

## AVERY FIRE ASSOCIATION

February 3, 2012

### Green Valley Fire Station

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Avery Fire Association was called to order by President Junior Sluder. The minutes of the January meeting were read and approved as read. The roll was called and all departments except Banner Elk were represented.

Junior thanked the members of the Green Valley department for a wonderful meal noting that the salad bar matched up to Stonewall's.

Treasurer David Charles Vance reported an association bank balance of \$ 20,076.26 with all bills paid . He noted that 40 bags of absorbent had been added to the county's stock at the Ladder Company station and that Charlie was pricing Foam.

Bob Garland announced that the 911 Committee meeting would be held on Monday and the problems with text messages not coming thru would be addressed.

The Mayland Tech Burn Building Committee meeting was set for 5:00 pm on Monday to discuss the control burn at the prison.

Melissa Phillips with Mayland Tech reported that she would offer six more classes in February and ICS 400 in March. Technical rescue would begin Monday the 13th at Mayland in Newland - meeting twice a week. An extinguisher class would be held at Green Valley station on Monday night and a medical responder class would start Monday night in Crossnore. Joe Shoupe will hold a wildland fire suppression class at Elk Park beginning February 20th for 3 nights and an FS 212 class ( chainsaw use & safety) starting February 27th at Crossnore.

Junior Sluder appointed: Kennie Mcfee, Bob Garland and Tony Hunter to a committee to organize the prison building control burn.

Bob Garland gave a report from the Chiefs' committee.

Members were reminded to make sure their budgets were turned in to the fire

commission and also to be sure to add the increased cost for insurance.

The Mitchell County fire marshal came before the Association to promote the Three County Drill beginning April 27th. He invited members to anytime during the three day drill and stay as long as you can. Each participant would be required to sign in and would receive a picture I.D. Departments bringing equipment were asked to let him know in advance. An ICS 100 & 200 class for the drill would be held February 16th & 23rd. Junior appointed Charlie and David Charles to a committee to organize the county's resources and members.

Members were reminded to try to make the Western North Carolina Firemen's Association meeting on April 18th at the Gamewell Fire station.

The letter prepared by committee to respond to the December Avery Post article was read to the membership. Bob Garland moved that it be sent to both papers and Bob Pudney seconded the motion. Members approved the motion unanimously. The letter was to be attached to the minutes.

Members discussed the Association's budget request and decided to add \$6,200 to the budget for " I Am Responding" service and monies for 100 gallons of Class "A" foam.

Junior Sluder appointed: Tony Hunter, Johnny Mathis & Bob Garland to the Scholarship Committee with Bob as the Chairman.

Junior asked members to pray for Jake Owen and his family.

The next Fire Commission meeting was set for Thursday, February 23rd at 6:00 P.M. The next Association meeting was set for March 1st at the Elk Park Fire Station. Chiefs will meet at: 6:30 pm and the Association at 7:00 pm.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Dear Bertie,

Thank you for Attending the December special meeting between the AVERY COUNTY FIRE ASSOCIATION, the AVERY COUNTY FIRE COMMISSIONERS and the AVERY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS.

In your article of December 7th, 2011, Bob Gragg's recollections about the 1977 vote to adopt the Avery County Fire Tax are totally correct. The overwhelming support of the county's voters prompted the Commissioners at that time to vote in a 10 cent tax per \$ 100 of property value. We are forever indebted to our citizen's support and the county commissioners who voted in our fire tax.

The December 2011 meeting with the County Commissioners and the Fire Commission was the result of a careful 54-page study of our member department's budgets, tax base, homeowner's fire insurance costs and fire departments ratings. We wanted to share the results.

As our county has grown and the tax base increased, the fire tax has been lowered. Monies coming to our member departments have not kept pace with the increased cost of fire service and equipment . This forced departments to finance vehicle purchases and station construction.

Our up to date equipment and many hours of "FREE" volunteer effort have given our county departments superior ratings - resulting in serious savings on fire insurance policies in Avery County. The average homeowner pays a fire tax of \$61.20 and saves an average of \$ 321.30 on their fire insurance policy. We are the only entity in the county that receives taxpayer funding and returns more money than received.

Failure to recognize the budget needs of our county fire departments will cause insurance premiums to rise. We have had a good relationship with county government since the adoption of the Fire Tax. Hopefully our presentation will enlighten county government to our needs, continue our good relationship and allow us to drop insurance premiums further.

We also covered the "recruitment and retention problems" that departments are dealing with. Any readers who enjoy helping others and might be interested joining one of our departments in either a support position, or as a medical responder or attack team should contact us.

You and your staff are always welcome at our monthly meetings and we look forward to seeing you in the future.

Sincerely,

AVERY COUNTY FIRE ASSOCIATION