

PUBLISHED AND POSTED AT PARISH COMPLEX SEPTEMBER 16, 2020

PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE

THE FOLLOWING MEETING WILL BE HELD IN THE COUNSEL CHAMBERS OF THE
PARISH GOVERNMENT COMPLEX, 21490 KOOP DRIVE, OFF OF HIGHWAY 59,
MANDEVILLE, LOUISIANA

**ST. TAMMANY PARISH GOVERNMENT
PERSONNEL BOARD**

MINUTES AND OPINION

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2020, AT 9:00 A.M.

ST. TAMMANY PARISH GOVERNMENT COMPLEX

21490 KOOP DRIVE, MANDEVILLE, LA

Called to Order by Patrick J. Berrigan, Chairman

**Roll Call: Patrick J. Berrigan, present
Joseph Allen, present
Donald Sharp, present
Shovie Ducre, present
Tom Sheldon, absent**

EXECUTIVE SESSION

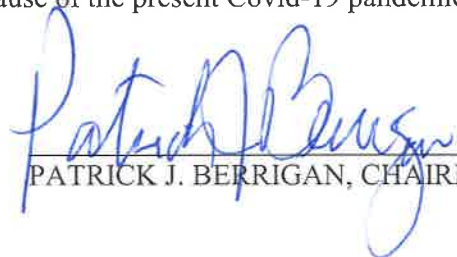
In accordance with the provisions of the St. Tammany Parish Government Personnel Policies, La. Rev. Stat. 42:16, and La. Rev. Stat. 42:17, the St. Tammany Parish Government Personnel Board hereby convenes in executive session a Grievance Hearing regarding the termination of a Parish employee at the employee's request. Notice has been provided to the employee pursuant to the St. Tammany Parish Government Personnel Policies and La. Rev. Stat. 42:17.

BOARD ACTION

This meeting came to order at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, September 17, 2020. The meeting began with the testimony of the St. Tammany Parish Government Administration concerning the reasons and methods for the termination of a Parish employee, Ashley Ray, who was an employee

in the procurement department with the title of Support Services I. The effective date of the termination was January 6, 2020. The reason for termination was (1) habitual tardiness, (2) absenteeism/job abandonment, and (3) insubordination. The Board, after hearing the testimony and considering the evidence presented by the Administration, and further hearing the testimony of the terminated employee, Ashley Ray, gives the following advisory opinion.

It is the unanimous decision of the personnel board that Ashley Ray be returned to her former position with all benefits and rights that she had at the time of her termination. The Board advises after careful consideration of the testimony concerning the manner in which the Administration conducted the disciplining of an employee. It is obvious from the record and the testimony that the employee was not given sufficient progressive punishment for what appears to be her dereliction in her job. The Board clarifies this by saying that there should be incremental punishment which would include a personal meeting with the employee explaining the reason she was being held responsible, if it continues that she be suspended without pay, that she be terminated if she does not respond to the counseling and the suspension. It is worthy to note that this is the action of a new administration; however, it appears that there is no consistency in the manner in which she was terminated. It is the strong advice of the Board that there be a progression of discipline, not one abruptly happening without sufficient warning and counseling. The Board realizes that it is only in an advisory capacity and therefore its advice is clear and concise recommendation that she be rehired. Additionally, it appears on the face of the complaint and the record that Ashley Ray was denied her basic constitutional rights under the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendment because of the delay from January 6, 2020, to September 17, 2020. The Board does not believe that the rights of the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments should be trampled because of the present Covid-19 pandemic.



PATRICK J. BERRIGAN, CHAIRMAN