

**AGENDA**  
**Avery County Fire Commission**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**July 13, 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. Budget Amendments

7:10 p.m. B. Truck Committee report.

7:20 p.m. C. Linville Fire Department Request

7:30 p.m. D. Hiring Employee to be stationed at Linville Central Rescue

7:35 p.m. FDC Report

1. Update on Personnel Policy.
2. FDC Request to take Training

7:40 p.m. IV. Approval of minutes from June 8<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017

7:42 p.m. V. Upcoming Meetings & Other Issues of Concern

Next Fire Commission regular meeting will be August  
10<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at 7pm in the  
Avery County Commissioners board room  
Avery County Firemen's Association meeting August 3rd,  
2017 Seven Devils Fire Dept. at 7:00pm

7:45 p.m. VI. Closed Session Personnel G.S. 143-318.11(a) (6)

8:30 p.m. VII. Adjourn

## **AVERY COUNTY FIRE COMMISSION MINUTES**

The Avery County Fire Commission met in a Regular meeting on Thursday, June 8, 2017, at 7:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Boardroom, Newland N.C.

Johnny Mathes 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 with exception of Corey Hughes. Charlie Franklin and Beth Reath attended.

Chairman Mathes noted that a representative of the Avery Journal was in attendance and thanked him for coming. He told the Journal's representative that if he had questions, to please feel free to address the Board. The Journal rep stated their desire to help in recruiting volunteers for the County's Fire Departments and that this was the purpose of their attending.

### **II. ADDITIONS / DELETIONS TO AGENDA (7:03 p.m.) None**

### **III. PUBLIC COMMENTS (7:04 p.m.): None**

### **IV. AGENDA ITEMS (7:05 p.m.)**

#### **A. LINVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT REQUEST FOR FUNDS**

Joe Hawkins noted that this year Linville was eligible for a State grant, but that they did not receive one. Since they didn't get the grant, they understood they would get \$15,000 from the Fire Commission instead of \$30,000. They are asking for \$30,000 because they have a benefactor who will match the \$30,000 that would've been given by the State. He stated that he had looked at all the existing minutes and he didn't see how the Board determined grant distributions to each station. Johnny Mathes asked Charlie Franklin if this was a work session discussion. Charlie stated it had been determined in a Budget meeting. Jim Brooks said he believed it was established to penalize departments that didn't apply. Joe affirmed that they did apply, but didn't get the grant. He noted they have the email stating they were eligible, however the State ran out of funds before they got the application. Jim noted he felt this was a different situation than just not applying. Bill Beuttell stated that if they could get the money from any other source that equals what the State would have provided, he is all for matching the amount. He will make a motion to this effect. Jim noted he will second it. Charlie questioned would the Board do this for any fire department (in the future) that didn't get the State grant, but that came up with a private matching, dollar-for-dollar funds? He asked could it be treated as a grant? Jim Brooks noted that he believed that if stations apply (and did everything they could to get the grant) and don't get it, the Board should give them the money that everyone else is getting. He noted they should not be penalized if they apply and don't get it. Matt McClellan asked where the policy came from to only give \$15,000 or deny any funds? Charlie again noted it was discussed in a budget meeting (policy was read aloud later in the meeting). Joe stated that there was one year where there were 3 or 4 departments that didn't get their applications in and that is when this came issue about. Bill Beuttell agreed. Bill stated he would be glad to amend the agenda to include what Jim proposed, that if the fire department applies for grant and if they don't receive, then Board would give

the County portion. Jim Brooks reiterated that this is the same amount that every other department gets. Bill noted that is the Amended policy (if it's defeated, he will go back and make a motion to cover this particular instance). Matt asked did the Board want to make 2 (motions) or just make one to cover all? Jim confirmed that is what Bill did when he amended it - it covers both. Jim stated we (1.) approve Linville's request and then (2.) the Board makes their policy change motion.

**Motion made by Johnny Mathes, second by Bill Beuttell to give Linville \$30,000 to match donated funds by other parties. Johnny asked for further discussion.**

Bill addressed Joe about the letter he had written to Bill. Bill stated that he respected Joe's right to write the letter, but that he took exception to the inference that the Board has hidden agendas (or that I (Bill) has hidden agendas). Bill stated there are none and he can say with all honesty that since he's been on the Board, and since he was Chairman, there have been no secret meetings and no talking about how they are going to vote. If Joe believes this is the case, he must bring it out in the open. Joe stated that when the letter was written he was extremely frustrated over the grant issue. He noted it was partly his fault and that he should have taken a day or two (to think over). He felt the station was falling behind in obtaining funds for equipment purchases and was very worried and concerned. Bill understood Joe's concerns and accepted this explanation.

