



JPOIG Overview

Lafitte-Barataria-Crown Point Volunteer Fire Company: Full-time Residents #2018-0013

January 11, 2024

Why We Did This Investigation

We received an anonymous TIP that families, adults, and children, were living at Lafitte/Barataria/Crown Point Volunteer Fire Company (LBCP VFC) fire stations. Relatedly, the JPOIG investigated whether individuals, and specifically volunteers and family members, have been identifying fire stations as personal residences or otherwise indicating occupancy for personal purposes. The scope period of the investigation was 01/01/2020 through 12/31/2022.

What We Recommend

- The LBCP VFC should cease the practice of permitting individuals to reside full-time at the fire stations; and
- The LBCP VFC should cease any practice, if such exists, of permitting firefighters' children to visit firefighters at the stations for prolonged visits or overnight.
- The LBCP VFC and the Parish should review property holdings to ensure that all immovable property is properly titled per the CEA, Section 1, Paragraph 2 (d).

What We Found

The JPOIG's investigation revealed the following:

- ❖ The JPOIG substantiated allegations that some LBCP VFC employees and/or volunteers were living at fire stations full-time.
- ❖ The JPOIG further substantiated that some LBCP VFC employees and/or volunteers have identified fire stations as personal residences.
- ❖ The JPOIG was unable to substantiate the allegation that children were living at fire stations.

The LBCP VFC is a non-profit located within Jefferson Parish's Fire Protection District No. 4 which is situated on the West Bank. District No. 4 generates approximately \$773,000 a year in tax revenue for fire prevention and suppression. The primary source of the operating dollars for the LBCP VFC come from these tax dollars which the Parish pays to the LBCP VFC under the terms of a contract. The LBCP VFC occupies fire stations which are owned by the Parish and/or supported with public funds.

The JPOIG interviewed Chief Linton Duet, Fire Chief of the LBCP VFC who confirmed that individuals were either currently living full-time at the fire stations (they do not have a permanent residence other than the fire station), or had done so in the past. Of the individuals identified by Chief Duet as living full-time at the station, nine were "volunteers."

Information provided by Chief Duet was confirmed through a combination of payroll records, fire fighter rosters, and other public records. Voter registration records, court records, and bankruptcy records confirmed paid and/or volunteer firefighters claimed a station address as their permanent residence, and one fireperson registered the station as a business address with the Louisiana Secretary of State.

The Parish, through the Parish President, responded that "full time residency comports with LBCP obligations" under its contract with the Parish, but the response fails to articulate, relate, or quantify the value gained. The response also disagrees with the facts confirmed by Chief Duet and the JPOIG contending "only one (1) resident operator resides at a District station, (specifically) Station No. 41."

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