

AGENDA
Avery County Fire Commission
Regular Meeting
November 9, 2017

7:00 p.m. I. Convene Meeting/Invocation

7:02 p.m. II. Call to Order
Additions/deletions to agenda
Public Comments

Agenda Items

7:05 p.m. A. Linville VFD request fund to finish there building repair

B. Association request to move funds from the Association fund Balance
To purchase a funeral bell.

C. Discussion on forestry grant funds

D. Crossnore Fire department requesting funds to repair garage door.

E. Green Valley Fire Dept. Requesting more funds for their new truck.

7:15 p.m. FDC Report

7:20 p.m. IV. Approval of minutes from September 14th & October12, 2017

7:25 p.m. V. Upcoming Meetings & Other Issues of Concern

Next Fire Commission regular meeting will be December 14th 2017
at 7pm in Avery County Commissioner's board room
Avery County Firemen's Association meeting December 7th,
2017 at the Newland VFD at 7:00pm.

7:28 p.m. VI. Closed Session Crossnore

8:00 p.m. VII. Adjourn

AVERY COUNTY FIRE COMMISSION MINUTES

The Avery County Fire Commission met in a Regular meeting on Thursday, September 14, 2017, at 7:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Boardroom, Newland N.C.

Bob Garland led prayer.

I. CALL TO ORDER (7:00 p.m.)

Chairman Mathes called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. All Board members were present except Corey Hughes. Charlie Franklin and Beth Reath also present.

II. ADDITIONS / DELETIONS TO AGENDA (7:01 p.m.) None

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS (7:01 p.m.): None

IV. AGENDA ITEMS (7:02 p.m.)

A. LINVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT - REQUEST FOR PREVIOUSLY APPROVED FUND FOR EQUIPMENT (\$15,000). Mark Taylor explained that last year they were trying to work toward getting a match for funds they finally got this year. The \$15,000 for 2015/2016 was not spent because they were waiting to get extra money. Since it was appropriated last year, he asked could they get the \$15,000 and apply this toward equipment? Bill noted he wants to discuss this further with other Board members and with Charlie. He is concerned this will "steam roll" into a situation where other departments come back to the Board for more funds. He wants to be fair to everyone. Matt McClellan agreed, but stated if it had been last year's budget and not that of 2 years ago (2015/2016), this would've been simpler. The Board agreed to table the discussion. Mark stated that Linville is a year ahead of everyone else - that they held out a year, but Charlie noted that Linville was even with other departments now. Charlie suggested that this issue be taken to the County Finance Department and County Manager to get a recommendation from them and the Board agreed.

Motion made by Bill Beuttell that discussion of this item be tabled until October 12, 2017 Fire Commission regular meeting, second by Matt McClellan. Motion approved by those in attendance.

Motion made by Bill Beuttell that this item be taken by Charlie Franklin to the County Finance Dept. and County Manager for their recommendation, second by Jim Brooks. Motion approved by those in attendance.

Charlie stated he would set up a meeting with the County Manager.

B. LINVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT'S REQUEST FOR PAYMENT OF BUILDING REPAIR INVOICES. Charlie stated that "lift" invoices are now taken care of. The items that were not yet approved concerned cinder block used in wall repairs. Mark apologized, as he thought that the bathroom repairs were included in the lump sum. After researching this with Charlie and reviewing his records at Linville, he discovered it had not been a part of the request. Charlie pointed out that the 2 invoices in question were a part of the August 10, 2017 - Agenda item "B". Johnny asked for a total of the

invoices. The two invoices totaled \$485.32 (Henson Building Materials \$167.32 and High Country Plumbing \$318.00).

Motion made by Bill Beuttell for the Fire Commission to pay Invoices totaling \$485.32, second by Jim Brooks. Motion approved by those in attendance.

Charlie asked Mark if he preferred payment to Linville or directly to vendors. Mark requested that he pay vendors.

C. LINVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT'S REQUEST FOR PAYMENT OF TRUCK REPAIRS ON 6301. Johnny noted that the price for repair had increased. Mark stated that more issues had been found during the repairs. Johnny asked Mark if Linville wished to be reimbursed and Mark confirmed that Linville had paid by credit card and needed reimbursement. The extra repairs were discussed. The total exceeded the original \$5,000 cost. The final total cost is \$5,684.78.