**Johnny called for a vote to approve. Motion unanimous by those in attendance.**

Charlie then asked the Board to clarify how to handle this. Was this to be handled just like a grant where they would bring invoices to him and he would pay their half of the invoice amount? The Board noted they would further discuss later. Charlie then read aloud the April 10, 2017 Budget meeting minutes portion where the Grants policy was previously established - on page 5.

**Motion made by Bill Beuttell that any fire department that appropriately applies for a Grant and does not receive State funding, shall still be awarded County portion of that Grant up to equal amount that other fire departments receive. Second by Jim Brooks. Chairman Mathes called for further discussion. Mathes called for a vote to approve. Motion unanimous by those in attendance.**

## **B. TRUCK COMMITTEE REPORT**

Matt McClellan stated that the Truck Committee met with Banner Elk Fire Department and approved the specifications for the QRV they are purchasing. The Committee recommends this purchase to the Commission. Johnny noted the cost of \$44,329.36.

**Motion made by Jim Brooks, second by Bill Beuttell to approve the purchase of QRV for Banner Elk as recommended by the Truck Committee. Chairman Mathes asked for further discussions. Mathes called for vote to approve. Motion unanimous by those in attendance.**

## **FCD REPORT (7:20 p.m.)**

**Update on Personnel Policy, Truck Titling and Auto renewing contracts.**

Charlie Franklin stated that he and Michelle Poore were to have met this past Tuesday. Michelle's secretary called and cancelled and the meeting which is now re-scheduled for tomorrow (Friday, June 9th). He currently does not have any update, but should get answers tomorrow. Jim noted that regarding Contracts with individual Fire Departments being late, it is not the Commission's fault. He wants to be sure all knew that it is the hold-up on the part of the attorney. Paul

Buchanan stated that this needs to be done soon. Charlie stated that Michelle seems to have a problem with doing anything that they ask.

Jim Brooks referred back to grant applications and noted that he would like to have each station send a copy of their Grant application to Charlie, so there will be a record of what equipment is needed. He noted that in the future there could be some items that could be purchased in bulk to save money (like uniforms). Charlie stated that currently he only receives invoices for what they purchase and turn in at budget time. Matt noted that stations get a list of what they ask for when grants are approved and this is what should be given to Charlie to share with Board. Paul Buchanan stated that stations could send copies of their grant applications to Charlie. Jim said in addition, the Fire Association could review the lists. He noted that Charlie already reminds departments of grant application deadline.

**V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MAY 25, 2017 (7:28 p.m.)**

**Motion made by Jim Brooks, second by Bill Beuttell to approve the minutes for May 25, 2017. Motion unanimous by those in attendance.**

**VI. UPCOMING MEETINGS AND OTHER ISSUES OF CONCERN (7:29 p.m.)**

- Next Fire Commission Special Meeting will be June 14, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. in Newland.
- Next Firemen's Association meeting will be July 6, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in Beech Mountain, Station 2
- Next Fire Commission Regular meeting will be July 13, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in Newland.

**ISSUES OF CONCERN:**

Matt McClellan stated his concern for the safety of their paid men regarding the need for body cameras and software for these cameras. This is to protect men responding to medical calls, particularly from women who may accuse a responder with false accusations of inappropriate behavior. Johnny asked Charlie to check into the cost of this item.

**VII. CLOSED SESSION (7:32 p.m. to 8:12 p.m.) The Board then went into closed session.**

See closed session minutes dated June 8, 2017.

**RETURN TO OPEN SESSION (8:12 p.m.)**

**Upon returning to Open Session, Chairman Mathes announced that No Decision was made.**

**VIII. Adjourn (8:14 p.m.)**

**Motion made by Matthew McClellan and second by Johnny Mathes to adjourn the meeting. Motion unanimous by those in attendance.**

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

**Attest:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **AVERY COUNTY FIRE COMMISSION BUDGET MEETING MINUTES**

The Avery County Fire Commission met in a Special Meeting on Wednesday, June 14, 2017, at 6:00 p.m. in the County Commissioners Conference Room, Newland, NC. The purpose of the meeting was to finalize the budget for 2017-2018 and to determine budget amendments which will be required in July 2017.

