

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act. Notice of this meeting date, time, place and agenda was posted online, at 8305 Augusta Road, Pelzer, and made available to the newspapers, radio stations, television stations and concerned citizens.

Minutes for a Regular Meeting on Monday, November 10, 2025, at 12:00 pm at 8305 Augusta Road, Pelzer, SC 29669.

Jim Darby called the meeting to order and asked Bubba Bagwell to open with prayer. He reminded everyone of the Jay Darby Coat Drive.

Lynn Ballard was in attendance to talk about the current situation of FILOT and how it will affect our community. He sent a letter to try to get clarification on how this change will affect current FILOT agreements in effect if they are renegotiated. There is no clear response right now. The percentages have not been decided yet and it could change depending on the percentage the county takes. The ordinance reads the County could take up to eighty percent. The County will not give a response in writing. FILOT is defined in the SC State Statutes and it says if you invest two and one half million dollars in brick, mortar and equipment the business can be taxed at six percent instead of the standard ten and one half percent. The State can also give a State Tax incentive for job creation. Lynn Ballard said that he wanted to give this information to our Commissioners due to the fact that South Greenville has a lot of FILOT that we get income from. Jim Darby thanked Lynn for the information.

Jim Darby asked if everyone had time to review the minutes from the October meeting. Jimmy Brashier motioned to accept the minutes with the grammatical error fixed. John Jennings seconded it. All were in favor.

The Financial Reports were presented and reviewed. Jennifer Adams said that LGIP closed out the month of October earning \$23,957.49 in interest at an Average Interest Rate (365) of 4.3188%. Bubba Bagwell motioned to accept the Financial Reports as presented. Terry Creamer seconded it. All were in favor. She also reminded everyone of the Christmas Dinner on December 4 at 6 pm at Washington Baptist Church and the Kids Christmas on December 6 at Headquarters from 9-11 am.

Deputy Chief Finley started the Chief's report with the call volume for October. We had 276 calls in October and the total year to date is 3,037. Engine 75 had to have the rear tires replaced. Quint 78 has had electrical issues and the PTO was not working. It is working now, but may need a programming update. New Engine 75 is here and we are working on getting it ready to place in service. Jim Darby mentioned that he asked Mike Stadler, whom was a part of the original Possum Kingdom Fire Department, to speak at the dedication of that truck.

Chief Harbert started his report reminding everyone of the Christmas Dinner. He said that the Fire Marshal's office will start giving quarterly updates to the Board and for this month they are currently working on completing our annual inspections. Chief Harbert said that Jordan Little had been chosen as the new Human Resource Coordinator. He is currently still on the truck and working part time with Jennifer. He will become fulltime on day shift in May after he finishes his degree. The clean up at the new property has been completed and it looks good. Our first EMT class will begin in December and will have thirteen people from B-shift in it. We are hoping to boost our current EMT numbers dramatically next year with this program. We ordered the bunker gear that was approved last meeting, but it has not come in yet.

Old Business

- I. Chief Harbert said that he had included in the packets an updated version of the 2026 Budget. He reviewed the 2026 Budget. He pointed out that there is Allocated Monies that include the cost of Quint 76 coming out of the New Apparatus Account, money to remodel Station 76 from the CIP Account and the remaining \$299,775.13 will come from the Reserve account if we need it due to the conservative number we are using for the income for our Tax Levy. This allowed us to have a balanced budget. This will only happen if we have no growth or extra money coming from the Tax Levy. With this being a reassessment year, we went with a very conservative number for our Tax Levy. We increased our Dispatch Income due to an increase in the fee we are charging Gantt. They have a new Chief and we have negotiated the new contract with Gantt for \$125,000.00. The Tax Levy amount is based on our new millage rate of 36.2 mills at \$220,011.00 plus an estimated amount of \$750,000.00 for our FILOT portion. He reviewed the Expenses on the Budget. We put advertising back in to cover the cost of Public Hearings. We put \$100,000.00 for Building and Grounds based on our current spending. We do not have a confirmed number in Business Insurance. They are projecting a ten percent increase along with our increases from purchases. We added more money in SPD Conference for employees due to the fact that we want to send more people to that conference. The same thing applies to Fire Chief Conference. We want to send more people to this conference next year. Fire Investigation Conference was increased from last year. This is due to the required training that is needed to keep up the training requirements for the certifications needed for our investigators. We increased New Firefighter Equipment due to the fact that we will have some items we need to purchase once Quint 76 arrives, as well as our normal annual purchases of equipment. Hydro Testing has been added for \$8,250.00. This will be the last year that we can do this test on these air packs. They will have to be replaced by 2031. Ladder Testing increased due to a price increase and adding ladders with our new trucks. Under Personnel, Health and Wellness decreased due to the fact we now have all of the equipment and we now just have to maintain our current standard. Hospitalization Insurance was increased based on our current price for the first seven months of the year and then adding the twenty percent limit increase for the remaining months of the year. The total estimate is \$770,000.00. The payroll number includes several different changes. They are listed as follows: a five percent increase for all employees, the EMT incentive will increase from \$1,500.00 to \$2,000.00, a non-competitive promotion program for the ranks Master Firefighter and Firefighter/Engineer that is being used to retain people in the one-to-five-year range. It also adds two nighttime dispatchers for the second half of the year as long as Gantt continues to use us as their dispatch center. There is overtime built in for both the firefighters and dispatch, and a bonus next year. There was a cost increase in the price of physicals. Workers Comp had an overall increase of eight percent. Uniform Expense has a large increase because we are going to try to unify the uniforms and have everyone look the same. The Annual Recorder Service is higher due to the fact that we are upgrading to a new system and there is a start-up fee. Station Discretionary Fund has been split out and includes a set portion for furniture. This will allow us to start replacing recliners, beds and other large furniture items. The increase in Software was due to the cost increase of ESO. We left the USDA loan payment in there because we are still waiting to

