



MINUTES

FIRE SERVICE ADVISORY COMMISSION

July 20, 2023

Oconee County Administrative Offices, Council Chambers
415 S. Pine Street, Walhalla, SC 29691

MEMBERS

Commissioner Charlie Vissage, Region 1
Commissioner Tony McAlister, Region 2
Commissioner Austin Grant, Region 3
Commissioner Bruce Brock, Region 4 (absent)

Commissioner, Region 5 (seat vacant)
OCES Director, Scott Krein
Fire Chief, Chris Smith

The Oconee County Fire Service Advisory Commission met at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC, with four members present.

Press: Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, notice of the meeting, date, time, place of meeting and agenda were posted on the bulletin board at the County Administrative Offices, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC, and the County Council website [www.oconeesc.com/council]. In addition, it was made available [*upon request*] to the newspapers, radio stations, television stations and concerned citizens.

No members of the media were present.

Call to Order:

- Chairman McAlister called the meeting to order at 18:00.

Approval of Minutes:

Comm. Vissage motioned to approve the minutes from the April 20th fire service advisory commission meeting with Comm. Grant seconding. Members unanimously approved the minutes.

Election of Officers

- Commission Secretary: Steve Zahn resigned the position effective the March meeting. Commissioner Austin Grant agrees to serve as commission secretary for three months pending the appointment of a permanent replacement by the July meeting. Anyone interested in serving in this capacity should contact a member of the fire service advisory commission to be considered at the May meeting.

Radio Communications Committee Report:

- The repeater at Newry Mill is online and working well. We have to complete programming of radios to move forward.
- The advancements at Bad Creek and Keowee Key water tower are still underway.
- The radio technician position was cut from the budget this year.

Director Scott Krein's Report:

- Improper Access from Fire Fighters and Responders in ERS

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- We have to make sure that members are not accessing call reports if they were not on the call. Members should not be opening reports just to view them or get information. Please pass this along to your members.
- Budget Discussion – Changes in proposed 2.9 fund for next fiscal year
 - At this time, we will not be changing to a new reporting software from ERS. This change was cut from the budget for this year. We will continue to pursue this upgrade in the future.
 - Volunteer compensation amounts were not changed.
 - July 25th is the last day to cut checks for the last year's budget. All paperwork must be turned in by the 24th. This is a hard cutoff and will not be extended. Chief Smith sent an email to the station chiefs about this earlier in the week.
 - All incident reports must be completed within 10 days of the end of the quarter.
 - Hose testing is still in the budget and has been scheduled. If the county budget does not cover the entire cost of hose testing, any remainder will have to come from the individual departments as agreed upon two years prior when the county initially decided to pursue third party hose testing.

Chief Chris Smith:

- No report
- SOG 202.1 – Discussion regarding new awards program:
 - New SOG explains new honors and awards that both volunteers and paid staff can be nominated for. Nomination form is included in the SOG.

Fire Representative Reports:

- Region 1: Comm Vissage – Question posed to Chief Smith what his five year plan was for goals and vision for the department. Director Krein stated that they are working on a better written 5 year plan. The primary advancement they are aiming for is to improve the salaries. The county continues to face staffing shortages. Corinth-Shiloh is staffed, and the next step in the plan for staffing is to staff the Bountyland Station. This will greatly help the county. Commissioner Vissage suggests getting the 5 year plan completed and pushed out to the stations to grow support. Chief Smith acknowledged that volunteerism is struggling and it is a challenge to recruit and retain. Chief Smith reached out to Duke Energy to ask if any of their fire brigade members would have interest in volunteering with their community fire departments.
- Region 2: Comm McAlister – Question asking why departments were having difficulty getting their checks. Chief Smith explained that reporting requirements were not being met and the timeline for having checks cut once the department's quarterly obligations were satisfied.
- Region 3: Comm Grant – Nothing to report
- Region 4: Comm Brock – Not Present
- Region 5: Vacant

Next Meeting

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- The next Fire Service Advisory Commissions Meeting will be held on August 17th, 2023, beginning at 18:00.

Adjourn:

- A motion to adjourn was made by Comm Brock and seconded by Commissioner Vissage and approved unanimously at 18:21.

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