The Board of:	Riceville Volunteer Fire Department
Met at:	6:30PM
On:	Monday, July 20, 2026
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 6:36PM.

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 June 15 Regular and Executive Session and the June 22 Emergency Board meetings were emailed to the Board on July 14. Corrected May and June Executive Session meeting minutes were emailed to the Board on July 20. Lee Barrett made a motion to accept the meeting minutes as written. Kent Creasman seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

4. Treasurer's Report: Financial reports for the month ending June 2026, which also marks the end of the fiscal year, were emailed to the Board on July 16. Katie Payne explained that in the absence of some large, unbudgeted items showing as expenses for this fiscal year, we would be at 84% of our budget total as opposed to 103%. She also explained these are not the final numbers, as invoices received after the end of the fiscal year for services prior to June 30 will be applied to the financials in accordance with accounting practices.

In response to a question, Katie Payne relayed the Department received its first payment form the County on July 15. The Ad Valorem Tax and Sales Tax used to be received separate but are now combined into one payment. The amount received did equal 1/12 of the amount the County said the Department would receive.

Lisa McCallister asked about the EMS Income, which is up. Katie Payne responded the Department continues to work on reducing dependency on this income and is doing well/remains on track with collections.

In response to a question, it was noted the County had raised the fire tax flat rate from the recently approved 11.96 cents (per $100) to 17.38 cents (per $100).

Mark Siler made a motion to accept the June financials. Steve Wickham seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

5. Fire Chief's Report: The Fire Chief's and Training Reports were emailed to the Board on July 16.

Division Chief McEntire gave an overview of the Training Report, which included 1526.0 total training hours for January 1 through July 11, 2026. The annual hydrant testing is taking place this month. An “Extrication Saturday” opportunity will be planned for members and auto aid agencies. All medical certified members have been working on the online portion of the required 2026 Protocol Update, which must be completed by July 31, 2026. In regard to Fire/Rescue training opportunities, Enka will host the Driver/ Operator Program in August. A date for the Training House Burn has not yet been scheduled but could potentially occur the end of September/first of October. There are plans to have a new Common Passenger & Heavy Vehicle Rescue class soon. Some members are participating in the nighttime Firefighter classes at Upper Hominy and the Buncombe Training Center; some in the daytime classes at McDowell Tech; and a few are rotating through both.

Captain Redden provided an overview of the FLSE report, sharing the Department applied for but did not receive a grant from the NC Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM) for smoke detectors. As a result, the Department was not able to participate in “Smoke Alarm Saturday” last month. In response to a question, Captain Redden noted the Department does have some smoke detectors on hand, which will be used for those in need.

Chief Kelly provided an overview of his report, noting Total Calls were down slightly (118 in June; 140 in May) and Overlapping Calls were up (28/23% in June; 23/17% in May). At 90%, the Department is above the County average for IVs. The average fire response time was 11:53 minutes; EMS was 11:29 minutes. There were 50 in-district and 68 out-of-district calls. In regard to three part-time staff applications, there was one hire, one failed to show for assessment; one not offered employment and one pending employment, per policy review. Chief Kelly shared information regarding a three-day (August 17-19), in-person course entitled Community Wildfire Mitigation Best Practices being held in Asheville.

6. <u>Old Business:</u>

A. Administrative Policies Review Committee – No update at this time.

B. Building Repairs Update (Door Replacements) – Chief Kelly relayed there was no update at this time. Lisa McCallister asked if she was correct in thinking the funds received (from FEMA) were specifically for purchase of flood doors. Chief Kelly relayed one company came on site and said the doors would have to be completely reengineered but gave no price for this work. Lisa felt it important to go back to the source of the funds as soon as possible and let them know we have done our research but aren’t getting anywhere. Katie Payne added that FEMA advised if the actual cost was more than what had been given, they would consider giving more.

C. Department Vehicles – Dan Little relayed the decision was made a couple of months ago to not repair Engine 11-3 at this time, noting the quote to repair the foam system is about $24,000. He is currently waiting on a gentleman to come to assist with troubleshooting issues on TAC 11.

D. UTV/ATV Policy – Katie Payne relayed there is no feedback from Management Solutions for Emergency Services (MSFES) to report at this time regarding combining this policy with Department Policy A-20, Apparatus and Privately-Owned Vehicle (POV) Operation.

E. TAC 11 Purchase – Last month, the Board approved proceeding with purchase of a vehicle from OnPoint Upfitters (vs. Brooks Public Safety) at a cost of $96,806.84 and with the understanding no down payment was required. In following up with OnPoint, it was learned the price had increased and that up-front payment was required. As a result, Chief Kelly and Division Chief McEntire presented the following updated information from both vendors to the Board:

(1) Billing – Onpoint is not a member of the NC Sheriff Association or HGAC and provided two payment options, which were to pay the vehicle dealer full price up front or pay the dealer for vehicle up front and then pay OnPoint for upfit after completion.

Brooks is a member of the NC Sheriff Association and has one payment option, which is to pay the vendor for vehicle and upfit after completion.

(2) Build Time – Onpoint estimates 14 weeks on delivery of the ARE cover; Brooks 8 weeks. Otherwise, build time is the same.

(3) Price - Quotes for a Black Truck with Red Wrap were $109,060.84 (OnPoint) vs. $92,603.67 (Brooks). Quotes for a White Truck with Riceville Graphics were $97,263.84 (OnPoint) vs. $86,946.67 (Brooks).

The Board was advised that the price of the chassis could change, as dealers cannot hold trucks without a deposit or signed contract.

Lisa McCallister made a motion for Chief Kelly, Division Chief McEntire and Dan Little to find and proceed with purchase of a vehicle that is the best fit for the Department with the cost not to exceed $96,806.84. Merel Johnson seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. Board members stressed the need for Chief Kelly to call the vendor as early as possible the next morning in an attempt to avoid further price increases.

Katie Payne presented finance options from Civic Credit Union and Community Leasing for a generic loan in the amount of $95,000. Ranging from 5.78% to 6.49%, Community Leasing was higher than Civic at 5.47% (48 months), 5.57% (60 months) and 5.65% (72 months). There is no down payment or prepayment penalty with Civic, and they require a signed Resolution from the Board. Lee Barrett made a motion to seek financing from Civic up to the amount of $96,806.84 and for a period of 48 months. Lisa McCallister seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

7. New Business: There was no New Business to bring before the Board.

8. Announcements: The next Regular Meeting of the Board will be held on Monday, August 17, 2026 at 6:30PM.

9. Public Comment: There was no public comment.

10. <u>Executive Session:</u> Merel Johnson made a motion to move to Executive Session for legal and personnel matters at 7:26PM. Steve Wickham seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. The Board returned from Executive Session at 8:57PM.

11. <u>Executive Session Discussion(s):</u>

A. Personnel Matter – Merel Johnson made a motion to approve the personnel matter discussed during Executive Session. Steve Wickham seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

B. Financial Matters - Merel Johnson made a motion to approve the financial matters discussed during Executive Session, one of which was to allow Katie Payne to select a vendor to perform the annual audit and prepare the 990, in keeping with the best interest of the Department and not to exceed a cost of $26,000. Steve Wickham seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

C. Ambulance Service Billing – Merel Johnson made a motion to approve the billing rate matter discussed during Executive Session, which was to amend last month's motion to make sure our mileage rate is equal to that of the County and to implement the flat rate recommended by our Billing Representative and prior to next month's meeting. Steve Wickham seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

12. <u>Adjournment:</u> Steve Wickham made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:58PM. Kent Creasman seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

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