hear back about that loan. The increases in Utilities are due to general cost increases. In Capital Outlay, we have \$130,000 in bunker gear that is for twenty-three sets of pants, coats, boots and gloves. There are no helmets, because we have plenty of those right now. The remodel for Station 76 of \$50,000.00 from the CIP Account is included and the cost of Quint 76 of \$1,600,000.00 from the New Apparatus Account. Chief Harbert asked if anyone had any questions. John Jennings asked if the changes in the non-competitive promotions would cause us to bottle neck at the top if we do this. Chief Harbert explained it is only with the lower ranks. The rank of Engineer and up will continue to test like we currently do. We will still continue to test for all the positions and will include a written test, a practical test and time requirements on them it will just be set up so that the employee will be allowed to test when they have achieved all the requirements for the next rank. John Jennings also asked about the remodel of Station 76. Chief Harbert explained that by adding the Quint and the Battalion to that station we now have more people in that station than what was original planned on. There has been no major upgrades or additions to that station since it was built. We now have twelve people stationed there regularly and need to add lockers, replace sheetrock on the walls and general upgrades to the station. John Jennings motioned to approve the 2026 Budget as presented and have the Public Hearing on December 10, 2025, at 5pm at Headquarters after it has been advertised the weeks of November 26, 2025, and December 3, 2025, in The Journal. Bubba Bagwell seconded it. All were in favor. John Jennings also recommended keeping our 2026 Meeting Schedule as the second Monday each month at 12 pm at Headquarters. That will also be advertised in the Public Hearing.

New Business

- I. Jimmy Brashier said that we were advised that we need to have a reimbursement resolution approved by Brad Love, our Financial Attorney. There was a copy of it included in your packet. Jennifer Adams said Brad Love recommended due to the fact we have paid for Engine 75 and are still waiting to hear about the USDA loan, this resolution his office prepared will allow us to reimburse ourselves no matter the timeline on the loan. Jimmy Brashier motioned to approve the resolution as presented. Terry Creamer seconded it. All were in favor.
- II. Chief Harbert gave an update on the FILOT. He said that County Council has currently had two meetings and the ordinance has passed in both of those meetings. The third reading is tomorrow night and it will most likely pass. This will affect us due to the amount of industry we have coming to our area. We have talked to the multiple people at the County and no one can tell us how it will affect future FILOT, but Chief Harbert gave an example of a current FILOT where we get \$35,679.00 and that amount would be approximately \$9,700.00 if the County were to take the full eighty percent under the new ordinance. County Council has also decided to do a study for consolidation of the fire departments, EMS and Communications. This study has been sent out to RFP and there is a committee that has been selected to pick the company doing the study. The results of the study are due back in 180 days in the ordinance, so we are calculating that to be in April of 2026. We do know that the sewer consolidation

that took place several years ago took place over three meetings and happened fast. It could not be stopped.

- III. Jimmy Brashier motioned to go into Executive Session for Personnel-Employment, Compensation, Promoting, Demoting, or Discipline. Bubba Bagwell seconded it. All were in favor. John Jennings motioned to come out of Executive Session. Jimmy Brashier seconded it. All were in favor. No actions were taken after the Executive Session. John Jennings motioned to adjourn. Jimmy Brashier seconded it. All were in favor.

Minutes recorded by _____
Jennifer L. Adams, Administrative Specialist