
Leicester Volunteer Fire Department Board Meeting Minutes, July 31, 2023

Attendees included:

Board President Ronald Prestwood
Board Vice President Steven Marlowe
Chief Ted Godleski
Board Treasurer Brent Kendall
Board Secretary Daniel Brice
Board Members Joan Creasman, Dylan McMahan, Karla Reed, and Susan Weaver

Guests Included:

C-Shift Captain Jason Griffin
B-Shift Captain Jacob Bishop
Marty Rice

Call to order

A meeting of Leicester Volunteer Fire Department was held at LVFD Station 1, 1563 Alexander Rd, Leicester NC, Multipurpose Room on Monday, July 31, 2021, at 7:00pm. Meeting was called to order by Board President Ronald Prestwood followed by an opening prayer, led by Board Vice President, Steven Marlowe, and then concluding with the Pledge of Allegiance. Board President provided opening remarks and welcomed new Board Secretary, Daniel Brice.

Secretary's Report, Approval of minutes

Time was given for review of the previous meeting minutes. A motion was made by Joan Creasman to accept the secretary's report as presented for the Board meeting held on May 22nd, 2023. Steven Marlowe seconded, and motion carried.

Treasure's Report

Treasurer's report delivered by Board Treasurer Brent Kendall outlining spending and balances for the 1st month of the new fiscal year. Discussion proceeded among board members and concluded with no significant actions. A motion was made to accept the Treasurer's Report by Dylan McMahan, seconded by Steven Marlow, and the motion carried.

Old Business

Chief Ted Godleski

1. New First Response Vehicle (Suburban): Vehicle upfit has been completed. The vehicle was delivered and was placed in service on July 27th.
2. New Building: Still waiting for the fire department employee, who has volunteered to correct the drainage issue, at the main station, to bring his equipment and do so. Three people contacted for services pertaining to landscaping and dead tree removal at the main station. All three performed site visit, and made promises to get back with the Chief, but only 1 has responded. Decisions of actions are still pending.
3. Brush Truck Chassis: Chief Godleski gave the floor to Captain Griffin to provide a status report on the new trucks. One of the trucks is in Statesville and expecting completion next week. Rough Drafts of graphics has been delivered and is expecting a decision to be made by tomorrow. Capt. Griffin also revisited the discussion from the previous board meeting, May 22, 2023, of keeping the recently repaired Brush Truck, to be outfitted as an official Service Company Truck. This would help lower the department's ISO rating, provide a better means of accessing properties on steep narrow roads and driveways, and be better suited for towing ATV-18 and the scissor lift. OSFM was contacted and off the record, they said that the truck would help the ISO rating "a lot" but was unable to give more detail. Capt. Griffin estimated that to outfit the proposed Service Truck with all the required modifications and equipment, the price would be about \$32,000 - \$33,000. Capt. Griffin then identified the need for a light bar was overlooked in the quotes, and additional funds would be needed for that as well. Jason fielded questions from the board on necessity, reliability, costs. The board discussed budgetary concerns and suggestions were debated. The conversation rolled into the next agenda item of the status of the new Fire Engines and Pumper Tanker.
4. New Fire Engines and Pumper Tanker: Captain Griffin submitted an additional request to add dump chutes to each of the new Fire Engines. A decision is required now, as this requires modifications to the water tanks prior to the vehicles' assembly. The estimate of this modification for both engines is about \$11,000, which would be financed into the final purchase price of the Fire Engines. Capt. Griffin also requested 3 intake valves for each of the Fire Engines and Pumper-tanker, estimating the cost to be \$1,600 each. Additional discussion from the board ensued concerning budgets and logistics of this request and the previously discussed Service Truck, as well as additional mobile radios, additional equipment (shelves, hoses, etc), and required tools for the new Fire Engines.

A motion was made by Steven Marlowe to purchase (est. \$17500) the upgrades and modifications to the chassis bed for the company service truck and to be funded by the Vehicle Maintenance budget and then purchase (est. \$17,500) the necessary items to equip the truck from the Small Equipment budget. Joan Creasman seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

A second motion was made by Joan Creasman for the approval of purchase of the proposed dump valves for the 2 engines, estimated \$11,000, and to be financed into the purchase price of the Fire Engines. Steve Marlowe seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

A third motion was made by Steve Marlowe for the approval of the new Fire Engines and pumper-tanker's (qty:3) intake valves, hose, and mobile radios, for the estimated amount of \$20,000, to come out of the Small Equipment budget. Karla Reed seconded, and the motion, carried unanimously.

