

**The Board of:** Riceville Volunteer Fire Department  
**Met at:** 6:30PM  
**On:** Monday, February 17, 2025  
**For:** Regular Board Meeting  
**Moderator:** Dan Little (Chairperson)  
**Members Present:** Lee Barrett, Kent Creasman, Kathy Higdon, Merel Johnson, Lisa McCallister, Carla McLendon and Steve Wickham  
**Not Present:** Butch Laughter (Medical)  
**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 asked those present to keep Butch Laughter and Reverend Terry Duckworth in their prayers (medical reasons). After opening the meeting in prayer, he asked everyone to stand if able and join him in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. (It was learned later in the meeting that Fairview Battalion Chief Steven Lytle passed away today in an off-duty accident. Dan asked that his family also be kept in our prayers.)
3. **Approval of Minutes:** Draft minutes for the January 20 Regular meeting were emailed to the Board on February 8. Steve Wickham made a motion to accept the January Regular minutes as written. Merel Johnson seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
4. **Treasurer's Report:** Financial reports for the month ending January 2025 were emailed to the Board on February 13. Katie Payne relayed there was nothing major to report. We did not experience the expected decrease in EMS income and remain okay in the Fire and Sales Tax categories. Katie relayed building-related expenses will be reflected in next month's reports. In response to a question, she noted the \$6,806.99 for TAC 11 (Line Item 540110) was for a transmission. Lee Barrett made a motion to accept the January financials. Kent Creasman seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
5. **Fire Chief's Report:** The Chief's and Training Reports were emailed to the Board on February 12. Division Chief McEntire gave an overview of the Training Report, which included 144 total training hours for January (down due to weather); multiple EMS CE offerings per quarter due to good participation; annual blood work completed January 28; annual physicals rescheduled to February 26 (due to member illness and renovation challenges); and Extrication, Driver/Operator Program, Technical Rescuer Specialties, USAR and Tanker Ops training in various stages of complete, scheduled or to be scheduled.

Chief Kelly provided an overview of his report, noting Total Calls of 149 for January. There were 37/25% Over-Lapping Incidents, with the percentage rate being the trend for the past 2 ½ years. There has also been a change with more In-District Over-Lapping rather than Out-of-District Incidents. At 7:36 and 8:28 minutes, the Average Response Times (ART) for Fire and EMS remain below the National benchmark. The Monthly Staff Loss of five (5) is a result of the annual review/update of the roster. The

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Department assisted in the successful search for two lost hikers last week at the head of Shope Creek.

Captain Redden gave an overview of the FLSE Report, noting no events for January. An Open House is being planned for the end of May.

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

**A. Administrative Policies Review Committee** – Kent Creasman relayed he has received feedback from Captain Blount, Claudio Fuentes and Ira Peshkin. The focus of the review is on recruitment and retention. Plans are to meet in early March, informing Chief Kelly of proposed recommendations.

**B. 1110 Review Committee** – Dan Little relayed the Committee has discussed placement of a 30' x 40' metal building to house Ambulance 1110, with a 30' x 10' section of the building being a storage room. The proposed building would replace the current shed on the far side of the Community Center; cost about \$20,000; have a 30' setback from the creek; be placed on gravel not a concrete pad; have two roll-up doors, one personnel door, limited electrical and no windows. Dan asked Katie Payne to send the diagram of the proposed building to the Board.

**C. Building Repairs Update** – Completion of the kitchen near the administrative offices is pending receipt of cabinets and countertops. All appliances for both kitchens are on site, with the exception of a dishwasher for the Staff Kitchen.

At Chairman Little's request, Katie Payne emailed a Hurricane Helene insurance income and expense report to the Board on February 16, which was briefly discussed. The Board discussed options for flooring in the Community Center and will look at samples following the meeting. Lee Barrett made a motion to move forward with epoxy coated flooring and doors so long as it does not exceed \$74,500. Steve Wickham seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Lee Barrett presented a renovation idea, proposing converting the current dayroom into dorms and installing a partition/temporary wall in the Community Center, allowing a portion to be used as the new dayroom. Movement on such a renovation is probably one to two years in the future, with bathrooms/showers and egress needing to be taken into consideration.

Dan Little relayed he felt we need to monitor the septic/drain field for a few more months to ensure there are no adverse effects as a result of the hurricane. The tank is pumped regularly and other proactive measures could prove costly. Chief Kelly shared he had been advised by Terry Wells that NC is working on a \$10 million Bill through the State Fire Marshall's Office to help Fire Departments with damages that are not covered by insurance. (Chief Kelly does not have details at this time, as House Bill 47 is not yet finalized.)

In response to a question, it was relayed the Board Room will be used to house filing cabinets on one side and EMS supplies and a narcotics refrigerator on the other. The flooring in this room will be the same as that decided upon for the Community Center.

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Flooring is not needed for the furnace room, nor the storage closet that houses the ice machine, as these will remain concrete.

Other pending items include: The stairs leading to the dorms need to be finished. The ceiling in the Community Center needs to be painted. The old AC/heat ducts and cold air return in that room are in rough shape and need to be replaced. The bathrooms will have the same flooring as that found in the administrative offices area.

**D. Tanker Donation** – Steve Wickham relayed several members of the Country Volunteer Fire Department in Madison County came on site last Friday to evaluate the tanker. The area they serve has no hydrants. Their Department has a 1,000 gallon tanker, which has a bad pump. They are very interested in our 3,000 gallon tanker. Chief Kelly will prepare the paperwork, and Steve will reach out to the Department in Texas who donated the tanker to us to let them know of our plans to “pay it forward.” Steve Wickham made a motion to donate the tanker [donated to Riceville] to the Country Volunteer Fire Department in Madison County. Lisa McCallister seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

### **7. New Business:**

**A. 990 Tax Return** – Katie Payne emailed a copy of the 990 Tax Return for 2023 prepared by the Department’s accounting firm (DMJPS) to the Board on February 13. She noted because of the timeframe covered by the return, the names of past Board Members are listed on the 990. Changes made to the Bylaws during this reporting period are also noted on the return.

The Board will need to vote on the 990 at next month’s meeting. Katie asked if anyone has any questions about the return to please email her (and include the entire Board) prior to the March meeting, to allow time for her to obtain answers to the questions.

**B. Bylaws Amendment** – Dan Little asked if an amendment to the Bylaws was in order to provide direction should no applications be received to fill annual/upcoming vacant Board seats. (This was the case in September/October 2024.) He asked Katie Payne to reach out to Keith Bost, Management Solutions for Emergency Services (MSFES), for his input. He asked Lisa McCallister if she would chair the Bylaws Committee again, if it is determined an amendment needs to be drafted. Lee Barrett and Kent Creasman were members of that Committee previously and are willing to serve again if needed.

**C. Window Replacement for Community Center** – Lisa McCallister relayed Blue Ridge Glass had provided a quote in 2022 to replace the windows in the Community Center. She asked them to provide an updated quote, which came in at \$18,600 and includes installation. She will obtain two more quotes for the Board’s consideration.

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

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Jane Little announced the Boy Scouts will hold a Flea Market on April 5 to raise funds for the Scouts to attend Summer Camp. The event will take place at either the pavilion or the Scout hut.

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

**10. Adjournment:** Kent Creasman made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:40PM. Lee Barrett seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

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