

St. Clair Fire Protection Board of Directors  
Meeting Minutes

Date: 8/12/2026

Present

Board of Directors: Tiffany Burton, Andrew Branscum, Sarah Straatmann

Office Assistant: Kim Schuchmann

Chief: Timothy Wideman

Fire Fighters & Volunteer FF: T Myers, J Schultz, A Hansel, J Read, D Cooley, J Sikes, N Via, C Berry, E Woodruff, B Williams, J Jones, T Ware, C Martin

Guests: Kurt Voss

The meeting was called to order by Director Branscum at 6:10 p.m.

Director Straatmann: Aye

Director Branscum: Aye

Director Burton: Aye

Motion was made by Director Branscum to accept the agenda.

Director Straatmann: Aye

Director Branscum: Aye

Director Burton: Aye

Motion was made by Director Burton to accept the Secretary's report for the meeting minutes from July 14<sup>th</sup> 2026.

Director Straatmann: Aye

Director Branscum: Aye

Director Burton: Aye

Motion was made by Director Burton to accept the Secretary's report for the executive meeting minutes from July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

Director Straatmann: Aye

Director Branscum: Aye

Director Burton: Aye

Comments from the public:

None

Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report for audit and pay bills in the amount of \$32,762.75 For 8/11/2026.

Director Straatmann: Aye

Director Branscum: Aye

Director Burton: Aye

Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report for audit and pay bills in the amount of \$14,112.50 For 8/12/2026.

Director Straatmann: Aye

Director Branscum: Aye

Director Burton: Aye

Motion to approve payroll and taxes in the amount of \$ 54,448.95 for the 7/23/2026 payroll.

Director Straatmann: Aye

Director Branscum: Aye

Director Burton: Aye

Motion to approve payroll and taxes in the amount of \$ 50,648.91 for the 8/6/2026 payroll.

Director Straatmann: Aye

Director Branscum: Aye

Director Burton: Aye

**Old Business:**

- 90-day public notice for the adoption of the 2024 international Building Code and International Fire Code will be posted on district website, hard copy available at Administrative Office.
- Refund check in the amount of \$ 767.80 received from Schicker Ford for unused parts for 8319.

**New Business:**

- CD maturing 8/27/26 with FMB

Director Burton made a motion to keep the CD with FMB renewing for 7 months at 3.71%

Director Straatmann: Aye

Director Branscum: Aye

Director Burton: Aye

- Signed a contract with Home Systems for HVAC maintenance and repair

**Vehicle Maintenance:**

- 8319 A/C repair
- 8393 Batteries replaced
- 8339 Flow meter replaced
- 8330 New rear tires
- 8318 New Tires

**Station Maintenance:**

- Received water test for station 2
- Station 4 needs a new AC coil

Director Branscum made a motion to repair the AC unit with Home Systems in the amount of \$5763.66

Director Straatmann: Aye

Director Branscum: Aye

Director Burton: Aye

**Other Business**

- Truck Committee: Still on schedule for October delivery
- Building Committee: need to downsize the plans to stay in budget

**Officers:**

**2665:** none

**Items for Directors:** none

Motion made to move into Executive Session at 6:29 pm

Director Straatmann: Aye

Director Branscum: Aye

Director Burton: Aye

Meeting back in session at 7:41 pm with 0 Votes being taken.

J. Read: I would just say we have had some issues around here; for years, we were told they were being taken care of. I realize no place you work is perfect; you have problems anywhere you go. But saying that everyone is out to get you, playing the victim all the time, and getting on Facebook to write comments—everybody knows where you work. We had an individual who worked here that made a poor decision, and as you know, since you were a fellow fireman, everybody talks. It made us look bad; it made you look bad. When he was here, we had some of the same things going on. We have an issue that I know of; from the way I understand it, we took proper procedure, and now the story is changing because we are fishing for how we are going to get out of this order. It's to the point now that if things aren't fixed around here, I've got to look for a new job, and all these guys feel the exact same way. And I'll be honest with you; there are a lot of things I've been fed up with since I started. Dan, I served under you for a long time. Whenever I took over as acting captain for Josh, you made it hard for me to serve. You're doing the same thing to (?). Jeremy doesn't come around for months and months because he's sick, and they explain the stuff on Facebook; people are asking me, people I go to church with. Tim, I'm sorry that things didn't work out the way you wanted them to, but that's not my fault, that's not his fault; no one's fault here. I don't want anybody to lose their job—I think losing your job sucks—but if you can't figure it out, it's time to move on. I appreciate you guys listening to us; I appreciate you letting us all have the opportunity to work here, but something's got to give because we're falling apart, and we're falling apart quickly.

