LEE COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA
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MINUTES OF THE LEE COUNTY FIRE ADVISORY BOARD

April 16, 2019

The Lee County Fire Advisory Board (FAB) met on April 16, 2019 at Lee County Emergency Services, located at 204 West Courtland Drive, Sanford, North Carolina.

The following members were present:

- Donald Andrews
- Cy Richardson
- Charles Baker
- AJ Collazo
- Kirk Smith
- Shane Seagroves. Ex Officio Member
- Matthew Britt, Secretary

Absent:

- Richard Holshouser

Chairman Donald Andrews called the meeting to order at 1801 hours and welcomed all members.

Chairman Andrews introduced the minutes from December of 2018 for approval, no comments or concerns were made. A motion to accept as written was made by Charles baker, this motion was seconded by Cy Richardson and received a unanimous vote.

The agenda was reviewed by Chairman Andrews, with no comments or concerns by the board. A motion was made by Cy Richardson so accept the agenda as written, this motion was seconded by Kurt Smith and received a unanimous vote.

No one was present for the Public Comment section, Chairman Andrews acknowledged this and moved forward.

At this time Chairman Andrews began the budget review process for each of the counties volunteer fire departments. This year's process of utilizing google sheets to enter budget data was reviewed. The Chairman and Board commented that the change seemed to be a success and streamlined the process.

The first budget reviewed was that of Tramway Rural Volunteer Departments. It was noted that the department requested a 3.9 percent increase in salary and the board requested that Tramway explain this change during their upcoming meeting. The remainder of the requests were in line with expected changes and no other issues were noted. Tramway experienced an

increase from 482 million to 510 million tax base during the reevaluation. At this time Commissioner Smith reminded the board of the county commissioners desire to develop a revenue neutral budget for the upcoming fiscal year. Chairman Andrews noted that Tramway's budget as submitted would require no adjustment to the current tax rate.

Deep River Volunteer Fire Department requested an increase in salary, but the numbers requested and those listed in the justification do not match. The board asked that Deep River address this issue during their upcoming meeting. The budget request showed a decrease in Disability and Life insurance costs, there was concern for the reason for this decrease and if the same level of coverage was still being provided. Cy Richardson asked for clarification on number of employees and Chairman Andrews advised 2 personnel. The department also showed a decrease in Auto and Property Insurance, as before the reason for a decrease was questioned and clarification requested. The budget showed a decrease in accounting funds, Cy Richardson asked if the department shared financial responsibility with an accountant or if said accountant handled all department finances. An answer was not available, but would be addressed with the department. All other requests fell within expected ranges. The department advised they had paid off all debt and would be adding their previous debt payment requests to reserve funds for a future down payment on a tanker apparatus. The district increased from a tax base of 273 million to 305 million. The current rate would absorb the requested budget without change.

Cape Fear Volunteer Fire department submitted a budget with minimal changes. 2500 dollar increase in fleet maintenance was requested, the board requested explanation of this change. In addition a 2000 dollar increase in wireless access fees was requested, the board requested an explanation of this change. The budget did see a decrease as the ongoing Automated External Defibrillator project had been completed in FY 18-19. The district saw an increase from 370 to 380 million in tax base and will be able to absorb requested budget with current tax rate. It was also noted that the organization moved from an ISO class 7 to a 4.

Northview Volunteer Fire Department requested an increase in salaries, the board ask that this increase be explained. All insurance related costs were evaluated to be as expected by the board. It was requested by Chairman Andrews that the department detail their plans for Capital Reserve monies. The tax base for Northview increased from 713 to 836 Million dollars. It was mentioned by Shane Seagroves that though the tax revenue will increase above revenue neutral by the tax base increase, this could rapidly change in the future with commercial occupancy changes. He advised against changes to the tax rate for this district. Northview can support its requested FY 19-20 budget via its current rate.

Lemon Springs Fire Department budget was presented with minimal changes from the previous years. It was noted that they were no longer requesting funding for health insurance, which brought into question their future staffing plans. The board has requested they detail their staffing plans at the next meeting. One area of question was that of workers comp, as the county pays these costs for the department. It was assumed this was a mistake, but the department will be asked to explain at the upcoming meeting. With the elimination of health insurance, the budget total shows a 5000 dollar increase for FY 19-20. The district experienced a 9 million dollar growth in its tax base and will require no change in its rate to support the requested budget.

Carolina Trace began their budget submission with a requested 1.1% increase in salaries, however the requested amount did not match the personnel worksheet. The department

was notified to verify their request before the next meeting. The board questioned what the organization staffing plan was moving forward, they have also been asked to address this. An increase in accounting fees and training were also noted and asked to be discussed. The budget totals a 4000 dollar increase for FY 19-20. Chairman Andrews identified a potential revenue with the Carolina Trace tax base dropping from 437 Million to 435 Million dollars. If the budget were made revenue neutral, it require a decrease of 29,000 dollars. Chairman Andrews advised he would meet with the County Manager to discuss the options. Carolina Trace's tax rate would need to increase from 9.7 to 10.5 to cover the requested budget.

Northwest Pocket Volunteer Fire Department submitted their budget with a requested 6.5 percent increase to salaries, an area the board requested explanation for. In addition, 20,000 dollars was requested for capital reserve funding to support the purchase of a new engine. The board requested the organization to further detail their apparatus purchase plan. The tax base increased from 193 million to 200 million dollars. No change is required to support the requested budget.

In other business, Commissioner Kurt Smith made the board aware of a legislative bill giving schools the right to stop being used a polling places. It was further mentioned the difficulty this could cause as schools are the majority of government, ADA compliant buildings in the county. Cy Richardson detailed the difficulties Pittsboro Fire Department had experienced with using a fire station as a polling location.

A following Fire Advisory Board meeting was scheduled for April 30, 2019 to meet with fire department representatives regarding their submitted fire department budgets.

With no further business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 1925 hours. A motion was made by Charles Baker and seconded by Commissioner Kurt Smith, the vote was unanimous.

ATTEST

Matthew G. Britt

Donald Andrews, Jr., Chairman