Captain Griffin concluded that the projected delivery of the new pumper-tanker to be October 2023 and the new pumpers to be February 2024. The board discussion continued about loan financing of the new trucks and concluded that Brent Kendall will research for the best options for financing.

Chief Godleski discussed recent damages to Squad 18 among which was the tailboard. Capt. Griffin provided photos and was evaluated by the Board. It was determined that the damage was not significant for immediate repair. The floor was returned to Chief Godleski to continue his agenda items.

5. Radios and Pagers: Fifteen hand-held radios had been delivered and put in use. The board and attendees discussed on the quantity of radios previously approved and the need for additional radios for the new positions. Steve Marlowe made the motion to purchase 3 additional radios for the 3 additional positions from the Board Specified Spending budget. Joan Creasman seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.
6. Community Garden Agreement – Still waiting to hear from the Friends of the Leicester Library, as they are waiting to hear back from the County Attorney.
7. Solar Panels at New Building – Received an email on July 24 from Jerimiah Leroy, the Buncombe County Sustainability Director, and they are ready for a deeper dive into financial analyses and cost saving potential. They are requesting the most recent 12 months of utility bills from the Main Station building and seeking authorization to contract Duke Energy directly. Chief gave authorization for this and confirmed the previous agreement that they would review findings with the Board before further actions are initiated. Currently waiting on their analyses and projections.
8. Turnout Gear: Has been purchased and received.
9. Station #3: Repairs/remodeling is still on hold, pending issues at Station #2 being resolved.
10. Purchase of Rescue Equipment and Airbags: Received and placed in service.

President:

11. Station #2 Septic System repair: The County visited and dug some test plots at the Sandy Mush Community Center, and they all failed testing. The search was expanded, and we reached out to neighboring property owner, Todd Worley. He said that he did not have a place to put the proposed septic system. We then started discussions with the Big Sandy United Methodist Church on possibility of putting the septic on church property. They gave written approval for

testing to be done on their property. Mr. Holder, from Buncombe County Environmental Health, found that the first area proposed by the fire department was not feasible. He did find a possible location on top of the grade but was unable to obtain conclusive samples. Test pits will need to be dug in this location. Another neighbor was inquired to allow testing on her property, and she gave written approval for testing. Testing was preformed but was also inconclusive. Test pits will also need to be dug at this location. This is where the situation is currently.

Joan Creasman raised the idea of envisioning a new station at a new site. She explained investing in the old station for a remodel with an imperfect septic is akin to “putting lipstick on a pig”. The Sandy Mush area is growing, and Station 2 has served its purpose. There is no room for growth and issues will continue to arise in the future. It would be better to invest in a new building rather than a remodel and repairs. She proposed to start looking for property.

The board started discussions and debates. Ronald Prestwood explained that a new station needs to be within 10 miles of the Main station and that Station 2 is already within 0.2- 0.3 miles of that limit, so any selection of property needs to meet this requirement. The current septic system and bedroom limits was discussed as well as the feasibility of finding property in the required area. Daniel Brice proposed to form an investigative committee to evaluate the possibility of a new building, including cost estimates and property possibilities. Joan Creasman volunteered to chair the committee and asked for Dylan McMahan and Karla Reed to be members.

The board continued to discuss and determined that the efforts of septic repair on the exist station need to continue while the proposed committee researches the option of a new building. Ronald Prestwood made a motion to form the investigative committee of 3 members, with Joan Creasman chairing, and Dylan McMahan and Karla Reed as members. Joan Creasman seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

12. Articles of Incorporation: The Board was provided with a copy of documentation entitled “ARTICLES OF RESTATEMENT FOR NON-PROFIT CORPORATION OF LEICESTER VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT, INC. and then given time to review. The documentation having been prepared by Management Solutions for Emergency Services, LLC, the management company that Leicester Volunteer Fire Department had recently contracted with. Chief Godleski confirmed that the provisions of the matter of dissolution does transfer assets to another 501 3-C (non-profit) entity and meets the requirements that are stated in the contract that the fire department has with Buncombe County concerning dissolution. Karla Reed made the motion to accept the “ARTICLES OF RESTATEMENT FOR NON-PROFIT CORPORATION OF LEICESTER VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT, INC as were received from Management Solutions for Emergency Services, LLC., Susan Weaver seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Other Board Members

