

**The Board of:** Riceville Volunteer Fire Department  
**Met at:** 6:30PM  
**On:** Monday, April 15, 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 6:31PM.
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 March 18 Regular and Executive Session meetings were emailed to the Board on April 6, with an edited draft of the Regular minutes emailed on April 8. Lisa McCallister made a motion to accept the Regular and Executive Session minutes as written. Merel Johnson seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
4. **Treasurer's Report:** Financial reports for the month ending March 2024 were emailed to the Board on April 10. Katie Payne relayed we remain on track with the budget. There are some line items that will come close to budgeted, and Insurance (Line Item #5404) may go over. A 10% increase for this line item is included in the proposed budget for 2024-2025 and will be reevaluated when the policy renewal is received in late June/early July. In response to a question about Line Item 540103, Chief's Vehicle (Tahoe), Katie responded the associated \$1,710.60 was a year-to-date figure. Kent Creasman made a motion to approve the March financials as presented. Lee Barrett seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
5. **Fire Chief's Report:** The monthly Chief's and Training reports were emailed to the Board on April 10.

**A. Training Report** - Division Chief McEntire noted updates to the emailed report include dates have been set for the May EMS CE; he is working on the quarterly calendar for Membership; and the Department will participate in various fire scenarios at Swannanoa next week, to which the Board is invited.

**B. Fire Life Safety Report** - There will be a safety event at the Department on Saturday, April 20, from 10:00AM to 4:00PM. From 12N until 5:00PM that same day, 6 Pigs BBQ will be on site.

A smoke detector canvas is scheduled for the first Saturday in June. The Department was approved for a grant from the State Fire Marshall's Office for 54 smoke detectors (maximum).

## RVFD Regular Board Meeting (April 15, 2024)

**C. Chief's Report** - Chief Kelly provided an overview of his report, noting Total Calls of 109 for March. Total Call Man Hours has been added as a new line item and was 59:51:20 for the month of March. IV Attempts/Success % was up at 67/88%. Over-Lapping Incidents were down from 44/31% in February to 36/33%. At 8:49 and 7:37 minutes, the Average Response Times (ART) for Fire and EMS remain below the National benchmark. Two new Volunteers were brought on board; a new AEMT and a new PT Paramedic have been hired.

Engine 11-2 has been in and out of service for repairs due to the original damage. There was a delay in receiving a part to repair a problem with the cooling system, but the unit was back in service today.

Stress cracks have been found in the cross member between the rear suspension and transmission of Ambulance 1110. This results from high mileage (174,000), with total running hours on that vehicle being 225,000. A loaner arrived today.

Chief Kelly explained the various methods of recruitment taking place, which include fire colleges, flyers, word-of-mouth, training events, NC Fire Chief Association and WNC Jobs (geared for Fire and EMS). Indeed (on-line recruitment site) was used last year but was expensive with no return on investment.

Chief Kelly spoke about the possible need to revisit the Department's age policy (currently 21, consider dropping to 18) and CDL requirement associated with driving Department vehicles. If changes were made, approving drivers would take place on a case-by-case basis; after undergoing a very specific and intensive training program; and with safety remaining a top priority.

### **6. Old Business:**

**A. Equipment Surplus Policy** – Keith Bost, Management Solutions for Emergency Services (MSFES), is in agreement with the changes the Board requested to the subject policy. Lisa McCallister reiterated the requested changes recorded in March's minutes, and Katie confirmed those changes were made. Lee Barrett made a motion to approve the Equipment Surplus Policy that Keith Bost approved as written. Kent Creasman seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**B. Department Vehicle Branding Committee** – Lee Barrett (Sign by Design - \$1,150 plus tax; Super Sign - \$1,624); Chief Kelly (Clark Communications – just over \$1,000) and Lisa McCallister (A to Z Signs and Engraving - \$1,048.60) followed up on the approved branding design and obtained the above quotes. All quotes are “per vehicle.” The A to Z Signs quote included an \$80 travel charge for them to come on site and perform the work. This company comes highly recommended, as they do a lot of work for Haywood County law enforcement, EMS and Fire; in many of the adjoining counties; and for Western Carolina University. Lee Barrett made a motion to proceed with having the work done by A to Z Signs. Merel Johnson seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. Dan Little asked Chief Kelly to follow up and have the work taken care of as quickly as possible.

**C. Ceiling Repairs Status** – A representative from a recommended company was to have evaluated the needed repairs last week but did not show. A different individual (from a different company) is to come by one day this week.

**D. 2024-2025 Proposed Budget** – A copy of the Department's proposed budget was provided to Board Members last month and is due to the County by April 20. Katie Payne explained funds in Line Item 6121 (Building Improvement) were moved to Line Item 6007 (Building Improvement); a 10% increase was budgeted for Health and Liability Insurance; and the need to budget for Worker's Comp, even though the State currently pays for this item. Katie responded to questions about Line Items 4101 (Buncombe County Sales Tax) and 4104 (Ad Valorem Tax); 5500 (Fire & Rescue Supplies – i.e., flashlights) vs. 6123 (Loose Equipment – set aside for upgrades to new truck); and 55062 (Medical Supplies – tracking about 50% less, even with inflation).

Katie reviewed the Cash Sheet with the Board again, explaining what happens with budget money not spent; that operating reserves equals three months of operating expenses; and that EMS funds are recorded after a full year is collected, rather than month-to-month. Plans are to discuss payment options for the new ambulance at next month's meeting. In response to a question, Katie explained the cost and payment in full of the new truck will be reflected in the Capital Plan to the County.

Kent Creasman made a motion to approve the proposed 2024-2025 budget. Lisa McCallister seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**E. Proposed Changes to Administrative Policies** – Chief Kelly and Keith Bost, Management Solutions for Emergency Services (MSFES), are currently reviewing the proposed changes. Dan Little asked that Keith Bost be asked about the inclusion of specifics on the formation and members of a Grievance Committee.

**F. Ambulance Purchase Update** – Chief Kelly received an email on March 29 from Dennis Tingen, Director of Sales, in which he was advised Riceville is next in line with Lifeline to put the truck in production. Chief Kelly did sign the new agreement with the company as discussed last month. Projected delivery date is August 2024; however, Chief Kelly expects to travel to Iowa around July 4<sup>th</sup> to conduct the final review. The company is responsible for getting the truck to the Department and is still in discussion with Chief Kelly as to whether it will be driven or transported by trailer. Barring any unforeseen issues, the cost of the truck is \$340,100.

## **7. New Business:**

**A. 1110 Maintenance Issues** – Discussion on this topic took place earlier in the meeting and is recorded in 5. C., Fire Chief's Report.

**B. New OSHA Standards (Proposed)** – Printed copies of proposed changes to the OSHA standards are available in the Chief's office for review. The standards have not been changed since 1996, and the proposed changes may adversely affect non-profits. Public comment is being accepted until May; the Legislature votes in June; and those affected have until December to become compliant with the changes. It was suggested

## RVFD Regular Board Meeting (April 15, 2024)

the email to express concerns to the Legislature be placed on the Department's website.

**8. Announcements:** Dan Little announced the next Regular Meeting of the Board will be held on Monday, May 20, 2024 at 6:30PM.

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

**10. Adjournment:** Lisa McCallister made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:45PM. Merel Johnson seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. The Board did not adjourn to Executive Session, as there was no business necessitating this action.

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