

AVERY FIRE ASSOCIATION - CHIEF'S COMMITTEE

Mayland Community College - Newland - January 8, 2015

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

Paul Buchanan reported that the Foundation grant for the new Fire Safety house had yet to be awarded.

Ranger Joe Shoupe announced that the NC Forest Service was formed in 1915 and was celebrating its 100th year of service. He also noted that Avery County was one of the first four counties to have a Cooperator's program, which began in 1921. Members discussed the previous meeting's worries about the complaint filed against Dale Laws for answering fire calls while on duty with the Forest Service. Joe said he passed the problem up the chain of command and heard nothing other than they were worried about the liability issues. Members agreed that if Dale was paged to mutual or auto aid, he would be covered by the primary department's insurance. It was then decided that the County Commissioners did not need to try to work out the problem.

Levin Sudderth reported that the County Inspections Department refused the request for help with the State mandated inspections and that the County was still stopping Linville from hiring some one else to do them. Members didn't understand why the Inspections department was so busy since construction in the county was moving at such a slow pace. The safety issues for the citizens of Avery County was the primary concern in addition to the insurance rating points.

Bob Garland confirmed that the Sheriff's frequency work was finished and working fine. The county hired an engineer to work out the problem. He thought that the problems with Fire Tac 1 & 2 could be solved with a PL change instead of a frequency change. If a frequency change is required it would have to come in the next budget year. If the PL's would solve the problem, then radios would only need reprogramming and the VTAC frequencies could be added at the same time. To remove rescue from the Alpha & Omega calls would require that all consoles be reprogrammed. That too would have to be in the next budget year. Bertolini did not finish the Frank Tower & repeater estimate and it will have to move to next year's budget. Jamie Johnson was considering asking Mitch Grubb to bid on future Service Contracts. Problems with dispatchers' use of I Am Responding's software & texting were discussed. Reports of I Am Responding use were passed out to each department. Members achieving 30 responses to calls & pager tests were given Fire Association hats. Chiefs were asked to consider working on members to use the system, its maps, directions, and add their water points & hydrants to the mapping program - reminding them that its use would gain valuable rating points by keeping track of members responding. Joe Shoupe posed the question: " how would we work together in a major emergency without TAC 1 & 2" - noting that they have been down way too long. Members agreed that the county's hands are tied because no one nearby can work on the Tait system equipment.

Members discussed the use of the 911 monies for projects for the Sheriff's department and EMS. They wondered why the fire service could not use the monies too. Bob Garland agreed to check into the use of those monies.

Green Valley and Beech Mountain reported that they had installed truck-mounted repeaters and that they were working well. Members applying for repeaters on the state grant were reminded to call Dean Gibbs for specifications.

Dean Gibbs told members that the state had added a large number of new items to the state grant approval list. Members felt like there should be no cap on the state grant monies and that departments should be allowed to purchase what they need on the grant.