

The Board of: Riceville Volunteer Fire Department
Met at: 6:30PM
On: Monday, May 19, 2025
For: Regular Board Meeting
Moderator: Dan Little (Chairperson)
Members Present: Lee Barrett, Kent Creasman, Heidi Hensley, Merel Johnson, Butch Laughter, Lisa McCallister and Carla McLendon
Not Present: Steve Wickham
Guest(s):

1. **Call the Meeting to Order:** Dan Little called the meeting to order at 6:34PM. He relayed that Steve Wickham will not be in attendance tonight, as he is out of town.

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 21 Regular and Executive Session meetings were emailed to the Board on May 13. Lisa McCallister made a motion to accept the April Regular and Executive Session minutes as written. Kent Creasman seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

4. **Treasurer's Report:** Financial reports for the month ending April 2025 and an updated hurricane-related income and expense document (as of May 15) were emailed to the Board on May 16. Katie Payne relayed we are on track with the budget, with nothing major to report. In response to a question, she relayed the increase in EMS income is most likely related to the timing of invoice processing rather than an increase in calls. Kent Creasman made a motion to accept the April Treasurer's Report. Lee Barrett seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

5. **Fire Chief's Report:** Division Chief McEntire gave an overview of the Training Report, which was emailed to the Board on May 16. The report included 1,280 total training hours for January 1 through May 15; move of EMS CE offerings from May to June due to new protocol; completion of annual testing, with the exception of E11-3 for which servicing is required every six months due to age; and upcoming scheduling of UTV classes for the East side of the County.

Chief Kelly relayed there were no events to report in regard to FLSE. As a reminder, the Department will participate in "Smoke Alarm Saturday" on June 7, targeting Riceville Forest. Chief Kelly did share that a third save took place in Scenic Mobile Home Park recently and as a direct result of placement of a smoke detector in that home as part of this program.

Chief Kelly provided an overview of his report, which was emailed to the Board on May 14. He noted there were 175 Total Calls for April. Total Man Hours were up at 124. At 8:01 and 9:53 minutes, the Average Response Times (ART) for Fire and EMS remain below the National benchmark. EMS Out-of-District Dispatched was up due to the amount of time 1120 stayed in service with the County and their shortage of trucks. Ambulance 1120 was out-of-service for one week, and 1110 was used in its place. In

response to a question, Chief Kelly noted the County Substation slated for the former Owen Pool location is “on the books for 2027.”

6. Old Business:

A. Administrative Policies Review Committee – Kent Creasman needs to meet with Chief Kelly and discuss the proposed recommendations prior to moving forward.

B. 1110 Review Committee and Metal Building Quotes – Dan Little relayed the Committee has not been able to meet, so these topics are deferred until next month’s meeting.

C. Building Repairs Update – Dan Little provided an update on the status of repairs. While progress has been made, much work remains (i.e., doors need to be installed; cabinetry, countertops and appliances need to be received and installed in the Staff Kitchen). Katie Payne relayed an update from the Lead Worker (Roberto) is to be provided this week. At Dan’s request, she will obtain contact information for Roberto’s Supervisor.

Merel Johnson inquired about the poor acoustics in the Community Center. This is a topic that has been discussed by the Board over the years. Lisa McCallister has some information/quotes from the last time it was discussed. Dan Little asked if she and Merel would follow up on this issue for discussion at next month’s meeting.

D. Bylaws Amendment – Lisa McCallister read the handout provided to, discussed by and voted upon by the Board last month. The handout contains the recommended wording from Judge Noble and Keith Bost, Management Solutions for Emergency Services (MSFES), for Bylaws Section 3.3, Terms of the Members of the Board of Directors. The recommended verbiage provides direction should no applications be received to fill annual/upcoming vacant Board seats.

