

**The Board of:** Riceville Volunteer Fire Department  
**Met at:** 6:30PM  
**On:** Monday, January 24, 2022  
**For:** Regular Board Meeting  
**Moderator:** Mark Curran (Chairperson)  
**Members Present:** Paul Campbell, Judy Dillingham, Dan Friday (via telephone),  
Kathy Higdon, Lisa McCallister and Carla McLendon

1. **Call the Meeting to Order:** Mark Curran called the meeting to order at 6:34PM.

2. **Treasurer's Report:**

**A. Finance Reports** - Lisa McCallister reported overall finances are in good order. The Department received a late payment from the County, resulting in two deposits of normal income in November, with deposits back to normal in December. Katie Payne relayed we are on target with mid-year budget projections.

Judy Dillingham asked where we are with EMS revenue money and if we are at about the same point as we were this time last year? Referencing the Profit and Loss Sheet, Katie said we are at 56% of what was budgeted. Keeping in mind collections are on a three-month delay and compared to what we budgeted, we are right where we should be.

**B. HVAC System** - Lisa McCallister shared the Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) units for the Community Center need to be replaced according to Gentry's, who came recently to service the system. The Department currently uses a twinned gas furnace and heat pump system. In keeping with Department policy, three proposals for replacement have been received from Gentry (\$23,110 Carrier; \$20,383 Goodman), Haynes (\$23,686 York) and Pyatt (\$24,808 Carrier; \$21,018 Goodman). All three quoted the same scope of work; none provided a timeframe in which the work could be done. Three or four other vendors were contacted but either did not return the call or did not have time to send anyone to evaluate.

Discussion took place regarding the brand of products quoted. Board member Kathy Higdon and community member Lee Barrett spoke highly of the Goodman product, which both have installed for home use. Lee has knowledge/spoke highly of and will provide contact information for Early's Heating and Cooling of Fairview for consideration. Two members of the Barnwell family voiced knowledge/spoke highly of Pyatt Heating and Air Conditioning, Inc.

Lisa McCallister relayed according to files, the current system was installed in 2006, and the last time an agreement was in place for routine maintenance by a vendor was in 2010. She recommended a maintenance agreement be considered moving forward.

Mark Curran called for a motion to set a not-to-exceed limit, obtain a quote from the additional vendor and obtain work timeframes from all vendors who submitted a quote. He suggested the motion include the Board be able to vote on the issue via email prior to next month's meeting. Judy Dillingham made the motion, with the cost not to exceed \$25,000. Paul Campbell seconded the motion, which carried. Mark Curran relayed to

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Chief Kelly that the Board would like to vote on this issue next Monday (January 31), so vendors should be advised to respond by that date.

**3. Approval of Minutes:** Lisa McCallister made a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular and Executive Session Meetings held on December 13 and the Special Meeting held on December 27. Kathy Higdon seconded the motion, which carried.

**4. Fire Chief's Report:** Chief Kelly provided an overview of the calendar year call statistics found in his handout. The Department continues to have a large number of overlapping calls, which puts a lot of demand on staff. Work continues on trying to increase the volunteer numbers, with one new volunteer in the audience tonight. Work continues on improving call response times, which are affected by overlapping calls.

### **5. Old Business:**

**A. Dorm Remodel** – Dan Friday has sent two emails to Biltwell Woodworks and is awaiting a response. Chief Kelly received a proposal, which will be forwarded to Dan. Lisa McCallister was in contact with a party who came and looked at the project. To date, they have submitted a list of questions, but no estimate. Community member Kent Creasman provided contact information for Scroggs Construction to Mark Curran as another potential option.

**B. Concrete Pad** – Dan Friday relayed the contractor (Travis of Countryside Landscaping) said the remaining concrete work is on his list and will be addressed as soon as he is able to get the concrete and the weather will allow.

**C. Ambulance Committee** – Chief Kelly relayed six companies have expressed an interest in bidding on the ambulance purchase, with two of those being in North Carolina. Bid opening will take place on Monday, February 7, at 7:00PM, with the process open to the public. (Community members Teresa Barnwell and Lee Barrett questioned and lengthy discussion took place regarding the need for a new ambulance; whether the Department is making money from the ambulance services; and how much has been spent to keep the ambulance running.)

