



# *Rural Fire Commission*

624 Wilson St  
Chester, South Carolina 29706

September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023

The meeting was called to order by Gene Hudson and opened in prayer by Williams at 5:38pm.

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

Departments Present: Richburg, Lando, Rossville, Fort Lawn and Great Falls.

Special Guests: None

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

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

**Citizens Comments:** Eddie Murphy- minutes need to be sent to the chiefs. Mr. Murphy encourages a joint meeting with the chiefs and fire commission to trade knowledge. Mrs. Brewer advised Mr. Murphy that the minutes and agendas are posted on the county website for all to see.

Chief Dutton- Fort Lawn- Tanker unit 221, which was obtained from forestry had the axels done and will be going to Lesslie Welding soon for upfit. This tanker replaced their old tanker which was totaled due to a fire. It is about 2 months out from being placed in service.

Chief Melton- Richburg- Chief Melton spoke with Doug McMurray from the radio committee regarding voice annunciation while changing ops channels on the radios. It would cost approximately \$40,000 to make these changes if Motorola came in for a special repair. If we would like to add names to the radios, it will cost approximately \$140,000. These items were not included in the initial programming (with no input from the fire service). All agreed that not having the radios assigned names is a safety issue. Chief Melton also made the recommendation of either Kell Benson or Meghan Brewer to be appointed to the radio committee to replace Barkley. The new to them truck purchased from forestry is still at Lesslie Welding, it is behind due to medical issues with one of Lesslie's staff members. Ladder 841 is currently at Lesslie Welding to repair the cylinders on the ladder itself. Richburg's Fall Festival will be October 28<sup>th</sup>, 10am-2pm, all are encouraged and invited to attend. A motion by G, Hudson, 2<sup>nd</sup> by JP McNeil to send a letter to D. McMurray and M. Dorsey regarding having the new radios being programmed with specific personnel names was made. Motion passed.

**Fire Coordinators report:** Meghan Brewer- Interim Coordinator Benson requests all grant information be forwarded to him by 9am on 9/27/203. This will allow time for the items to be put on the agenda for the county council meeting and also give time for Mr. Benson and Mr. Hester to review the items and prepare for possible questions from the council. Mr. Benson encourages the chief or designee to be present in case there are any department specific questions that need to be answered. Pump, ladder and SCBA testing was completed 2 weeks



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ago. There were 32 trucks, 123 ladders and 177 airpaks tested. 3 ladders failed and 3 trucks were unable to be tested due to other mechanical issues. Mrs. Brewer will be working to replace the 2 ladders that failed. Mrs. Brewer advised that the fire code fines and ordinance will need to be looked at closer and a meeting with the county attorney needs to be set up to find out exactly what is needed to amend the ordinance. She would like to do this in one shot and not rush.

**Old Business:** A motion by J. Williams, second by JP McNeil to appoint Kell Benson to the radio committee, with the caveat that if he is unable to attend meetings, he will send a representative in his place. Motion passed.

Great Falls Fire Department- K. Benson and R. Hall met at the fire department to look at what needs to be done to remediate the mold issue and regrade the parking lot. The fire coordinator's office will email Mr. Hall for an update on the repairs and report back to the commission.

**New Business:** Chief Lopez-Great Falls- requests insurance to be put on a 2000 American LaFrance pumper they purchased on their own. This will replace engine 310. The vehicle has approximately 40,000 miles on the engine and about 9,000 hours on the motor. It will also cost around \$247 to move the radio from 310 to the new truck. A motion by J. Williams, 2<sup>nd</sup> by JP McNeil to provide insurance and pay for the radio to be moved was made. Motion passed.

J. Williams requested what amount of equipment money was to be distributed to the departments. After a brief discussion, where it was made known that an increase was requested for said monies and the council did not approve it, a motion by J. Williams, 2<sup>nd</sup> by JP McNeil, was made to allot \$2,000 to each county department. Motion passed.

D. Jordan- grant monies are available to all departments. Ms. Jordan asked if the information on grants was getting to all the chiefs. A discussion regarding the accessibility of grants and how difficult it is to apply for them was had. It was also noted that the fire commission cannot mandate the chiefs to apply for these grants.

J. Williams stated that we need to start working on the next fiscal year's budget ASAP. G. Huson stated we will look at having a meeting in December. He will also ask the Chiefs for recommendations for a budget committee.

Mr. Agee stated that the CPI increase for the next fiscal year will be around 3%. The county council will also have a workshop on 10/5 to discuss planned developments.

A motion by JP McNeil, 2<sup>nd</sup> by J. Williams was made to go into executive session to discuss a personnel matter; motion passed at 6:46pm.



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A motion by JP McNeil, 2<sup>nd</sup> by G. Hudson was made to come back into regular session. Motion passed at 6:56pm.

A motion was made by J. Williams, 2<sup>nd</sup> by D. Jordan to send a follow up letter to the personnel discussed in executive session, requesting the return of all county fire equipment. If equipment is not returned, the commission will take action through the magistrate office. Motion passed.

**JP McNeil motions, J. Williams seconds to adjourn meeting, motion passed.**

**Meeting adjourned 6:58pm**