

Fire and Rescue Commission  
Minutes of April 28, 2020  
Chatham Community Center  
115 South Main St, Chatham, VA 24531

**1.) Call to order at 6:31 p.m. by Bryan Fox, Chairman**

**2.) Roll Call**

<u>Member</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Chuck Angier	X	
Tim Duffer	X	
Bryan Fox	X	
Brian Garrett	X	
Ben Meeks	X	
Ron Scarce	X	
Keith Scruggs	X	
Bert Sellers		X
Billy Talbott		X

**Staff members present:** Chris Slem, Michael Lee, David Smitherman

**Association Representative:** Dean Fowler

**3.) Additions or Revisions to the agenda:**

**4.) Approval of the agenda:** Ron Scarce made a motion to the approve agenda; Brian Garrett made second to the motion to approve agenda. No discussion, motion passed to approve agenda.

5.) Approval of previous meeting minutes: Keith Scruggs made motion to approve last month's meeting minutes, Ron Searce made second to the motion to pass last month's meeting minutes. No discussion, Motion passed to approve last month's meeting minutes.

6.) Presentations: Brian Fox Chairman, read multiple county code sections in reference to the Fire and Rescue Commission and the relationship with Fire and Rescue association. Ron Searce wanted to address the fire and rescue association that the fire commission is the first step in requesting additional funding and/or fire and ems related issues.

7.) Fire and Rescue Association report: Mr. Fowler did not have any report due to not being able to meet because of COVID-19. The next Fire and Rescue association meeting is tomorrow, April 29, 2020, at 1900. Meeting will be located at the Community Center.

8.) Other Fire and EMS Agency Reports

**A. Cascade Fire Department.**

Eric Clark: Chief of Cascade Fire Department: Requested the Commission support Cascade becoming transport EMS agency. Reference the letter to commission. Dr. Boro has requested that the agency continue to show improvement with call percentage for 6 months. A target start date for transport is June 1, 2020.

Mr. Adams, President of Cascade Fire Department, spoke highly of the community and also the department. "These individuals have shown an interest in helping their community. "We need to prepare for the projected growth in our area, we want to prepare and be proactive."

Matt Hunt, Assistant Chief of Cascade Fire Department, thanked the commission for listening to their proposal. They have an agreement with purchasing an ambulance with Mt. Cross.

Tim Duffer made the motion to allow Cascade Fire Department to become a transporting agency. Brian Garrett second the motion for Cascade Fire Department to become a transporting agency.

No discussion.

Votes: All votes were yes. No opposed. Motion carried with 6-month probation per Dr. Boro.

**B. Cool Branch Fire.**

A letter was sent to Franklin County in regards to Cool Branch requesting more funding. Mr. Slemp read the letter to the commission. This letter was written by Bob Warren, Chairman

of Board of Supervisors. This will be the third letter send for additional funding. Pittsylvania County has gotten mostly negative responses to letter previously sent to Franklin County.

Scottie Adams, President of the Fire Department, requested the CIP funding of \$140,000 from FY 2019-2020 be released to help with the purchase of a fire apparatus. They have advertised and done fundraising to help with the purchase of this Fire truck. He is requesting to be on the May board of supervisor's agency to discuss tax exempt bond funding as well.

Tim Duffer asked if the commission needed to make a recommendation to go to the board.

Mr. Fowler suggested using the municipal bond funding saves roughly \$25,000 for that agency.

**Motion:** Tim Duffer: made motion to recommend to board of supervisors to give the Cool Branch fire department tax exempt endorsement. Ben Meeks second the motion of Cool Branch Fire Department to recommend to the board of supervisors for tax exempt endorsement.

Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Smitherman advised that volunteer agencies expecting to get CIP should not order it as the COVID-19 crisis has the county in financial despair. It is unknown what will be funded in FY21.

**C. Cool Branch Rescue:** Scottie Adams, Captain, stated it was his understanding in FY20 they were awarded ambulance CIP from the county for a new ambulance. He believes the board of supervisors approved for them to have the ambulance funding. He has not received the money and the ambulance was ordered and will be delivered next month at a cost of approximately \$250,000. He requested the county release the \$90,000 CIP funding. Pictures of the ambulance have been sent to PS Director Chris Slemph. Without that funds they can not take delivery of that truck to replace a 2006 ambulance. They have spent over \$10,000 on that ambulance and it is steadily costing the agency in repairs. Mr. Adams advised without this ambulance the community will suffer.