Johnny Mathes led in prayer.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Johnny Mathes called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. All Board members were present except for Corey Hughes. Also present: Charlie Franklin, Fire Department Coordinator and Beth Reath, Fire Commission Secretary.

### **AGENDA - REVIEW OF 2017-2018 BUDGET FOR NEEDED AMENDMENTS (6:02)**

The following information was distributed Board members for their review:

1. Linville Fire Department: Monthly Budgeting Form (spreadsheet) showing budget versus actual account expenditures and balances from 7/1/16 through 5/31/17.
2. Seven Devils Fire Department: Quarter and YTD report showing budget versus actual account expenditures and balances from 7/1/16 through 5/31/17.
3. Meeting Minutes from May 4, 2017 meeting with Station Chiefs to review their 2017-2018 budgets as proposed by the Fire Commission.

### **GENERAL DISCUSSION**

Future Funding - Body Cameras: Comments by Jim Brooks and Bill Beuttell were made regarding to the use of body cameras and software. [In previous meetings, the need for body cameras came up as a preventative measure to offset possible allegations by patients when responder answers a call alone.] Bill noted that in using body cameras staff would have to be very careful as this equipment would fall under HIPPA, with lots of paperwork involved. Jim stated that software would have to be stored in a secure place. Jim said that whoever proposes using cameras should do the research (form a committee) and present that information to the Fire Commission. Charlie confirmed that this did fall under HIPPA guidelines. Matt McClellan stated that Charlie would keep the software to download (no one else would have this capability), and viewing would only be done if a situation happened and paid person came to Charlie called for it. He noted there is no way to avoid the possibility of this happening when sending one paid person on a call. Any person can say anything and it's their word and unless you can put two Fireman per station [one person is at risk]. Bill asked how long the files would have to be kept. He noted that something could happen and not be brought up for 6 months. Jim suggested it might be 7 years. Charlie suggested it might be 5 years minimum. He noted this is a situation where a fireman goes alone into a house of a female, or male (in this day and time). Jim said he had never seen this problem (where allegations occurred), and Matt stated that it's a very real problem that is coming at some point. Jim noted that a responder does not have to put themselves in

danger. Charlie said if body cameras were used they would have to be set up like law enforcement's. Matt said theoretically, if he's a paid fireman he must respond. Matt said if fire taxes are paying his salary, he must respond. Otherwise, there might be another lawsuit. Bill said he doesn't see a situation where if a fireman goes to a call and there's a single person in there, he's not going to go in because he's worried about liability. He's going in there. Bill noted that paid deputy sheriffs who enforce the law do not have to put their lives in danger. In our County Bill doesn't see a situation where a fireman wouldn't enter a structure fire whether it's a woman or a man. Jim noted there are many things the Board would like to spend money on, but the budget doesn't allow for them. Matt stated he didn't think the cameras would cost that much. Charlie said this would be protecting only our paid staff. Bill said this would only be a dozen cameras even with the new employees hired. Charlie had looked into it this and what he found out so far is the cameras are not expensive - it's the software that's costly. Charlie had thought of using the same system, as law enforcement and maybe download on their system. If there was a problem we could go back and get it. That wouldn't work. Johnny Mathes asked if they're paged, when does that camera come on? Can they turn it on and off? Charlie said that's a problem because if staff has the control to do that, and they don't come on every shift, and they just turn on when they want it on, who is to say something didn't happen? They cut the camera off. Matt stated then it's on them. Charlie stated that the bottom line is that we can do the best we can to make it as safe as possible for our employees, but there's no way we can do everything. It would be great if we had the money to double up on staff, but we don't have it.

Late Payments of Invoices by Banner Elk: Jim told Charlie he had talked to Gary Miller about how they don't pay their utilities on time (and also other bills). Gary said it's a problem between him and the Board of Directors - he wished that the Fire Commission would do something because he's tired of getting chewed out. He said their bookkeeper not only gets paid out of their budget, but they pay her out of private money too. She had too many jobs and she's not getting it done. Jim believes that we have the right and it comes in on a monthly basis, and they're not paying their utilities we could hold them up until they paid them. We are not supposed to be paying penalties. Charlie noted that he had breakdowns on Banner Elk trucks. He proceeded to review repairs and costs. Jim said a letter could be sent to the Board of Banner Elk.

