

The Board of: Riceville Volunteer Fire Department
Met at: 6:30PM
On: Monday, March 20, 2023
For: Regular Board Meeting
Moderator: Dan Little (Vice Chairperson)
Members Present: Lee Barrett, Kent Creasman, Judy Dillingham, Kathy Higdon, Lisa McCallister and Carla McLendon
Not Present: Mark Curran and Dan Friday

1. **Call the Meeting to Order:** Dan Little called the meeting to order at 6:35PM.

2. **Sealed Bids Ambulance 1120:** Chief Kelly opened the two sealed bids received regarding the sale of Ambulance 1120 (2008 Chevrolet). The first was from Emergency Remarketing, Willoughby, Ohio, who presented a bid of \$1,378.18. The second was from Elite Ambulance Sales, Winona, Minnesota, who presented a bid of \$9,500.

Board discussion included putting the bid back out for another 30 days; the cost of keeping/repairing the vehicle; when a new vehicle will be received; and the ability to use funds from the sale of 1120 to repair existing vehicles. Kent Creasman made a motion to accept the bid from Minnesota (Elite Ambulance Sales) for \$9,500. Lisa McCallister seconded the motion. Judy Dillingham abstained from the vote; all other Board members voted in favor of the motion, which carried.

3. **Approval of Minutes:** Draft minutes for the February 20 Regular and Executive Session meetings were emailed to the Board on March 9. Lisa McCallister made a motion to accept the Regular and Executive Session minutes as written. Kent Creasman seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

4. **Treasurer's Report:** Financial reports for the month ending February 2023 were emailed to the Board on March 18. Lisa McCallister relayed EMS income is down, as was the call volume for January. Katie Payne relayed the EMS line item is above the budget for the year (74% vs 68%). Billing at the increased rate began in late February but won't be realized until June. Katie relayed increases in Sales Tax collections have been realized, as she reported last month should be the case. Lee Barrett made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Reports. Carla McLendon seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

5. **Old Business:**

A. Transparency Policy – Keith Bost, Management Solutions for Emergency Services (MSFES), was scheduled to be here tonight to discuss the policy further with the Board. Dan Little relayed Mr. Bost is not able to attend tonight's meeting.

B. Ambulance Purchase – Chief Kelly spoke with the vendor representative (Mr. Hadley) last Friday. At that time, Mr. Hadley still did not have a VIN number or work order assigned to the truck. Mr. Hadley did confirm it is a 2023 vehicle. Timeframe for receipt remains unknown.

C. Small Claims Court Issue – Lisa McCallister relayed as reported last month, we did receive a judgment against Mr. Gee. She had to submit further documentation, and he has been served notice. In about ten days, we can request execution of the judgment. Lisa has and will submit the paperwork associated with this step, so the process is moving forward.

6. Fire Chief's Report: The monthly Chief's, FLSE and Training Reports were emailed to the Board on March 17, with a hardcopy provided tonight. Division Chief McEntire provided an overview of the Training Report. In response to questions from a Board member, Division Chief McEntire responded he and Captains Blount and Wickham were Instructors at McDowell Fire and Rescue College this past weekend. He further responded he had not been asked to assist anyone with registration for the Spring Basic EMT Class.

Chief Kelly provided an overview of the Fire Life Safety Event (FLSE) Report, which includes an April Blood Drive coordinated with Safe Kids and the NC OSFM Smoke Detector Program.

Chief Kelly provided an overview of his report, noting Total Calls and Over-Lapping Incidents were both down in February. However, Total Calls are tracking closely to last year's numbers. Of the Over-Lapping Incidents (20/15%), 11 were In District and 9 were Out-of-District. At 9:58 for the EMS Average Response Time (ART) and 6:33 for the Fire ART, both were under the Department's benchmark of 10 minutes. Five (5) new staff applications (all Fire) have been received, with the applicants undergoing background checks and getting agility tests scheduled.

In response to questions from Board members, Chief Kelly responded one employee separated employment this month, which will be reflected on next month's report. We are still looking for a Captain. As part of the annual roster review process, an initial letter, a follow-up letter and a phone call were sent/placed to six potential inactive volunteers. Chief Kelly has heard back from three of them. The Department incurs no expense for holding their certifications; however, a volunteer must have 36 annual training hours to remain on the State roster and be eligible for the NC State Fire and/or NC State Rescue Associations.

In response to questions from Board members, Division Chief McEntire responded there have been no issues with scheduling use of the Community Center. One request was denied because the person does not pay taxes in the Riceville District. There were two requests for the Center for the same date/time, but the second requestor was very understanding and made alternate arrangements.

7. New Business:

Budget Recommendations – Katie Payne relayed budget numbers from the County were received last Wednesday. [Sales Tax increased by \$178,000 last year. There is no increase (flat) this year. Fire Tax has increased by \$50,000.] A 2023-2024 Budget Summary and Proposed Budget packet was provided to the Board, and Katie gave an overview of same. An increase of \$0.01 in the Tax Rate is proposed (from 14.60 cents to 15.60), which would result in an increase of \$100,000 in revenue projections. An

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increase of \$0.01 in the Tax Rate for property assessed at \$100,000 would result in a \$10 increase in the annual tax bill; a \$20 increase for property assessed at \$200,000; a \$30 increase for property assessed at \$300,000; etc. If an increase in the Tax Rate is requested, it must be sent to the County by April 7. The Board has the flexibility to ask for a lesser amount than approved by the County when submitting the final budget to the County, which is due by April 20.

After much discussion, Lee Barrett made a motion to request a \$0.02 increase in the Fire Tax. Lisa McCallister seconded the motion. Judy Dillingham voted No; all other Board members voted in favor of the motion, which carried.

8. Announcements: Dan Little announced the next Regular Meeting of the Board will be held on Monday, April 17, 2023 at 6:30PM.

9. Public Comment: The meeting was opened for public comment after Lee Barrett read the associated guidelines. Mark Dillingham expressed concerns on behalf of his son, Gabriel Dillingham, who had received a letter from the Department as part of the annual review of the volunteer roll. He relayed Gabriel is currently participating in an EMT class, for which the Department paid the registration fee, so does not understand why he received a letter associated with inactivity.

10. Move to Executive Session: Kent Creasman made a motion to move to Executive Session at 7:52PM to discuss legal matters. Lee Barrett seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. The Board returned from Executive Session at 8:09PM.

11. Adjournment: Lisa McCallister made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:10PM. Judy Dillingham seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.