

The Board of: Riceville Volunteer Fire Department
Met at: 6:30PM
On: Monday, March 18, 2024
For: Regular Board Meeting
Moderator: Dan Little (Chairperson)
Members Present: Lee Barrett, Kent Creasman, Kathy Higdon, Merel Johnson, Butch Laughter, Lisa McCallister, Carla McLendon and Steve Wickham

Not Present:
Guest(s):

1. **Call the Meeting to Order:** Dan Little called the meeting to order at 6:30PM.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance and Prayer:** Reverend Terry Duckworth opened the meeting in prayer. Dan Little asked everyone to stand if able and join him in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
3. **Chief Presentation:** Chief Kelly recognized Captain Steve Wickham for 25 years of service with the North Carolina State Rescue Association.
4. **Approval of Minutes:** Draft minutes for the February 19 Regular meeting were emailed to the Board on February 20, with an edited draft emailed on March 13. Lee Barrett made a motion to accept the edited draft minutes as written. Kent Creasman seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
5. **Treasurer's Report:** Financial reports for the months ending January and February 2024 were emailed to the Board on March 13. Katie Payne relayed we remain on track with the budget and with income based on the Buncombe County level. The only category above budgeted is Line Item 4201, Interest Income, which is a good thing and a result of a money market investment. In response to a question, Katie relayed there have been no further breaches of the Department's accounts (November 2023). Carla McLendon made a motion to approve the January and February financials as presented. Lisa McCallister seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
6. **Fire Chief's Report:** The monthly Chief's and Training reports were emailed to the Board on March 13 and 14, respectively. An amended Chief's Report was emailed to the Board on March 14.

A. Training Report - Division Chief McEntire gave an overview of the Training Report, to include total training hours through February (625.50); completion of EMS CE classes for all three shifts in February; McDowell Fire and Rescue College (two new members working on their fire fighter certification class; two members teaching UTV class); Member program participation (one in EMT; one planned for AEMT); working with State Fire Marshall's Office and community colleges on major upcoming changes for NFPA 1006; couple part time employees in Trench and Water Program; and one member completed Shoring Training last week (USAR).

B. Fire Life Safety Report - Chief Kelly relayed Paul Gilliam presented an overview of firefighter gear and responsibilities to first graders in Haywood County.

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There will be a Bike Rodeo at the Department on Saturday, April 20, from 10:00AM to 4:00PM. There will be a car seat check station as well. From 12N until 5:00PM that same day, 6 Pigs BBQ will be on site. This is a firefighter based company, who will donate \$3 back to RVFD for each plate sold.

A smoke detector canvas is planned for the month of June, as has been the case for the past two years. The Department has applied for a grant from the State Fire Marshall's Office for 54 smoke detectors (maximum) and is awaiting feedback.

C. Chief's Report - Chief Kelly provided an overview of his report, noting Total Calls of 143 for February. IV Attempts/Success has been added as a new line item and was 51/90% for the month of February. Over-Lapping Incidents were up from 26/19% in January to 44/31% in February. At 6:47 and 9:42 minutes, the Average Response Times (ART) for Fire and EMS were elevated from previous months but below the National benchmark. The increase in the EMS ART is a result of being called out from the hospital. Three New Volunteer and two New Staff applications were received in February. The County has three new ambulances running during peak hours. Working 12-hour shifts, these ambulances are averaging ten calls per day.

7. Old Business:

A. Ambulance Purchase Update – Chief Kelly provided a copy of a letter from April Phelps, President of Southeastern, assuring the chassis designated for this Department will not be sold to someone else. He also provided an updated contract page as previously discussed by the Board and which had been signed by the Director of Sales, Dennis Tingen. Kent Creasman made a motion the updated contract be accepted as written; signed by Chief Kelly; and returned to Southeastern. Merel Johnson seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

B. Equipment Surplus Policy – The Board discussed draft Policy A-45, Disposition of Department's Surplus Property. Katie Payne will follow up with Keith Bost, Management Solutions for Emergency Services (MSFES), to see if there is a requirement to donate/sell to in-County Emergency Service organizations first and only to other IRS 501(c)(3) organizations. If not, the Board would like those references removed, and the IRS reference changed to "an organization that serves the community." The Board asked for the section entitled "Methods for Disposing of Surplus Real Estate" to be removed. Lee Barrett made a motion that Katie Payne make the edits and email the document to the Board, at which time an email vote will be conducted on the amended policy. Kent Creasman seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