## **BUDGET DISCUSSION**

Linville Budget: Linville spreadsheet was reviewed. According to their monthly expenditure report, they showed \$452,463 in the bank as of 5/31/17. After some discussion, it was determined that the spreadsheet formulas gave incorrect totals. The Board could not review the spreadsheet with errors. Charlie then went to his office to review the formulas on his computer and make corrections. See Linville Budget continued below.

While waiting for Charlie to make formula corrections to Linville spreadsheet, Johnny asked what did the Board need to accomplish tonight?

Budget Overview: Bill stated all we need to do is recognize the revenues we would get from the County and talk about what we will do with some of Fire Commission fund balance. Bill wants to pay down Frank's debt service. We matched the State grant. If we have some left over - for every \$100,000 we pay off early, we save \$20,000 a year. With hiring 3.5 people versus 6 we have

money available. We are buying an extra QRV this year and we refrained from buying the 2nd big truck. We maxed out on the grant, so what else is there to do? Johnny said we are going to buy 3 QRVs total (Banner Elk from last year's budget and then 2 more - one for Newland and one for Crossnore). Jim noted that they needed the long-term vehicle plan.

Linville Budget continued: Charlie corrected the Linville spreadsheet formula, printed it and re-distributed it to Board members. The corrected bank balance through 5/31/17 was \$24,778.92. The column showing balances for each line item were reviewed - overages and credits were noted. Most all line items were *credits* with only a few overages. The under budget year-to-date total was \$15,068.51 for the year (through 5/31/17). Jim looked at their 2015-2016 budget and they were under budget on almost everything for that year.

[Charlie noted that you would've thought the CPA would've found the error. Jim asked did Nancy look at this. He asked how much do they have in fund balance and Charlie stated \$24,000. Matt thought they might have more funds in another account].

Bill questioned, when fire departments get a lot of private donations, what would they do with funds in a private account? Charlie stated that the Fire Commission has not prevue on those accounts however the departments would buy equipment with it. Jim asked did they ever put private money into trucks they get and beef them up. Charlie answered yes. Charlie did note that while some departments would buy extra equipment with private funds, some might buy and sell T-shirts and other items. Johnny Mathes said Frank used some of their private money to pay for their Volunteers to have Wings insurance (emergency medical flights for treatment at distant facilities). It's \$55-\$65 per year, per family. Wings will fly someone multiple times in a year. Cost to fly someone to a hospital could cost anywhere from \$30,000 to \$50,000.

Budget Overview continued: Bill clarified with Charlie that tonight they must recognize what budget is and what revenue is coming in. Charlie agreed and noted the additional task of what was to be done about Linville, Beech Mountain and Seven Devils. He brought attention to the minutes from 5/4/17 where Board met with fire chiefs from each station. Because the minutes were lengthy, Beth noted that for each station, the bottom line was "Action required". This summarized what needed to be done (without having to read through entire minutes).

Charlie said we know QRV's had to be increased from \$35,000 to \$45,000 by amendment to budget. Michelle Poore was to have the contracts in his hands this past Friday and he was going to send out monthly report forms to treasurers. [There may be an issue with rebuilding formulas block by block due to software update - latest 2016 version of MS Office vs. older version. He is hoping old version would merge formulas correctly with new version].

Budget Amendments: Charlie pulled up 2017-2018 Fire Commission Budget spreadsheet on the large display screen for all to review. He noted that this version was the budget that went to the County. This one shows the check amounts each fire station will receive from the County. For the NEW amended spreadsheet, the following changes were made by the Board.

**AMENDED BUDGET - Changes made to Spreadsheet on 6/14/17:**

1. Newland - Capital Equipment line item 91 - **set at \$45,000.** ( cost of QRV)

**Action required** (in July): **Motion for \$10,000** (diff. between 35,000 and 45,000)

[The Board discussed additional request of \$15,000 (from \$45,000 to total \$60,000) by Newland for special truck equipment. It was decided not to give this additional amount].