Director Branscum: Thank you for your comment. Anyone else?

J Schultz: yeah, I would like to have a closed session about my personal problems I've been having here. Since I've been called out in the middle of a meeting like this and I want to address them right then and there.

B Williams: So, address them.

J Read: Yeah, that's what we had to do. So might as well just add to it.

J Schultz: I don't know why you're pointing me out remember there's other guys here.

B Williams: other guys are doing what? Let's hear it.

J Schultz: I'm trying to put it nicely, but I can't, so I'm just going to—respectfully, not in front of everybody—say that the things I've dealt with in the past 6–7 months have affected my marriage. I'm getting pretty close to a divorce, and nothing is being done about my problems. We wonder why I'm so angry; I am very angry because my kid is affected, my family is affected, and my health is affected. I'm running into some health problems I've never had before.

B Williams: Pretty sure you're talking about us; yeah, so go ahead and say it. Has anybody here on C shift seen us mistreating Jeremy in any way, shape, or form since he's been here? If you have, speak up. I've asked you guys this because I saw this coming. Has anybody seen us alone with him at any time, such that we could be mistreating him the way he's claiming?

E Woodruff: I have not

Trent: no

Josiah: No

E Woodruff: I mean it was worth doing we're supposed to follow so we follow them

B Williams: that's the entire issue except one separate one.

J Schultz: that's not what happened OK.

B Williams: I don't know what happened I don't know what you're talking about there was one time we tried to have a sit-down meeting with you and your head exploded.

J Schultz: no that's the one time I'm talking about. We never had. Tried to have a sit at a meeting if you invited the chief into it. So that's my standing on it you want to keep at the lowest level why are we taking it above the highs of the lowest level that we're supposed to take it to.

B Williams: As he was just a neutral party

J Schultz: It doesn't matter it's all the way up here. That'll never happen, doesn't need to happen. No, it doesn't matter it's too late now.

B Williams: OK so this one meeting where your head exploded is causing you to have health issues?

J Schultz: I did not explode, you're trying to get me to rage bait so.

B Williams: You did absolutely

J Schultz: You want me to play the recording?

B Williams: The recording, you recorded from when you started when you came back in after talking to Dan on the phone. I want to hear at the beginning of the meeting like everybody else did.

J Schultz: All right, let's hear it

B Williams: You still have it when he got up and stormed out and all that stuff?

J Schultz: I got up and stormed out because I was being picked on by you.

B Williams: You were not. All he asked you was why you were acting off

J Schultz: No, and I've tried and I tried and I keep on getting picked on and I'm not going to stand for it no more.

B Williams: How are you getting picked on?

J Schultz: I was being picked on the whole time. You threatened to suspended me for two days.

B Williams: Who did?

J Schultz: I keep on getting freaking written up for stuff that's out of my control.

B Williams: Such as?

J Schultz: Calls that I ran on but I was not in control of yeah, I got wrote up for those multiple times.

B Williams: I didn't write you up for that

J Schultz: You wrote me up yes, you did right in front of clay.

B Williams: Clay what did I write him up for?

C Martin: Not doing a report on a call

J Schultz: That was not my call. That was not my call

C Berry: What else was the write up for?

J Schultz: Yeah, allegedly not telling you about something. But I got it in writing where I told you. Yeah, OK.

B Williams: Isn't that on record? Don't we have it all?

J Schultz: I got it on record too so.