C. Department Vehicle Branding Committee – Branding recommendations from Chief Kelly were emailed to the Board on March 14, with a hard copy available for review tonight. Dan Little asked that a company and design be agreed upon that will be used on the Chief's vehicle and TAC-11 now, as well as future support vehicles. Chief Kelly expressed his preference of branding as that in Photo 3, white truck with red stripe. Lee Barrett made a motion to proceed with a design of a stripe down the side (Riceville VFD); an identifying word on the back window (i.e., Chief); an identifying tag on the front; and In God We Trust (rear fender wells). Merel Johnson seconded the

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motion, which carried unanimously. Lee Barrett asked to be involved in the bidding process.

D. Engine 11-2 Repairs Update – Engine 11-2 is back in service. Captain Blount outlined issues identified by staff once the Engine was returned (i.e., water level sensor, fuel gauge sensor). These issues have been corrected, with the associated expense covered by insurance.

E. Electrical Repairs Status – Electrical repairs are complete, with the cost being a little over \$4,000 compared to the \$6,500 bid. MB Haynes found some cut/dead wires for which no repair was needed, lowering the cost of the work. An Electrical Inspector evaluated and approved the completed work.

Ceiling repair is pending, as Chief Kelly is waiting to hear back from a recommended company.

8. New Business:

A. 990 2022 Exempt Tax Filing – Katie Payne mailed the draft 990 prepared by DMJPS to the Board for review on February 29. Lisa McCallister made a motion to approve the return as prepared. Merel Johnson seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

B. 2024-2025 Proposed Budget – Board Members were given a copy of the proposed budget, and Katie Payne gave a brief overview of the document, outlining recommended changes (Income and Expense Notes). On the last page, \$240,000 needs to be added under the category of Carryover Current Asset Accounts. This figure represents funds in the Civic Money Market account. Board Members were asked to review the document and reach out to Katie with any questions, with a goal of approving the proposed budget at next month's Regular Board meeting. The Department's proposed budget is due to the County by April 20.

C. New Engine Pre-Con Meeting Update – The Engine Committee met at length and prepared two versions of proposed change orders, which were emailed to the Board on March 15. (The original change order proposal comes to \$15,538; the second \$3,352.) The majority of the proposed changes and costs are associated with replacing chrome finishes with black. Steve Wickham made a motion to accept the Pre-Con proposal of \$15,538. Kent Creasman seconded the motion. Lee Barrett (due to the high cost of the Black Line-X) and Kathy Higdon voted No; all other Board Members voted Yes, so the motion carried. Division Chief McEntire asked Dan Little to sign a copy of the approved KME Change Order for submission to Safe Industries.

D. Proposed Changes to Administrative Policies – Board Members were provided with a thumb drive containing proposed changes to administrative policies. [Dan Little asked Chief Kelly to have the proposed changes reviewed by Management Solutions for Emergency Services (MSFES) prior to approval by the Board.] Proposed changes are readily identifiable through the use of highlighting, strike through and red ink. Lisa McCallister asked if this Handbook could be consolidated with the Employee

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Handbook, resulting in just one reference. Chief Kelly said he was looking into consolidating, along with the Part-Time Employee Handbook.

E. Email List Rebuild – Board Members were provided a copy of a QR code which will be placed on Department social media sites in way of rebuilding the email list that was lost when the website became unavailable several months ago. This email list will be used to communicate information to the community. This is separate from the email list referenced in the Transparency Policy, which Katie Payne relayed the Department is working on. Merel Johnson recommended the site to which the QR code leads be branded to identify and legitimize it is from the RVFD.

F. Community Feedback – Chief Kelly relayed donations and thank you cards had been received by the Department, with good feedback from the Community.

9. Announcements: Dan Little announced the next Regular Meeting of the Board will be held on Monday, April 15, 2024 at 6:30PM.

Harold Parker announced there will be a dinner for Staff and Retired Firefighters on Saturday, April 13, at 5:00PM. The cost of the dinner will be covered by the Firefighter Fund. Board members were invited to attend with a plus one and were asked to RSVP to Chief Kelly.

10. Public Comment: There was no public comment.

11. Move to Executive Session: Kent Creasman made a motion to move to Executive Session for personnel matters at 8:27PM. Merel Johnson seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. The Board returned from Executive Session at 9:31PM.

12. Adjournment: Lisa McCallister made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:31PM. Kathy Higdon seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Note: Chairman Dan Little only votes in the event of a tie.