2. **Crossnore** - Capital Equipment line item 91 - **set at \$45,000.** ( cost of QRV)

**Action required** (in July): **Motion for \$10,000** (diff. between 35,000 and 45,000)

3. **Beech Mountain** - Miscellaneous Expense line item 85 - **set to \$59,000.**

**Action required** (in July): **Motion for \$21,000** (diff. between 59,000 and 38,000)

4. **Seven Devils** - Miscellaneous Expense line item 85 - **set to \$33,300.**

**Action required** (in July): **Motion for \$5,300** (diff. between 33,300 and 28,000)

New Amended Budget Total:	\$2,525,141.54
Budget submitted to County:	<u>\$2,478,841.64</u>
<b>Amendments:</b>	<b>\$ 46,300.00</b>

Newland	\$10,000
Crossnore	\$10,000
Beech Mtn.	\$21,000
Seven Devils	<u>\$ 5,300</u>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$46,300</b>

Further Discussion on Truck Purchases:

Regarding what stations receive for truck purchasing, Jim noted that if a station has fund balance money, they can do something on their own to purchase additional equipment. Charlie stated that he felt all departments having a fund balance of at least \$10,000. If not it causes cash flow issues - this has happened with Crossnore in the past. Bill asked (he was playing the devil's advocate) if a department gets a certain amount for a QRV and they want a grade higher and were willing to pay for it out of their own private funds, why do they have to go through the Truck Committee? Johnny said they may get something that will cost the Fire Commission down the road. If they get \$45,000 and they go buy a used truck, and all it does is give trouble, then we're paying for that trouble. Charlie said not so much just with QRVs, but with bigger trucks when you put out a spec for bid to compare apples-to-apples, bids have to be made from the same paperwork. If not you will see people going with expensive trucks and after awarding to lowest bidder, they will go back and put on more equipment. Again, Bill asked does this have to go through Truck Committee. Johnny said he would think the Committee would let them get a used vehicle. Matt stated there are other considerations, it's not just about one thing - unless it's a case where they're being extravagant and it will cost money later. Charlie said what the Commission



approves must be across the board for everybody. From then on, we don't know what happens as long as that figure does not change, we don't know what will happen. Johnny asked are we going to bid that out? Matt said doesn't know how. Banner Elk has someone they use. It's set up to where they buy it for them and they set it up (put what they want on it). Johnny said Lite-n-up will buy it (extra gear) and put it on. Matt said that is who Banner Elk uses. Charlie said Elderton Dodge did every bit of Elk Park's in-house. With QRV allowance of \$45,000, there will not be much variance in what that buys. Jim asked wasn't there a company in Taylorsville that will sell you one? He asked what is the company there that does the Spartan chassis trucks? Charlie responded it was Anchor Ritchie, but he thinks that company does not do QRV's. West Jefferson may sell them. If you order these they will all come with factory bed, factory cab etc., so other than lights and siren, etc., that's the only difference there will be. Charlie also stated that if this size vehicle was bought under the Sheriffs program or state contract that meet the bid requirement.

Allocations to Beech Mountain and Seven Devils: Bill said with respect to increased allocations to Seven Devils and Beech Mountain discussed during the last budget meeting, he had a question. If we did the same amount for each, would that be fair? We were going to do it as a percentage of their budgets. Charlie noted the Board now has Seven Devils' expenditures, so we can compare it to Beech Mountain's to see how close they are. Beech Mountain's overall budget is \$235,801.38. They had requested \$58,950.35 (¼ share). Seven Devils' is \$133,223. Their ¼ share would now be \$33,305.75. Bill said this is what we should give them. [On spreadsheet for Beech Mountain \$58,950.35 was rounded up to \$59,000. On spreadsheet for Seven Devils \$33,305.75 was rounded down to \$33,300].

Charlie stated that if we do this ¼ method, he is reminding all that the Board has no control over the rest of the budget. The only thing a department has to do is come up with a bigger budget next year and still ask for ¼ share and get a big raise. Jim noted that we do have line item amounts from them that dictate the budget. Bill said he's not concerned with that happening because if they come in with a screwy budget next year (greatly inflated), the Town of Beech Mountain will complain. There are checks and balances. Regarding what we're doing this year, we pledged to do something for them last year and didn't do it. Next year, we're not obligated to do anything (can even adjust down or upward).

Charlie noted the importance of documenting the numbers they were deciding on today. The budget amendments we made must reflect the additional amount over what was budgeted. **See pages 3 and 4 AMENDED BUDGET.** In July, everything we're doing will have to come out of fund balance.