K Schuchman: I mean, I'm going to say it because I don't care: collectively, as a district, we are failing. The morale is in the tank, and every single one of us is experiencing physical, mental, and emotional drain every day. There are things that I have heard from different guys who come into my office to sit down and talk, which is fine. I have been 'Doctor Kim' since I was at Edgar Murray School; come, I will be your therapist, it's not a big deal. But it is the same thing over and over again, and it is affecting every single person in this district, from the base firefighter all the way up to the chief and the board members. Collectively, we're failing as a district; the morale is going down, and I'm really afraid that if something doesn't change, if something doesn't get done, and if some of the issues aren't worked out in a peaceful manner, we are going to lose our employees here. We are going to be down to a volunteer station and not be able to run any calls because no one is going to want to come in with the turmoil that's going on at this moment. I know that there are quite a few people—touching on what Jeff said—who are looking for employment elsewhere because it's so bad here. Some of the women I've worked with at Mercy who have significant others in the fire service in surrounding counties, if they see me at Walmart, want to know if I'm still in St. Clair and why I would stay there if all of this

is happening. Nothing that happens here stays here; all the counties that surround us know every single thing that happens in this district. None of those districts should know our business, but there are people who question why anybody would stay at St. Clair when the issues have reached such a level of horribleness—I don't know how else to put it. I wouldn't exclude myself; I've sat and complained about stuff too, but there are a lot of issues that need straightening out. Everybody asks for the policy and the contract rules to be upheld; if you break a rule, there should be consequences. Things are happening now where if you break a rule or do something inappropriately, there are consequences, and they're upset only because now it applies to them. They don't want it to apply to them; they want it to apply to just individual people. I have not been here forever—some of the guys in the room have been here for 10-plus years—but this is my home, and I plan on staying here until I retire. I pride myself on my work. To go into more detail, my migraines have increased to the point where I have had a really hard time getting out of bed; I am physically incapacitated because things have just skyrocketed. It's not just one person's health that's deteriorating; it's collectively all of us.

Director Branscum: It sickens me to see it come to this point of a blow up and catastrophic failure level. Because what you're wanting to fix has to be fixed out there. Because if we have to fix it, we're starting over. You guys have to fix the issue it starts at the bottom.

N Via: That's the problem though is going to a shop meeting and stuff gets hashed out in. Everybody gets in a screaming mass cussing each other out, five minutes after the shop meetings over everybody's back to running their mouths and going their separate ways. Screw this guy, Screw that guy it's back to the same stuff 10 minutes later. And it's been like that several times that I can remember. At least the last two years we haven't had one in a while but the last one was like that.

Director Branscum: I appreciate you coming forward saying how you feel I think it needed to happen a long time ago so it didn't boil over like this but I'd like to see it worked out on the floor however you guys can get it done. Does anyone have anything?

Director Straatmann: Yes and no, because I think there are some issues that, yes, should be handled on the floor, but it sounds like we have passed those issues, which is why they're all here on their days off. So, for me, what are the issues? Like, I'm flying not totally blind, but I don't work here with you guys' day in and day out, and I'm not hearing the same thing here. But I am hearing stuff from other districts, and not from the person in my household—I'll tell you that. I know a lot of people in this industry; I hear the stuff that I know shouldn't be heard outside of this firehouse. So, there's a lot of people around here who are involving other people in other districts. So, this district has to fix itself, yes, but part of it is dealing with each other and not turning around and telling everybody else district business. It's district business, so I'm not happy about that, except it's not even from my own household. So, I need to know: what are the issues? Why are we all here? So, obviously, we've got some personnel issues that need to be addressed, but what is this?

N Via: There are just a few bad apples. That have ruined a bunch for everybody else it's just what it comes down to

Director Straatmann: Are we talking like attitude or is it...

N Via: Attitude, morale, and work ethic—just anything. You have new guys coming in who are excited to work here, who want to work; this is their first fire job. They come in here, and then you get people who question them. I'm like, 'Why are you doing that?' I don't really care, but I just think it's childish. For instance, someone deleted me on Facebook because I post videos of myself doing trends and stuff. I'm sorry, I love my job and I take pride in it. If you're that self-conscious that you have to delete me because I'm doing something you should be doing, too, that's a 'you'r' problem, not a 'me' problem. That is super childish. I think it's funny, whatever, but it's still childish. I haven't dug as deep into it as some people have, but I've been told there are policy issues that need to be fixed. For example, if you get written up for one thing and then get written up again for something completely different, it doesn't count as a second write-up; it's treated as a warning because it's a separate policy. I think that's dumb. If you get a write-up and then another, it should be a second write-up, not a warning, just because it's a different policy—that is the dumbest thing I've ever heard. At any other job, if you get written up once—or usually, you get a warning—and then you're late next time, it's a second write-up; you're probably fired or written up again. I know that's one issue people have brought up: every time someone breaks policy, it's treated as a different situation, which doesn't make any sense.