Motion made by Jim Brooks to reimburse Linville for truck 6301 repair in the amount of \$5,684.78, second by Bill Beuttell. Motion approved by those in attendance.

D. TRUCK COMMITTEE REPORT ON NEWLAND AND CROSSNORE QRV PURCHASES:

CROSSNORE: Matt McClellan stated that the Truck Committee has approved the spec for Crossnore's QRV "as-is". The total cost exceeds the \$45,000 budget set by the Fire Commission's and the additional cost will be paid by Crossnore.

Crossnore's Total = \$45,234.97 (Fire Commission portion \$45,000.00 / Crossnore portion \$234.97).

NEWLAND: The Truck Committee has approved the spec for Newland's QRV with some additions. The total cost is under the \$45,000 budget set by the Fire Commission. Matt noted that the previous estimates did not include decaling, the chevron on the back and bed lights. This added \$1,050 plus \$95 (total \$1,145). Tax on \$1,145 at 7.25% is approx. \$83.00.

Newland's Total = \$44,515.63 (\$44,432.63 + \$83.00 tax) (Fire Commission portion is 100%).

Motion made by Johnny Mathes to approve purchase of QRVs for Crossnore and Newland, second by Bill Beuttell. Fire Commission costs not to exceed \$45,000 for either vehicle. Motion approved by those in attendance.

Johnny instructed Charlie to proceed with purchases.

E. FIREMAN'S ASSOCIATION REQUEST TO MOVE FUNDS FROM FUND BALANCE TO TRAINING LINE ITEM TO PAY FOR INSTRUCTOR - HONOR GUARD TRAINING: Bobby Powell explained that the Honor Guard class will be held at Newland. Mayland has a minimum of 10 people for a class and we've got 7 signed up. The fee for the instructor will be \$480.00. Johnny confirmed that this is a fund balance transfer and Bobby confirmed.

Motion made by Matt McClellan to approve Fireman Association fund balance transfer of \$480.00 to cover cost of Honor Guard instructor, second by Jim Brooks. Motion approved by those in attendance.

FDC REPORT

1. **MEDICAL SUPPLIES UPDATE:** Charlie stated that all requested medical supplies/equipment was ordered and is now distributed to each fire department, except for the Narcan. He received it today and he expects to get it distributed tomorrow or the first of next week. Johnny questioned if the Narcan could be put into individual fire department budgets? [He noted that gloves would continue to be purchased by Fire Commission]. Charlie explained that items such as this shouldn't be a re-occurring cost because EMS carries the Epi, the ampules, the syringes, needles and the Narcan. These items should be obtained from EMS to replace any fire department's medical supply. *(After the Fire Commission provides these supplies to the Fire Departments once per year, it is then the individual fire department's responsibility to keep up with the expiration dates on these items, so they can trade-out old supplies for new with EMS).* Charlie noted that the trade with EMS needs to happen 3 months prior to expiration date
2. **PURCHASE OF TURN OUT GEAR AND PAGERS FOR EMPLOYEES:** Charlie reviewed the cost of equipment required for employees.

He presented a quote for the needed equipment ("Darley Armor Ap. Gear Package" at \$2,438.65 per set includes helmet, coat, pants, gloves, boots and gear bag). Each set is \$2,438.65 = Total Estimated Cost = \$13,986.65. He noted that instead of paying \$6,000 per year for equipment on the State grant, the Fire Commission would have to pay \$12,000 a year due to departments not wanting to apply for it on their State grant. He explained that what most departments don't understand is that all the money comes out of one pocket. It's divided many ways. Jim noted that the Fire Commission must instruct the individual fire departments to apply for this equipment through grants.

NOTE: Johnny stated the importance of abiding by an Agenda. He is adamant that subjects of concern must be put forth in a request to be placed on the Agenda (and with adequate detailed information given with the request, so that the Fire Commission has time to research the concern). The Board does not want to be "blindsided" again. If subjects are not on the Agenda, they will not be discussed.

Motion made by Jim Brooks to approve the purchase of turn out gear and pagers for employees at an estimated total cost of \$13,986.65, second by Matt McClellan. Motion approved by those in attendance.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR AUGUST 10, 2017 AND AUGUST 24, 2017

VI. UPCOMING MEETINGS AND OTHER ISSUES OF CONCERN (7:27 p.m.)

-Next Firemen's Association meeting will be October 5, 2017 - Avery County Ladder Building at 7:00 p.m. (Chiefs meet 6:30)

-Next Fire Commission Regular meeting will be October 12, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in Newland.

