



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

MINUTES

May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021      6:30pm

Clarke County Government Center – Meeting Room AB

Attendees:      Diane Harrison, Chairman  
                     Matt Hoff  
                     Randy Buckley-arrived at 6:39pm  
                     Keith Veler  
                     Tony Roper  
                     David Beatty  
                     Randall Loker

Absent:            David Weiss

Staff:              Pam Hess  
                       Brian Lichty  
                       Melanie Radford  
                       Amy Kemp

Chairman Harrison called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

1.      Mr. Lichty requested to add a tuition reimbursement request on to the New Business section of the agenda. Mr. Roper made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. The motion was passed with all in favor.
  
2.      Public Comment - None
  
3.      Mr. Hoff made a motion to approve the April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021 minutes. The motion was passed with all in favor.
  
4.      Committee Reports - Information Only
  - Standards - Mr. Lichty reviewed with the group. Mr. Veler, Mr. Beatty and Mr. Lichty discussed the expectations of the goals and the differences on page 10. Mr. Lichty mentioned to the group on page 12-Closing Balance Summary report, that additional revenue was collected again during the month of April from older transports that had been sitting stagnant. Ms. Harrison received clarification from Mr. Lichty regarding the Mutual Aid Responses

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report on page 13 to better understand the data. Pages 20 and 21 were included for the group to comprehend what standards Mr. Lichty uses to collect data for comparison along with why/what reports are looked at. The subcommittee recommends looking at this data in a quarterly basis instead of month to month. Mr. Lichty explained that one report will not give you all the answers; you have to look at Fire and EMS separately along with the factors or matrix of the calls. No other comments or questions.

- Technology - No meeting was held.
- Budget/Recommendation - Nothing to report.

#### 5. Unfinished Business

- Incentive program review - Mr. Lichty reviewed with the group. No comments or questions.
- OT Report - Mr. Lichty reviewed with the group. No comments or questions.
- Blue Ridge Staffing update - Mr. Lichty reviewed with the group. No comments or questions.
- Strategic Plan Update – Mr. Lichty will be sending out an email to the specific committee members for setting up the first meeting. The committee will go over only areas that need to be reviewed and once completed it will be presented back to the Commission.

6. Report from the Director of Fire and EMS - Mr. Lichty reviewed with the group and updated the numbers listed on page 29, under Employee Development, hiring status-full time ops-47 applications, 14 passed initial screening, 7 scheduled written test, 3 passed, 0 failures.  
Discussion – No comments or questions.

#### 7. New Business

- Meeting schedule/structure – Ms. Harrison informed the group that she met with Mr. Boies and Mr. Weiss discussing the Commission, its roles and what could be done differently. It was proposed to change the meetings to once quarterly instead of monthly and offer the individual Companies to have a representative be present and allotted a specific amount of time to report to the Commission directly information they deem “need to know”. After a lengthy discussion between all members of the group, Mr. Roper made a motion to reduce the Fire-EMS Commission meetings to quarterly. The motion passed with all in favor. Mr. Hoff made a motion to set the new date structure being held on the months of February, May, August, and November. The motion passed with all in favor.
- Mr. Lichty presented to the group the following Tuition Reimbursement SOG 100.19; as requested by the BOS to have an established program in place. The group reviewed and made a few recommendations that are noted accordingly:

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# Clarke County Fire and Rescue

## Standard Operating Guideline

John H. Enders VFD, Blue Ridge VFD, Boyce VFD, Clarke County Fire, EMS and Emergency Management

|  |                    |                                 |
|--|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Subject:</b> Tuition Reimbursement  | <b>SOG:</b> 100.19 | <b>Page</b> 1 of 2              |
| <b>Category:</b> General – Tuition Reimbursement   |                    | <b>Sub Category:</b><br>Tuition |
| <b>Approved by:</b> Fire and EMS Director, Boyce VFD Chief, Blue Ridge VFD Chief, John H. Enders VFD Chief |                    | <b>Effective Date:</b><br>TBD   |

### Scope

This guideline applies to all Fire – Rescue Volunteer members for the purpose of assisting volunteer personnel with obtaining certifications to best serve the Clarke County Fire – Rescue System.

### Purpose

To provide personal and professional development opportunities for all volunteers of the Clarke County Fire – Rescue system. Reimbursement will be for courses related to a specific job or function.

While tuition reimbursement is not the only training and development resource available to volunteers, it is an essential benefit, providing additional learning opportunities.

