

Minutes for the Regular Meeting on Monday, May 9, 2022, at 12:00 pm at 8305 Augusta Road Pelzer, SC 29669.

Jim Darby called the meeting to order. Jim Darby asked Donnie Freeman to open with prayer. He welcomed the guests: Mike Stadler, Bubba Bagwell and others.

Everyone reviewed the minutes. John Jennings motioned to accept the minutes. Jimmy Brashier seconded it. All were in favor.

Jennifer Adams reviewed the Financial Statements. Jimmy Brashier motioned to approve the Financial Statement. John Jennings seconded it. All were in favor.

Chief Sutherland started the Staff Report (see attached) by reminding everyone of the upcoming events. SC SPD training in Columbia is on May 18th. We also have several employees that will be recognized at the Cardiac Arrest Survivor Ceremony on May 11th. Our spring 1% and Department Meetings are on May 12th, May 19th, and May 23rd. Department pictures are May 16th, May 17th, and May 18th. New hire testing is on May 21st at Headquarters. There will be a SCFA class at Headquarters on May 30th and May 31st. Chief Sutherland said that the fuel prices are still up and we are continuing to evaluate the situation to make sure that we are doing everything that we can to save on fuel. South Greenville Fire District won the bid on the truck from Johns Creek Fire Department. It's now here. We have to clean it, send it for service, add the lettering and striping, and train on it. We will take the equipment from Engine 80 and place it on this truck. The total cost of the truck was \$76,101.50. Chief Sutherland said that we got a great truck at a great price. The contract for the new Engine 80 has been signed. There was a statement from LGIP showing that they are getting great rates at this time. Greenville County has approved everything for us to start building the training tower. The contractor has ordered the rebar for the foundation. The old Platform 80 was placed on GovDeals.com. The high bid was \$8,100.00. The bidder could not get the money from the bank to pay for it. There were no other bidders. The truck was taken to the scrap yard on May 4th. The total amount received after we took the truck and the ladders separately was \$8,139.00. We took the hose off of this truck and placed it on the truck that was going to the Dominican Republic. That truck left on May 2nd to go be loaded for the trip. The HVAC work that was approved at Headquarters was completed on May 3rd. We are still accepting resumes for the new Deputy Fire Marshal position. There was a lot of interest. The interviews will be conducted soon. Jim Darby explained to our guests in attendance that we received a great deal on a used truck through a bidding process instead of using a broker. John Jennings asked Chief Sutherland to review the interest information on the LGIP account. He feels we may need to increase the balance in that account if it is getting a better interest rate. Donnie Freeman said that we have seen that the risk is low and he is not concerned that we will lose money in that account. Donnie Freeman asked how quickly could we get the money back if we needed it. Jennifer Adams said if the request is before 4pm the money will be in our account the next day. Donnie Freeman asked Chief Sutherland and Assistant Chief Finley their opinions. Assistant Chief Finley said that a lot of state governments have investments in it and he feels good about it. Chief Sutherland said that he has never heard anyone say they had lost money and it is earning a better interest rate right now. As of now we have not lost money and we have earned a good return on our balance. John Jennings motioned to move \$150,000.00 to the LGIP account from our Reserve Account. Donnie Freeman seconded it. All were in favor.

Assistant Chief Finley started his report with the April call volume. He said once again we had an increase. The total for the month was 333. There were septic tank issues at Station 75. Dirt was brought in and spread over the drain lines. As of now, that seems to have fixed the problem. The new equipment for Engine 77 has started coming in. We are placing it in service as it arrives. The new fire gear has begun coming in. The new vendor is working out well. All of our ladders passed ladder test this year, which means we do not have to do any repairs and have them revisit us. This is because we have been investing in quality products. Chief Sutherland thanked the Commissioners for allowing us to buy good quality products.

Jennifer Adams said that the 2021 Audit had been completed and submitted to all our requiring agencies.

