

**The Board of:** Riceville Volunteer Fire Department  
**Met at:** 6:30PM  
**On:** Monday, November 17, 2025  
**For:** Regular Board Meeting  
**Moderator:** Dan Little (Chairperson)  
**Members Present:** Lee Barrett, Kent Creasman, Merel Johnson,  
Lisa McCallister, Carla McLendon, Mark Siler and  
Steve Wickham  
**Not Present:** Butch Laughter (Medical)  
**Guest(s):** Dorinda Bennett, Irena Pivovarevich and Isaac Rowles,  
DMJPS, PLLC

**1. Call the Meeting to Order:** Dan Little called the meeting to order at 6:32PM and determined a quorum was present.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance and Prayer:** Mark Siler opened the meeting in prayer, and Dan Little asked everyone to stand if able and join him in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**3. Annual Financial Audit Report:** Board members were provided a draft copy of the Auditor Communications (June 30, 2025) and Financial Statements (June 30, 2025 and 2024). Dorinda Bennett, Irena Pivovarevich and Isaac Rowles 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, 2025 and 2024, 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.

Specific to the Financial Statements, it was relayed the figure for 2025 Receivables (\$508,089) is subject to change. The EMS Receivables Report provided by EMS MC does not appear to reflect contractual adjustments that would reduce the actual amount received from payers. The Auditors have been in communication with an EMS MC representative and requested a more accurate report. A new entry is found for 2025 on Exhibit B-1, Statements of Functional Expenses, under Public Support and Revenue. It is entitled "Inkind Donations" and represents donations received by the Department, for use by the Department. One new entry on the Notes to Financial Statements report is #5 Long-Term Debt, which is specific to the financing of the new ambulance.

The Department was commended in the area of Material Weaknesses, as there were none to report again this year. Although the Auditors noted great improvements have been made over the past few years in this category, the Department was again encouraged to continue to improve internal controls related to segregation of duties and to mitigate the risk of fraud. However and as has been communicated in the past, this recommendation is directly related to the small size of the Department.

## RVFD Regular Board Meeting (November 17, 2025)

The Auditors will finalize their report once the requested report is received from EMS MC. They thanked Chief Kelly, Katie Payne and the Board for their assistance in the audit process. Dan Little and Katie thanked the Auditors for their support in return. Ms. Bennett, Ms. Pivovarevich and Mr. Rowles excused themselves from the meeting at this time (6:50PM).

Merel Johnson made a motion to approve the Financial Audit with the contingencies to be reversed in December on the EMS Receivables. Mark Siler seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. Katie Payne will inform the Board at the December meeting of the final EMS Receivables figure.

**4. Approval of Minutes:** Draft minutes for the October 13 Annual, Regular and Executive Session meetings were emailed to the Board on November 11, as were draft minutes of Executive Session meetings held on October 23 and 27 and November 3 and 5. Kent Creasman made a motion to accept the October Regular and all Executive Session meeting minutes as written. Lee Barrett seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**5. Treasurer's Report:** Financial reports for the months ending September and October 2025 were emailed to the Board on November 14, with nothing major to report. In response to questions from Lee Barrett, Katie Payne noted Insurance (Line Item 5404) is at 58% because it is paid quarterly, and two quarterly payments have been made. Dues and Subscriptions (Line Item 5601) are at 81% because a lot of the software annual renewals take place at the beginning of the year, so this is a normal percentage. Lisa McCallister noted the significantly higher income in September compared to October is due to the \$100,000 Wildland grant received in September. Merel Johnson made a motion to accept the September and October financials. Lee Barrett seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**6. Fire Chief's Report:** The Chief's and Training Reports were emailed to the Board on November 12. Division Chief McEntire gave an overview of the Training Report, which included 2,809 total training hours for January 1 through November 11 and EMS CE offerings scheduled for November 29 and December 3 and 5. He also relayed the burn date for the Department's Training House is scheduled for December 6. The WNC Air Quality burn permit has been received, and neighbors have been notified of the impending burn. While not required and even though the asbestos test came back negative, a kit has been ordered for lead paint testing.

Chief Kelly provided the FLSE report, relaying the Halloween Social Event that took place on October 31 was a success. In addition to activities held at the Department, the event allowed for a lot of visibility in the community and candy was distributed at several developments. He thanked the Ladies Auxiliary (food) and Dan Little (hayride) for their help with the event.

