*State of Louisiana*

*FIREMENS' SUPPLEMENTAL PAY BOARD OF REVIEW*

*MEETING*

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*FEBRUARY 9, 2022*

*1:00 p.m.*

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Firemens' Supplemental Pay Board of Review

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FEBRUARY 9, 2022

1:00 p.m.

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MEMBERS AND STAFF PRESENT:

 Brien Ruiz, Chairman

 Dwayne Thevis

 Ronald Schillace

 Richard Parker

 Charles Morgan Williams

 Kay DeBenedetto

 Suzanne Tessier

 Wayne Tedesco

 Candy Diez

 Connor Junkin, Esq.

 Mark Campbell

 Col. Jason Starns

OTHERS PRESENT:

 Bryan Champagne, Broussard Fire Department

 Travis Perrilloux, St. John Department Public Safety

 Angela Ragusa, Broussard Fire Department

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

**February 9, 2022**

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**CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

**MR. RUIZ:**

 All right. We'll call to meeting to order February 9th at 1:00. Roll call, please.

**ROLL CALL**

**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.

**MR. PARKER:**

 Here.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Mr. Williams.

**MR. WILLIAMS:**

 (No response.)

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 I sent him the link, and so he ought to be connecting in any minute.

 (Off-the-record discussion.)

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Well, Mr. Chairman, we have a quorum with four members in attendance, so we can go ahead and get started and he can join when he can.

**MR. RUIZ:**

Let's see if he can't hook up. We ain't in no hurry here. I know we have a quorum.

 (Off-the-record discussion.)

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 We're good.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Okay. We'll call the meeting back to order. Roll call once again, 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.

**MR. PARKER:**

 Here.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Mr. Williams.

**MR. WILLIAMS:**

 Here.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Okay. We have a quorum. Can we --

**MR. RUIZ:**

 We have a quorum. Go ahead, Ms. Kay.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Before we proceed, can we have all of the people who are attending also first, Ms. Ragusa , please state your name, what department you're from?

**MS. RAGUSA:**

Angela Ragusa, I'm with Broussard Fire Department.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 And, let's see, Mr. Champagne.

**MR. CHAMPAGNE:**

Bryan Champagne, Fire Chief, Broussard Fire Department.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 And who else might we have on here that's -- that's all of our visitors? Please, if you speak -- we always need to be careful when we have this many people, please, when you speak, always first identify yourself by name so that Michelle can get that. And, Michelle, did you get their names in the -- do you need the spelling of any of their names or anything?

**COURT REPORTER:**

 No, I believe I'm good. I see that Mr. Perrilloux is on too, and he's part of the agenda.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Mr. Perrilloux, what number are you?

**MR. PERRILLOUX:**

 I'm not a number. I'm actually logged in on Zoom.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Okay. Would you state your name and what department you're from?

**MR. PERRILLOUX:**

 Travis Perrilloux, St. John Parish Department of Public Safety.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Sorry. I see you now.

**MR. JUNKIN:**

Would you like me to swear everyone in right now?

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Yes. Connor, can you do that, please?

**MR. JUNKIN:**

 Yes. Anyone who's planning on testifying, please, raise your right hand. (Witnesses sworn.)

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Okay.

**REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 17, 2021**

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

Mr. Chairman, you want to go ahead and make review -- review and approve the minutes?

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Yes, ma'am. I was waiting -- everybody is sworn in, Connor?

**MR. JUNKIN:**

 I believe so.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Okay. So review and approval of the minutes of November 1st (sic), 2021.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 Again, this is Ronnie. I was able to review the minutes. Everything appears to be in order; therefore, I make a motion to approve the minutes of November the 1 (sic), 2021.

**MR. THEVIS:**

 Dwayne Thevis, I second that motion.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 I have a second. This is Brien speaking. I have a second. I'm sorry. Go ahead.

**MR. THEVIS:**

 Dwayne Thevis, I second that motion.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Yeah, I got a second. I'm asking if there's any more questions about the minutes?

 (No response.)

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Hearing none, all in favor approval of the minutes of November 1st (sic), signify by saying "aye."

 (All aye.)

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Motion passes.

**APPEALS**

TRAVIS PERRILLOUX

ST. JOHN PARISH DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Next thing on agenda, Mark.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Well, we have the appeal of Mr. Travis Perrilloux.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Mark -- usually, Mark speaks. I'm just asking, you handling the agenda today?

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Yeah. Mr. Ruiz, I guess, yeah. Kay is handling it.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Okay. Go ahead, Ms. Kay.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Okay. We have the appeal of Mr. Travis Perrilloux who came before the Board on November the 17th of 2021, and the Board denied his request to receive supplemental pay. The letter where he was notified of that is in your packet. He has sent in some additional information and a formal request for an appeal. It was three ordinances. I don't know if y'all have had a chance to review those. They were in the information that was sent out.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 I've reviewed it, Ms. Kay. I don't -- I did not see any changes. Correct me if I'm wrong, but I was reading through it, and I don't see no changes.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 No. The -- the only thing that changed was he sent those three ordinances.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Right. And the ordinance doesn't change my view. I'm re -- I read through them. Did -- did any of y'all read through them?

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 Ronnie. Yes. I -- I don't see any changes, as well.

 I have a question or two for Mr. Perrilloux. Can you hear me?

**MR. PERRILLOUX:**

 I can hear you just fine,

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 Okay. Mr. Perrilloux, I have a question. First of all, who do you re -- who is your -- your boss? Is -- do you report to a fire chief?

**MR. PERRILLOUX:**

 I don't. My boss is the Parish President.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 Okay. You report to the Parish President. Okay.

**MR. PERRILLOUX:**

 That's correct.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 You are listed as the Assistant Director of Public Safety.

**MR. PERRILLOUX:**

 I'm actually the Interim Director of Public Safety for the last five years.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 I'm not finished.

**MR. PERRILLOUX:**

 I can't hear everybody talking at one time. I was speaking to one person. I'll take one question at a time.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 Right. Mr. Perrilloux, this is Ronnie. I'm -- I'm not finished. So, please, the rest of the -- the people listening in, I'll let you know when I'm finished.

