



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

MINUTES

December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018 6:30pm

Clarke County Government Center - Meeting Room AB

Attendees: Matt Hoff, Chairman  
David Weiss  
Tony Roper  
Jacob White  
Diane Harrison  
Bryan Conrad  
Doug Lawrence  
Andrew Nicholson

Absent: None

Staff: Brian Lichty  
David Ash  
Melanie Radford

Chairman Hoff called the meeting to order at 6:28pm.

1. Mr. Conrad made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was passed with all in favor.
2. Public Comment - None
3. Mr. Roper made a motion to approve the October 11<sup>th</sup> 2018 minutes. The motion passed with all in favor.  
Mr. Nicholson made a motion to approve the November 8<sup>th</sup> 2018 minutes. The motion passed with all in favor.  
Mr. White made a motion to approve the December 4<sup>th</sup> 2018 minutes. The motion passed with all in favor.
4. Committee Reports -
  - Standards - (see attached) No comments.
  - Technology – Mr. Roper stated there was nothing to report at this time.
  - Budget/Preparation – Mr. Lichty reminded everyone that any discussion and a final vote is needed no later than the January 10<sup>th</sup> 2019 meeting. Mr. White asked if the Treated Not Transported numbers are represented in the figures on the budget breakdown on page 37 under the revenue section for Ambulance and Rescue services and Mr. Lichty confirmed they are.
    - i. Additional requested information – (see attached) Mr. Lichty reviewed with the group. No questions or comments. Ms. Harrison presented Green County’s comparisons to the group, shows similarities to Clarke County. (See Commissioner Harrison for Document)
5. Unfinished Business -
  - Blue Ridge Staffing Request- Update – Mr. Lichty reviewed the last month’s data from November 2018. Mr. Roper made a motion to continue funding Blue Ridge’s temporary staffing for another month.  
Discussion-Mr. Roper wanted to verify that this specific funding is being added into next fiscal year’s

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budget recommendation. Mr. Lichty verified that this would be one of the items the Commission will need to vote on and recommend to the BOS as part of the new fiscal budget. Mr. White asked if this could be evaluated on a quarterly basis instead of monthly but Mr. Weiss explained that the Board of Supervisors (BOS) had agreed to review this on a monthly basis for the remainder of this fiscal year. The motion passed with all in favor.

- Association (role in fire-rescue) - Guest Mr. Jay Arnold spoke on behalf of the Association and reviewed with the group the attached information. Discussion/Questions-Mr. Weiss asked if Boyce is a part of the Association or not? Mr. Arnold confirmed, not since they withdrew but would hope that they would come back. Mr. Weiss commented from the BOS perspective, to codify 2 out of the 3 companies into an Association, he's not sure that the BOS is comfortable with that. The BOS appreciates everything the Association has done and can do but the companies need to come to an understanding as to whether they will be in the Association or not, otherwise there could be the possibility of one company trying to talk to them in a different vain than the other companies. If the Association is going to be put into the hierarchy of what is going on then that requires more thought and conversation with the BOS. Mr. Arnold stated that if the Association is done away and dealt strictly only through the Commission that it would go downhill. Mr. White commented that the Commission should not be at the level of involvement for operational, that's what the Association is for and does not believe that is what the Commission believed either. Mr. Arnold voiced his opinion that he thinks the Association has made some missteps on communication issues, it's not hard to do, but would like to have all communication comes to one location and one place that everyone can get all the same information, that it would deter from the rumor mill, but one person may not remember everything from a meeting, you may not get the whole picture if you aren't at the meeting, and sometimes the minutes may not reflect what actual went on. Mr. Weiss commented that the Commission minutes are kept in accordance with code and pretty close to word for word. Mr. Arnold stated that operating without some kind of "vehicle" not involving the volunteers, they need to have some kind of voice. Ms. Harrison wanted to confirm what she is reading, that any members from any of the companies can be present, meaning any members including Boyce without being a part of the Association are able to attend the meetings. Mr. Arnold confirmed and if they are going to participate then they should want to help be decision makers as well. Having the delegates from each station also helps when voting occurs so that each company is represented appropriately. Mr. Conrad asked what happened to the by-laws that the Association previously had since what he brought this evening is clearly not them. Mr. Arnold stated that they have them, but tonight's mirror a lot of what is already in place but some would not be pertinent under this new scenario. Mr. Hoff wanted to confirm that under the new draft presented tonight, that the Association would not receive or disperse any money at all, and Mr. Arnold verified yes that was correct. Mr. White asked if Mr. Arnold knows of any other jurisdiction that do not have an Association. Mr. Arnold stated that he was unsure. Ms. Harrison asked if the Association could continue to provide minutes to the Commission and vice versa to help with some of the communication issues. Mr. Arnold stated that they came to the conclusion a few months ago that they would start sending the minutes and would continue to do so. Mr. Hoff thanked Mr. Arnold and stated that the Commission has to review and discuss this further.
- BOS (Association - role in fire-rescue) – Mr. White asked if there was a message from the BOS. Mr. Weiss stated the message was delivered from the BOS 60 days ago and hasn't changed. The BOS feels the Association has played a vital role and can continue to do so, but the "who" that is in it and how it works is really up to the three companies. The premise of this Commission and the representatives on this

