

The Board of: Riceville Volunteer Fire Department
Met at: 6:30PM
On: Monday, August 18, 2025
For: Regular Board Meeting
Moderator: Dan Little (Chairperson)
Members Present: Lee Barrett, Kent Creasman, Heidi Hensley, Merel Johnson, Butch Laughter, Carla McLendon and Steve Wickham
Not Present: Lisa McCallister
Guest(s):

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: 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 July 21 Regular and Executive Session meetings were emailed to the Board on July 25. Carla McLendon requested discussion of the Executive Session minutes, which will take place during Executive Session. Merel Johnson made a motion to accept the July Regular meeting minutes as written. Lee Barrett seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

4. Treasurer's Report: Financial reports for the month ending July 2025 were emailed to the Board on August 14. One month into the fiscal year, we are on track with the budget. Kent Creasman made a motion to accept the July Treasurer's Report. Lee Barrett seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

5. Fire Chief's Report: Captain Redden relayed one FLSE event was held this month, with one adult and seven children in attendance. Events will be scheduled with a Day Care in support of October being Fire Prevention month.

Division Chief McEntire gave an overview of the Training Report, which was emailed to the Board on August 13. The report included 1,952 total training hours for January 1 through August 11; scheduling of EMS CE (meeting with Coordinator and Dr. Horine tomorrow); service testing being planned for end of October/first of November (back on track); and scheduled facility burn on September 6 with Swannanoa.

Dan Little noted the Department's Training House has a leaking roof and mold issues. He asked Division Chief McEntire to provide some estimates at next month's meeting to burn this structure before it collapses.

Chief Kelly provided an overview of his report, which was emailed to the Board on August 13. He noted there were 131 Total Calls for July. Total Man Hours were up at 84. Chief Kelly feels the Department is in line with the rest of the County in regard to success rate for IV Attempts (149/83%). EMS Average Response Time (ART) was up at 10:32 minute, which can be attributed to overlapping calls. Fire ART was below the benchmark at 9:22. One of the two Paramedics hired last month has resigned, citing

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family matters. A pump had to be replaced on Truck 11 to help with fuel flow. UTV 11 has been placed out-of-service and will be taken off the books.

Dan Little asked Chief Kelly if EMS out-of-district calls canceled in route or refusals could be tracked in support of miles being placed on the ambulance as well as dollars spent. Chief Kelly responded they can, noting he has discussed this issue at the County level and received a response that it is all part of running an ambulance.

Lee Barrett asked when the new Substation at the site of the former swimming pool is expected to be in operation. Kent Creasman responded that is a year to 18 months in the future. However, this Substation will basically be one ambulance and one Community Paramedic moved from Station 4 (Black Mountain), which will be shut down.

Lee Barrett asked when the video-assisted laryngoscope purchased a few months ago would be placed in service. Chief Kelly responded once training is complete, which is currently at about one-third. The existing laryngoscope continues to function properly and will continue to be used until training is complete.

Chief Kelly further relayed:

- The Department will be awarded a \$100,000 Disaster Relief Grant from the Office of the State Fire Marshal. The funding is intended to support “Equipment, Wildland PPE and items that will enhance wildfire response and preparedness.”
- Violet Caramella was recognized at the NC SAFRE Conference Memorial Service last week.
- The Veterans Restoration Quarters has purchased the old Quality Inn on Tunnel Road. In a meeting with Chief Kelly this morning, they relayed they will have quarantine rooms clearly marked. They will also have a van and EMT on duty to transport veterans to the VA when needed. This may reduce the number of calls for the Department to the Quarters.
- The Regional Ranger for the US Forest Service let Chief Kelly know last week the contractors expect to be complete with the harvesting of identified trees in the game lands area off Shope Creek by mid-September.
- Chief Kelly provided an update on Elora Allen and Veronica Hanks, both of whom are doing well and looking forward to returning to work.
- The Department’s Facebook account was reactivated two days ago, having been temporarily deactivated since the accident in June.

6. Old Business:

A. Administrative Policies Review Committee – No update; tabled until next month.

B. 1110 Review Committee and Metal Building Quotes – Dan Little relayed the hydraulic (liquid) lift system on 1110 malfunctioned again. Atlantic evaluated and thinks it may be a control module/height sensor, which they estimate would cost \$2,500 to repair. A technician from Northwestern Emergency Vehicles will be on site this Thursday to evaluate. (Note – 1120 has an air lift system rather than liquid.)

C. Building Repairs Update – Dan Little relayed Service Master has completed most of the work; one issue remains with the metal building, and Roberto is scheduled to be on site in the morning to complete pending issues in the Community Center. He is also to provide contact information for a door contractor, who will take care of reinstalling the remaining doors. The sheetrock is up in the kitchen and will soon be painted. The cabinets have been received and will be installed once the painting is done. Most of the electrical work is done; there are just a few items pending in the Staff Kitchen. Installation of a new roof and gutters on the main building, as well as a new roof on the pavilion is complete.

D. Property Deed – No update; tabled until next month.

E. Acoustics in Community Center – No update; tabled until next month.

7. New Business:

A. Engine 11 – Chief Kelly has received word that construction of Engine 11 is scheduled to begin in March 2026.

B. Department Vehicles – Dan Little relayed Car 11 is in rough condition and may need to be replaced. Initial thoughts are purchasing a four-door, half-ton pickup truck with a camper cover, using a decking system and drawers. Discussion included moving TAC 11 to the Car 11 position; the Chief's current vehicle to the TAC 11 position; and the new purchase becoming the Chief's vehicle. Dan would like to table the topic until next month, at which time Katie Payne may be available to provide financial input.

C. Board Member Application – Election of Board Members will take place at the Annual Meeting, scheduled for Monday, October 13, 2025. Four members are slated to rotate off the Board (Lee Barrett, Kent Creasman, Heidi Hensley and Carla McLendon). With the exception of Carla, all members are eligible to serve another term if interested and elected. Department Bylaws Section 3.4, Election of Board of Directors, outlines the process for submitting an application, which will be accepted from August 29 through September 13, 2025. Chief Kelly was asked to post this information on the Department's website.

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

9. Public Comment: There was no Public Comment.

10. Executive Session: Lee Barrett made a motion to move to Executive Session for legal matters at 7:27PM. Kent Creasman seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. The Board returned from Executive Session at 8:07PM.

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11. Legal Matters: Merel Johnson made a motion to approve the legal matter discussed during Executive Session. Kent Creasman seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

12. Approval of Minutes: Steve Wickham made a motion to approve the July 21 Executive Session minutes with the edit discussed during Executive Session. Lee Barrett seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

13. Adjournment: Kent Creasman made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:08PM. Steve Wickham seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

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