 Mr. Perrilloux, I -- I -- I didn't hear. You are the Director or Assistant Director?

**MR. PERRILLOUX:**

 I'm the Interim Director. My Civil Service position is Assistant Director, yes, sir.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 Okay. The -- okay. So you do not work for a fire department or a fire district, correct?

**MR. PERRILLOUX:**

 I'm not employed by -- over -- I oversee about four of them.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 Okay. I looked in the -- under the Emergency Preparedness for St. John the Baptist, and it clearly states that the center is staffed with three full-time employees, department directors, including emergency. It houses -- it houses the Parish Department of Public Safety, Office of Homeland Security, Emergency Preparedness, and Office of Fire Service, the 911 Communications Center, and the animal shelter, and the Public Safety Department. So it sounds like your agency, your -- your department is just that, it's a separate department. It's not a fire department or a fire district.

**MR. PERRILLOUX:**

 So that's what you accept from the -- the ordinances that was sent, as far as into the legalities of it? It's -- the department --

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 Okay. You're not a firefighter, correct?

**MR. PERRILLOUX:**

 I am a firefighter, sir. I been a firefighter since 1992. I was certified firefighter in 1998.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 Okay. So you respond to fire calls?

**MR. PERRILLOUX:**

 I do. I don't respond -- just like you need any other district chief or any assistant or chief of operations as we haven't -- St. John parish or deputy chief, I don't respond to the day-to-day normal car fires or house fires that don't go beyond past one alarm. No, sir. However, if it is a mutual aid call or structure fire, I am on scene, and I do respond to it.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 Okay. I can only go by what's presented before me and --

**MR. PERRILLOUX:**

 I understand. I understand that.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 -- and the only thing I see is that you're on call in the event there's a natural or hurricane or so something happens with --

**MR. PERRILLOUX:**

 No, sir. Yes. And -- and -- and, again, the Department of Public Safety is over the Department of Fire Services, and that should be highlighted in the packet of that Ms. Kay sent to you guys out there. It -- it -- it's over the volunteer fire departments, as St. John has Office of Fire Services, which is our paid sector. We -- we're a combination fire department with the west bank of our parish, St. John West Side, incorporating the majority of the volunteers in St. John the Baptist Parish.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 Okay. So the fire chiefs answer to you?

**MR. PERRILLOUX:**

 Yes. We only have one remaining fire chief. We have Cane Dufrene (phonetic) who is the chief of operations. His title isn't the fire chief of St. John Parish. If you look at the warrant that I sign every month, it states who's acting as the fire chief of St. John Parish. We have volunteer fire, which is on the west side of St. John Parish. You may also want to look at your SSP forms for the correct Civil Service or documentation of -- which -- that's represented St. John the Baptist Parish.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 Okay. Let me ask this. You said you're Interim Director.

**MR. PERRILLOUX:**

 Of public safety, that's correct. Under Civil Service, my Civil Service position is Assistant Director of Public Safety.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 You're finished, Ronnie?

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 No, no. I got one more question. The -- the person that you took the place of, he or she, did they receive State supplemental pay, to your knowledge?

**MR. PERRILLOUX:**

 To my knowledge -- to my knowledge, the -- the first time that I think there's only -- since 1958, there's only been five directors of public safety in St. John Parish. In inception of the St. John Office of Fire Services, the person prior to me, none of them were actually certified firefighters or had been in a paid fire service or system before I came to St. John Parish, sir.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 Okay. I was also looking at the website for St. John the Baptist, and, you know, it says that all emergency preparedness response and recovery and mitigation activities are coordinated through this facility, which includes Office of Fire Service --

**MR. PERRILLOUX:**

 Absolutely.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 -- Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness. This is kind of a -- oh, this is kind of a thin line. I'm -- I'm -- I'm not really sure, but I'll listen to the other Board members, what questions they may have.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 All right. You're finished, Ronnie?

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 Yeah.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Does anybody else have any questions for Mr. Perrilloux?

**MR. PARKER:**

 Mr. President, Richard Parker. I just kind of got a -- a statement just listening to him talk. He answers to the Parish President and -- and he's like -- he's an emergency management or emergency services coordinator, but, I mean, the fire chiefs, they answer to somebody, but that doesn't make their boss automatically qualify for State pay. I guess what I'm getting at. I mean, if the fire chief answers in Jefferson Parish to the Council, that doesn't make every Councilman eligible for State pay. Because everybody answers to somebody, you know.

 In his job description, I'm seeing him more like an emergency management role than a fire department role, and my opinion from what we've always qualified who would qualify for State pay and with the State pay rules, my opinion is that that position doesn't qualify for that.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Yes, sir. Thank you, Richie. Anybody else? You want to say something?

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Brien, this is Mark. I'm -- Mr. Perrilloux, are you -- is Spencer, are you also known as Spencer Perrilloux?

**MR. PERRILLOUX:**

 Negative. Spencer Perrilloux is one of the firemen in the district.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Okay.

 (Off-the-record discussion.)

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Dwayne, do you have any comments?

**MR. THEVIS:**

 I don't have any comments -- discuss a little further on it to some other items.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Okay. So we need to make a motion, either to deny or accept Mr. Perrilloux. I'm saying that Mr. Perrilloux does not qualify to receive supplemental pay. Everything I read, I think he belongs to the Homeland Security, more of a Sheriff's deputy.

 Gentlemen, what's y'all's pleasure?

**MR. WILLIAMS:**

 Charles. I would make a motion to deny that there is no new evidence presented and based on our previous decision that we deny Mr. Perrilloux's request.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Brien speaking. Do I have a second?

**MR. PARKER:**

 Parker. I'll second.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Any more discussion?

 (No response.)

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Hearing no discussion, I'm going to repeat the motion before we vote. Mr. Williams said that he wants to uphold the decision on November -- November 1st (sic), 2021. Am I correct in saying that, Mr. Williams?

**MR. WILLIAMS:**

 Yes, sir.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Okay. Everybody understands? All in favor of upholding our decision on November 1 (sic), 2021, signify by saying "aye."

