



# *Rural Fire Commission*

624 Wilson St  
Chester, South Carolina 29706

August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023

The meeting was called to order by Gene Hudson and opened in prayer by Williams at 5:37pm.

Commission Members Present: Martin, Jordan, Hudson, Williams and Trowell

Departments Present: Richburg, Lando & Fort Lawn

Special Guests: None

Motion by Martin, second by Williams to approve agenda, with amendments, motion passed.

Motion by Martin, second by Williams to approve the minutes, motion passed.

**Citizens Comments:** Eddie Murphy- attendance from the fire board has been poor. As past Chief, I need things on paper. A copy of the minutes from these meetings needs to go to each council member and sent to the Chiefs. All the members of the commission should visit each fire station and attend the Chiefs meetings.

A discussion was had regarding the forestry grants that are available. A few fire departments did not know about them and said, "they did not have the money to apply". Mr. Jay Williams stated that the grants were free to apply for and no money was needed.

David Dutton- fee schedules for false/multiple fire alarms were brought up at the Chiefs meeting. He encouraged the fire commission to get it approved quickly so that new industries coming to Chester would know about them before they came. Mr. Dutton also brought up that turnout gear will soon need to be replaced again and that we need to be prepared. He also stated that Tanker 220 has a tank from 1988 on its chassis. They gave truck 210 back to the county to use as a spare and it's currently sitting outside Great Falls fire department growing grass around it. David stated it's a good truck and 310 needs to be taken out of service because it is not safe to operate. Mr. Trowell agreed with that statement. Mr. Hudson stated that Chief Lopez was told to take 310 out of service and use 210 as its primary truck.

**Fire Coordinators report:** Kell met Robert Hall at the Great Falls fire department to go over the mold and water issues. A capital improvement item was approved to help offset the cost. Mr. Benson felt that because it was a county owned building, that county maintenance should be involved in the conversation and planning. Mr. Hall is going to plan regarding Great Falls. Money was also approved for the training center repairs and improvements. These include but are not limited to painting double wide, installing new flooring, counters, and doors. We are also going to replace the decking on the entrance, which will be done by contractors. We will also be replacing some of the damaged and missing tiles in the burn tower. Mr. Benson let the Fire Academy know he fully intends on hosting countywide classes starting in January. Kell is working with Spartan on the graphics for the new firetrucks. He also stated that we could save



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about \$3,000 a truck on the new tankers by changing the color scheme from 2 tone to single red. Kell made a presentation to county council regarding the duties of the fire office and what we have accomplished since July 1<sup>st</sup>. Airpack testing is scheduled for 9/5,6 & 7, pump and ladder testing will be 9/11,12 & 13.

Mr. Martin brought up that the fire office needs to show the chiefs in the county a little more respect regarding being in their stations. Mr. Benson asked who had disrespected him and that the goal of the office was to assist the fire departments in whatever they need. Mr. Martin stated there was no single person who disrespected him. Mr. Benson brought up that we are exploring a countywide computer software program to assist in truck checks, scba checks, etc. He will bring this up at the next Chiefs' meeting.

**Old Business:** New fire apparatus- Mr. Williams requested the delivery dates on the new fire apparatus. Mr. Benson reported that there is a December/January date for the engines and June/July for the tankers.

**New Business:** T. Melton- Richburg will be applying for the forestry grant and going to the council for the matching funds, 801 has a transmission issue and cannot get the part. He encouraged the commission to be diligent about the truck rotations due to aging/outdated equipment. He has approximately 25 sets of turnout gear that will go out of date in 2025. There was a complaint regarding 2 people living in their substation. These 2 individuals signed a contract with the fire district and have held up to their end of said contract. If there is a problem with anything in Richburg, please see him, there is no need to email Mr. Hester. The truck they purchased from forestry is waiting some repairs and upfits at Lesslie Welding.

It was brought up that multiple departments will be applying for the forestry grant and will need to go to council for the matching funds. After much discussion it was decided that Mr. Benson would obtain a list of all departments requesting matching funds and approach the council at one time on their behalf.

Radio Committee- T. Melton stated he had emailed Mr. McMurray to set up a meeting for the 800 system regarding commercial structures in the county. He has yet to respond. There is a vacancy on the radio committee from Rural Fire. It was decided that the commission members bring their suggestions for a person to the next meeting.

A motion by Mr. Trowell, second by Ms. Jordan to go into executive session regarding a personnel matter was made at 6:35pm, motion passed.

A motion by Mr. Williams, second by Mr. Trowell was made to come out of executive session at 6:47pm, motion passed.



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A motion by Mr. Hudson, second by Mr. Trowell to send a certified letter to the individual discussed in executive session. Motion passed.

Ms. Jordan asked who the truck committee was. There was an informal committee of Mr. Hudson, Mr. Williams and Mr. McNeil. A discussion regarding new tankers was had, pertaining to their proposed locations. The conversation will be tabled until the next meeting.

Mr. Trowell inquired if the 2 fire departments who were sent letters regarding their reports have complied. Mr. Hudson stated they had. He also inquired as to what we can do to help Great Falls with their staffing and equipment needs. It was brought to the attention of the board that there may not be a charter for that fire department.

**Trowell motions, Jordan seconds to adjourn meeting, motion passed.**

**Meeting adjourned 7:00pm**