

The Board of: Riceville Volunteer Fire Department
Met at: 7:00PM
On: Monday, October 9, 2023
For: Annual Board and Members Meeting
Moderator: Dan Little (Chairperson)
Members Present: Lee Barrett, Kent Creasman, Kathy Higdon, Butch Laughter, Lisa McCallister and Carla McLendon
Not Present:

1. **Call the Meeting to Order:** Dan Little called the meeting to order at 7:02PM.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance:** Dan Little asked everyone to stand if able and join him in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
3. **Close Registration:** Dan Little called for a motion to close registration. Kent Creasman made a motion to close registration. Kathy Higdon seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
4. **Approval of Minutes:** Lee Barrett read the minutes from the 2022 Annual Meeting. Kent Creasman made a motion to accept the minutes, and Lee Barrett seconded the motion. During discussion, Katie Payne requested an amendment be made to the minutes to keep information in alignment with the budget year. Specifically and under Item 3, Treasurer's Report, she and Lisa McCallister asked the parenthetical comment of "now paid off" be removed following reference to Ambulance 1110 and Engine 11-2. Dan Little confirmed that Kent was in agreement with amending his motion accordingly and with Lee that he was in agreement with the amendment in regard to his second of the motion. Both confirmed they were in agreement, and the motion carried unanimously.
5. **Treasurer's Report:** Lisa McCallister relayed we have an Operating Reserve Fund balance of \$495,000; a Vehicle Fund balance of \$471,000; and a Building Fund balance of \$500,000. We have an upcoming purchase of an ambulance. While the exact cost is unknown, it will be over \$300,000. As previously reported, purchase of a new fire engine is being considered and will be close to \$1,000,000. French Broad is in the process of building a new building. It is not known if the size is comparable to our need, but they are currently at \$8,000,000. Leicester built a new building within the past three to five years, at a cost of round \$12,000,000. We have a long way to go in building reserve to fund that project.

Katie Payne relayed we have maintained and improved wages for employees; are working to replace old and expiring equipment; and maintenance to the aging building. We expect our new ambulance will be delivered in the next few months, so that payment will be beginning. We expect to order a new engine this year but won't receive that for a couple years. In this past budget year (July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023), we did pay off the current ambulance and our newest engine.

Kathy Higdon made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report. Kent Creasman seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

RVFD Annual Board and Members Meeting (October 2023)

6. Fire Chief's Report: Chief Kelly provided an overview of his Annual Report handout, which included number of calls received per quarter, average response time, overlapping calls, number of calls per apparatus and category of calls; and status of replacement of Ambulance 1120.

Chief Kelly provided an overview of the Annual Training Report, which included 3,980 hours of training and 490+ NC and National accredited certifications held by the Department. Eleven (11) new certifications were obtained through local community colleges and the National Fire Academy. Current strength of membership includes nine EMT Basic, 19 Advanced EMT, 11 Paramedics, and 30 NC Certified Firefighters.

Chief Kelly provided an overview of the Fire Life Safety Event Report, which included the Community Risk Reduction Project involving canvassing for smoke detector placement. RVFD has received a grant two consecutive years for smoke detectors and will automatically be receiving smoke detectors in 2024 due to the success of this program. There were 10 Events for the year; 26 car seat installations; 60 smoke detectors installed; and a total of 541 people reached in the community.

Chief Kelly relayed the two biggest events held are the Halloween Social and Santa Claus Initiative. Both require a lot of work, and he commended the staff and volunteers for all their hard work this past year.

Lisa McCallister made a motion to accept the Chief's Report. Kathy Higdon seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

7. Elections: Dan Little shared the following information – we have three seats for the full three-year term. We have one seat for a one-year term. (This is the seat previously held by Mark Curran, who resigned.) You can vote for four parties as listed on the ballot. Write-in votes are not permitted. If you vote for more than four, your ballot will be disqualified and not be counted. The parties that get the top three vote totals will get the three-year seats. The party with the fourth highest vote total will get the one-year seat.

We had 10 total applicants. Two were received via email, which is not currently an acceptable method. One of those withdrew, and two were deemed not eligible. Both of these applications were reviewed by our HR and legal advisor and letters were issued to them giving notification of this determination by regular and certified mail. Section 3.3 of the Bylaws addresses a Board member serving two consecutive terms and then mandates a required one-year period to be off the Board. This change was approved in August of 2022 when Dan Friday was on the Board. It should also be noted that he did not vote in favor of this specific change.

While it has not been done in the past, the names of the seven candidates that are on the ballot were placed on the RVFD website on October 2, 2023, and after checking with each to make sure they had no objections to that action.

Dan Little relayed each candidate would be given three minutes to introduce themselves and asked Chief Kelly to conduct the timing of each speaker. Heidi Hensley is ill and

RVFD Annual Board and Members Meeting (October 2023)

not able to be here tonight. Merel Johnson, Robert King, Butch Laughter, Dan Little, Steve Soneker and Steve Wickham each addressed the members, providing a brief bio.

Dan Little thanked the candidates for their interest in serving on the Board. He thanked Board members, Department staff and community volunteers who helped with the voter registration process. He asked everyone to vote, relaying Tory Lindsey would collect the ballots.

Once all ballots were collected, Dan Little announced Kent Creasman would read the votes from the ballot box. Carla McLendon would verify. Lisa McCallister would tally the votes on paper, and Lee Barrett would tally the votes on the dry-erase board. Kent removed the security seal from the lock box and read the votes. The results of the tally were:

Heidi Hensley - 22
Merel Johnson - 43
Robert King – 27
Butch Laughter - 61
Dan Little - 62
Steve Seneker – 21
Steve Wickham - 47

In accordance with the tally, Dan Little, Butch Laughter and Steve Wickham will fill the three-year term slots. Merel Johnson will fill the one-year term slot. Carla McLendon counted the ballots (72), which Lisa McCallister confirmed matched the number of voters on the registration sheets. Dan Little welcomed Merel Johnson and Steve Wickham to the Board and asked them to have a seat at the table.

8. **Old Business:** There was no Old Business to come before the Corporation.
9. **New Business:** There was no New Business to come before the Corporation.
10. **Public Comment:** Dan Little asked if there was any objection to moving into the Regular Monthly Meeting and holding public comment until that meeting. No objections were voiced.
11. **Adjournment:** Lee Barrett made a motion to adjourn the 2023 Annual Meeting at 8:10PM. Kent Creasman seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.