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Excuse me, Brien. The meeting is -- the meeting was on the 17th.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 17th. Okay. I'm reading it wrong. 17th.

 Give us a roll call, Mark. I can't hear everybody.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Okay. Mr. Ruiz.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 I vote to uphold.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Mr. Schillace.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 Aye.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Mr. Thevis?

**MR. THEVIS:**

 Aye.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Mr. Parker.

**MR. PARKER:**

 Aye.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Mr. Williams.

**MR. WILLIAMS:**

 Aye.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 The motions to uphold our decision on November 17th passes.

**MR. PERRILLOUX:**

 All right. Thank you, gentlemen. Y'all have a wonderful day.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Okay. Next, on the agenda, we have no new departments and no old business, which is good. We got a lot of stuff cleaned up last meeting.

 New business, are y'all ready to proceed into new business?

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Yes, ma'am. Give me one second. Okay.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 All right.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Angela Ragusa, Broussard Fire Department

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 All right. New business, we have the Broussard Fire -- Broussard Fire Department, Ms. Angela Ragusa. The reason this is being brought before the Board is that her job is administrative assistant. We do not have a -- an official job description from her, so going on that, we brought it before the Board. And this is a Civil Service town, so her job description is administrative assistant -- her job title is administrative assistant.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 There is a job description.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 I'm sorry?

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Wait up. One at a time. Nobody speaks. Ms. Kay is speaking. Are you finished, Ms. Kay?

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Yeah. Mark, you said there is a job description?

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 There is.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 It's not in the packet, huh?

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Yes, ma'am. It was -- it's the last page, City of Broussard, to whom it may concern.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Okay. I'm sorry. Yes. It -- it -- they do have something on there about her duties. Her duties with the fire department as fire administrative assistant are described below. Do y'all all have that and can read that?

**MR. RUIZ:**

 That's all -- I've read that before. That's -- that's my -- this is Brien speaking. The job classification that I read through the packet was that she -- it doesn't say anywhere in there that she -- in her job classification that she fights fires, so. It's the last page. I'm reading it, Ms. Angela M. Ragusa, to whom it may concern, and it says -- and everything I'm reading, this is the chief's -- chief's -- chiefs assistant at the office, that's the only way I can put it.

**MR. PARKER:**

 Mr. President, this is Richard Parker. I got a question.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Go ahead. You can speak.

**MR. PARKER:**

 All right. Thank you. Her title is a administrative assistant, and maybe our attorney or Ms. Kay, you can correct me if I'm wrong, but above the description for her to qualify says she -- her title has to be secretary to the fire chief or administrative assistant to the fire chief or something like that. Something that -- for the attorney, I'm referring that she -- for the fire chief, basically.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 So this -- this is Brien speaking. It -- it -- in my past experience, if the fire chief wanted his administrative assistant to -- to be -- to receive supplemental pay, it requires -- to be added in there so she would qualify or that person would qualify for supplemental pay. As we read it today, she doesn't -- this person does not qualify according to the statute.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 This is Ronnie. I -- I'm sorry. Are y'all finished?

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Who's speaking, please?

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 This is Ronnie.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Go ahead, Ronnie.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 Okay. Angela, can you hear me?

**MS. RAGUSA:**

 Yes, sir. I can hear you.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 Okay. I have a question or two. Okay.

 I see -- I see within the package, you are -- you have your Firefighter I certification. You do work more than 35 hours a week. Do you -- do you respond to fire calls?

**MS. RAGUSA:**

 I do.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 Okay. Do you fight fire?

**MS. RAGUSA:**

I -- I have fought fire, and I -- I respond in any way that they need me to respond, whatever they need me to do when I get there.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 You finished, Ronnie?

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 Yeah, that's it. Yeah. This is Ronnie.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 I understand that she made do them type of things, but it needs to be in her job description. And -- do that. It needs to be in her job descriptions in order for her and for us to understand that she -- she's a firefighter, plus administrative assistant.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 Okay. This is Ronnie. I have another question or -- or a statement. Here again, based on what I see before me, your job duties is on a City of Broussard letterhead. I need to see something -- you are under Civil Service, correct?

**MS. RAGUSA:**

 Yes.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 Okay. I need to see your Civil Service job description, and, from that point, if it's not clear that -- that part of your duties and responsibilities is responding to the fire ground and participating on the fire ground, then you do not meet the qualifications set forth to receive supplemental pay. So if -- may have -- we -- you may have resubmit if that is -- if -- if that is not in there or have something changed to that effect.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Thank you, Ronnie.

**MR. THEVIS:**

 Dwayne Thevis. I have a question for Chief Champagne.

**MR. CHAMPAGNE:**

Yes, sir.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Go ahead, Dwayne.

**MR. THEVIS:**

 Is she -- is she taking Casey's (phonetic) place?

**MR. CHAMPAGNE:**

 Yeah. She took Casey's place. So when she was originally hired -- let me give y'all a little background. When she was originally hired, she was strictly administration. Since that time, I think she's coming up on her three-year anniversary, she enrolled herself into a recruit academy in St. Martin Parish, went through the entire recruit -- recruit academy, passed the recruit academy, went on to take HAZ-MAT awareness, HAZ-MAT ops, Firefighter I, all successfully passing all -- all parts of it, and now she's working on Firefighter II.

 So, with that, she's now able to -- since she learned all the skills of a fireman, she can actually leave the office and respond to structure calls, fires, and pretty much operate in any fashion that we need, whether it's you know, going in and fighting the fire or doing something else on the fire ground, she's able to do, you know, all the above. You know, we did not change her -- there is a job description from Civil Service that I had submitted to the city. The city felt it was too long to submit to the board, so they -- I think they abbreviated it, and I didn't see what they actually submitted. But the -- you know, and she might -- and maybe we need to go back to Civil Service and -- and add in that she can also now do the other side of the -- of the fire department.

**MR. THEVIS:**

 Was Casey getting supplemental pay?

**MR. CHAMPAGNE:**

 No. Casey -- no. Casey was not receiving supplemental because Casey had never been through -- Casey had never gone through a recruit academy or passed any of the, you know -- never even tried to take any of the tests, she -- so she -- she was never qualified for -- for that.