Mr. Smitherman advised the commission and also Mr. Adams that Mr. Vaden could look at the contract and see about terminating the contract.

Ron Scarce asked that a formal request be sent to Franklin County with assisting with more funds for Cool Branch Rescue.

Dean Fowler stated the process has been for years that if the money was available in July and had not been used by the end of the year, it could be carried over to the following year to use it. fire truck takes a year to build from time of contract to time of delivery a year. Ambulance is about 9 months. Now they have to come to the commission and the commission will then recommend that agency for vehicle funding. At what point would that money become available?

Mr. Smitherman asked if Cool Branch has gone to the board of supervisors in Franklin County. requesting funds? Mr. Adams advised Board members from Franklin County. will not meet with them.

EMS Calls in Franklin Co: EMS 193, Fire total 62

Ron Scarce supports the release of the 490,000 for the ambulance. Recommendation to the board wouldn't be a problem as long as we have reached out to Franklin County

Scottie Adams asked that the BOS and Public safety directors and himself request a meeting with Franklin County board of supervisors to discuss.

Dean Fowler requested that if this letter Mr. Warren sends is unsuccessful; can we send a letter of termination of answering calls in Franklin County that this commission support that?

Chuck Angier asked if we support any of the agency's in Bedford or Franklin County? Mr. Slemp advised we do support the SML Fire Department but no other agencies.

Keith Scruggs asked if they thought about borrowing a backup ambulance if this county money does not go through? Scottie Adams stated they tried to borrow ambulance when we did back up. Calland's allowed them to use one of theirs but it's hard to find spare ambulances.

Scottie Adams stated their call volume is down due to this pandemic. It's down everywhere.

Tim Duffer stated we need a response from Franklin County.

Keith Scruggs made a motion to send Franklin County a certified letter based on OEMS rules and regulations on terminating answering calls in Franklin County until funding has improved from Franklin County. Ron Scarce seconded motion on sending certified letter based on OEMS rules and regulations on terminating answering calls in Franklin Co. until funding has improved.

Discussion: No

Motion passed unanimously.

Scottie Adams asked if Pittsylvania County supplied north Halifax with funding for ambulances. Mr. Slemp advised no but the county does give North Halifax "per call" money of \$250 each call.

Brain Garrett made a motion that Fire and Rescue vehicles that are contracted should be a high priority in the future. Ron Scarce seconded that motion.

No discussion

Motion passed unanimously.

## **9. County Staff Report**

Mr. Slemp spoke on not having a County wide SOG for vehicle operations. We insure all the vehicles and need to adopt a SOG, a personal vehicle SOG, and personal driving records.

Bryan Fox Office of EMS required that providers have 10 days to report to an agency of a driving infraction.

Bryan Fox recommended Mr. Slemph add reference to proper EVOC by rules and regulations.

Reporting if you are convicted of reckless driving is a must. Also dealing with safety issues and appropriate warning devices. Response speeds, slowing down for inclement weather, Due regard.

Ben Meeks asked if there was a request of age limit. Mr. Slemph advised no

Tim Duffer asked response speed and suggested we discuss with the insurance carrier for assistance in writing SOP.

Bryan Fox recommended a dash camera for vehicles.

Ben Meeks asked if a copy of this could be made to the fire and rescue association for comments as well.

Personal vehicle coverage when responding to a call. Insurance will pay deductible. Slemph is changing the wording to due regard. State code on emergency lights in personal vehicle.

Slemph will bring this back after he gets the final draft from tonight's recommendations.

#### **10.) Unfinished Business:**

A. Mr. Slemph: Non performing agencies.

Bryan Fox stated per Dr. Boro OMD is requesting to address the non performing agencies. In regards Boro and Slemph have written a letter to agencies who are under performing. Agencies 30 percent or lower. Letter would come from commission signed by Mr. Slemph and Dr. Boro. 3 or 4 agencies are on the list. Some agencies are being proactive. The agencies that are not being proactive need to be addressed. High level concern in reference to non performing agencies.

Keith Scruggs recommended the wording be changed from may suspend to will suspend. Mr. Slemph below 70 percent need a plan of action, below 30 percent plan and improvement within 30 days.

