

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
RECESSED SESSION-FIRE COMMISSION – MAY 12, 2022**

ASSEMBLY

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in Recessed Session on Thursday, May 12, 2022, at 6:00 p.m., at the Universal 911 Backup Center with the Fire Commission.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Tony G. Brown, Chair; David N. Walker, Vice Chair; Brenda Vaughn; Chris Allison; and Patrick Ellis

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

OTHERS PRESENT

Ashley Wooten, County Manager; Cheryl Mitchell, Clerk to the Board; Lake Silver, Management Asst.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order and thanked the Fire Commission for the invitation to hear updates from the local fire departments. Chairman Joe Washburn welcomed the Board and reported that each fire department would now have VIPER radios through the Fire Commission. Getting the radios was a \$2 million project and approximately \$900,000 was received through grant funding. All the fire service should be using them by the end of summer.

The next project the Commission will be working toward is the Training Grounds Project. The project would be training grounds for all emergency services and fire services. The Commission is currently looking for property for the training grounds.

Fire Commission Chairman Washburn called on each department in attendance to give an update:

Ashford-North Cove Fire Department—Brad Washburn, Chief

- 18 volunteers with 3 fulltime paid staff, and 6 part-time staff, will add another fulltime staff 7/1/22 making 1 paid staff per shift
- 337 calls since July, 2021
- currently preparing for a DOI inspection
- received a \$10,000 Covid relief grant
- have applied for a \$35,000 federal grant
- expressed his appreciation for the Board's support

Crooked Creek Fire Dept- Steven Lytle, Chief

- fire dept building was completed
- have daytime personnel staffing
- have applied for a \$35,000 federal grant
- appreciates the support of the Commissioners

Glenwood Fire Dept- Donnie Tipton, Chief

- 2021 made 629 calls; 216 since 1/1/2022
- 4,729 man-hours in training
- OSFM had recently inspected the fire department, waiting on results, currently have a Class 5 rating
- Have applied for 50/50 grant, and \$35,000 federal grant
- Rescue boat is now in service ready to deploy when needed
- The MTCC summer camp will be held at Glenwood Fire Dept
- Currently have two full-time positions open

Hankins-North Fork Fire Department—Barry Stepp, Chief; Darren Hollifield will be Chief in July

- 10 new members since 1/1/22
- 80 calls
- Have applied for 50/50 grant, and \$35,000 federal grant, and Covid grant
- One 8-hr staff person
- Purchased a new firetruck-retiring 33-year-old truck
- Purchased a 20 ft. rescue boat

Marion Fire Department—Ray McDaniel, Chief

- 12 fulltime staff with 4 part-time administrative, and 6 part-time staff; and 11 volunteers
- 1400 calls in 2021
- Recruiting and retaining firemen is still an issue
- Need 2 fire trucks
- Purchased four thermal imaging cameras with a FEMA grant
- Looking to hire six more people with the Safer Grant

Old Fort Fire Department—Ron Richardson, Chief

- 28 volunteers with 4 part-time employees
- 869 calls in 2021
- Currently upfitting a like new fire truck

PG Fire Department—Neil Settlemyre, Chief

- 2021 had 573 calls
- 2022 so far had 270 calls
- Received a 95/5 grant for tools
- New fire department should be complete in July, 2022
- Will be hiring 3 full-time employees in January, 2023
- Currently have 5 part-time employees

Sugar Hill Fire Department—Joe Washburn, Chief

- Currently have 25 volunteers
- Average 500 calls per year; this year on track for 650 calls
- Received medium rescue certification
- Ordered a brush truck a year ago, and it has not crossed assembly line yet
- Have purchased land to build new main fire station due to the current station is 84 years old and was built to be a school
- Currently a Class 5 rating
- Applied for all grants

Woodlawn Fire Department—Keith Stockton, Chief; Asst. Chief, Cole Hobson

- 28 volunteers; 3 part-time employees and 1 full-time vacancy

- 460 calls since July 2021
- Applied for all grants
- Applying for a quick response vehicle

McDowell Rescue—Brian Gentry, Chief

- 1,954 calls in 2021 and 591 calls so far in 2022
- 5 full-time employees, and 2 vacancies; 12 part-time employees; 15 volunteers

Fire Investigator – Andrew Pressley, Fire Marshall

- 17 fire investigations
- 70 road signs have been replaced due to theft

Emergency Management—William Kehler, Director

- Averaging 10,000 calls a year
- 911 Center has a 9.5 rating, working on a 10.
- Expressed his appreciation for the cooperation from all the departments that helped find an 8-year-old boy lost in mountain terrain

Chairman Brown expressed his appreciation to Chief Stepp retiring from Hankins Fire Dept. He added the Board would try to help find property for the training grounds.

County Manager, Ashley Wooten, noted staff is looking at property that would be appropriate for the training grounds.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50pm.

Attest:

Cheryl L. Mitchell
Clerk to the Board

Tony G. Brown
Chairman