**MR. THEVIS:**

 Okay.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 Ronnie speaking. Chief, basically, you -- I feel you kind of answered your own question or either our questions. You need to go back and -- and -- and revisit this, change the title, or -- or if you keep the same title, you need to include these firefighting duties within her job description. It sounds like she meets the qualifications, but, basically, what I see before me, she does not. So you need to get those changes made so she -- she'll -- so that she will be eligible to receive the supplemental pay. But, based on what I see before me, I cannot vote yes to approve this.

**MR. CHAMPAGNE:**

 Once we have -- once we go through the Civil Service process of adding to her qualifi -- or job description, we just start -- you know, start from scratch and submit a new application?

**MR. RUIZ:**

 First of all -- you -- you're correct. So this is Brien speaking. But, first of all, we got to deny. We're going to have to -- if we deny, we'll deny her application today. We'll send you a written letter. You'll appeal it -- and -- and Mr. Schillace and the rest of the board members, questioned you about, and then we'll review your -- her case again, and then we'll vote to give her or not give her supplemental pay at that time.

 But, gentlemen, first of all, I need a motion.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 This is Ronnie. I'll make a motion to deny the request for supplemental pay for Angela Ragusa.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Do I have a second?

**MR. THEVIS:**

 Dwayne Thevis. I'll second.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 All right. Do we have any more questions?

 (No response.)

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Hearing no questions, all in favor signify by saying "aye."

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 You've got to call roll.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Make a roll call, Mark.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Okay. Mr. Ruiz.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Aye.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Mr. Schillace.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 I vote aye to deny.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Mr. Thevis?

**MR. THEVIS:**

 Aye.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Mr. Parker.

**MR. PARKER:**

 Aye.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Mr. Williams.

**MR. WILLIAMS:**

 Aye.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 What was the vote, Mark? I couldn't hear everybody. Did the motion pass?

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Yes. All five voted to deny.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Okay. I -- I couldn't hear everything. Thank you, Ms. Kay.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 And -- and I ask this, excuse me, but, Michelle -- because I keep getting breakup. Michelle, are you getting everybody?

**MR. RUIZ:**

 I keep getting break up, too.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Yeah. I -- I'm not sure, but, yeah, some -- some of us, and I don't know if it's just my speaker or what, but anyway. Sorry.

**COURT REPORTER:**

No, it's me, also. I'm getting breakup and a beeping noise, so I'm trying to get what I can get.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Okay.

DAN COTTEN

CADDO PARISH FIRE DISTRICT #1

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Okay. The next thing on agenda.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 I'm sorry. We have one final item -- I'm sorry. We have two items.

 Next, on the agenda is the Caddo Parish Fire District No. 1, Dan Cotton. And Mr. Cotten, there were -- were several questions that the staff had.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Is he with us?

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 I don't think he joined. Mark, did he join?

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Not to my knowledge.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 No. Okay. Well, the questions were, number one, is he part time or full time, what is his hiring authority? He sent this letter that he himself signed, and it's got an appointing authority signature, but we don't know who that is. There is no fire chief's signature on the application. He had a couple letters that he attached from back in 2015. I mean, obviously, he worked and received from the City of Shreveport up until about 1999, and then, from there on, it's kind of a -- we're -- we're not real sure what he's been doing.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 I -- I -- this is Brien speaking. I went through this application, and I have a letter before me that says -- from his attorney saying that he is a part-time employee, so. And then on his application, it says more than 35 (phonetic) hours a week, but I got a letter, and I'm sure everybody else has this letter, saying that the chief's position is part-time with 34 hours a week. Is my understanding that Chief Cotton is working this position and has served for -- in last 15 years. So the letter from his attorney -- more -- it says that he's a part-time employee. As a part-time employee, he's not -- he doesn't qualify for supplemental pay.

 Do we have any questions? Ronnie?

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 I'm still looking through this. I don't -- I agree with you. I see what you're making reference to, but that was dated February the 26th of 2015. Everything that I have is like -- it's old. I mean, it's like from -- 2015, you know, to -- due to the lack of information, and -- and I don't -- I don't -- I don't see how we could approve this. I don't -- I don't see anything current.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Richie, you got any questions, Dwayne, Charles?

**MR. PARKER:**

 I agree -- I agree with what you're saying. If he's a part-time employee, he doesn't qualify, and it's right here in black and white on his letter.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 All right. We need to entertain a motion.

**MR. PARKER:**

 This is Parker. I'll make a motion to deny.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 This is Ronnie. I second.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 We have a motion, and we have a second. Do we have any more discussions?

 (No response.)

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Okay. Let's have a roll-call vote.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Okay. Mr. Ruiz.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Vote for the motion.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Mr. Schillace.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 Aye vote for the motion.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Mr. Thevis?

**MR. THEVIS:**

 Aye.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Mr. Parker.

**MR. PARKER:**

 Aye.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Mr. Williams.

**MR. WILLIAMS:**

 Aye.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Okay. Mr. Chairman, that was five ayes, if you couldn't hear -- hear all of them.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Right. I heard them all. The motion passed.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Okay.

ALBERT EVANS

SLIDELL FIRE DEPARTMENT

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 The final agenda item under new business is the Slidell Fire Department, Albert Evans. And this one is just a situation where he was actually approved at the last meeting with an effective date of 7/15 -- or I'm sorry -- 1/01/22, which is one year after his employment date, because at the time of that application, he did not submit any prior service. Since that time, he has submitted a prior service form with the St. Tammany Fire -- Fire Protection District No. 12 for 6/24/20, to 12/31/20. And so, Mark, correct me if I'm wrong, you've calculated that new effective date being 7/15/21?

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 That's because that's when he got his Firefighter I.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Okay. And with his prior service now, now that -- that would qualify him to start receiving as of the date of his --

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 All right. This is Ronnie. I make a motion to approve Albert Evans.

**MR. THEVIS:**

 Dwayne Thevis. I second that motion.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Is there any more discussion on Albert Evans?

 (No response.)

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Hearing none, call for a roll-call vote.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Okay. Mr. Ruiz.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Aye.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Mr. Schillace.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 Aye.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Mr. Thevis?