As a final note, Jim Brooks reminded all that the Board had told the Fireman's Association they would provide a decision regarding the script for polo shirts (Fireman's Association felt it very important to show individual fire department names on shirts worn out of station). The Board approves and noted that departments could have this embroidery added to their shirts (on the opposite sleeve). T-shirts will remain as-is, reflecting the more generic Avery County Fire Department and EMS wording.

**VII. CLOSED SESSION - Personnel Issue - Statute G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (6).
(7:30 p.m. to 7:56 p.m.)**

Motion made by Jim Brooks that Board go into Closed Session with Statute G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (6), second by Bill Beuttell. Motion approved by those in attendance.

See closed session minutes dated September 14, 2017.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION (7:56 p.m.)

Upon returning to Open Session, Chairman Mathes announced that Regular session was adjourned. No decisions made.

VIII. Adjourn (8:00 p.m.)

Motion made by Bill Beuttell, second by Matt McClellan to adjourn the meeting. Motion unanimous by those in attendance.

**Johnny Mathes, Chairman
Avery County Fire Commission**

Attest: _____

**AVERY COUNTY FIRE COMMISSION
MINUTES**

The Avery County Fire Commission met in a Regular meeting on Thursday, October 12, 2017, at 7:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Boardroom, Newland N.C.

Bob Garland led prayer.

I. CALL TO ORDER (7:00 p.m.)

Chairman Mathes called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. All Board members were present except Corey Hughes and Matt McClellan. Charlie Franklin and Beth Reath also present.

II. ADDITIONS / DELETIONS TO AGENDA: None

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS (7:01 p.m.): (see Page 3 - John Turner Comments)

IV. AGENDA ITEMS (7:02 p.m.)

A. BID OPENING AND AWARD - GREEN VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT TRUCK:

Charlie Franklin requested that the Board delay bid opening until later in the meeting, so that a representative from Green Valley could be present. The Board agreed and moved to the FDC Report.

Discussion Delayed (see Page 3)

FDC REPORT (7:02 p.m.)

1. **EQUIPMENT FOR ROVING EMPLOYEES:** Charlie Franklin noted that the Fire Commission needed to purchase a minimum of 3 sets of turnout gear for its new Roving employees. He directed attention to two quotes (attached) he received for pagers and turnout gear as follows:

<u>High Country Communications</u> (includes pagers, radio programming, shipping & insurance, plus taxes)	3 sets	\$ 1,366.35
<u>MES (Municipal Emergency Services)</u> (includes coat, pants, suspenders/belt, fire helmet w/visor, firefighting hood, gauntlet, boots, traditional helmet, plus taxes)	3 sets \$3,250.54 quote per single set purchase	\$ 9,046.62
Total Estimated Cost		\$10,412.97

The purchase of these items would be within the 2017-2018 budget and these quotes can be utilized for 2018-2019 budgeting purposes.

Charlie noted previous quote for turnout gear from 9/14/17 meeting minutes.

Darley Armor Ap. Gear Package	per set cost	\$ 2,438.65
(includes helmet, coat, pants, gloves, boots and gear bag).		

Previous quote was for 6 sets totaling \$13,986.65

Motion made by Jim Brooks, second by Bill Beuttell for Fire Commission to purchase pagers and turnout gear in the amount of \$10,412.97. Motion approved by those in attendance.

Charlie noted he would continue to seek best price for these items.

2. NFPA MEMBERSHIP AND NFCS SUBSCRIPTION: Charlie explained that the County does not pay for this item. He noted that previous memberships and National Fire Code Subscriptions have been paid through the Fire Marshal. Charlie stressed the importance of retaining this subscription which provides latest manual updates. He noted the subscription gives the County fire departments access to the latest information on fire codes, etc. and serves as a great reference tool. He stated the non-member cost per year is \$1,495.00. The member rate is \$1,345.50 (renewal info attached).

Motion made by Bill Beuttell, second by Jim Brooks to purchase NFPA National Fire Codes Subscription. Motion approved by those in attendance.

Bill Beuttell noted that he felt Phil Barrier, County Manager, would instruct them to purchase this. He told Charlie to request approval before ordering the NFCS.

