

**The Board of:** Riceville Volunteer Fire Department  
**Met at:** 6:30PM  
**On:** Monday, November 20, 2023  
**For:** Regular Board Meeting  
**Moderator:** Dan Little (Chairperson)  
**Members Present:** Lee Barrett, Kent Creasman, Kathy Higdon, Merel Johnson, Lisa McCallister, Carla McLendon and Steve Wickham  
**Not Present:** Butch Laughter  
**Guest(s):** Dorinda Bennett and Irena Pivovarevich, DMJPS, PLLC

1. **Call the Meeting to Order:** Dan Little called the meeting to order at 6:37PM.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance and Prayer:** Dan Little asked everyone to stand if able and join him in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. He then opened the meeting in prayer.
3. **Annual Financial Audit Report:** Board members were provided a draft copy of the Auditor Communications (June 30, 2023) and Financial Statements (June 30, 2023 and 2022). Dorinda Bennett and Irena Pivovarevich of DMJPS, PLLC presented an overview of these documents, which outlined their financial audit of the Department.

It was the opinion of the Auditors that the financial statements reviewed during the audit present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the RVFD as of June 30, 2023 and 2022, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the year then ended, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the USA. This is the type of opinion an organization wants as a result of an audit.

The audit revealed the Department has continued to do a good job of paying down debt. Katie Payne was commended for the improvement in the area of Material Adjustments, as there were none to report this year. The Department was again encouraged to continue to improve internal controls related to segregation of duties and to mitigate the risk of fraud. However, it was noted this recommendation is directly related to the small size of the Department. Ms. Bennett noted, "It was a great audit, with great results."

Kent Creasman made a motion to accept the financial audit as reported. Lisa McCallister seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. Ms. Bennett and Ms. Pivovarevich excused themselves from the meeting at this time.

4. **Approval of Minutes:** Draft minutes for the October 9 Annual and Regular meetings and the October 30 Special Board meeting were emailed to the Board on November 13. Draft minutes of the November 17 Special Executive Session were emailed to the Board on November 19. Merel Johnson made a motion to accept the October Annual, Regular and Special Board minutes as written. Steve Wickham seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. The Special Executive Session minutes will be discussed during tonight's Executive Session.

5. **Treasurer's Report:** Financial reports for the months ending September and October 2023 were emailed to the Board on November 15. (The September report reflects interest earned from First Bank ICS that was not available at the time of

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October's Board meeting.) Katie Payne relayed we remain on track with the budget, sitting at 33% at the end of October.

Katie gave an overview of the bonuses that would be processed as part of the first payroll in December. The bonuses are awarded in accordance with established Department policy and in keeping with the annual budget approved by the Board in the Spring.

Katie shared the Department's operating account had been compromised recently. She contacted First Bank immediately, and the funds were returned to the account by the beginning of the next business day. Katie is working closely with First Bank to put processes/a system in place to try to ensure this does not happen again.

Lee Barrett made a motion to accept the September and October financial statements. Steve Wickham seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**6. Fire Chief's Report:** The monthly Chief's and Training Reports were emailed to the Board on November 15. Division Chief McEntire noted training hours are 2,917 as of October 31; EMS continuing education classes start tomorrow; and training opportunities will pick back up in January.

Chief Kelly provided an overview of the Fire Life Safety Report and his report, noting Total Calls were back up in October (155). Over-Lapping Incidents were up (51/33%), with 29 In District and 22 Out-of-District. At 7:43 and 8:41 minutes, the Average Response Times (ART) for Fire and EMS were below the Department's benchmark of 10 minutes. Average Time on Scene for October was 22:55 minutes. Truck 1110 was down four days for repairs (fuel pressure pump) and is back in service.

### **7. Old Business:**

**A. Ambulance Purchase Update** – Chief Kelly relayed the Salesman (Darren Hadley) with whom he has been working is no longer with the company and was not correctly communicating to him the status of the build. After speaking with someone with a higher level of authority at Lifeline, Chief Kelly was able to get the build date moved from December 2024 to July 2024. He has also asked for a monthly status report, effective December 2023. Discussion included the feasibility of the Department purchasing the chassis and having someone else conduct the build; requesting Lifeline move up the build date again; and liability of the company regarding the miscommunications. After some discussion, Lee Barrett made a motion to send the contract to Keith Bost, Management Solutions for Emergency Services, to see what our legal position is in holding them [Lifeline] accountable for delivering an ambulance in whatever the timeframe is [according to the contract]. Steve Wickham seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. Dan Little asked Katie Payne to send the contract to Keith Bost.

**B. Bylaws Review Committee Report** - Lisa McCallister emailed the proposed Bylaws amendments and Transparency Policy (which is the source of the amendments) to the Board last Thursday. The intent of the amendments is to line up timeframes in the Bylaws with what Keith Bost negotiated with the County Attorney, so we are not in

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violation of the County contract. (Per Katie Payne, the County contract will automatically renew next July, with no known changes.) Lisa suggested she send the proposed amendments to Keith Bost for his review to ensure we are not contradicting the Transparency Policy or NC General Statutes Chapter 55. In keeping with our Bylaws (Section 8.11), the December Board meeting will count as the first of the required two consecutive meetings to consider the amendments. Lee Barrett made a motion to send the proposed Bylaw changes to Keith Bost and his staff for review. Kent Creasman seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**C. Department Vehicle Branding Options** – Katie Payne requested the Department move forward with having branding placed on the windows of the three white unmarked vehicles. The work will be done by Signarama; use budgeted funds; and at an estimated cost of \$350. There were no objections from the Board.

**D. Engine Committee Update** – The Board approved purchase of a new Engine during a Special Meeting of the Board held on October 30, 2023.

**E. Equipment Surplus** – Chief Kelly will send the proposed Equipment Surplus Policy to the Board for their consideration and discussion during next month's meeting. Merel Johnson made a motion for the Chief to move forward with selling if possible, otherwise disposing of the IV Pump, Zoll Monitor and Motorola Radios. Lisa McCallister seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. (Note – these items are being surplused for incompatibility reasons.)

### 8. New Business:

**A. Check Signature Authority** – After a brief discussion, Kent Creasman made a motion to remove Mark Curran and Judy Dillingham from the Check Signature Authority list, with Dan Little, Lisa McCallister, Lee Barrett and Chief Kelly now having Check Signature Authority on all accounts. Merel Johnson seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**B. Department Christmas Dinner** – In response to a question, Chief Kelly responded the Department Christmas Dinner is still in the planning stages, with the goal of finalizing next week.

**C. Department Sign** – Merel Johnson inquired about the feasibility of obtaining a digital/LED road sign for the Department. A vendor recently estimated \$36,000 for a digital sign. Merel offered to evaluate an LED sign further. Lee Barrett expressed the need for a digital newsletter, as another means to better communicate with the community.

### 9. Announcements:

**A. Next Regular Meeting** - Dan Little announced the next Regular Meeting of the Board will be held on Monday, December 18, 2023 at 6:30PM.

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**B. Santa Community Engagement** - Santa will visit in the community on December 9, starting at 10:00AM. He will then be at the Department from 1:00PM until 3:00PM for refreshments and pictures with Santa.

**10. Public Comment:** There was no public comment.

**11. Move to Executive Session:** Lisa McCallister made a motion to adjourn to Executive Session for legal and personnel matters at 8:10PM. Merel Johnson seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. The Board returned from Executive Session at 9:27PM.

**12. Adjournment:** Lisa McCallister made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:27PM. Lee Barrett seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.