

EVERY FIRE ASSOCIATION

Chief's Committee - Newland Fire Station - December 4, 2014

The regular monthly meeting of the Chief's Committee was called to order by Chief Bob Garland.

Paul Buchanan reported that he was working with a foundation on a grant that would give the Watauga Fire Association \$ 100,000 to purchase two fire safety houses - one for Avery & one for Watauga. He hoped that the grant would come thru by December 31st, 2014. The only cost to Avery County would be \$ 800 for the sprinkler attachment.

Joe Shoupe reminded members that the new air quality open burning laws only require a fire safe containment and a burning permit. They no longer cover distances from neighbors & roads or the size & type of shrubbery that can be burned.

Mark Taylor announced that he had met with Kenny Poteat & Tommy Burleson about the required fire inspections. He said that Tommy made it clear to Kenny that his department would not be doing the inspections. Kenny then told Mark to come before the County Commission Board.

Bob Garland reported from the 911 Committee. He noted that the County Dispatch Center had adopted the same Ebola protocols as neighboring counties. He said that if a patient answered the questions indicating a possibility of the virus that 1st responders would not be called and EMS would handle the patient alone.

Bob also noted that the Sheriff had prodded Bertolini and that he thought that the new Sheriff's frequency would be installed within a week. After the Sheriff's frequency is cured the PL's for Tac 1 & 2 will be changed and the four new simplex frequencies be added. All the paper work was finished and they were trying to schedule the work. He asked Bob Pudney & Jim Brooks to meet with James Seaburg to begin working out the ESN problems.

Bob passed out a flyer announcing a program to spur I Am Responding usage. Monies from the Western NC Fire Association meeting were used to purchase 100 hats with the new Avery County Fire Association patch. The 1st ten members of each department who answered 30 fire calls or pager tests would be given a free hat. Results would be announced at the next meeting.

Kennie McFee told members that Smokechaser Dale Laws had been told by the Forest Service that he could no longer run any fire or medical calls while on duty. Kennie noted that this is done in neighboring counties and that Dale had done it for years.

It was mentioned that someone anonymously called the 800 hotline and complained that Dale was using the forest service vehicle for things other than forest service business.

Members were reminded that 40% of the local forest service budget was paid by Avery County. Reo Griffith, Chairman of the County Commissioners expressed his appreciation for Dale's efforts. Bob asked Paul Buchanan to send a letter from the Fire Association on this matter. Reo offered that maybe the county could extend Dale's work period by three months in return for the 1st response and that Dale could help with pre-fire planning in subdivisions & resorts.

Bobby Powell asked members to allow him to send in an application for Avery County Federal Grant before the deadline. Members unanimously agreed.

Joe Shoupe asked members how they felt about a one day fire prevention field day at Altimont Center. Kids would be rotated thru different stations with each department manning a station. Paul agreed to set up a committee to develop the event and present the idea to Supt. Burleson.

Members discussed a program for older kids that might stimulate Junior Firemen and help get the High School Firefighter I & II program started. Paul said the He, Joe, David Charles & Charlie would work on it.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.