

Minutes for a Regular Meeting on Monday, March 1, 2021, at 12:00 pm at 8305 Augusta Road Pelzer, SC 29669.

Jim Darby opened the meeting with prayer. All were present.

Everyone reviewed the minutes from the February meeting. Donnie Freeman motioned to accept the minutes. Sabrina Bedingfield seconded it. All were in favor.

Jennifer Adams reviewed the financial reports for February. She reviewed the check report. She also pointed out that the new bank account had been opened. It is listed as Southern First Reserve Account. Sabrina Bedingfield motioned to accept the financial reports. John Jennings seconded it.

Chief Sutherland started the staff report with an update on COVID. The numbers are dropping in Greenville County. Our number has decreased as well with the number of employees with it. Sabrina Bedingfield asked if there were any new mandates for first responders to get the vaccine. Chief Sutherland said not at this time. Chief Sutherland said he was contacted by a resident that had their home owner's insurance cancelled because the Pelzer Fire Department had closed. He had to contact the insurance company about the fact that there hasn't been a Pelzer Fire Departments since the 1950's. The station that served the residents belonged to South Greenville Fire District and it had only been moved up the road. He also sent the information about the closest hydrant. After all the discussion, the policy was reinstated. Chief Sutherland said that he did not know what exactly was going on, but if anyone hears of this happening to others in our district please have them get in touch with Chief Sutherland or Assistant Chief Finley. When Upstate Service Solutions was installing the new duct work at Station 78, they found a leak in the bathroom from the shower. Chief Sutherland had their plumber go ahead and fix the leak. It was included in the invoice that has been paid to them. Chief Sutherland has ordered the new brush truck. Teresa Cawley had a conference call with us to update her on our current financial status and where we are in the CIP for the upcoming year. She said that we looked good and discussed some other items that are later on the agenda. There is a nozzle demo at Station 77 today due to the problems we are having with the nozzles on the new engines. There will be one last demo for the extrication tools. There will be two companies there at the same time to allow them to compare them together. Next month Chief Sutherland will be discussing the replacement of the Rescue truck and of the Platform. Right now, the platform is out of service due to a hydraulic leak. We cannot afford a brand new one at \$1.5 million or more, so we need to look at finding a good used truck to replace it with.

Assistant Chief Finley gave an update on our call volume for the year and a breakdown of the types of calls. We have begun the preventative maintenance on all of our vehicles. Spartan is taking our trucks one at a time to their shop to complete the work. They will be rotating through all of the trucks. The AFG grant for the Breathing Air Compressor has been submitted. The Kussmaul charger was installed on Battalion 80. Station 73, Station 74 and Station 75 had cord reels and/or new bay lights installed in them last week. Chief Sutherland thanked Mr. Darby for his help with the wiring on those projects. There were quotes in the packets for our annual SCBA flow testing and the hydro testing that has to be done every five years. These items were put in the budget as a line item. We have to use a MSA vendor in order to keep from voiding the warranty on them. Last year, we replaced two AED's due to the age and the fact they are coming to their end of life. We put in the medical line on the budget to replace two more. We will continue to do this to keep them on a replacement program. Donnie Freeman asked how much we actually use them. Chief Sutherland said that they are not used often, they are just becoming old and need to be replaced because we start having issues with the batteries. Assistant Chief Finley said we had new hire testing in February. We have two openings on A-Shift. Chief Sutherland said that in both cases, we have developed a standard for our employees at 3 months, 6 months and 1 year from date of hire and it became obvious that these employees were not going to meet the standard for the 1-year evaluation. Donnie Freeman said that he agreed that we need to make people meet our standard so they can work here. He said that he knows that this job is not for everyone. Donnie Freeman also asked about the actual hiring for the shifts. Assistant Chief Finley said that we have a testing procedure that qualifies everyone. It has a written test, an agility test and a Board interview. The scores are then averaged to qualify them for our standard. The shift officers can then pick the person that best fits their shift and the shifts needs.

Chief Sutherland said that we recently found bed bugs at Station 77 in one of the bedrooms. We ended up calling in an exterminator that specialized in bed bugs. They guarantee their work for a year. We think they came in from a call. He also said that the guys were training at Rocky Creek Baptist on Friday and the nozzle and dug a hole in the asphalt. It was an accident that we will be fixing. The officer in charge went to the church representatives to find a solution. We will repair the parking lot and fix the nozzle.

Chief Sutherland said Fire Marshal Horn has been doing plans at the County, but they are getting ready to start doing them online. We may have to get him a different screen or TV to review plans on. He has been having plans for subdivisions to include the hydrants and other things we want on there before we ever see them.

Chief Sutherland said that Jessica Phillips is still waiting on Greenville County GIS to finish putting layers on the maps so that she can finish updating our response plans.

