

The Board of: Riceville Volunteer Fire Department
Met at: 6:30PM
On: Monday, May 18, 2026
For: Regular Board Meeting
Moderator: Dan Little (Chairperson)
Members Present: Lee Barrett, Kent Creasman, Merel Johnson,
Butch Laughter, Carla McLendon, Mark Siler and
Steve Wickham
Not Present: Lisa McCallister (Vacation)
Guest(s):

1. Call the Meeting to Order: Dan Little called the meeting to order at 6:35PM and determined a quorum was present.

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

3. Approval of Minutes: Draft minutes for the April 20 Regular and Executive Session (recessed) meetings were emailed to the Board on May 9. Draft minutes for the May 11 Executive Session (reconvened) meeting were emailed to the Board on May 15. Kent Creasman made a motion to accept the meeting minutes as written, and Butch Laughter seconded the motion. Lee Barrett abstained from voting, as he was not present for any of the meetings. Otherwise, the vote carried unanimously.

4. Treasurer's Report: Financial reports for the month ending April 2026 were emailed to the Board on May 15. We are ten months into the budget year and remain on track financially. EMS Income (Line 4215) at \$36,843.91 is up from budgeted and may be a reflection of when billing actually occurs. Lee Barrett made a motion to accept the April financials. Butch Laughter seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

5. Fire Chief's Report: Handouts of the Fire Chief's and Training Reports were provided to the Board. There was nothing to report for FLSE.

Division Chief McEntire gave an overview of the Training Report, which included 919.0 total training hours for January 1 through May 11, 2026. The annual hose testing is complete, and the annual hydrant testing will begin this month and run through July. Face-to-face EMS CE training continues to have good participation, with the May classes completed and the next class scheduled for June 6. Several Fire/Rescue training opportunities exist, with one Riceville member having completed the Driver/Operator Intro/Basic class. A date for the Training House Burn has not yet been scheduled but could potentially occur late summer/early fall.

Chief Kelly provided an overview of his report, noting Total Calls (133 in April; 162 in March) and Overlapping Calls (37/28%) were both down slightly. There were 57 calls in-district; 76 calls out-of-district. The average fire response time was 9:42 minutes; EMS was 10:18 minutes. Repair of the HVAC system for the Community Center is awaiting a part, with a scheduled resolve date of Wednesday, May 20. Chief Kelly and Division Chief McEntire recently attended the State's Mid-Winter Chiefs' Conference in

Concord, at which Chief Kelly was a presenter. Kent Creasman asked about plans to hire for the vacant Paramedic positions, which includes one resulting from a recent transfer to the County. Chief Kelly noted there is one pending employment per a policy review.

6. Old Business:

A. Administrative Policies Review Committee – No update at this time.

B. Building Repairs Update – Dan Little relayed doors are still needed for the entrance between the foyer and Community Center. Chief Kelly relayed he has spoken with and sent measurements/pictures to Matthew Holland of Stantec, regarding three exterior waterproof doors funded by FEMA. Mr. Holland is working with his supervisor on a plan of action. He relayed their company does not have an engineered waterproof interior door. The Department will need to contact a “regular Building Project Manager” regarding the interior doors.

In response to a question from Dan Little, Chief Kelly relayed there have been no reports of issues with the recently installed septic pump system, nor has he noticed any odors in the pump/septic area. Dan relayed the issue with the commode in the foyer bathroom (no flange) has been resolved, so that facility is back in service.

C. Department Vehicles – Dan Little relayed that troubleshooting continues on TAC 11. Engine 11-3 repairs are tabled pending receipt of the budget from the County.

Kent Creasman later asked for clarification on the number of quotes needed for purchase/repair, especially when due diligence has been exercised in an attempt to obtain three. The Committee has three quotes for the chassis but only two for the up fitters. Division Chief McEntire relayed of the three vendors, only Brooks (who works with Modern Chevrolet) can quote both the chassis and the up fit work. He feels the Sales Representative he spoke with recently will provide a quote within the next few days. Division Chief McEntire also asked for clarification on his understanding that as long as the Department is a member of the Sheriff’s Association or HGAC (HGACBuy - Helping Governments Across the Country Buy), we are good to use their vendors, as they have already been vetted.

D. UTV/ATV (Draft Policy) – Tabled until receipt of OSHA report.

E. 2024 990 and June 30, 2025 Financial Audit – Merel Johnson made a motion to accept the 2024 990 and June 30, 2025 Financial Audit. Kent Creasman seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

F. Property Survey – Merel Johnson relayed the property survey report and associated invoice have been received. The plat drawing has been sent to the County for filing under one PIN, rather than the current two. The associated drawing is difficult to read due to the small print size, so Merel will obtain an engineering-sized drawing of the property for the Department.

G. Budget/Flat Tax Rate Update – Katie Payne relayed the County-wide flat tax rate and budget amount the Department will receive is still unknown. Dan Little, Chief Kelly and Katie met with the County on April 20 and explained the Department's needs and how the initial funding allocation from them of \$2,658,092 does not meet what was requested or needed for the year. The County acknowledged their concerns had been heard and that the final amount the Department will receive will be made known at the County Commissioners' meeting on June 2, 2026, where the budget will be adopted. There are also a few bills in the NC General Assembly/Senate that (if passed) could affect the Department's budget. In the meantime, Katie relayed expenses are being cut where possible to come in line with the initial funding allocation, with plans to present an updated budget for approval at the Board meeting in June.

7. New Business: There was no New Business to bring before the Board.

8. Announcements: The next Regular Meeting of the Board will be held on Monday, June 15, 2026 at 6:30PM.

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

Johanna Bracken and Richard Kitchen asked how they would evacuate in the event of a fire blocking their road (off of Bull Creek Road). Their concern stems from the amount of downed timber from Hurricane Helene that remains in the area near their home. Chief Kelly and Board Members spoke to proactive measures that could be taken by the homeowner, such as implementing measures outlined in the Fire Wise Model and having their property evaluated by a Fire Wise representative (free service). Chief Kelly offered for someone from the Department to evaluate the property as well. He also mentioned the proactive steps taken a year ago January in conjunction with the County to create Strike Teams, which can be called upon if it is determined additional resources are needed. Chief Kelly also noted the working relationship that had been formed with the U.S. Forestry Service and the resources available to them (i.e., helicopters and planes). The resources available at the Department (i.e., brush truck) and well as from nearby Departments was also noted.

10. Executive Session: Kent Creasman made a motion to move to Executive Session for legal and personnel matters at 7:21PM. Merel Johnson seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. The Board returned from Executive Session at 8:57PM.

11. Adjournment: Merel Johnson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:58PM. Kent Creasman seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

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