### **6. New Business:**

**A. Vice President Election** – The Board agreed to wait to elect anyone to this position until after the two vacant Board seats have been filled.

**B. Board of Directors Interest Form** - The existing posted form was revised to include a space for the interested individual's email and telephone number(s). Dan Friday made a motion to accept the revised form. Judy Dillingham seconded the motion, which carried.

**7. Public Comment:** The meeting was opened for public comment after Paul Campbell read the associated guidelines.

Swig Mueller, Vice President of the Jewel Acres HOA, requested use of the Community Center by the HOA on May 1, 2022, at 3:00PM for their annual meeting. The Board

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responded the Community Center may be in use by Department staff at that time, depending upon when the dorm remodel takes place. She was asked to complete and submit the application form found on the website, and the Board will be able to respond to the request closer to the date of the meeting.

Terry Duckworth, RVFD Chaplain, spoke to the issue of filling vacant Board seats. It is his recollection that the Board did not fill vacant seats in the past by the next highest vote getters from the previous Annual Meeting. He again encouraged Board Members to do the right thing (ethically and morally) by following a standardized set of rules and regulations at all times.

Lee Barrett submitted his name for consideration for one of the vacant Board seats. He expressed his personal opinion regarding what he considers to be a hostile working environment, citing examples to support his opinion. Mr. Barrett also voiced his personal opinion on matters of concern to him relating to the Board. Dan Friday requested a point of order on at least two occasions, at which time the Chairperson reminded Mr. Barrett of the requirement to adhere to the communicated guidelines for Public Comment.

Steven Lawrence spoke to the issue of filling vacant Board seats. It is his recollection that the Board filled vacant seats in the past by the next highest vote getters from the previous Annual Meeting. He also expressed concern over not receiving a response to a letter he submitted to the Board in October 2021.

Lisa McCallister shared her research shows the current Bylaws do not speak to filling vacant seats. Attorney Perry Fisher has issued an interpretation, which the Board may be bound to follow, which is the Board should appoint. The NC General Statutes allow Board appointing or a vote of the community. Lisa has reviewed the minutes on line, which date back to October 2017 and support the standing practice has been the Board appoints. Lisa is not doubting what anyone is saying about how it has been done in the past or how it is being recommended for the present. She is reiterating the Board is to work with the current Bylaws. Lisa further noted there have been a number of things that have come up in the past few years that the Bylaws don't address but should. She suggested a committee be formed to address updating of the Bylaws.

Francis Rice Schaeffer asked if a fireman could be on the Board. According to the Bylaws, an employee of the Department may not serve on the Board.

Kathy Higdon asked if Terry Duckworth, Department Chaplain, could pray for the community and the Department. Following no objections from the Board and asking it be kept non-denominational, Chaplain Duckworth prayed.

In follow up to a remark made during Public Comment, Mark Curran clarified that at the last meeting he shared he had asked the whole Board to resign. He felt the Board was too divided and the wounds too deep to heal. Board members have discussed at length and on more than one occasion and are committed to working together. The Board may not be moving at the pace some feel it should, but Mark relayed there are many hurdles. He also shared that rules and regulations change often, which would explain why the Board may not be able to do something the same as in years past. Mark feels

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Chief Kelly has a good vision for and handle on the Department, as well as good support staff. He remains hopeful for the Board and Department and committed to his position as Chairperson.

**8. Adjournment to Executive Session:** Lisa McCallister made a motion to adjourn to Executive Session to discuss personnel issues at 7:47PM. Judy Dillingham seconded the motion, which carried. The Board returned from Executive Session at 9:09PM and moved back into the Regular meeting.

**9. Invoice Payment:** Lisa McCallister made a motion to pay the invoice from Management Solutions for Emergency Services (MSFES) as billed. Paul Campbell seconded the motion, which carried.

**10. CDL Requirement:** Judy Dillingham inquired about the need to have a CDL in order to maintain a Firefighter certification, which she believes to be a State requirement. Mark Curran will follow up with Chief Kelly on this issue.

**11. Adjournment:** Dan Friday made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:13PM. Judy Dillingham seconded the motion, which carried.