Linville Budget continued: Beth asked about Linville's request for \$15,000 to increase grant funds to \$30,000. Matt stated they had \$29,875 on the 2017-2018 budget for this. Charlie clarified that the \$15,000 was a 2016-2017 budget item, not the 2017-2018 budget. In the 5/4/17 fire chief meeting, Linville expressed they would need more money for certain expense items. Matt expressed his dismay at Linville's rep. who said the Commission didn't look at their budget. Matt noted that the Commission had carefully reviewed each and every line item to see what they had actually spent. Charlie stated that one month ago they still had \$16,988 in their budget. Jim said they had \$8,400 leftover last year. Matt noted that their average monthly expenses ran \$8,800

with just a few months higher, but they should be covered unless something large comes up. [Charlie stated that one reason they were over in truck maintenance because they pay \$300-\$350, whereas all others are paying \$200 per test].

The Board decided that if Linville needs more money, they will have to come to the Commission at a later date. [some line items with credit can be moved to those where funds are needed]. Matt noted that on the Plymovent, the Board was generous in giving Linville the funds. The Commission only has daytime staff where no one is sleeping. Also, Linville paid to have it put in with grant. Linville wanted full coverage and we should have told them that they had to pay the \$10,000. The Commission paying for plumbing issues was appropriate. Jim said there are other things purchased that department's buy and then the Commission has to pay to upkeep. Matt said 24-hour coverage is Linville's issue.

Charlie said workman's comp did not get paid until June and he wants to make sure that Linville has funds there. It's the only thing he sees that will be a big expense item. Johnny noted it comes out the end of June or first of July. By the time we paid it, it may have come out twice on a budget, so appears high. Jim stated Linville paid \$3,500 in 2013-2014, \$2,375 in 2014-2015 and \$3,350 in 2015-2016. Last year they paid \$3,900. They asked for \$5,100. We would have to look at rosters for each year to determine costs. Bill noted they had only spent \$1,548 this year to date, but Charlie thinks the workman's comp will come out next month. Jim said Commission should leave this at \$3,510, it's double what they had. All their line items have been raised up. He noted they never spend anywhere near what they ask for.

Charlie presented the board with a comparison of budgets. He noted that in 2015-16 Linville's operation budget was \$104,236.76 - Frank's budget was \$48,496.98. In 2016-17 Linville's operation budget was \$140,152.50 - Frank's budget was \$89,852. In 2017-18 Linville's budget was \$101,583 and Frank's was \$60,472. Going back several years, it's going to come out pretty close to even in the end.

Jim said if they don't have enough money next year, they will come back to us and provide us with a bill. Charlie said if you look at overall budget, they're about right, when considering call volume (they're about 4th or 5th). Crossnore and Newland have just a bit more than Linville. The Board looked at the past phone/internet, truck fuel and heating expenses and what the budget was for each. Johnny suggested bringing in paid receipts to show where their money was spent, but Charlie reminded that the reports were directly related to their actual expenditures. Bill expressed he does want to go through hundreds of receipts. Jim stated that they will have plenty of money left over to cover what is there.

Again, the Board decided that if Linville needs more money, they will have to come to the Commission at a later date. Charlie feels that if the Board does not give them what they ask for they will not sign a contract. He thinks this is the year they may try to break off into an individual fire district. He believes it will have to go through a referendum. Matt does not think the County Commissioners will want to deal with this. Jim said State statutes on this would explain how this has to work. Bill asked if they don't sign contract, would we get back all the equipment the Fire Commission/taxpayers bought? Do we have to fund them while they're pulling away? Charlie stated we would only get back one brush truck that is joint titled. Linville bought their trucks, but

you could possibly prove that private funds mingled with a small amount of tax dollars bought vehicles and possibly could get back 2 trucks.

Bill stated that we as a body, are doing our very best job to please everybody under the budget constraints we have. If this is an issue, we will deal with this when it happens. Matt said this is just like Foscoe. This will be the same thing that happened with Watauga County too. They all had to do their own push to get what they wanted. If Linville pushes and Crossnore and others don't get the money they need or want, they lose cooperation from one another. Without support from others they can lose their rating. Charlie said it can backfire. Jim said that Gary Miller said the Tynecastle Shopping Center wants to be in Linville's district to save money on their fire insurance. It's in Sugar Mountain. Sugar Mountain could step forward and sign a contract with someone other than what the County does. The town has control over who they contract with. All agreed there is something going on with this issue. Gary was all about not giving up anything and Jim told him what difference does it make? They are not getting any more money. Johnny noted one business is on one side of the road and the other is on the other side of the road. Matt said there be a problem. Charlie said this is why Mark (Linville) is trying to make his plea now, it's for down the road. Sugar Mountain can do this, but Linville would have to get permission from Banner Elk access Sugar Mountain threw there distric. Matt stated we would deal with this when the time comes. It's not up to the Fire Commission, but they may want to hear our view on this.

