



**Clarke County Fire & EMS Commission**  
101 Chalmers Court, Suite B  
Berryville, Virginia 22611  
(540) 955-5132

MINUTES

January 3<sup>rd</sup> 2018

6:30pm

Clarke County Government Center – Meeting Room AB

Attendees: Van Armacost, Chairman  
Tony Roper  
Andrew Nicholson  
Diane Harrison  
Matt Hoff  
Jacob White  
Bryan Conrad

Absent: David Weiss

Staff: Brian Lichty  
Chief Jason Burns-Blue Ridge  
Chief JC Blaylock-Enders

Chairman Armacost called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm

1. Mr. Conrad made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was passed with all in favor.
2. Mr. Lichty made a correction to the minutes under the Committee Reports for Technology-“the moving of the transmitters will occur in Fiscal Year 2019” should be Year 2020. Mr. Hoff made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 14<sup>th</sup> 2017 meeting as presented with the correction. The motion was passed with all in favor.
3. Committee Reports –
  - Standards – Nothing to report at this time.
  - Technology – Nothing to report at this time.
  - Budget – Ms. Harrison stated the committee met again and read a typed written statement that was prepared from their discussion along with charting data (copy of statement was part of Commission packet for the



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1/3/17 meeting) Ms. Harrison and Mr. White allowed the individual departments to present the letters they had drafted and sent to the sub-committee. Chief Jason Burns of Blue Ridge stated that he feared that information that was presented at the last meeting may not have been understood correctly or raised questions and Mr. Roper confirmed that he did not understand the requests that were being made. Chief Burns went on to explain the burdens that Blue Ridge is currently facing with building deficiencies that will need repairs very soon. He stated that this is the fifth year in a row that he has requested a financial increase with supporting justification for Blue Ridge. He reiterated that this is not just about apparatus replacement; this is about the County stations being able to survive in the future and move forward. Stipends have been stagnant since 2009. Chief Burns presented the number of new members annually that Blue Ridge has brought on since 2012 to include new EMT's or classification upgrades to Paramedics to address the recruitment/retention comments from the last meeting that were negative in nature. Mailers are sent out monthly for recruitment and retention is addressed by supplying further education, providing uniforms, along with additional station benefits for their members. He is asking this Commission to please support the Stipend increase request to allow keeping the doors open and continue the volunteer system running. Mr. Roper had a few questions/comments to better understand why he should/shouldn't support this request for Chief Burns; which he respectfully answered. Ms. Harrison commented this is part of the reason why it is so difficult to put together a budget when there isn't a real plan in place and the recommendation shows a broader approach. If the sub-committee was changed to budget and planning this could help to resolve some of these issues to include quarterly reporting sent in by each stations to keep momentum as a county wide system and what needs there are to include funding/purchasing. Mr. White did comment that the stations do have a plan as to what they need to do; the funding increase would help to give them the ability to do it. Chief JC Blaylock of Enders commented that the funding of the stations are just putting band aids on to continue operations; many things need to be improved but are unable to be met due to funding. Enders is barely staying above water. The volunteers help to



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benefit the company by saving on expenditures that can be done in house versus sending out. Chief Blaylock then read the letter that President Chris Shipe had prepared on retention and recruitment information as well as addressing the heavy EMS call volume that Enders sustains due to the Senior Citizens Facilities located in town and will continue to increase with another facility being opened in 2018. Enders strongly endorses Director Lichty's budget request to turn some part time staff into full time which would greatly reduce overtime and scheduling issues. Having the career staff EMS unit has helped with Enders retention as the volunteers are not being burned out trying to run all the calls as well as helping Boyce and Blue Ridge to assist on their calls. With the counties financial support this will help to keep the volunteer system viable. Chief Blaylock did state that Enders fail rate has come down and they are making improvements within the system to include providing volunteer drivers breaking up the career crew allowing a Medic to stay at the station to respond to another call if dispatched.

- i. Sub-committee budget recommendation-Mr. White clarified that their recommendation from December's meeting may have been misinterpreted based on previous discussions and directions they thought they were being pointed in. Due to this he presented a new report showing the appropriate overall budget and reflects where the increase to Stipends would help. They are requesting that the apparatus assistance fund be changed to a capital fund to utilize where/when needed countywide, upon approval, instead of just apparatus. On behalf of the budget sub-committee, Mr. White made a motion for the Commission to support an increase in stipends of \$175,000.00 with some oversight and accountability with the use of funds to make sure they are achieving the goal set forth in the Strategic Plan and making sure they have the proper stuff for operations and are responding appropriately. The motion was failed with a vote of 4-2 (Against-Mr. Roper, Mr. Nicholson, Mr. Hoff, Mr. Conrad, For-Ms. Harrison, Mr. White) Mr. Hoff asked/commented that if the Supervisors were to offer less than the requested amount would the stations accept? Mr. White said that any increase will help.



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Mr. Lichty stated that if there would be a compromise he needs to know how to enter the budget request. Mr. White made a second motion for the Commission to support the stipend increase of \$125,000.00 and to let the Finance Committee or Board of Supervisors determine if an amount smaller than that could/would be approved. The motion was failed 4-2 (Against-Mr. Roper, Mr. Nicholson, Mr. Hoff, Mr. Conrad, For -Mr. White, Ms. Harrison). Mr. Roper made a motion to increase each stations individual stipend by an additional \$15,000.00 on top of last year's budgeted amount. This would be: \$65, 0000.00 total to Boyce and Blue Ridge and \$90,000.00 total to Enders for FY 18/19. The motion was passed with all in favor. Ms. Harrison made a motion to change the name of the Budget Committee to the Budget/Planning Committee meeting monthly consisting of the same members. The motion was passed with all in favor. Mr. White made a recommendation to change the name of the apparatus replacement fund to capital improvement fund. The recommendation was passed with all in favor.

4. Unfinished Business-None at this time
5. Report from the Fire and Rescue Association-Nothing to report at this time
6. Report from the Director of Fire and EMS-Nothing to report at this time
7. Public Comment-Chief Jason Burns commented that Fire & Rescue has an increase in costs that far surpasses health care and costs. They have tried to follow the path they were guided on, jumped through all the hoops they have been asked to and feels it atrocious that the Commission only voted to approve an additional \$15,000.00 increase per station and slighted them a potential \$160,000.00 opportunity.
8. New Business
  - a. Meeting Schedule for 2018-continues the same as the second Tuesday of each month. Tonight's meeting was labeled as a special meeting to address



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budget recommendations for timely submission. The normal monthly meeting will still be next week.

- b. Election of Chair and Co-Chair-will be addressed during the next meeting scheduled.
9. Adjourn – Mr. White made a motion to adjourn. The motion was passed all in favor at 7:59 pm.

Next meeting is on January 11<sup>th</sup> 2018 at 6:30 pm in the Clarke County Government Center – Meeting Room AB

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