1. Karla Reed – Requested updates of By-Laws, Uniforms, and new employees.
 - a. Bylaws: Karla Reed asked if the Bylaws have been sent to Mr. Bost? Chief Godleski replied that he emailed him 2-4 weeks ago and followed up this past Friday and still waiting for a response. It was then asked if Mr. Bost had been supplied a copy of the County contract. Chief Godleski confirmed. It was also requested that a copy of the

contract to be given to new Board Secretary, Daniel Brice. A copy was provided shortly thereafter.

- b. Uniforms: Karla Reed voiced concerns that during a recent event, the dress uniforms were not up to par and requested Class A dress blues for everyone or at the least all full-timers, including coats, pants, shoes, hats, ties, pins, etc. Chief Godleski is going to ask Roger Banks to review inventory and obtain pricing and quotes.
- c. New employees: Karla requested the status of the three new employee positions. Chief Godleski and Captain Griffin explained that two new full-time employees were hired, but they are filling previous vacant positions and not filling the new positions. It was then asked if they received new radios, and Capt. Griffin affirmed.

Old Business was concluded.

New Business

Chief Godleski:

1. Chief Godleski provided that after each year an audit is completed and we must sign a letter of engagement with Auditor's Office, which is Goldsmith, Molis, and Gray PLLC. Chief Godleski will sign the letter if there are no objections, and then email it to Terry Jean Moody. No objections were noted.
2. Joan Creasman provided suggestions on improving activities of Annual Meetings:
 - a. Have a manned table at the entrance with the sign-in sheet. In the previous meeting, some visitors were missed as the sign-in book was passed around. Also have separate sign-in sheet for non-voting visitors.
 - b. Create a time limit for the invocation. This past meeting, the invocation was 20-25 minutes long.
 - c. In lieu of reading of the Secretary's report, publish the minutes on website if allowed, and pass the website information to the audience.
 - d. During the counting of ballots, allow board members counting the votes to vacate the head table to accurately count ballots as there was much distracting activity during this period.
3. Joan Creasman also raised the need to publish the Board Meeting minutes on the station's website, as this has not been done. She read an excerpt from the County Contract that specifies the minutes are to be published for public access. Daniel Brice is going to take the responsibility of publishing minutes on the website.
4. Karla Reed inquired about the previously received email from Management Solutions for Emergency Services, LLC, on the HB 378 (Background Checks) law. She asked if there is anything that we need to do? Chief Godleski responded that there are no changes we need to make as our current practices are already compliant with the law. Ronald Prestwood inquired if this is performed on all personnel, including volunteers and board members. Chief Godleski affirmed.

5. Daniel Brice provided a review of the website hosting accumulated costs was \$1602 for the past 12 months. Daniel advised that it would be more effective to host the website elsewhere that would provide the benefits of reducing costs and efforts to maintain. He suggested Weebly.com and the estimated costs would be reduced to \$312 per year. Design of the site can be done without incurring costs and a preview can be provided before a decision is made. He estimates that maybe 3 to 4 months is needed to deliver and would like to recruit staff to assist. Board President Prestwood approved of the idea of waiting for the preview to discuss further.
6. Daniel Brice also raised the question of how much detail needs to be in the minutes of the meeting. Board President Prestwood suggested to wait till next meeting to see the new minutes to provide feedback.
7. Joan Creasman asked that with newly formed Committee for investigating a new building, what are the demographics needed for Sandy Mush? Ron Prestwood responded that a new station must be within 10 miles of Station 1 and the mountain would be an ideal border. If beyond 10 miles, Sandy Mush would have to incorporate itself. The board discussed this further and had not further requested actions.
8. Joan Creasman made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Steve Marlowe seconded, and the motion carried.
9. Meeting adjourned at 10:10pm. The next meeting will be August 28, 2023, at the Main Station located at 1563 Alexander Rd, Leicester, NC

Respectfully Submitted,

Daniel Brice
Secretary-Board of Directors