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Commission was to provide the volunteers the voice that Mr. Arnold was speaking of. As an observation, he's not sure why they are not using the voice that they already have. Mr. Weiss will have to discuss further with the BOS but he is uncomfortable with codifying an organization that doesn't represent all the entities if it calls itself an Association of the volunteer fire companies. That seems odd to him and not sure how that works, but perhaps there is a way to make it work. Ms. Harrison verified with Mr. Weiss the breakdown of the representatives on the Commission and he explained that this was the consensus of what the companies wanted. The ordinance or makeup can be changed and put back in a different way. Mr. Conrad commented that the Association has never been a governmental entity and if the three fire companies want to join an Association or not, that's great but doesn't really have anything to do with the government entities that have been put together to do what this Commission is doing and not up to the government to decide whether the Association exists or not, they can do whatever they want. Mr. Conrad doesn't think it makes sense to somehow turn it into a government agency without having everyone represented and that would just create another layer that seems unnecessary. Mr. Conrad asked if this is what this Commission is being asked to do, to have the government somehow recognize the Association as a government entity. Mr. Weiss stated that is what it sounds like. Mr. Conrad stated that the government was asked to take this over and they did and this is what has happened. Mr. Nicholson asked what was the relationship between the Association and the BOS prior to the commission, did it work, did something need to be changed. Mr. Weiss stated that prior to the Commission the BOS was not involved in the day to day decisions or policies that they are now, it was strictly fire funds and then a voice/communication to the BOS from the Association about issues. Mr. Arnold confirmed that prior to the Commission the Association managed all fire and rescue even prior to the position of the Director, and he feels the Association still plays an important role and wants to continue working with Director Lichty to better the system, but everyone needs to work together regardless of change in personnel. The Association was always recognized, maybe not formally, but has always been a part of the system. Mr. Arnold commented that the Commission has had the Association listed as a topic on the agenda for the meetings each month but they didn't realize they needed to submit information. They want to make the system work. Mr. Weiss commented that this is his thoughts only not of the BOS, he is not in opposition, just voicing his concerns that setting up a structure that is missing a part, if it's an Association, than it should be an Association of all. Mr. Arnold stated that they are hoping Boyce will come back, that the Association makes the appropriate changes needed and that they are officially recognized. Mr. White stated that the Association has also completed a lot of County fire and rescue projects as well as training and has played a vital role up to this point. Mr. Nicholson asked what was the reason why Boyce decided to leave the Association, is it public. Mr. Conrad stated that there was a presentation made to the Association as well as to the Commission in September 2018. Mr. Lawrence asked if Boyce was given the opportunity to voice what their issues were. Mr. Weiss stated that the BOS perspective is that it is an internal issue that the Association should work out and they encourage them to do so. Mr. Conrad stated that it really isn't up to this Commission to tell anyone what they need to do about the Association, they need to do that. Mr. Lichty recalled that this whole topic got brought up when Boyce decided to leave the Association therefore some questions arose on how some things would continue to flow, such as financial items, and were asked to the Commission because of items not being in writing. In the strategic plan, the Association is in there but there is no direct relation to the BOS. Mr. Hoff stated that obviously Mr. Weiss needs to go back to the BOS to discuss the latest developments and document that were presented tonight, so in all fairness so does the Commission, so in interest in time tonight, this needs to be slated to unfinished business for the next

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meeting, along with the additional questions that still need answers. He doesn't think this will be solved here tonight without everyone having the time to read through this and having a thorough understanding of what is going on. Mr. Weiss commented from the BOS that the perception that the Commission should be at higher level, that is true, but results have not come through and the system has not progress or changed enough for that to happen yet. If the Association, the Commission, the Director and everyone can make the significant changes even more than we've made to significantly drop our response times, progress at a level that the system is doing better than it is now. The BOS was invited in to help fix a problem that folks said they couldn't handle without the BOS, so until they see that the problem is fixed, however it is fixed, then they don't feel they can turn it over to that level. Mr. Conrad stated that the BOS was invited in by JH Enders Fire Company not by the Association. This is just one example of many where the Association was circumvented and the letter came from Enders saying they needed career staff. This is what started this whole process. To suggest that the Association in the recent past has been useful is a little bit ridiculous. The Association hasn't even been able to elect a president the last couple of years, no one wanted the job, no one was taking it seriously. But suddenly when Boyce drops out all of sudden, now it will be taken seriously. Mr. Hoff stated again that this item needs to be carried over to the next meeting and asked for it added to the agenda under Unfinished Business.