Bill asked what is our account balance (see below)? He asked would we still get the same amount from the County? Matt thinks if Linville pulls out, it will end up hurting them because the Commissioners will set what the rate is and it may end up being close to what they get now. Bill stated the Board has given them \$52,000 to clean up their station. We've offered to give them the extra \$15,000 for the grant because they secured funds elsewhere. Jim said they did the right thing and applied. Johnny noted he has heard this for many years, that they may pull out. This may happen. Matt said with the leaks at the station, they need to get rid of the porch. Jim said Gary Miller like to finagle, as his dad is the Mayor, but his dad is catching a lot of heat right now. 100 people will make sure he doesn't get voted back in. Matt stated Newland has a silent mayor until there is a split decision and then she acts. Jim said whoever the mayor is, they tell the town manager what to do.

Fire Commission Account, Budget Amendments, & Summary: Charlie said the Fire Commission bank balance right now through end of May, is \$433,283.56. We still have a month to go with bills. There are still 1-1/2 trucks (to pay for). We pay 1/2 of Newland's and a 2nd truck. We should be getting another \$300,000 going back into the account the first of July. They hold check up until the last part.

Bill stated that whatever we have at the end of this fiscal year, we should have \$150,000 to \$200,000 at the end of next fiscal year because we've got the additional revenues coming in and we're only going to buy one truck. Charlie noted from what we requested, we actually received \$21,000 more and when we put the extra \$10,000 on the two QRVs, there's only \$1,000 left.

Original truck budget	\$700,000
2 QRV's	-\$ 90,000
1 Lg truck	-\$400,000

3.5 employees                      -\$167,000  
Balance =                            \$ 43,000

This leaves \$43,000 balance (may be \$60,000 at the most). Charlie noted we just increased Beech Mountain's and Seven Devils' budgets, so that's an additional \$21,000 and \$5,300. Jim said we may get some more money from new home construction. He said he will have a better handle on things by the end of June, but he still believes the Commission could still spend \$200,000 and not be too close. Bill noted again that with amendments, if they have enough fund balance, he wants to retire Frank's debt early. Jim suggested that may have to come at the end of the regular year (December) when they look at numbers again (mid-year for County). Charlie said when it comes time to review budgets again, and they're coming up with their numbers, he thinks maybe it's better not to figure in extra revenue from tax rate and just plan on that being already spent. It makes things simpler. Bill said when we made presentation to the Commissioners, we told them we would keep an 8% in fund balance (approx. \$200,000), so if we have more we need to put it to good use. Paying extra on debt principal will save money. Jim asked Matt if Green Valley would be asking for a new building in the near future. Matt said not that he knew. Johnny stated it took 5 years to get the land for Frank's department. Charlie said he would not be on that committee. Charlie said that the back of Green Valley's building, near the steps has major stucco problems. The Board will have to do something soon. Bill said they need to set up a time to inspect. Matt asked could it be covered by insurance? Charlie said it's an aging problem. Jim said he gets an engineer to certify repairs needed.

Bill said we could be in worse shape. Most trucks at Linville, they bought. Johnny said for years the County gave money to buy them. Matt said they gave a large amount and departments used it for what their needs were. Bill noted so trucks weren't joint titled? Johnny said for years all got the same amount. Johnny said if you wanted a truck, you had save up enough to get down payment. Jim said they got loans. He said at Linville the Foundation would buy the trucks. Matt noted that long ago, stations had to have fund raisers to buy their trucks. Bill said it speaks of their commitment to get the whole system started up for the County. It's a testament to their drive and perseverance.

Bill asked if we needed a vote to approve this budget (with amendments)? Charlie said no - the budget had been approved and this meeting was just to establish needed amendments for next meeting.

**MEETING ADJOURNED (7:50 p.m.)**

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

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

**Attest:** \_\_\_\_\_