**MR. THEVIS:**

 Aye.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Mr. Parker.

**MR. PARKER:**

 Aye.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Mr. Williams.

**MR. WILLIAMS:**

 Aye.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 The motion passes.

**INTERNAL AUDIT BRIEFING/CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN**

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Okay. That's all of the new business that we had, and Wayne is going to take us through the next couple of items and -- and tell you some new updates.

**MR. TEDESCO:**

All right. The first one -- well, the first three rather is going to have to do with a -- a recent internal audit report that we had in house and just some of the issues that we're experiencing and, you know, some corrective action plans that we're going to need to put in place to rectify those audit findings.

 The first one being the overpayments. We have a large number of overpayments on the books that go back, you know, years. And so a lot of it has to do with, you know, I guess us requiring y'all to send us the warrants sort of prematurely, meaning those warrants are sort of due to us in the office by the 10th of the month, and, you know, a lot can happen, right, in -- in the next 20 days, but some -- you know, the timeframe between, say, the 10th and the 30th, but, by that time, we've done already paid that particular employee based on your directive.

 So part of the corrective action plan in -- in the future and as a part of the project building is, we're going to make a shift towards not requiring those warrants to be received in our office until after month end. So, when we get those warrants from you, they should be all inclusive of what's needed to prevent the need to go back and try to recoup.

 That being said, you know, it's sort of twofold. We -- we also want to try perhaps to get to a point of -- of being able to pay the department versus paying the individual employees, and there's a process that need to take place to make that happen, but that's -- that's our vision.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Excuse me, for a second. This is Brien speaking.

 So what you're saying is, y'all would rather send one check to the fire department instead of individually?

**MR. TEDESCO:**

Yes. It won't be necessarily a check, a paper check, per se, but, yes, it would be a lot easier to manage, for example, say, 600 to the departments versus, you know, 11,000 to 13,000 individual payments, so, yes, that is the vision.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 And -- and let me -- let me -- let me jump in here. Sorry, sorry.

 That is something that has been discussed in the past and -- and will -- could be discussed again. It would require change in statute, but from an administrative viewpoint, that is truly the better way to handle it, because we don't know these employees. They're the department's employees.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Yeah. But let me tell you something, Ms. Kay. The Sheriff -- y'all do that for the Sheriff.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 I'm sorry. You broke up.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 I said, y'all do that for the Sheriff, correct?

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Well, yes. We don't actually handle the Sheriffs, the -- the Treasurer's Office handles the Sheriffs, but that is the way they do it for them, right. They pay each of the 64 Sheriffs.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 I know for a fact that the Sheriff decides how much each individual gets --man club (phonetic), because that's the most powerful club in the state of Louisiana, that's why they decide to do the way to do it. I don't like that idea at all, and I don't get a state check. I'm retired. I don't like that idea at all. I'm giving you my opinion.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Well, like I said, it -- it would not be dis -- it would not be decided upon today or tomorrow, but it would have to be a legislative change.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 I know that.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 And we'll talk a little bit more about some statute updates that need to be made in preparation for this system, too.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 I understand.

**MR. TEDESCO:**

 Okay.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Mr. -- Mr. Wayne, go ahead.

**MR. TEDESCO:**

 All right. Well, that being said, let's move on to the second item we were going to try to discuss, and that is the account receivables. And, you know, getting with legal counsel in house, you know, we were trying to, you know, follow up on last Board meeting's inquiry, where we were trying to first -- the prescriptive period on whether it was going to be three-year versus five years. At best, legal counsel internal can tell we believe that prescriptive period to be three years.

 So our intention, at least starting immediately, is that, you know, we will send out, you know, as a part of the warrant package each month, and you've already seen it last month, that initial billing and subsequently in the following month's warrant, you'll get that second notice and still unpaid. And that next warrant, you will get that third and final notice, per se. And that's our initial attempt that giving you three attempts to pay, but -- but as a part of the -- the project and the rebuild we're -- we're exploring other billable software packages that would, you know, provide a more presentable invoice, a detailed ledger, if you will, where we are going to go back and try to recoup that -- that three years that -- that's still owed.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 My -- my question is what if they don't send the money back after three years? We file suit?

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Are -- are you saying, what do we do if the department doesn't pay us?

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Yes, ma'am, that's what I'm trying to say.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 We -- we don't really have a a solution to that just yet.

**MR. JUNKIN:**

This is Connor. I can jump in here.

 Basically, the only mechanism we have right now is to forward the debt to the Office of Debt Recovery, which is a separate division of the State, and it's -- I believe it's under the Attorney General's Office and that they would need to --they would file a suit there. Whether or not they, you know, determined that they would or not is a different question, but that's -- that's the only mechanism we have right now. The -- the Supplemental Pay Board doesn't -- can't do it itself.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Yes. That's why I just thought maybe -- you explained it. Thank you.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 That's all part -- that's all going to be part of our modernization project is to get a good receivables system in place. And -- and, first of all, we do believe that the modifications that are going to be making to the project are going to, first of all, decrease the amount of the accounts receivable. Okay. Because we'll have clear deadlines, easier ways of communication, and that kind of stuff, so we feel like that's going to reduce it already. Okay. And then we are in the interim working with our legal advisor, with Connor, on making sure that, not only the administrative rules for the -- for the issuance of supplemental pay, but the statutes also, are in line and clearly define who is responsible for the overpayments.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Yes, ma'am. I understand.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 And we're just letting y'all know, because you may get some phone calls as these people start to get some second and third requests for payments, and if y'all get any calls, that way y'all know what's going on and can advise them appropriately.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 I get more police calls than fire calls.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 You want to be on that --

 Okay. Do you want to go on to the military?

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 This is Ronnie. I have a question. After the third notice that the department receives, then you going to send the final notice saying that this department has been turned over to the Debt -- the State Debt Recovery department?

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 As soon as we find out and get a clear-cut answer on how we should proceed on that. We're in the process of writing all that now. But if -- if that is the case, then certainly we would notify the departments.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 Okay. Again, it was kind of broken up. How far are you going back?