- Dispatch changes - (see attached) Mr. Lichty reviewed with the group. Ms. Harrison questioned a concern with the mutual aid companies, is that a radio issue. Mr. Lichty stated that they are no longer using the radios but making an actual phone call. Mr. Lawrence asked if dispatched to in route, not from the time the phone is picked up. Mr. Lichty confirmed no from the time tones go out. Mr. Weiss asked if there are any financial differences in our billing changing the mutual aid companies. Mr. Lichty stated that with compared data reviewed from last year's calls, there is little to no change from using Mt. Weather versus now with other agencies. Mr. Lawrence asked where the 3 minute difference comes from. Mr. Lichty explained some of it comes from dispatch changes going from 8 minutes down to 5 minutes.

6. Report from the Fire and Rescue Association -

- Meeting Minutes (see attached) – Mr. Hoff mentioned that in these minutes there is a comment under old business regarding the citizen's appointee to the Commission and the need to be a citizen of Clarke County. Mr. Weiss stated that there are thirty plus boards, commissions, that the BOS appoint and very few of them have a residency requirement. This Commission does not have that requirement. They try to look for good people who have good interest and background in whatever committee they are put on and committees are hard to fill so that is why they don't require it along with it has been this way for as long as he can remember and prior. Mr. Nicholson looking at the dispatch response report asked to clarify some of the times. Mr. Lichty went over them and clarified they do not include delays at dispatch. Mr. Nicholson wanted to try to understand how Clarke may compare to other fire companies and handed out a report he found online from February 2018 for Frederick County, Va. (see attached) He stated that it appears to be close to the same average times as Clarke has, granted Frederick County has approximately 111 full time employees and 8 support staff, but he believes to give credit due with our volunteer force who help with Clarke's numbers. Mr. Weiss and Mr. Roper both explained that what is not included in this report are the failed calls so the reported numbers are not calculated the way our report is. The consensus agreed that this specific report is not a comparison such as apples to apples, more like apples to oranges. Mr. Nicholson asked if the back page of Frederick report, liability factors, is that the same kind of information. Mr. Lichty thinks that this information is like what Clarke defines as an overburden, usually the first call for Clarke is

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handled okay, it's when a second or third call comes in that hurts. Mr. Conrad also stated that he believes that Frederick County has two people staffed in each station unlike Clarke. Ms. Harrison asked if the two career staff stationed at Enders get a call, do both go on the call together. Mr. Lichty confirmed unless there are volunteer staff there to help with splitting the call and it also depends on what kind of call it is, ALS versus BLS. This is where the incentive program comes into place, to help fill the stations. Mr. Weiss commented that this was the whole premise and reason why previously the paid staff was put into that station, that the volunteers would help to fill the other half and they have done as well as they have been able to do. Mr. Lawrence also commented that the Frederick report probably doesn't use the worst end of the calls statistically, the highest and the lowest, so this data may be skewed.

7. Report from the Director of Fire and EMS - (see attached)
  - SOG's - EBOLA and Seatbelt (see attached)
  - Incentive Program update –Mr. Lichty reviewed with the group and commented that some of the times may be signed in for as staffed but calls are still not being responded to, therefore there may need to be tweaked on what hours are then counted for if calls not being answered. Boyce does not have their paid person included in their hours listed so it needs to be determined if all the companies need to held to the same standards. Blue Ridge has a paid person there now so it's not being all done by the volunteers. The major difference is that Boyce pays for their career staff and the County pays for the other stations. Mr. Weiss commented, without criticism or judgement, that it appears that hours are being accumulated but the accumulation of the hours are not lessening the response times, the incentive program was not established just to pay but to help improve results. Mr. Lichty confirmed that is partially true. He commented that there is a significant amount of hours that are logged, so the fails should be less if this is truly accurate. He still believes that there is some tweaks still needed in order to get factual data. Mr. White asked if this information has been brought to volunteer leadership yet to address or make any changes. Mr. Lichty stated not yet because this incentive program is managed by this Commission so he wanted to start here first. Mr. Lawrence confirmed that more people are signed up, but sometimes there are not showing to the calls and asked when will the funds go out to the companies. Mr. Lichty stated this is done on a quarterly basis so at the end of each quarter. Ms. Harrison is it not being communicated correctly to the personnel that you sign up you show up. Mr. White asked Mr. Lichty if he is seeing these trends with one specific company or multiple companies. Mr. Lichty explained that he is noticing certain trends with one company and another trends with other companies. No other comments or questions.
  