Chief Kelly provided an overview of his report, noting Total Calls were down from the previous month (97 in October; 115 in September), as were Over-Lapping Incidents (16/17% in October; 39/34% in September). Two new staff applications were received, one for a Part-Time Paramedic, the second for a Firefighter AEMT. TAC 11 was out of service due to electrical issues, and Ambulance 1110 was repaired last week. The

mounting bracket has been received which will allow for the computer to be installed in 1110. Installation is scheduled for this Thursday. Ambulance 1110 will be placed in service later this week to allow 1120 to be taken out of service for preventative maintenance.

Chief Kelly relayed he will be meeting with members of the U.S. Forest Service tomorrow morning to discuss what the Department considers to be mitigating issues. He relayed the harvesting project is scheduled to be complete within the next ten days. He is aware the Forest Service would like to reschedule the community meeting that was to have taken place on October 1 but had to be cancelled. He is waiting to hear back from them as to what date(s) in December they are considering.

## **7. Old Business:**

**A. Administrative Policies Review Committee** – Tabled until next month.

**B. 1110 Review Committee** – Tabled until next month.

**C. Building Repairs Update** – Tabled until next month.

**D. Acoustics in Community Center** – Tabled until next month.

**E. Department Vehicles** – Tabled until next month.

**F. UTV/ATV (Draft Policy)** – Tabled until next month.

**G. Buncombe County Flat Tax Proposal** – The meeting scheduled for two weeks ago with the County and Fire Chiefs was cancelled. It is scheduled to take place on November 19.

## **8. New Business:**

**A. Conflict of Interest Statement Policy** – Tabled until next month.

**B. Solar Backup** – Mark Siler was made aware of collaboration between the Land of Sky Regional Council and State and Nation-wide parties in which they are asking Fire Departments in areas hit hard by natural disasters to consider becoming a micro-grid. It appears the resources are free and would involve donated solar and battery equipment that would serve as a solar-powered backup generator station. The batteries could be fixed or trailered, which would allow them to be taken where power is needed. The next step would be to complete a survey so it could be determined if RVFD is a viable partner. Mark is willing to complete the survey if the Board is interested in learning more about this project. Lee Barrett made a motion that Mark Siler complete the survey along with Chief Kelly, get further details and provide a presentation to the Board. Steve Wickham seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**C. Sewer Line Issue** – Dan Little relayed an issue has been identified with the sewer line that runs underneath the concrete flooring on the Community Center/Staff Kitchen side of the building. T.P. Howard's Plumbing ran a camera through the

## RVFD Regular Board Meeting (November 17, 2025)

associated line, with the video showing multiple high and low spots in the terra cotta pipe. Resolution of the problem may require busting up of the concrete flooring in the foyer bathrooms, the Staff Kitchen and continuing along the pipe path to the back of the building. Quotes for this work will be obtained by Kent Creasman (Scroggs Construction Services, LLC), Chief Kelly (T.P. Howard's Plumbing Company, Inc.) and Dan Little (Johnson's Contracting, LLC).

**D. Burn Ban and Website Maintenance** – Merel Johnson asked if Burn Ban notices could be prominently displayed on the Department's website. This request is the result of a community member relaying he could not find burn ban information after reviewing multiple sites. Merel also recommended a minimum quarterly review of the website to facilitate clean-up of outdated postings. There was brief discussion about the need for a part-time Webmaster or if a Department employee may have this knowledge base and could take on this assignment.

**E. Board of Directors Manual** – Katie Payne provided Board Members with an updated copy of the Board of Directors Manual.

**9. Announcements:** Dan Little announced the next Regular Meeting of the Board will be held on Monday, December 15, 2025 at 6:30PM.

Christmas in Riceville will take place on Saturday, December 13, where Santa will go throughout the community distributing gift bags.

**10. Public Comment:** The meeting was opened for public comment after Kent Creasman read the associated guidelines.

Ray Whitson, owner of Asheville Roofing, expressed how grateful he was to have the Department as a neighbor. He explained his business had outgrown their current building and asked consideration be given to selling him a portion of the Department's property behind his business.

**11. Executive Session:** Kent Creasman made a motion to move to Executive Session for legal and personnel matters at 7:49PM. Merel Johnson seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. The Board returned from Executive Session at 9:32PM.

**12. Adjournment:** Lisa McCallister made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:32PM. Merel Johnson seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

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