



MINUTES FIRE SERVICE ADVISORY COMMISSION

April 18, 2024

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

MEMBERS

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

Commissioner Terry Sanford, Region 5 (absent)
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 3 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 Will Bates called the meeting to order at 18:01.

Approval of Minutes:

- Minutes for the March fire service advisory commission meeting were sent out.
- Motion by Commissioner Brock to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Commissioner McAlister. Members unanimously approved the minutes.

Radio Committee Report:

- Committee has been meeting and working on the schematics.
- Had a meeting with dispatch today to work on some issues with the schematic.
- The radio group has been looking at every tower. Today they are planning to go inspect the Toccoa tower with the new owner. We have not had access to this site for a while.
- Deciding what channels will go into which zone to make the reprogramming easier.
- One issue we are having is that a lot of vehicles are not digital compatible yet.
- Still working on testing the Kenwood radios.
- We are looking at compatibility to make sure all purchases will serve us well for future needs.
- Highway 130 tower update: Work is still going on at this site. The concrete pad was poured for the building, generator, and fuel tank to get this tower operational. There is money in the budget to finish this advancement, and it will be completed with time.

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- The goal is to have all radios in the county to be digital. The goal will be to dispatch on the dispatch channel and then to assign an ops channel. There will be no other communication on the dispatch channel. There will be additional tactical channels to use as needed for tanker shuttles, etc.
 - We are working to get an inventory of all radios that need to be swapped out.
 - The county will try to recommend additional digital radios to give departments more options that are compatible with the digital system.

Director Scott Krein's Report:

- Helicopter Insurance
 - Anyone who received the incentive for last year now has active coverage.
 - Some have not received cards yet, but everyone who was on the list that received an incentive was sent to MASA and was covered.
 - Director Krein will send the list of members that are covered to the individual fire departments to verify that they are accurate.
 - We have the signed contact for the helicopter agreement with MASA.
- Air Trailer
 - Tuesday night at council, the air trailer was passed and is being ordered. It is still months out, but is in the works. This will give us power and air on scene. Comes with a cord reel that can fill other apparatus' cascade tanks. The grant was written for training and on-scene use and will replace the 34 year old unit that is currently at the burn building.
 - Roughly a \$200,000 purchase. The majority of the funds for this came from an AFG grant.
 - We plan to fix the current mobile air truck box to continue using it for as long as possible. It is not part of the replacement plan with this purchase.
- Volunteer Incentive Plan
 - Keeping the same requirements as last year with one addition.
 - Firefighters, rescue squad members, and special team members must have some form of certification.
 - All firefighters and medical responders are required to complete 20 hours of training per year.
 - One clarification on a requirement from last year: all firefighters need to have CPR/first aid training. We need to make sure that members are trained in first aid and not just CPR. Cards must be valid through September 30th.
 - One requirement has been added since last year: Accountability committee requested a 1 hour class on incident command and accountability be required for every department. This class is currently being created and will be available over the summer to give people plenty of opportunities to complete this requirement.
 - For administrative members, each chief will be given 50 points to distribute as they see fit.
 - Each chief will need to make sure there are no duplicate entries so that no members are getting paid for the same incident twice

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- Any volunteer who is also a paid firefighter cannot receive incentive credit for calls that they responded to while on duty with their paid department.
- Motion by Commissioner McAlister to accept the VIP requirements as amended, second by Commissioner Brock. Motion passes.

Chief Chris Smith:

- Box alarm update
 - Getting the bugs worked out of the new system. If your department finds any issues, please let Chief Smith know.
- 3 updated SOGs were presented
 - These will be emailed out to the chiefs next week.
 - These SOGs were distributed in the form of hard copies but were not named or read aloud in the meeting.
- New policy for junior firefighters
 - Junior members will be covered by workers comp provided that they follow the guidelines provided, meet the age requirement, complete the application, complete the required physical, and are listed on your department roster.
 - Junior firefighters can perform support work on scene but cannot fight fire interior. They must be supervised appropriately on scene.
 - Departments must have a member with youth protection training from Boy Scouts of America's website.
 - We had 17 employees start in January and February so far. This will allow us to support the volunteer departments better. 10 of these new employees will be going through the upcoming rookie school.
- Cadet firefighters
 - Had 8 more cadets graduate last week. They will work for 3 weeks with the other squads before being put in the 40 hour stations as rookies. They will be rotated through Bountyland and Corinth-Shiloh to get some experience. We have two more still in class in Spartanburg who will graduate on May 3rd. This is the first time that we have been fully-staffed with paid staff since Chief Smith has been here. There are still some part-time openings to fill. There are 9 candidates testing tomorrow for part-time positions.

Fire Representative Reports:

- Region 1: Commissioner Bates – No update
- Region 2: Commissioner McAlister – Hats off to the Bountyland Station. They are running a lot of calls and holding their own. Chief Smith said they have responded to 60 calls in the first two weeks.
- Region 3: Commissioner Grant – Not present
- Region 4: Commissioner Brock – No update
- Region 5: Commissioner Sanford – Not present

Discussion regarding at-large position: The secretary position remains open. Austin Grant has been filling in since Steve Zahn stepped down. We will bring this up at the chief's association again.

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Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Brock to adjourn at 18:36. Second by Commissioner McAlister.

Next Meeting

- The next Fire Service Advisory Commission Meeting will be held on Thursday, May 16, 2024, beginning at 18:00.

Adjourn:

- A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Sanford and seconded by Commissioner McAlister and approved unanimously at 18:41

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