There's just a really bad lack of accountability for people who are doing things wrong. I'm not perfect by any means; I mess up all the time. I do stuff I probably shouldn't do, and I have to go back and fix it. But when it gets to the point where you get a warning or a write-up and you constantly keep doing it, I mean, what are we doing? It's like these two have said: the culture of this place and the morale are at the bottom of the barrel right now, and they shouldn't be. I brought it up in the shop meeting: if this place would get its stuff together—and you know, this used to be a well-functioning place where everybody got along and stuff was good, despite being the lowest-paid in the county (which I know you guys give us what you can, and that's fine)—you would have a line out the door of people applying because people want to come here to run calls and fight fires. We stay busy; they want to come here for the experience. But because of everyone talking about how this place is, nobody wants to come here. That's why, when we have two or three openings, we might only get two applications. I know Billy has asked people to apply here who have the certificates and are at other places, but they get told 'no' because they hear how bad it is, and they don't even work here. That's another issue; I'm pretty sure it's part of our policy or our union contract, though I'd have to look, that you're not supposed to badmouth this place outside of here, yet it happens all the time.

B Williams: What about people talking about they feel like the bad behaviors and stuff are being swept under the rug? Anybody can say anything about that?

N Via: I talked to Clay about this the other day, but we also want to make it clear that we're not trying to throw either of the chiefs under the bus; for any of us, we know they're doing what they can. They've already got their plates full; they're basically going off of what the policy says. They're doing their job, and after that, it's out of their control. We just want you guys to know that we are not trying to imply they aren't doing anything, because we know they are, but their hands are kind of tied with some things.

C Berry: Billy, brought it up seems like there's certain stuff is swept under the rug. Not chief wise. Everything's downplayed issues that are brought to people are just swept to the side or it's said Well its handled. Clearly, it's not because nothing has changed to reiterate before he said what next said it's not the chiefs.

J Read: I was simply trying to let someone know: 'Hey, if the fireman can fix it, then they need to fix it.' I told the guy that the fireman said, 'It's not my job.' When I was asked who said that, I replied that I wasn't going to tell them, but that person was mad because I had reported them for messing with other people's gear. Because we didn't have our gloves, were missing our Nomex, and all our stuff was tied in a knot, he said, 'You're as worthless as the other f\*\*\*ing f\*\*\*s who are trying to get me fired,' in front of kids who are volunteering here—kids I go to church with, juniors. Then, it was turned around on me, with claims that I cuss, even though we had written statements from those kids. I mean, that's not my vocabulary; I don't just go around throwing out swear words, especially not in front of the public. It's not that big of a deal; I've taken cussings before, but as firemen, we're supposed to hold ourselves to a higher standard. We're supposed to be an example to others; we're supposed to make the department and our crews look good. That's the stuff I'm talking about, and we all know for a fact he's MF'd past chiefs and cussed other guys out here. I mean, when is enough going to be enough? That's when the whole 'sweeping under the rug' comes into play. There are written statements from everybody here, yet the same stuff keeps going on; it's always something new each shift, always something new each month.

Director Branscum: anybody else

C Martin: Well, I tell you, I've done more emails since I've been an officer. In 10 minutes now, I've already done so much: sending emails back and forth, getting two sides of the stories that are different, and it is aggravating. I'd rather spend my time learning size-ups better or learning 360s better, but I feel like you just spend so much time; you know, then I realize that's part of the job, I guess. But, consuming a lot of time, there's just always so many different sides of the story; it's aggravating.

**Motion made by Director Branscum to adjourn the meeting at 8:04 pm.**

Director Straatmann: Aye

Director Branscum: Aye

Director Burton: Aye

---

**Andrew Branscum**  
**President**

---

**Sarah Straatmann**  
**Treasurer**

---

**Tiffany Burton**  
**Secretary**

The above-Board Meeting minutes will be formally accepted at the next scheduled Board Meeting

**APPROVED TB 8/12/2026**