Jennifer Adams reviewed the new Southern First Reserve bank account. There was letter enclosed from Greene and Finney that reviewed our agreement with them. It states the price will be \$10,250.00 for their services this year. The auditors have finished everything they needed to do on site. The hope to have a rough draft of the audit for Chief Sutherland and Jennifer to review within two weeks. They have also recommended that Lisa White review their work for us. This is a new mandate that we must follow starting this year. She will be charging \$500.00 or less for this. Mr. Darby said that he talked with them while they were here. Donnie Freeman asked if we were happy with them and they were doing what we need them to. Chief Sutherland and Jennifer both agreed they were happy with them.

#### Old Business

1. Chief Sutherland said that the Masonic Lodge next door contacted them and they are interested in selling the property behind their building to us. They asked to start forty feet off the building to make sure they have access to drive around the building and make sure that we are not on the septic tank and lines. They have gone out to the property and put stakes in the ground to mark it off. They are asking \$20,000.00 for the property. It is very close to an acre. Chief Sutherland recommends that we use T. Cox as our real estate agent to purchase the property from the Masonic Lodge. The Masonic Lodge will have to have three readings to get it approved, but the contact from the Masonic Lodge said there should be no issues. Chief Sutherland also recommends that we use the money in the Training Tower account to purchase the property. The cost will be \$20,000.00 plus the fees and closing cost, plus the cost of the real estate agent and surveying. Mr. Darby asked if we needed to get a real estate attorney to close the deal. Chief Sutherland said that he would rather go with the attorney that T. Cox recommends. John Jennings motioned to use T. Cox and purchase the property next door as Chief Sutherland suggested for a training tower. Jimmy Brashier seconded it. All were in favor. John Jennings asked if we knew the total cost of the actual tower part. Chief Sutherland said that Gantt had paid \$290,000.00. for a standard design. Newberry just installed one and had some upgrades and it added \$30,000.00 to \$40,000.00 to the price. He does recommend buying the Connex boxes because they are the best for the cost. Chief Sutherland thinks we will have to do this project in stages. We will get the land first, then order the actual tower, and lastly add in the driveway. John Jennings asked if we would allow others to use it for a fee. Chief Sutherland said that he would let our surrounding departments use it, but it is a liability to let everyone use it. They very easily get damaged and you have to have someone out there at all times to watch what is going on.

#### New Business

1. Assistant Chief Finley included three quotes for the Large Diameter Hose we need to purchase this year. The lowest bid is Anderson Fire and Safety at \$5,565.00. Jimmy

Brashier motioned to purchase the hose from Anderson Fire and Safety for \$5,565.00. John Jennings seconded it. All were in favor. Assistant Chief Finley will place the order soon.

- II. Chief Sutherland said that while we were working with Teresa Cawley, she mentioned about looking in to other options for investments since we have a substantial amount of money in the bank. She recommended us looking into the South Carolina Local Government Investment Pool, also known as LGIP. This will allow us to use our money to make money for us. The interest rate is higher in the pool because you can pool your money to get a larger investment. It is through the SC State Treasurers Office. The money is invested in secured investments that have a good rate and that can be easily accessed. They earn a daily yield that is credited once a month. Everything can be done online so there is a very easy way to get our money. The longest period of time to receive your money back is 4 days. As of December 2020, we only earned 0.1% with Greenville First Bank. The LGIP currently has a better rate than that. If we decide to purchase something large, we will have 30 days to pay the invoice. The money is not locked in and we can take it out at any time. Donnie Freeman asked if the money was secure and could we lose any of the initial investment. He also asked if Chief thought we should try to do this. Chief Sutherland recommended that we initially invest \$1.5 million or \$2 million to see how this works and if it is actually helping us. There are no penalties. There is supposed to be no risk and the funds are secured. John Jennings said that we could use the money from the interest to pay our bonuses each year. We will make more interest that we can use where we need it to be used. Chief Sutherland recommended that we put \$1.5 million dollars in the fund for three months to see how it does. Donnie Freeman asked if that money would include the Reserve Account. Chief Sutherland said that Teresa Cawley recommended LGIP, and because of that he felt comfortable in trying it to see what happens. Last year we only earned \$3,318.00 in interest. Jimmy Brashier motioned to accept Chief Sutherland's recommendation to put \$1.5 million in the LGIP program for three months to see how it does. John Jennings seconded. All were in favor. Donnie Freeman said to him it sounds to good to be true, but if everyone else wanted to try it then he was okay with it. Sabrina Bedingfield motioned to adjourn. Jimmy Brashier seconded it. All were in favor.

Minutes recorded by:  
Jennifer Adams, Administrative Specialist