Bryan Fox agency's getting 85 percent of funding and not answering 30 percent of calls. How is that appropriate with tax payers money? We need to be aware of the citizens that are entitled to these agencies. We have to make recommendations to make that better.

Dean Fowler request that it goes to the chief and or captain that it also be given to the president of the board of that agency. If some of the agencies are closed, then some of the other agencies will have to expand and so will funding for that agency.

The commission and public safety can assist you further in the letter. Mr. Slemph will add this.

Bryan Fox stated it needs to be hand delivered. Have a sit-down face to face meeting with board of directors and or chiefs and captains with also maybe fire and rescue president or fire commission chairman.

Ben Meeks asked if we would change the OMD name if the OMD is different than Dr. Boro and Mr. Slemp said yes.

Bryan Garrett suggested asking for a schedule of plan of improvement. 3 months, 6 months, and so forth.

Bryan Fox request that we step in at 60 percent and come up with a plan of improvement.

Bryan Fox asked could there be a merge of smaller agencies together in the future? Yes per Mr. Slemp.

Ron Scarce stated we need to be getting in the high schools and middle schools and start recruitment.

Dean Fowler stated we have approached the BOS with this and still do not have incentives.

Tim Duffer suggested we got an overlapping problem with multiple agencies recruiting. But we need to fix these 2 agencies that have not run anything in the month of April.

Bryan Fox stated we need to address this now. Benchmark for immediate action.

Chatham rescue 2018 answered 45 percent 2019 22 percent and so far, for 2020 they are 26 percent.

Bryan Fox suggested the agencies to combine with another agency. At least this will give them more people.

Brian Garret stated that at certain percentage an agency should receive this letter

Mr. Slemp stated anyone in the 30-35 percent range should receive this letter.

Ron Scarce made a motion that any agency under 35 percent will be required immediate action. Second by Brian Garrett.

Discussion: Dean Fowler asked if this was in reference to fire department as well. Mr. Slemp will pull the numbers

Motion passed unanimously.

Recommended changes letter: from 30 days to 60 days. Meet with them on 60<sup>th</sup> day, 30 day, and last day. Commission and Public Safety will help them through this process. Motion from Brian Garrett with a second from Ron Scarce.

No discussion

Motion passed unanimously.

## **B. Insurance Bid review**

Mike Lee will represent Public Safety. Need 2 more. 1 Fire commission and 1 fire and rescue. Fire commission. Fire Commission Rep: Tim Duffer, Dean Fowler Rep from Fire and Rescue Association.

## **New Business:**

FY 21 service agreements.

Mr. Slemp advised we need to change a couple of things. The way we fund agency's is an average on what they received on 3 years prior. Put data together for commission. Ranked each department with call volume for ems and fire. Ranked each by population as well. Service agreement to be tied in with funding.

Ron Scarce asked if this was for this year. Slemp said for FY 20-21. Ron Scarce agreed that Gretna needed more funding due to their ranks.

Keith Scruggs asked what was the formula prior to this. Mr. Slemp states it was in the past on what expenses an agency had.

Reference formula Mr. Slemp handed out to commission.

Tim Duffer requested that we get a subcommittee to set up the formula. Ben Meeks, Brian Garrett, Mr. Slemp will be on the subcommittee for the formula.

Service agreement. Mr. Slemp needs some feedback on it.

Apparatus Inventory has been tabled until next meeting.

## **12. Other matters from the Commission members**

Ron Scarce thanked all fire and rescue for doing this job. The Board of Supervisors also appreciates you.

Brian Garrett put something out with attendance requirement for commission members.

Dean Fowler: Concerns a couple quadrants on represented attendance. Scarce advised we need to address the attendance policy. Slemp will get with Smitherman on this.

Tim Duffer thanked Eric and Matt for stepping up. He suggested Board of Supervisors strongly consider any money given to agency prior to this virus to please consider giving it to them.

Bryan Fox thanked everyone for coming. He stated we make motions, we make recommendations, we record all of these votes and we needed leave this room as one commission we cannot deny what we do as a group.

Bryan Fox made a motion to adjourn meeting. Brian Garrett seconded the motion.

**Meeting adjourned at 0930**

**Next Meeting May 26, 2020**