

**Here is the text of Fire Chief Joe Boney's prepared statement announcing his pending retirement. He read the statement during the July 6, 2021 meeting of the Biloxi City Council, before councilmembers tabled for two weeks the appointment of city department heads.**

Everybody wants to know the story, so here is the true story....

Joe Boney was a little boy growing up in the 1960s, who ran to and stood at the fence in front of his home at 306 Reynoir St. every time a firetruck came screaming by from Back Bay fire station. With great pride he would tell his siblings, "That's what I'm going to be one day."

When that boy became a man he realized his dream on May 10, 1984m the first day of his employment with the Biloxi Fire Department. For years he would scream down the streets of Biloxi on the tail-board of the fire truck. He got to see and do so many extraordinary things; some were so horrific that no human being should ever have to experience, and some were so absolutely merciless that every human being should have experience of witnessing.

For over 38 years, he not only lived his dream, he lived it big. He achieved what only one percent of firefighters in Biloxi have accomplished; and that is the privilege to serve as Chief of the Department. He lived an unimaginable dream, filled with excitement, passion, hard work, dedication and perseverance; making a positive difference in the Department and the City he so dearly loves.

And now we come to the end of the story, and that little boy in the man still refuses to let someone else write his ending.

I wrote my ending to this story earlier this afternoon when I submitted my letter of intent to retire from the City of Biloxi to the Mayor, which will become effective no later than the end of the year in order to allow adequate time for a smooth transition.

So, while this may be the ending to this particular story, the little boy in me will still look for other dreams to pursue.

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