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Three years.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 Three, you said?

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Yes. And we operate on the fiscal-year basis, July 1st through June 30th.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 Okay. That's it.

**MR. TEDESCO:**

All right. The third item we want to hit on is the active duty military leave. The internal audit brought to light some situations where we have folks on full-time National Guard duty and getting paid, and they've been on duty for quite some time number of years.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Shouldn't that be a chief's responsibility?

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 I'm sorry. What was that?

**MR. TEDESCO:**

Yeah.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 What I'm asking, is -- isn't that the chief's responsibility?

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Well, I guess we have to interpret the law first to see who is --

**MR. RUIZ:**

 I understand the law -- the law -- I helped pass those laws.

**MR. JUNKIN:**

 Hey, this is -- this is Connor. Let me jump in here. So it is the chief's responsibility to notify us when they are on military leave and when that is changed. However, what's going on here is just clarifying the interpretation of what active duty means. Because of -- as of right now, what I guess our staff has been doing is just looking to see if it says active duty and then placing them under the active duty under Revised Statute 29:405, which basically says they -- they keep receiving pay. However, whether or not the full-time National Guard duty is the kind of active duty that qualifies them to continue receiving supplemental pay is more of the legal question, and that's -- that's more of how the Board needs to proceed is clarifying if -- if that's how they're going to interpret it, if full-time National Guard duty is going to qualify under active duty.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 So do we need to -- this is Brien. We need to interpret it, or do we need to address the law to define it?

**MR. JUNKIN:**

 So I can provide you with a legal interpretation of it and the Board can -- the Board will have to make the decision for the individuals who it impacts to see if they still qualify or not based upon their current military orders.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Okay. That sounds good. And this is Brien speaking. So --

**MR. JUNKIN:**

 Okay.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 How long -- Ms. Kay, how long would it take to get that information to us? Will we have it -- address it at the May meeting or it might take a little bit longer than that?

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Well, what we're doing here in house is, we are -- with Connor's assistance, like he said, he's going to give us an interpretation of the statute as it stands. We are going through everybody who is currently on military leave and still receiving their supplemental pay to try to get the -- their current status and their current military orders. And, as soon as we bring those, as we see ones that may -- some of them may all be perfect, and we -- we won't have a situation, but if we find one that we think, according to -- to the interpretation of the law and what their current military orders state, that they may or may not be eligible, then we will bring that before the Board. And since we have -- there is -- there is -- this is quite a big list of those that are receiving, so it will take some time. It's not like we're going to have them all done by the next meeting, but --

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Right. This is Brien speaking. Because having military orders, I can only speak from experience, I had a guy -- in St. Bernard to go to National Guard duties. Well, we have a few National Guard guys, and this -- this one guy kept going, and come to find out, my chief checked into it, talk to his supervisor, and he was volunteering for all these duties.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 And -- and that is an issue, yes.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Yeah. And my chief stepped in and said, no, you got to make a choice, either you going to be a firefighter or you going to be a military guy. Well, my -- my gentleman decided to be a military guy, because volunteering and getting orders is two different things. I -- and, look, I -- I -- I respect all -- all the soldiers out there. Thank God they're there, You know, but what's right is right, and what's wrong is wrong, so.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 We're going to research each case, and we will bring them forward when the -- if the Board needs to be involved in either denying -- or I -- I have a feeling that a lot of these we're -- when we contact the towns, we're going to find out that they're not even employed by the town any longer, and so that -- that solves that issue there. We will just have to -- we'll bring them to the Board and say, they're no longer employed by the town, then they will go off of supplemental pay.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Yes. Thank you.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 All right. I'm sorry. Wayne, did you have anything else on that?

**MR. TEDESCO:**

 Well, just help me out here. Like y'all are aware of one particular individual, but we weren't looking to come with each individual one by one. We were sort of looking for a blanket decision to -- to essentially make sure -- you know, analyze and see if this particular individual falls within one of the four criteria outlined here in 29:405.2, which is --

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Well, Wayne, what -- what we will have to do is, we will make a determination if we need Board approval. The staff, of course, we could not determine that they be taken off of supplemental pay, that is only a Board decision. So the ones that we find that are okay, we feel they do meet the criteria, that will be fine, but ones that we find in our research if we feel like they do not meet the criteria or they are no longer employed by their town or something like that, then those will need to be brought before the Board.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 I understand that, Ms. Kay. Do you -- you understand it, Wayne?

**MR. TEDESCO:**

I do understand it. I think we're on -- police and fire a little differently.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 -- looking for --

**MR. TEDESCO:**

What's that?

**MR. RUIZ:**

 I said that's not what you was looking for. You were looking for a blanket --and I don't think we can do that. We have to discuss that with Connor.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 No.

**MR. TEDESCO:**

Okay.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Yes.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 I think Connor would have to make that decision, a legal opinion.

**MR. JUNKIN:**

 Well, I can't really make the decision, but what I -- all I can really do is provide the -- the interpretation to the -- and to -- to the Board. And I can tell you right now what my interpretation is, is that full-time National Guard duty does not qualify as active duty under the requirements of the statute, because full-time National Guard duty and active duty are both separately defined and under federal law as to national -- as to the National Guard specifically in 32 USC Section 101, and active duty is under Subsection 12 of that law, and it specifically excludes full-time National Guard duty from the definition of active duty. And full-time National Guard duty is defined under Subsection 19.

 So my interpretation that if 29:405 says that, you know, these four types of active duty are the ones that can continue receiving supplemental pay, none of those four are full-time National Guard duty. If somebody's orders say that they are full-time National Guard duty, they're not under active duty, and, therefore, they do not -- they're not entitled to continue receiving supplemental pay. That's my interpretation.

 As far as the individual application to each one of those, that is a decision for the Board to make, or also if -- to whether or not the Board wants to adopt my interpretation as to how they want to go forward and look at those.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 This is what I would like, I'd like all that information so we can adopt or reject whatever the Board just -- members decide on that. Can that be done?

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 That -- that is what we will do.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 All right. Anybody else has any questions about that?

 (No response.)

**MR. TEDESCO:**

 All right.