New Business

- I. Chief Sutherland said that we have updated and reviewed our CIP and Financial Plan with Teresa Cawley, our Financial Advisor. If we continue as we currently are, we will have a deficit in FY2023. The reassessment caused us to lose millage. We had 42.6 mills before reassessment and 40.1 after reassessment. Inflation has hit us hard this year. There was a huge price increase on trucks, equipment and fuel. In 2020 there was a 1.4% inflation increase, in 2021 the inflation increase was 7%, and so far for 2022 the inflation rate is 8.5%. As you can see in your information packet, we want to ask for a 6% increase. The maximum to ask for this year is 8.4%. This is the most we have been able to ask for in one year in a long time. This is equal to 2.4 mills and will bring us back to 42.5 mills, which is very close to what we were before reassessment. (See attached) The tax increase on a \$200k home would be \$19.20 a year. As you can see on the spreadsheet without the increase, we will have a deficit in FY2023. The second spreadsheet shows a 6% millage increase and it makes our projections better. John Jennings asked for the total amount of the millage increase. Chief Sutherland said 2.4 mills. Our total millage now is 40.1 and it would be 42.5 after the increase if it is approved. Donnie Freeman asked how can we change the CIP to avoid asking for a millage increase. Chief Sutherland said that we would have to push Engine 75 out 2 years or more. That would cause us to have to push out everything else the same amount of years. This would cause us to have to completely redo the CIP. Jim Darby said that he knows it is a bad time to ask for an increase, but if we put it off then we will have to change the current CIP and there are no guarantees what the percentage for next year will be. There will also be another reassessment coming up in 2025. If we get behind, we may never catch up. He also reminded everyone that even if the Commission Board approves the increase, there is no guarantee that Greenville County Council will. Jim Darby agrees with Chief Sutherland, it is better to ask for a little right now than wait and have to ask for a lot to catch back up. Mike Stadler said the department will not see the increase for at least a year. He agrees that we should ask for a small increase now versus a larger one later. Jennifer Adams reminded everyone that we are limited by the State each year for the amount of millage increase we can ask for, and we may not get approved at Greenville County Council. John Jennings asked Chief Sutherland what he thought we should ask for. Chief Sutherland said he thought that 6% will keep us on track with our 15 Year Plan and CIP. John Jennings said that the 6% will still not get us all the way back to where we were before the reassessment. Mike Stadler said he thought you need to ask for something this year. Jim Darby asked the other citizens what they felt. The increase will affect them directly and it is needed to allow us to continue to provide the current level of services. All the citizens agreed that a small increase now was better than a larger increase later. John Jennings thinks we should ask for 6% increase, not the maximum amount of 8.4%. He agrees that if we wait it will cause us to get behind and we do not want that to happen. Donnie Freeman said that our citizens expect high quality service from us and that is what we need to provide to them. John Jennings motioned to proceed with asking for a 6% millage increase. Donnie Freeman seconded it. All were in favor. Donnie Freeman said it was needed to keep us from getting behind. John Jennings said it will help us provide more for our citizens. Donnie Freeman also agreed that it was better to ask for a little increase instead of waiting to ask for a big one later.

- II. John Jennings asked Jennifer Adams to review the current benefits that are offered to our employees. (See attached booklet) She reviewed all the benefits as if she were explaining them to a new hire, which is the purpose of the book. John Jennings asked if Commissioners could get these benefits. Jennifer Adams told him that most of the benefits can only be offered to an employee that works 30 or more hours a week, which is considered full time. John Jennings asked about getting the Commissioners some kind of incentive or benefit. Jim Darby said that the State Statute that created us in 1965 says the Commissioners shall serve without pay. He asked if there was a way to get that changed. Jennifer Adams said the only way that she knew to get the State Statutes changed was to

have them sent through the State Legislature and they must approve it. John Jennings said that he feels that we should at least look at the current State Statute and discussed making changes. Donnie Freeman said we also need to review our By-Laws to make sure they are not outdated. Jimmy Brashier motioned to adjourn. Sabrina Bedingfield seconded it. All were in favor.

Minutes recorded by:
Jennifer Adams, Administrative Specialist

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer Adams". The signature is written over a horizontal line that is part of the printed text "Minutes recorded by: Jennifer Adams, Administrative Specialist".