Amended Motion made by Bill Beuttell, second by Jim Brooks to purchase NFPA National Fire Code Subscription contingent upon approval by County Manager. Motion approved by those in attendance.

Jim Brooks reminded Charlie that fire departments should be made aware that this information is available to them.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR SEPTEMBER 14, 2017 (7:10 p.m.)

The Board agreed to table approval of the September 14, 2017 meeting minutes until the Fire Commission meeting to be held on November 9, 2017 (minor corrections and clarifications to the minutes are needed.)

Motion made by Jim Brooks, second by Bill Beuttell that approval of September 14, 2017 meeting minutes be tabled until November 9, 2017 meeting. Motion approved by those in attendance.

VI. UPCOMING MEETINGS AND OTHER ISSUES OF CONCERN (7:11 p.m.)

-Next Firemen's Association meeting will be November 2, 2017 - Linville Volunteer Fire Department at 7:00 p.m.

-Next Fire Commission Regular meeting will be November 9, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in Newland.

VII. CLOSED SESSION (7:11 p.m.) - General Fire Commission and Personnel Issues - Statute G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (6) and Statute G.S. 143-318-11 (a) (3). (7:12 to 7:33 p.m.)

Motion made by Jim Brooks that Board go into Closed Session with Statute G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (6) and (a) (3), second by Bill Beuttell. Motion approved by those in attendance.

See Closed Session minutes dated October 12, 2017.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION (7:34 p.m.) - No decisions made during Closed Session

Return to AGENDA ITEM A. (7:35 p.m.)

A. BID OPENING AND AWARD - GREEN VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT TRUCK:
No representative for Green Valley was present to attend the Bid Opening and Award of Contract. It was con-census of the Board that Chairman Mathes proceed with opening of the Bid Packages for Green Valley's truck. The results were as follows:

<u>Bidder</u>	<u>Bid Amount</u>
1. Anchor Richey	No Bid
2. Pierce	\$505,033.00
3. Toyne	\$409,643.84
4. C.W. Williams	\$464.886.00

Charlie confirmed to the Board that the maximum amount to be provided toward this purchase by the Fire Commission is \$365,000.00. Bill noted there were large differences between the bids and that the Board could table the issue until Green Valley was present. However, the Board decided to move forward with awarding the bid.

Motion made by Bill Beuttell, second by Jim Brooks to Award the Contract to Tonye (lowest bidder) in the amount of \$409,643.84 of which the Fire Commission agrees to pay a maximum of \$365,000.00. The difference of \$44,644 is to be paid by Green Valley Fire Department. Motion approved by those in attendance.

The above Motion is Amended: Motion by Bill Beuttell, second by Jim Brooks to ADD wording as follows: If Green Valley changes the specification for the vehicle in any way, the process of awarding the contract will have to be re-visited.

INFORMAL REQUEST BY JOHN TURNER, AVERY COUNTY PROPERTY OWNER, TO ADDRESS THE BOARD (7:45 p.m.)

In the process of Chairman Mathes' adjourning the meeting, Mr. John Turner (accompanied by members of Linville Fire Dept.) requested audience with the Fire Commission. Mr. Turner stated he had been removed from the Agenda, however, he had not signed up on the Public Comments sign-up sheet prior to start of meeting. His request to speak was granted.

Mr. Turner stated that he owns property both in Linville (34 Linville Square) and (198 Carolina Ave.) both are in Linville. He stated that one of the reasons his family lives in Linville was because of the fire department. Most people there are older and they feel it's important to have wonderful Fire Department and EMS service in his area. It has become obvious to Banner Elk residents that they are 1.5 million dollars of the 2.3 million-dollar budget. The revenues come from those 2 areas (Linville & Banner Elk). Linville gets about \$75,000 of the \$750,000. The equipment in Linville Fire Dept. is old. Mr. Turner commented "we're the left-handed step child". We contribute most of the money. He is shocked that neither community has a person on the Board to represent them. Linville is upset and this is being discussed among residents.

Main Issues of Concern:

1. He and 20+/- other residents in his community do not feel that they are represented fairly on the Fire Commission. They ask for representation on the Board.
2. The two communities of Linville and Banner Elk ask for better allocation of funds to their fire departments. They feel they do not receive a proportionate amount to what they contribute in funding for their fire stations.