In accordance with Section 8.11 of the Bylaws, Amendment or Repeal of Bylaws, the proposed amendment must be voted on in two consecutive meetings. If approved as a result of tonight’s vote, the amendment will take effect immediately. Lee Barrett made a motion to accept the Bylaws amendment as written. Merel Johnson seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Katie Payne noted that neither she nor Chief Kelly had received any negative feedback as a result of last month’s vote. Board members relayed they had not either.

E. Property Deed – Board members have not had a chance to speak with the owner of Asheville Roofing about the property layout/survey. Ideally, they would like to do so before Asheville Roofing goes to the expense of relocating a storage building, a portion of which may be located on Department property. The Board feels they can come to an agreement with Asheville Roofing that will work for both parties.

F. Septic System Repair – Due to the urgency of this matter, a motion carried unanimously at last month’s meeting to vote electronically on the quotes received and in

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order to move this project forward. Katie Payne forwarded five quotes to the Board on May 10:

Blaylock Excavation	\$11,958.00 (\$14,958 if tank is needed)
Horton's Septic and Plumbing, LLC	\$11,000.00
Johnson's Contracting	\$10,646.00 (\$13,846.00 revised for tank)
Miles Holden Incorporated	\$26,605.00
Praytor's Landscaping and Grading	\$37,693.26

Following discussion on the email, which included obtaining clarification on some of the quotes, a motion was made by Kent Creasman to award the contract. Merel Johnson seconded the motion and cast a vote of "yes." Questions remained and no other votes were cast on the email prior to tonight's meeting. Consequently, Kent Creasman retracted the motion due to the need for further discussion.

The Board discussed the quotes and repairs outlined in the County permit at length. Dan Little explained that while Brian Johnson is not a certified/licensed septic installer/repairer, he is a licensed general contractor. As such, he is authorized to install septic systems on new builds, so has the experience/knowledge base. Katie Payne added that a certified/licensed septic installer/repairer may allow Mr. Johnson to "work under their license" by contacting the County Inspector, and he has someone willing to do so. Regardless of to whom the contract is awarded, the County will inspect the work throughout the process and prior to the new lines and tank being covered.

Kent Creasman made a motion to award the contract to Johnson's Contracting. Lee Barrett seconded the motion. Lee Barrett, Kent Creasman, Heidi Hensley, Merel Johnson and Butch Laughter voted "Yes." Due to reservations about the lack of a certification/license, Lisa McCallister voted "No", and Carla McLendon abstained. The motion carried.

Dan Little asked Katie Payne to contact Brian Johnson to let him know the contract had been awarded to his company. She will also ensure alternate bathroom facilities are available for the employees for the duration of the work.

G. Creek Restoration – Dan Little relayed this work is in progress. The contract allows for debris to be removed from the creek and for the creek banks to be restored.

H. Engine 11 Status - In response to a question, Chief Kelly relayed he spoke with Cameron Marler (KME) today, who said we remain on track with the contract in regard to the new truck (late 2026/early 2027). It is a six-month build but is not on the production line yet. Color pictures are available in the Chief's office for review.

7. New Business:

A. County Contract - Chief Kelly and Katie Payne relayed the updated County Contract was received Friday afternoon, and they were advised several times that there were no changes to the contract from last year, just updated dates. To avoid any delays in funding, the Board agreed to proceed with a vote tonight. In the event Katie finds any changes (other than dates) upon completion of her review, the Board can

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revote at next month's meeting. Lee Barrett made a motion to accept the County Contract, providing there are no major contractual changes from last year. Merel Johnson seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

B. New Hire – Chief Kelly introduced and the Board welcomed Veronica Hanks, Fulltime Paramedic on A Shift.

8. Announcements: Dan Little announced the next Regular Meeting of the Board will be held on Monday, June 16, 2025 at 6:30PM.

9. Public Comment: Thaddeus Rude thanked the Department for assisting with a medical issue he had several years ago. He also thanked the Board and Department for the exercise classes he attended, as they helped with his mobility, and he feels others have benefited from the classes as well.

10. Adjournment: Lisa McCallister made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:47PM. Kent Creasman seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

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