

The Board of: Riceville Volunteer Fire Department
Met at: 6:30PM
On: Monday, March 17, 2025
For: Regular Board Meeting
Moderator: Dan Little (Chairperson)
Members Present: Lee Barrett, Kent Creasman, Merel Johnson, Lisa McCallister, Carla McLendon and Steve Wickham
Not Present: Kathy Higdon and Butch Laughter (Medical)
Guest(s):

1. Call the Meeting to Order: Dan Little called the meeting to order at 6:36PM. He relayed that Butch Laughter would not be present tonight for continued medical reasons.

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 February 17 Regular meeting were emailed to the Board on February 20. Lisa McCallister made a motion to accept the February Regular minutes as written. Merel Johnson seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

4. Treasurer's Report: Financial reports for the month ending February 2025 were emailed to the Board on March 14. Katie Payne relayed EMS income rebounded better than expected and is more in line with the monthly average. (EMS income reflected in this month's report is from the December/January timeframe.) The cost of vehicle repairs (Engines 2 and 11) and annual preventative maintenance on all vehicles is reflected in Line Item 5401. Kent Creasman made a motion to accept the February financials. Steve Wickham seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

5. Fire Chief's Report: Division Chief McEntire gave an overview of the Training Report, which included 583 total training hours for January 1 through February 28; multiple EMS CE offerings per quarter due to good participation; annual physicals completed February 26; upcoming annual hose testing; upcoming Extrication, Driver/Operator Program, Technical Rescuer Specialties, Rural Water Supply/Tanker Ops and Wild Land training.

Chief Kelly provided an overview of his report, which was emailed to the Board on March 12. There were 141 Total Calls for February. Total Man Hours were up (102) due to participation in a search for a lost couple on February 14. IV Attempts/Success % was 155/85%. Over-Lapping Incidents were up from 37/25% in January to 45/32%. At 7:28 and 6:22 minutes, the Average Response Times (ART) for Fire and EMS remain below the National benchmark. EMS Out-of-District calls were down (50 in January to 36). Chief Kelly provided an overview of recruitment efforts, which has resulted in five new hires.

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Chief Kelly noted plans are underway with the Interim Chief of Reems Creek to obtain an updated mapping of hiking trails at the head of Shope Creek, using camera-equipped drones belonging to the Reems Creek and Weaverville Fire Departments. Plans are underway with Captain Penland of Swannanoa to map out the river from the Eastmoor side back to the Botany side, using that Department's drones.

For the third year in a row, the Department has applied for the Annual Smoke Detector Grant. Receipt of these smoke detectors will allow the Department to participate in "Smoke Alarm Saturday," which is the first Saturday in June. Plans are to target Riceville Forest for smoke detector checks/installations.

In response to a question, Chief Kelly relayed there was no feedback from a recent meeting with the County Commissioners. However, he was able to present "where we are" to the Commissioners. He also had a meeting with the Emergency Services Director last Thursday.

6. Old Business:

A. Administrative Policies Review Committee – After review by Chief Kelly, Kent Creasman will forward feedback he has received to Keith Bost, Management Solutions for Emergency Services (MSFES), for his review. The feedback and response from Keith will then be presented to the Board.

B. 1110 Review Committee – Dan Little relayed the Committee has not been able to meet, so this topic is deferred until the April meeting.

C. Building Repairs Update – Dan Little and Katie Payne provided an update on the status of repairs. They learned Service Master employs day laborers, with none having reported on site for the past two weeks. Katie relayed the Supervisor (Roberto) said he would have a crew on site all week to begin addressing the long punch list that has been developed (i.e., kitchen cabinets not installed properly, doors hung backwards, poor paint job, improperly installed epoxy floor).

The company from whom the cabinets for the kitchen near the administrative offices were purchased has provided a quote for granite countertops for that kitchen. The quote includes a new sink and is only \$600 higher than a quote that was provided for linoleum countertops. That company has been asked to provide a quote for granite countertops for the Staff Kitchen.

A quote has been requested for laminate flooring for the stairs and two landings, as installing the same flooring as that in the administrative area would require staff to be out of the building for three days.

D. 990 2023 Exempt Tax Filing – Katie Payne emailed the draft 990 prepared by DMJPS to the Board for review on February 13 and again on March 14. This is the Department's 2023 tax return for the year ending June 30, 2024. Lisa McCallister made a motion to approve the return as prepared. Kent Creasman seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

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E. Bylaws Amendment – As requested at last month's meeting, Katie Payne recently reached out to Keith Bost (MSFES) to obtain his feedback on the need to amend the Bylaws to provide direction should no applications be received to fill annual/upcoming vacant Board seats. (This was the case in September/October 2024.) This topic will be discussed further at next month's meeting, pending feedback from Keith.

F. Tanker Donation – Steve Wickham relayed following a test drive, mechanic's overview and title transfer, the 3,000 gallon tanker donated to Riceville following Hurricane Helene has been in service at the Country Volunteer Fire Department in Madison County for approximately two weeks. (The area they serve has no hydrants. Their Department has a 1,000 gallon tanker, which has a bad pump.)

G. Window Replacement for Community Center – Lisa McCallister previously provided a quote from Blue Ridge Glass (\$18,600), which includes installation. She will obtain two more quotes for the Board's consideration.

7. New Business:

A. 2025-2026 Proposed Budget – Board Members were given a copy of the proposed budget, and Katie Payne gave an overview of the document, outlining recommended changes (Income and Expense Notes). Board Members were asked to review the document and reach out to Katie with any questions, with a goal of approving the proposed budget at next month's Regular Board meeting. Proposed budgets are due to the County by April 18; however, Katie has requested an extension until April 22, since the Board does not meet again until April 21.

B. Bay Doors – Chief Kelly relayed new bay doors were installed today on the front side and will be installed on the back side tomorrow. The old motors are being used until the new ones arrive, which is expected to be this Friday.

C. Metal Building – Katie Payne emailed the link to the proposed metal building to be used for housing apparatus and equipment to the Board on March 14. Lee Barrett noted the cost seems high and asked that a couple more bids be received. He also noted the quote did not include a mobile home anchoring system, which is needed for this type building. Lee strongly recommended that consideration be given to insulating at least the roof, to avoid sweating/condensation build up.

D. Property Lines – The Board discussed the need to research property lines, as there is a chance a shed recently placed by Asheville Roofing is partially or fully on Department property. The Department has a great rapport with Asheville Roofing, which it wishes to maintain. However, the Department needs to be mindful of potential liability issues. Lisa McCallister will research the property deed for discussion at next month's meeting.

E. Board Electronic Communications – Dan Little relayed he and Katie Payne are in the very early stages of discussing an alternative to printing out Board meeting materials, as a means of reducing the cost of maintaining a copier/printers and

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associated supplies. One idea being considered is use of tablets by Board Members to access materials during meetings.

8. Announcements: Dan Little announced the next Regular Meeting of the Board will be held on Monday, April 21, 2025 at 6:30PM.

Jane Little announced the Boy Scouts will hold a Flea Market at the Department pavilion on April 5 to raise funds for the Scouts to attend Summer Camp. They are also selling raffle cards as they did last year.

9. Public Comment: There was no public comment.

10. Adjournment: Lee Barrett made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:56PM. Kent Creasman seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

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