**STATUTE/ADMINISTRATIVE RULES UPDATES**

**MR. RUIZ:**

 The next thing.

**MR. TEDESCO:**

Just moving on to the statutes and administrative rule updates. Two things, one, just wanted to mention that, you know, although we did recently go to our normal annual request before JLCB for Act 110 back pay, we made a decision internally to go -- go ahead and try to go a little more often so that these folks ain't waiting an entire year. That decision being made, that we're going to go semi-annually in March and September. So, even though we recently went in December, our intent is to go next month in March again, so, again, just help these folks not have to wait so long.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 That -- that's fine. That's great, Wayne. We -- they do that -- so twice a year would be great.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 March and September?

**MR. TEDESCO:**

Yes.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Yes.

**MR. TEDESCO:**

 Good. Thank you.

 But the bigger issue here that we wanted to try to talk about with Act 110 is -- and the two statutes referenced there were -- were included in the zip file, and, and the -- and the language for police versus fire is different or obsolete, actually, in fire's case, but in police's case, for example, and this is a 40:1667.8, you know, you'll -- you'll notice that the language says, no payment shall be made to any one recipient in excess of $10,000 at any one time. So what we're trying to get interpreted is, does that mean that if someone was approved for, say, 14,000 bucks, are they capped at 10 grand, or does that mean that I just cannot pay them more than 10 grand in one payment, meaning I could pay them 10 grand this month and pay them the difference of 4 grand the following month, you know, that the uncertainty we currently have in house.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Right. And -- and let me tell you, I -- it all depends whose fault and the circumstance on why we owe somebody that much money.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Well, I -- I think our -- our question to y'all is, that limit is only in the police statute. It is not in the fire statute, because, you know, they are separate. And so our question to y'all is, we're going to have to make some -- some updates to the statutes with -- in conjunction with the new system to change some of the housekeeping terminology and stuff like that, would y'all want to consider adding a limit to fire?

**MR. RUIZ:**

 I really would have to think about that, Ms. Kay, because like I said --

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 And that's not something that has to be decided today.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Right. I know, but what I'm saying is, it depends --

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Two thousand -- that's, what, 18 months, I want to say.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Yeah. I -- I understand that, but let me tell you -- some -- some new kid comes on there, they might not even know they get supplemental pay. I've seen that happen before. I ask them, why you not getting supplemental pay? Well, what's supplemental pay.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Well -- and, you know, this -- that's -- you -- you speak the truth right there. Okay. I know that. Having just come from a new chief's training Monday, Candy and Wayne and I went and did a training at the new chief's class and what we try to understand -- to express to everybody, and -- and we need to do some training and fire too, because you know, it's not on the firefighter to apply for supplemental pay. It's on the chief. It's the department that needs to handle that. And, yes, there are a lot of situations, not in the big departments, but in the smaller departments for sure, where we see applications that come in sometimes two years after the fact, and we're asking, why did you wait? And they tell us, well, we didn't know. Well, that's their job. And when we have to go to the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget and explain why we are getting these applications so late, because that is all always one of their questions, why are you having to pay this back pay? And we say, because the towns have not submitted the applications timely.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 I told -- Ms. Kay, I've been trying to explain that to fire chiefs for the last four years, the last 20 years that I've been sitting on this board, so I understand the frustration.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 But we just wanted to make y'all aware of that. And we are -- Connor is going to seek an opinion on the fire -- I mean, excuse me, on the police statute for some clarification on how that should be applied. So we wanted to ask y'all and put that in your -- in your thoughts, do y'all want to set some type of limit?

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Can you -- can you ask Connor to send me that language as soon as possible?

**MR. JUNKIN:**

 Well, I -- I -- I mean, I heard you, so.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 When -- when we get an opinion, I don't know how fast we'll get one, but when we get an opinion, we'll share it with everyone.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 I want to see the language that we have now for police.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Oh, it's in your packet.

**MR. TEDESCO:**

Yeah. There's -- so the statute on police there is a statute of 40:1667.8, and you'll see it in there. And your's, fire, is the other one, which is 1666.9, which essentially has that thing in it.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 So I just -- I can just type that into my computer, and that's going to come up?

**MR. TEDESCO:**

 Well, it's in that file.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 In that zip drive.

**MR. TEDESCO:**

 It's in that zip file with the applications.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 I understand the zip file, but, for some reason, my computer won't let me open everything up.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 How about -- how about I will -- I will email you a copy of both of them after we get off?

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Right. I just want to read them.

**MR. TEDESCO:**

 Yep.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 If we going to -- if the Professional Firefighters of Louisiana are changes, I need to know as soon as possible, so I'll be looking at it. I'll -- I'll figure out a way to get to read them. All right.

 What's next?

**MODERNIZATION PROJECT UPDATES**

**MR. TEDESCO:**

 All right. Just moving on to some updates on the project itself. First one being the onboarding of the -- the IT folks.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 I'm sorry. It kicked me out.

**MR. TEDESCO:**

 Of the Zoom?

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Yes. I got kicked out of the Zoom, but I'm back.

**MR. TEDESCO:**

 Okay. But, anyway you know, right after January 1st, you know, we hit the ground running. We had out first onboarder come aboard, who, well, unfortunately, is hospitalized currently. But, you know, since then, we've, I think, hired two more of our -- two more contractors who we've -- we've gotten going and looking at some different data-cleansing-type activities. And, you know, we're really getting going, you know, coming to up with the logo and looking at the receivables and sort of looking at perhaps inactive-type records as we, you know, go through the purge process to make sure that when we, you know, copy things over into the new system that only good, valid data comes over. But all that to say, we are moving pretty swiftly, having multiple project meetings per week, sometimes four to six meetings a week, and we're moving. So it's progress, and we'll get there in -- in small phases is the goal.

 And part of that brings us to that second bullet of, you know, our intent is to send out surveys to, I guess, you know, your different departments, perhaps with your help, where we try to analyze what type of IT functionality they have as far as again, warrants getting to an electronic warrant versus is a -- a paper, snail mail warrant where we need to make sure that you have good email platforms, right. We want real, governmental email addresses, not, you know, gmail and AOL and these other different kind of email addresses, but, you know, we need to make sure you got a good, valid scanner and all those kind of things. So our intent is to send out surveys to just see what types of equipment you do have, do not have, can get, can't get, you know, that kind of thing. You know, the goal is to get -- get everybody sorted to that -- that electronic age.