8. New Business-Budget discussion-Mr. Roper stated that he is ready to make a recommendation but it would be the lowest of the staffing levels, option #2, with the thinking that we have to start somewhere. Mr. Lichty commented that he is not opposed but would recommend adding one more personnel to make a team of two. Mr. Roper thinks that with the temporary staffing at Blue Ridge, they did step up with the number of volunteers to assist with that additional spot and believes that is a model that can be replicated. Mr. Lichty agrees that if there is a person committed to however many hours a day, the where they are at is the minute part, we need to have accurate data as to exact times that one person would be needed. He feels it is not as proficient and effective as having a team of two. Mr. Roper made a motion to recommend Option #2 of the staffing request of the budget. Discussion- Mr. Weiss commented from the BOS perspective, that adding full time employees is a course that they are willing to consider but to Mr. Lichty and Mr. Roper's points, where is the line where more full time employees discourage volunteers. If we don't get volunteer response increased by adding full time people, you are dooming your system. It's highly unlikely that we will fire people that we hire in the emergency services sector. If the BOS makes that kind of commitment they would expect that more volunteers show up more frequently in a way that Mr. Lichty can

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schedule. The other issue is it is supposed to be a system wide approach that is what the BOS wants, so understand that this is a very serious path, serious amount of money and serious difference in the philosophy. We need X number of people to take care of this county and what the Commission is saying to the BOS is that the volunteer system cannot provide that X in a routine and regular fashion therefore requiring the county to provide that part of X. Mr. Lichy asked Mr. Lawrence (due to his time at the station) if there are any specific times that he sees are more appealing or attracts him to the station more than others. Mr. Lawrence stated that he has noticed that later lunch time hours has higher calls so he tries to help to split the calls with one paid and one volunteer. Mr. Hoff agrees that Mr. Roper and Mr. Weiss' points are both valid but in the short term we need something fixed to start and agrees with Mr. Roper's motion. Ms. Harrison asked in the line items this reflects the two personnel, is that the #2 option. Mr. Lichy stated that no this would be one more added because the two she is looking at is already included in the budget request, it would be a third person basically as a floater Monday through Friday for approximately \$66,000.00. Ms. Harrison asked if there was an addition of one more person on top the two for at Blue Ridge, would that mean that person could be utilized at Boyce. Mr. Lichy stated Option # 2 is listed as one person at Blue Ridge and one person at Boyce and the time listed doesn't necessarily need to be exactly those hours but would be a 12 hour shift timeframe and would be able to schedule appropriately. Mr. Roper called for the question. Mr. Hoff called to question all in favor of Mr. Roper's motion to approve all the line items in the budget and Option #2 of the staffing plan options signify by saying Aye-Mr. Roper, Mr. Hoff, Mr. Conrad, Ms. Harrison, Mr. White, Mr. Nicholson, Mr. Lawrence. Confirmed verbal response with showing of hands as well. The motion passed with all in favor. Mr. Lichy read each line item individually listed in the budget recommendation on page 6 to include adding Option # 2 as the recommendation for #5-Staffing on this list and confirmed this was all with Mr. Roper's motion to deter any misunderstandings that all items were recommended and voted on and the motion passed with all in favor.

Ms. Harrison asked if the Commission could discuss the Blue Ridge request for reimbursement for their equipment purchase since there is nothing written in procedure of how to do it or can it be a topic at next month's meeting. Mr. Weiss reminded everyone when the BOS set up the designation it is not appropriated money it just a designation in the fund balance. They did that in response to questions and concerns to funding big projects to help meet with a match in a grant under those auspices, it was never intended from the BOS perspective because that is not what they were asked for, to fund small purchase. Mr. Conrad pointed out that you have to be careful and watch for specifics of a grant for matching and if it doesn't match what was submitted, the grant could fall apart. In your grant application you have to specify where the funds are coming from. Mr. Weiss stated that the BOS's finance committee will discuss this issue and come up with some directives and send down to this Commission for recommendation, it will not be done within the next thirty days, but it will be done during this budget process. Mr. White stated that he's not sure if the intent of the fund was ever made clear. Mr. Weiss stated that he did at some point since he was the one who asked the BOS to create the fund, he may not have said it to the Commission directly.

9. Summary of required action - Mr. Lichy reviewed his list of actions needed prior to the next meeting:
  1. The level of the Association to next month's discussion.
  2. Mr. Hoff reminded everyone at next month's meeting they will need to elect a new chairman.
  
10. Mr. Roper made a motion to adjourn. The motion passed with all in favor at 8:12pm.

All meeting documents will be distributed at meeting. Next meeting is on January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at 6:30pm in the Clarke County Government Center - Meeting Room AB

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