending application

Bayou Blue Fire Protection District for Benjamin Nelton's and James Morgan's pending applications

NEW BUSINESS:

Brien Ruiz recommended **New Orleans FD** appear at the next board meeting to provide explanation for the job titles in question for **Delilah M. Pollard, Devra Goldstein, Thomas Palisi, and Rashi Reed**. Dwayne Thevis made a motion to postpone the decision until New Orleans FD appears at the next board meeting to provide clarification for the job titles. Richard Parker Jr. seconded and the motion passed.

Dwayne Thevis made a motion to approve application for **Christopher Adams – Plaquemines Port, Harbor & Terminal District**; water pump operator is equivalent to engineer. Richard Parker Jr. seconded and the motion passed.

Ronnie Schillace made a motion to postpone the decision until for **St. George FD** appears at the next board meeting to provide clarification for the job title for **Dusty Breaux**. Richard Parker Jr. seconded and the motion passed.

The board discussed a new procedure for routinely approved applications. All routinely approved applications will be entered into the system in the order they were received. These applications will be presented in the next regular board meeting for approval. The board confirmed with Marlon C. Battley, attorney that this procedure does not violate the state statutes and administrative rules.

Richard Parker Jr. made a motion to approve the procedure. Ronnie Schillace seconded and the motion passed.

MILITARY LEAVE:

Marlon C. Battley, attorney clarified how to read military orders. Per the Board’s discussion, the military order language will determine whether the current recipient will continue receiving supplemental pay.

If the language indicates that the order is for training “with ...[recipient’s]... consent” for the shown period, the recipient will not receive pay for the entire duration of training duties if the recipient has exceeded the allowable 15 days per 5 U.S.C. 6323 (a).

Brien Ruiz confirmed that if a military order is on the board meeting agenda, supplemental pay must be stopped until the board makes a decision on continuing supplemental pay.

INELIGIBLE SUPPLEMENTAL PAY RECIPIENT:

Natalya Besse informed the board of the call from the Inspector General’s office, Michael Sarvar. The Inspector General’s office received anonymous complaint about ineligible clerical staff receiving supplemental pay at Jefferson Parish East Bank Consolidated Fire Department. Mr. Sarvar requested the board to make a decision on how they want to proceed with this complaint.

Ronnie Schillace said the board takes its job seriously and makes sure the applicant is entitled to supplemental pay. Sometimes, a job title alone does not determine what that person does; a job description must be present to see if the person qualifies for supplemental pay.

Natalya Besse advised the board they can request Personnel Action Forms (PAF) and detailed job description for each current recipient. Several times the Supplemental Pay office has requested job title updates on the warrants from all municipalities. East Bank Consolidated Fire Department still hasn’t provided requested information on their warrant. This request coincides with the Louisiana Legislative Auditors’ direction to report recipients’ current “Job Titles.” It is the responsibility of the individual departments and municipalities to enter the current job title/classification of each employee who receives supplemental pay. Penalties for not reporting job titles/classifications could result in departments not receiving their monthly supplemental pay.

The office and Richard Parker Jr. will reach out to East Bank Consolidated Fire Department to provide PAF and detailed job descriptions.

PRESENTATION OF MOST RECENT BUDGET PROJECTIONS

Natalya Besse informed the board of the budget amount for FY23.

NEW APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL

Ronnie Schillace made a motion to approve 217 applications for \$399,224. Richard Parker Jr. seconded it and the motion passed.

NEW ACT 110 MONEY APPROVAL

Ronnie Schillace made a motion to approve ACT 110 money for 6 applications in the amount of \$9,434. Richard Parker Jr. seconded it and the motion passed.

SET TIME & DATE OF NEXT MEETING

August 4, 2023 @ 9:00 a.m.

** Location: Crown Plaza Executive Suites

4727 Constitution Avenue

Baton Rouge, LA 70808

ADJOURN

Ronnie Schillace made a motion to adjourn. Dwayne Thevis seconded and the motion passed.