

**AVERY FIRE ASSOCIATION**  
**Chief's Committee - March 18, 2021 - Gwaltney Station**

Chief Bob Pudney called the meeting to order. Frank and Crossnore were not represented.

Members discussed the progress on the proposed Linville training facility. It was noted that Jeff Thomas had not set up a meeting with his friend at the A-B Tech facility which would help determine the needed acreage and the list of potential future training features. Scott Stansbury reported that he had obtained a price of \$ 290,000 for a burn building.

Mark Taylor reported that the Fire Commission budget session reviewed over five million dollars worth of requests to be covered out of the 2.7 million dollar budget. He asked the commission to ask the county commissioners for more money - but they refused. He pointed out that the paid employees were costing \$ 800,000 and that Elk Park needed a million dollar new station. Kennie McFee reminded members that the commission had agreed that Green Valley would get the next station. Bob Pudney reminded members that if departments had \$ 800,000 to put into volunteer recruitment and retention we would need less paid employees.

Mark said that the commission also wanted to be put on the truck titles if they paid for repairs. Newland's board of directors was against liens on trucks for repairs.

The fire Commission thinks that departments are wasting grant money buying gear that they don't need and for this reason, they don't want to fully fund the state grant. With budgets so tight - it is important that departments be fully funded.

Kennie McFee asked if there were other ways to get more money? Mark Taylor said that Roy Dellinger was meeting with a firm that recovers monies from Insurance companies from wreck responses. Roy thinks this firm can recover monies without permission from the county commissioners.

Members discussed the increases in call volumes from guests and owners staying longer periods of time.

Mike Richardson noted that he was having trouble paying his department's bill because there were department monies missing and the investigation was not complete. The fire commission had not agreed to help him in the meantime. He also noted that the missing monies far exceeded the \$ 25,000 insurance coverage. It was noted that Watauga County helped two departments that had similar problems. Members agreed that the Chiefs and the Association should ask the fire commission to fund Fall Creek. Mike asked members if they could loan him turn out gear to equip 5 new members. He was also reminded that I Am Responding could alert those members until he could afford pagers.

This reminded Mark Taylor that members of the fire commission wanted to lower truck insurance coverages. John Hall said that this would cause trucks to be totaled instead of repaired.