

ANDERSON COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION COMMISSION

COMMISSION MEETING 10/21/2025

Minutes subject to approval by the Fire Commission

ORIGINAL

Present for the meeting were: Tommy Keaton, Randy Wilson, Charlie Dickerson, Chris Branyon and Bryan Merk. Chief Jimmy Sutherland and Assistant Chief Joey Freeman were also present.

Chairman Keaton called the meeting to order and asked for continued prayers for the Garrett family and Whitefield Station 22 and for Iva Station 10 Chief Curtis Brickle. Chief Sutherland advised Chief Brickle's condition shows improvement and asked for continued prayers for his recovery. Mr. Merk offered the invocation.

MOTION: The motion to approve the minutes of the 9/16/2025 meeting was made by Mr. Branyon, second by Mr. Wilson, and the vote was unanimous.

MOTION: Motion to approve the agenda of 10/21/2025 was made by Mr. Merk, second by Mr. Branyon, and all members approved.

There were no visitors.

Old Business - Committee Reports:

Personnel: Mr. Branyon reported that they have received applications for Fire Marshal, interviewed 5-6 candidates and hired Kevin Kay for the full time position and Mac Cochran for the part time position.

Finance: None

Purchasing: None

Rules & Regulations: Chris Branyon stated they have a meeting set up on Thursday with a lawyer in regards to Pendleton Station 2 bylaws.

Maintenance: Randy Wilson advised Station 19's new truck is here. Also, they have received sealed bids for the older Maintenance trucks and opened during the meeting. Two bids were received for the red service truck; one for \$6,199.97 from Anderson Fire & Safety, and the highest bid from West Pelzer Fire Department for \$8,665.00. No bids were received on the black pickup.

Planning & Development: Mr. Merk advised in regards to the Station 17 proposal, that due to the liability and insurance purposes, we refuse to allow them to work in the building.

Communications: Mr. Wilson asked Chief Sutherland if the tower site has been repaired, and Chief Sutherland advised yes. Mr. Wilson also advised that Chief Sutherland will be ordering more pagers and they have had six requests recently.

Motion to go into Executive Session: Motion by Mr. Branyon, second by Mr. Wilson to enter Executive Session for contracts and personnel, and the vote was unanimous.

Motion to return to Open Session: Motion by Mr. Branyon, second by Mr. Merk to return to open session, and all members approved. There were no announcements.

New Business - Committee Reports:

Personnel: None

Finance:

MOTION: Motion on recommendation of the Finance Committee was made by Mr. Dickerson to accept the One Percent Budget. All members approved.

Purchasing: None

Rules & Regulations: None

Maintenance:

MOTION: Motion on recommendation of the Maintenance Committee was made by Mr. Wilson to approve the quote in the amount of \$80,924.99 from IIA Fire Department Testing (Fail Safe, same as last year), and the vote was unanimous.

MOTION: Motion on recommendation of the Maintenance Committee was made by Mr. Wilson to approve the purchase of equipment for the new Engine 3, Engine 9 and the new ladder truck for Station 13. All members approved.

Mr. Wilson advised E3 and E9 are due by the end of November or first of December. If it falls near Christmas, it will be pushed to the first of the year. Ladder 13 is due the first of the year.

Planning & Development: None

Communications: None

Department Reporting: Terry Vaughan presented the report for Training. He also advised that make-up physicals will be at Headquarters on November 24th starting at 6 am. The Commission expressed appreciation.

Comments from the Fire Chief: Chief Sutherland reported that Fire Marshal Anthony Hamby has passed his plan review and has one more certification to complete to finish certification for state fire marshal.

Comments from Chiefs Advisory Board: None

Comments from Others: Randy Wilson advised that Whitefield Station 22 is still in his thoughts and prayers. He read a thank you letter from Whitefield Station 22 Chief Ross Ables addressed to the Commission, thanking and Commending Assistant Chief Joey Freeman for his help during their station's tremendous loss of Firefighter / Detective Mark Garrett.

MOTION: Following a motion by Mr. Merk with a second by Mr. Branyon, the meeting adjourned.

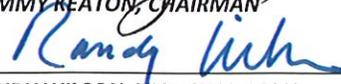
Respectfully submitted,

Angie Bryant

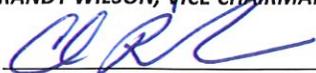
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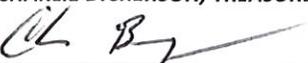
TOMMY KEATON, CHAIRMAN



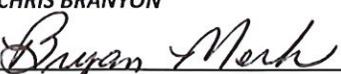
RANDY WILSON, VICE CHAIRMAN



CHARLIE DICKERSON, TREASURER



CHRIS BRANYON



BRYAN MERK

Whitefield Volunteer Fire Department

Station 22 · Established 1971
4000 Highway 29 North · Belton, SC 29627

October 7, 2025

All,

I want to take a moment to express my sincere appreciation for Assistant Chief Joey Freeman and the exceptional leadership he continues to demonstrate within the Anderson County Fire System, day in and day out.

In my opinion, and in the eyes of many who work alongside him, Chief Freeman embodies what it means to be a true leader. His dedication, commitment, and steady presence are unmatched, and it's clear to those of us who witness his work daily that he is an absolute vital asset to this county's fire service.

Over the past week, following the tragic loss of Firefighter/Detective Mark Garrett, Chief Freeman has stood beside me every step of the way. From the earliest moments, he has been a source of strength and guidance, checking on our firefighters who responded to the incident, ensuring our station remained operational and ready, and coordinating essential support from Headquarters staff to help cover our department and assist with logistics at the memorial service.

He personally handled phone calls, coordinated with others on my behalf, and even sat with the family while we planned the details of the service, offering a steady hand and a second set of ears during an incredibly emotional time. I believe he recognized how deeply I wanted Mark's life and service to be honored with the utmost respect, and he committed himself fully to helping make that happen.

Even up to the final call, Chief Freeman was by my side to make sure it went off without incident. I genuinely could not have asked for a more capable, compassionate, or dedicated individual to help guide me, and all of us, through such a difficult time.

Chief Freeman's leadership, selflessness, and unwavering support have made a lasting impact not only on me personally, but on everyone around us during this time of loss. We are all better because of his example.

With sincere gratitude,



Ross Ables, Chief
Whitefield Volunteer Fire Department