Mr. Turner stated that most summer residents have left and will be back in May. You have 7-8 months to do nothing if that's what you choose to do, but this issue will come back because we are aware of the disparity in allocation of money and the demise of our service component with our EMS and our fire departments. We want the Board to address this.

Jim Brooks explained the process of signing up for Agenda discussions and Public Comments. Those requesting to be on the agenda need to supply the Board with information prior to meetings. Regarding trucks/equipment, he noted that there is a Truck Committee and that a study had been prepared 4-5 years ago. Jim stated the Board is aware of the age of its equipment and noted he comes from a community that pays in more (tax) than they receive back. He gave the analogy of the school system and how its revenue covers the entire County (the monies from one end of the County may support more of the school system in the other end). Mr. Turner said he understood how governments work. Jim reiterated that the Fire Commission has a Truck Committee and a schedule for buying according to age and need. Budget sessions occur in May and June. The fire departments come to the Board to present their needs and the Board tries to fulfil them. Jim noted he has been a fire chief for 46 years. He helps run the Ladder Co., is a member of fire department and he works out of a resort community. He is not aware of a huge deficiency in Linville. If they bring a concern to the attention of the Board, we make sure they get what they need.

Mr. Turner repeated that Banner Elk and Linville contribute 1.5 million dollars of the 2 million-dollar budget. He again stated Linville only receives \$75,000 of \$750,000. They also have the option to withdraw from the program. Mr. Keller asked about call volume differences in Green Valley, Linville and Banner Elk. Johnny Mathes noted that during the period of appointing members to the Fire Commission, there were very few people who wanted the position. Mr. Turner said there would be no trouble in finding people in Linville to sit on the Board. Johnny noted there were 2 people who applied (to sit on the Board) and said neither was from Linville. He asked Mark Taylor, Linville Chief, to confirm and Mark confirmed. Mark noted that a fire department member that sat on the Board would have a conflict. Jim noted that these concerns should be raised at Fire Chief's meetings as well as at budget time and mentioned the amount of money spent on Linville this year. Mark stated that the things that needed repairing 5 years ago (and weren't fixed) cost much more to repair now.

Johnny noted that 2 more openings would be available in September and Jim said these would be one seat for County Commission and one for Fireman's Association. Bob Garland explained

that over the years, the fire tax had been cut back by the County Commissioners. Had they left it alone (there would be enough funds). Jim stated that the Fire Commission can run the fire departments with the money they have, but if there were additional funds, there would be lower ratings and this would save insurance money. He noted to Mr. Turner that an extra station was run as part of the Linville area; a tower ladder located at Linville Ridge east gate. It serves the County and gives better rating points to Banner Elk and Linville.

Bill Beuttell noted that what Bob Garland had said was correct - that 3 years ago the Board spent over 40 painstaking hours reviewing the budget of each department. When the budget was given to the County Commissioners, they basically said this is how much money you will get. Therefore, we had to work backwards from that amount. Two years ago, after the fire departments gave us their budgets we were a million dollars over the appropriation given us the year before. The Board decided to submit what the fire departments asked for. The County Commissioners said to go back and revisit the numbers - they would get what monies the fire tax brings. Bill explained that the fire tax generates approximately 4% for each year due to growth in the County. The fire trucks (as you just heard when truck bids were opened), go up 10% each year, so we're working with that difference. This year we were told as the Board was going through the budget process, we would get what the fire tax brought (plus the 4% for growth rate). The County had raised the fire tax up from 6.7 cents to 7 cents which gave us more. To answer your questions, Bill stated he had no problem speaking with any members of Linville or Banner Elk or their fire departments to discuss this issue in greater detail. Until there is a different funding mechanism, we are hamstrung. We can only work with the money that is given to us. In defense of what Jim was saying, we understand that Linville and Banner Elk are more affluent than areas such as Frank, but the citizens of Frank still need to have fire protection. If Frank had no fire department, our ratings would greatly deteriorate. We would have to pay a lot more home owner's insurance there because of the distance between Linville, Banner Elk and Frank areas. Bill referred to the way in which the school systems were funded and noted there are pros and cons to both sides of this situation.

Bill thanked Mr. Turner on behalf of the Board for coming to voice his opinions.

VIII. Adjourn (8:10 p.m.)

Motion made by Bill Beuttell, second by Jim Brooks to adjourn the meeting. Motion unanimous by those in attendance.

**Johnny Mathes, Chairman
Avery County Fire Commission**

Attest: _____