 And as far as the next bullet item on the improvements to the delivery of warrants, that -- that's what I mentioned, you know, getting towards an -- an email warrant versus paper, snail mail, and we're -- we're in the process now of sort of redoing it, reworking it, you know, getting more up-to-date verbiage and statute reference in it, and just -- just, you know, bringing clarity to the warrant, you know, really emphasizing, you know, the last day on payroll, for example, right. Somebody's last day work may be a particular date, but, of course, they then take leave, so they're still getting paid by their department, therefore, entitled to supplemental pay. But you -- you know, we get a lot of problems on, you know, last day in the office or last day work, you know, not accounting for that leave. But so, anyway, bringing clarity to, you know, last payroll, that's one -- one big enhancement for clarity. The recent surveys we've sent out as a part of -- of our -- of our internal audit, we really got a lot of different -- it was anonymous, but we got a lot of different conflicting feedback on -- on what -- what folks thought the date should be and how many days they thought they should be entitled to. So it was -- it was pretty eye opening, and I think, you know, us -- us bringing that clarity on a warrant would just kind of help dodge the problems on the front end. But we're working on what a -- what a -- what a more modernized warrant would look like.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Luckily, these people are answering your surveys.

**MR. TEDESCO:**

 We didn't have that many.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Well, not as many as we'd hope for. Okay. We sent out -- they sent out 50 and that was over both fire and police and got, what, 15 responses back.

**MR. TEDESCO:**

 It wasn't a whole lot.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 That's not good. We are going to be sending out a new questionnaire from us that is going to ask these technical-type questions, and we will need to get a much better response. So we will let y'all know. And we ask that anytime y'all are in meetings or whatever, chiefs association things, or -- or your -- your specific organizations, please, let them know, when they get communication from us, please, because it's going to be very important from now on. The new plan in this first -- I'm sorry?

**MR. RUIZ:**

 I said I'll be with a lot of people next week.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Okay. Is that the -- the association?

**MR. RUIZ:**

 -- so they -- they can hang out in that chief's circle and pass that information to them.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Okay. All right. Wayne, is that all you had?

**MR. TEDESCO:**

 Good. As we -- as -- yes, that's all I have with respect to the project for now.

**NEW APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL - 63**

**MR. TEDESCO:**

 And as we move to the next agenda item, I first wanted to just mention that what we looking to get here to get a little more concrete clarity on our approvals here, with respect to applications that we're going to ask for two different motions, one of them, we want you to make a motion on the new applicants, and then, two, we want you to make a separate motion on the approval of the Act 110, that way we, you know, keep those two issues sort of isolated.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Let's go with the motion, gentlemen, on new applications.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 I'll make a motion to approve the new applications. This is Ronnie.

**MR. PARKER:**

 Parker. Second.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Okay. Do we have any more discussion?

 (No response.)

 Hearing none, all in favor by saying by saying "aye." Or roll call if Mark wants to handle it.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Mr. Ruiz.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Aye.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Mr. Schillace.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 Aye.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Mr. Thevis.

**MR. THEVIS:**

 (No audible response.)

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Mr. Parker.

**MR. PARKER:**

 Aye.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Mr. Williams.

**MR. WILLIAMS:**

 Aye.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Motion pass.

 All right. Wayne, you said you wanted a motion of Act 110. I didn't see price on that Act 110.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Yes. It's that -- it's that second to last column. We only actually have one this time.

**MR. TEDESCO:**

 That is one on Page 2 for 150 bucks.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Oh, all right. Going to be on the same as the -- all right. I see it.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 That's for the future. That's for the future. Now, that ain't for today.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 We need a motion to approve it as of today.

**MR. PARKER:**

 Parker. I'll make a motion to approve the Act 110.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Need a second.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 This is Ronnie. I second.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Okay. Ronnie, thank you. I have a question.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 Yes.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 We -- we have never had to have a motion to approve Act 110.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 And -- and, no, you haven't, but, you know, when we -- when we read these statutes and when we do research, we see, oh, gee, we probably should have been requesting this all along. So, yes, we do need something spelled out in particular that y'all are approving that Act 110.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Okay. Well, that'd be fine.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 You've got a motion and a second on the floor. You need to call for the vote.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 We trying.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 Okay.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Roll call.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Okay. Mr. Ruiz.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Aye.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Mr. Schillace.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 Aye.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Mr. Thevis.

**MR. THEVIS:**

 (No audible response.)

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Mr. Parker.

**MR. PARKER:**

 Aye.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 Mr. Williams.

**MR. WILLIAMS:**

 Aye.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Did Mr. Williams vote?

**MR. WILLIAMS:**

 Aye.

**MR. CAMPBELL:**

 The only one that didn't vote is Mr. Thevis.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 All right. The motion passed.

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

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Set the time for the next meeting, May 11th.

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 And just to give y'all some warning, we may -- we haven't discussed everything yet with our chain of command, but we may go back for the next meeting to in-person meetings.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 Okay.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 I'll second that. We definitely need to do that.

 (Off-the-record discussion.)

**MS. DEBENEDETTO:**

 I -- I -- I totally understand. And so, hopefully, hopefully, by the next meeting, we'll be in a -- in a situation where we can, once again, begin having in- person face-to-face meetings.

 On that date, May 11th, Michelle will not be able to be in attendance, our court reporter, but we will -- so we will do the same thing and do a video and -- and recording of that meeting so she can do the minutes.

**MR. SCHILLACE:**

 Yeah. All right. This is Ronnie. I make a motion to adjourn.

**MR. PARKER:**

 This is Parker. I second.

**MR. RUIZ:**

 All in favor, signify by saying "aye."

 (All aye.)

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 February 9, 2022, 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 58, 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

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BRIEN RUIZ, CHAIRMAN

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DWAYNE THEVIS, VICE-CHAIRMAN