

**The Board of:** Riceville Volunteer Fire Department  
**Met at:** 7:00PM  
**On:** Monday, October 13, 2025  
**For:** Regular Board Meeting  
**Moderator:** Dan Little (Chairperson)  
**Members Present:** Lee Barrett, Kent Creasman, Merel Johnson,  
Butch Laughter, Lisa McCallister, Carla McLendon,  
Mark Siler and Steve Wickham  
**Not Present:**  
**Guest(s):**

1. **Call the Meeting to Order:** Dan Little called the meeting to order at 7:33PM and determined a quorum was present.

2. **Approval of Minutes:** Draft minutes for the September 15 Regular and Executive Session meetings were emailed to the Board on October 7. Kent Creasman made a motion to accept the September Regular and Executive Session meeting minutes as written. Lee Barrett seconded the motion. Mark Siler abstained, as he just joined the Board this evening. The motion carried.

3. **Treasurer's Report:** Due to the shortened time between the September and October meetings, financial reports are not yet finalized. These reports will be reviewed at the November Regular Meeting of the Board. Plans are for the results of the Annual Audit to be presented at November's meeting as well.

4. **Fire Chief's Report:**

**A. Chief's Report** - Chief Kelly relayed calls are down slightly; however, the Department remains busy with Overlapping Calls. Response times remain good.

**B. Training Report** - Division Chief McEntire gave an update on the planned burning of the Department's Training House. The report came back negative for asbestos, so he and Steve Wickham will proceed with obtaining the air quality burn permit. A one-month notice must be given to the State prior to the burn and a two-week notice to the Community. The latter will take place via the Department's website, social media and hand-delivered letters if/where necessary.

**C. FLSE Report** – Captain Redden relayed a two-part event took place at Verner East (Early Learning Center). The morning event consisted of fire safety; the afternoon, the check/installation of 11 car seats.

5. **Old Business:**

**A. Administrative Policies Review Committee** – Kent Creasman relayed he has met with Chief Kelly and discussed several topics in the Administrative Policies and Full-Time Policies. Kent needs to speak with Katie Payne and the Officers about one thing that needs to be addressed and possibly rewritten in the Administrative Policies.

**B. 1110 Review Committee and Metal Building Quotes** – A lift pump system has been ordered through Northwestern Emergency Services for Ambulance 1110. Once repaired, this ambulance will be used when 1120 has to be taken out of service.

The grant that would have been used to purchase a metal storage building was not received, so this item will be tabled pending available funding.

**C. Building Repairs Update** – Dan Little relayed items remaining are lights in the foyer (pending electrical inspection); a few items in the kitchen; and ordering of fire-rated doors. Service Master provided the paperwork on doors that need to be installed, so they have received their final payment. Post-Helene repairs totaled \$324,000, all of which was covered by insurance.

**D. Property Deed** – Conversation on this topic will take place with the owner of Asheville Roofing when he is apprised of the burning of the Training House.

**E. Acoustics in Community Center** – Katie Payne followed up with the Contractor who did the sheetrock work in the Staff Kitchen, who provided an estimate of \$25,000. The quote included a dropped ceiling with tracking and 12” of insulation. He is not able to guarantee this will resolve the sound issue but feels it will help tremendously. Katie will ask him what material the 2’ x 2’ squares are made of and possibly obtain some samples. Lisa McCallister offered to reach out to some acoustic companies, and Dan Little offered to follow up with his church, which recently had some acoustic work done.

**F. Department Vehicles** – Dan Little relayed Chief Kelly has a Committee looking into replacement of Car 11, as well as pricing out a new ambulance. TAC 11 is out of service. Per Allen Blount, the body control module needed has been ordered (\$311), programmed and is on its way.

**G. UTV/ATV (Draft Policy)** – Last month, Katie Payne noted this policy is an appendix to an existing policy. It was decided to table this topic until next month’s meeting. Dan Little asked Chief Kelly to send the “parent policy” to the Board prior to next month’s meeting and for their review.

**H. Buncombe County Flat Tax Proposal** – Chief Kelly reported last month that the Fire Chiefs were recently informed that Buncombe County is proposing a flat rate tax for all Departments, and wants to make services provided the same across the County. The proposed tax rate is unknown at this time. The County would like to have the flat tax rate/process in place by June 30, 2026. Chief Kelly and Katie Payne attended a meeting downtown last month on this matter, and Chief Kelly has attended a second one since. The Buncombe County delegation plans to meet every two weeks with the Fire Chiefs, and the Board is invited to attend. The Fire Chiefs have voiced their objections to this proposal.

## **6. New Business:**

**A. Election of Board Officers** - Dan Little relayed election needed to take place for the Officer positions of Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary. After confirming their willingness to continue to serve, Merel Johnson made a motion to keep

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the Board Officers as currently assigned - Dan Little as Chairperson, Kent Creasman Vice Chairperson, Lisa McCallister Treasurer and Carla McLendon Secretary. Steve Wickham seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**B. Conflict of Interest Statement Policy** – Board Members were provided a copy of proposed Board Policy B-1, Conflict of Interest & Annual Statement Policy, and asked to review prior to next month's meeting.

**C. Halloween Social Event** – The Halloween Social will take place at the Department on Friday, October 31, from 5:00PM until 9:00PM.

**7. Announcements:** Dan Little announced the next Regular Meeting of the Board will be held on Monday, November 17, 2025 at 6:30PM.

**8. Public Comment:** The meeting was opened for public comment after Lee Barrett read the associated guidelines.

Alice Royer thanked the Department and Board for all they do, noting the Department helped her with a chimney fire prior to Hurricane Helene. Neil Blank also thanked the Department and the Board. In regard to the proposed flat tax rate, he asked if there were other counties where this action had been implemented and was a success. Neil also asked how we could ensure guidelines (if they exist) would be followed. Chief Kelly responded this action had been implemented in 11 counties, with a 12<sup>th</sup> scheduled for this week. Not all Fire Chiefs in these counties consider it a success. He recommended individuals contact their County Commissioner.

**9. Executive Session:** Kent Creasman made a motion to move to Executive Session for legal matters at 8:26PM. Lisa McCallister seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. The Board returned from Executive Session at 9:36PM.

**10. Adjournment:** Lee Barrett made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:37PM. Merel Johnson seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

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