### General

#### A. Eligibility

1. Fire and/or Rescue Company volunteer(s) who are in good standing ~~with~~ with their companies and have fulfilled the original probationary requirements for their positions are eligible for tuition reimbursement.
2. If there is no established probationary period by the company, the volunteer must be a member for a minimum of 1 year and obtained minimum certification of Firefighter or EMT.
3. The request cannot be for programs provided within the surrounding jurisdiction for basic certification such as firefighter and Emergency Medical Technician-Basic.
4. Reimbursement for course work at an accredited college or university must have prior approval from the Company Chief.
5. Courses that are eligible for reimbursement include but are not limited to
  - i. Vocational Courses -such as community college courses, trade schools and adult education programs.
  - ii. Special Courses – such as programs focused on technical rescue such as Trench Rescue or Emergency Medical Technician-Paramedic.

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6. The course must be directly related to the volunteer's current position with the Company.
7. The course will assist the Company in meeting the overall mission.

B. Allowable limits

1. The total maximum reimbursable amount will be \$1,000 per volunteer per fiscal year.
2. Travel expenses are non-qualifying expenses.

C. Additional Requirements & Information

1. In addition to the requirements previously described, the following criteria applies to tuition reimbursement:
  - i. Requests will be submitted through Company Chiefs, if approved forward to Director.
  - ii. If volunteer does not receive a final grade of "C" or better, they may be required to return any funding received.
  - iii. Volunteer must complete the Tuition Request Form
  - iv. Volunteer(s) shall remain in an active, good standing position with their Company in exchange for tuition reimbursement. Each \$500 shall obligate the volunteer to a minimum of 150 hours of Company participation for 1 year after award. Volunteers separating prior to completing this obligation shall be financially liable for reimbursing the County on a prorated basis.
  - v. ~~The Volunteer Company must match or exceed any funds awarded by the County.~~

**Commented [BL1]:** Commission recommend change to "will be required"

D. How to Apply For Tuition Reimbursement

1. Complete the Tuition Reimbursement Request Form.
2. Submit this completed form to the Company Fire Chief or their designee for approval.
3. When the Fire Chief returns the approved Tuition Reimbursement Form (or otherwise informs the volunteer of approval) the request will be forwarded to the Director.
4. The request will then be present to the Fire – EMS Commission for approval or denial. The Commission may approve a lesser or greater amount but cannot exceed the 50% of total course cost.
5. The tuition will be released to the volunteer providing funds are available.
- 5.6. In the event of multiple requests, each request will be processed in the order it was received until funding depleted.

**Commented [BL2]:** Commission-Requested to add a "tie breaker" comment.

SOG Tracking

|                | Draft   | Chiefs Review                         | Commission Review |
|----------------|---------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Date           | 1/15/21 | 4/14/21                               |                   |
| Comments       |         | <u>Minor changes, see adjustments</u> |                   |
| Adjustments    |         |                                       |                   |
| Final Adoption |         |                                       |                   |

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## TUITION REQUEST FORM

Name of Volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_ (print)

Company: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Request: \_\_\_\_\_

Course/Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Course Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

As the above named volunteer I hereby request approval for tuition reimbursement upon completion of the course listed above. I understand that in order to obtain reimbursement, this request must be submitted and approved. I further understand that upon receiving proof of a passing grade of "C" or better I will submit to the Department of Fire, EMS and Emergency Management to identify requirements met. The Course/Class is deemed pertinent to my job and my Company. I understand that any separation from my Company or failure to meet participation hours within 1 year of acceptance can result in a forfeiture of any or all funds received.

Commented [BL3]: Commission-Adding text about 1 year

Requested Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Course Cost: \_\_\_\_\_

(Attach proof of course cost)

~~Company contribution: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Membership Date: \_\_\_\_\_~~

~~I, \_\_\_\_\_ (print) as the Chief Officer of the Company, do hereby approve this request and verify the Company contribution listed above.~~

~~Company Chief Approval: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_~~

Fire – EMS Commission Approval: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Approved: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Final Course/Class Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

It was also confirmed the Chiefs were involved and they had no requests for any changes, the funding approved in the budget was for a total \$6,000.00, if the funds are not applied for during the fiscal year, they can be moved to other categories such as training, recruitment, etc. and it was suggested there should be a tie breaker ruling if too many applications are received.

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8. Summary of required action

- Nothing at this time.

9. Mr. Huff made a motion to adjourn. The motion was passed with all in favor at 8:02pm.

All meeting documents will be distributed at meeting. Next meeting is on August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 6:30pm in the Clarke County Government Center – Meeting Room AB

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Minutes Transcribed by Melanie Radford

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