

**NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL PUBLIC SAFETY AND COURTS COMMITTEE
MINUTES
July 08, 2024**

The Newberry County Council Public Safety and Courts Committee met on Monday, July 8, 2024, at 6:01 p.m. in Council Chambers at the Courthouse Annex, 1309 College Street, Newberry, SC, for a special called meeting.

Notice of the meeting was duly advertised, as required by law.

PRESENT: Leon Fulmer, Committee Chair
Karl Sease, Committee Member
Jeff Shacker, County Administrator
Sheriff Lee Foster, NCSO
Tommy Long, Emergency Services Director
Eric Nieto, I.T. Director
Brandon Wicker, Emergency Services Coordinator
Andrew Wigger, Clerk to Council/PIO

Absent: Todd Johnson, Committee Member

1. Call to order – Mr. Fulmer, Chairman.

- Mr. Fulmer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and determined a quorum to be present.

2. Additions, Deletions and Adoption of the Agenda.

- Mr. Sease made a motion to add an Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance; Mr. Fulmer provided the second and the motion as approved 2-0.
- Mr. Sease led the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Discussion of the Fire Engine Purchase – Brandon Wicker, Emergency Services Director.

- Mr. Wicker discussed a truck that Spartan Fire has available for purchase. He said the Board of Rural Fire Control voted to make the purchase on this particular truck and it will be put in Little Mountain. The amount of the truck will leave room for loose equipment.
- Mr. Wicker said this truck will be available at the end of September and they need a PO (purchase order) to purchase the truck.
- Mr. Wicker went through the pros and cons of purchasing a custom truck versus a commercial truck. The pros included availability, build time, actual price for budget, safety, options, service and parts available. The cons included price, outside company for motor and transmission repair and build time. A full explanation of the pros and cons are attached with these minutes.
- At present, Mr. Wicker said engines 10, 11, and 41 are out of service. Engine 10 is out with a faulty ECM; 11 needs new head gaskets; 41 has a faulty ECM and pump repairs are pending. Tanker 82 was destroyed in a wreck on July 7, 2024. Tanker 102 is out of service because the tank valve needs to be repaired.
- To remediate these issues, they have moved Consolidated Tanker 54 to Counts Sub Station (cover Bush River area), Leitzsey Engine 46 moved to Station 4 (Pomaria), Prosperity Engine 20 moved to Station 1 Friendly, Belfast Engine 87 moved to Station 10 Chappells.
- Mr. Sease asked how long the trucks have been out of service. Mr. Long said Engine 41 has been out for about a month; Engine 10 and 11 for about a week; Tanker 82 wrecked the day before; Tanker 102 has been out for about a week. Mr. Long said most of that is waiting for outside vendors to make those repairs. Mr. Wicker added that they are moving trucks they don't typically move, Mr. Long said they will hopefully get them back in service as quickly as they can.
- Mr. Shacker said the truck is budgeted at \$850,000, specifically listed in the Capital Section of the Rural Fire Board Budget.

- Mr. Fulmer said he thinks he understands from conversations they need something in order to hold the truck, a PO. With that being said, he asked Mr. Shacker if they needed to take this back to council or do this as a recommendation from them to council to secure that PO.
- Mr. Shacker said he thinks they have a few different options, he said there is language in the Newberry County Purchasing Ordinance that is not ideal that seems to indicate if it is being purchased off a cooperative service like State Contract, that the \$50,000 cap that applies to the county administrator's authority does not apply to those purchases. He said if the committee agrees with what has been proposed, staff can follow up with the vendor and see if that action by the committee changes anything and the possibility they can hold it, then council could approve the purchase at the July 17, 2024, meeting. If they won't, the other option would be to reach out to the rest of council to see if they would agree to the issuance of PO to firm up the truck then ratify the decision at the next council meeting.
- Mr. Sease made a motion to reach out to all council members and see if they agree, then issue a PO number and ratify the decision at the next council meeting; Mr. Fulmer provided the second and the motion was approved 2-0.
- Mr. Sease asked about moving forward with replacing Tanker 82. Mr. Long said they need to reach out and see what the cost would be and if any are available and they are handling insurance now. Mr. Wicker said he will work to secure a price.

4. Internet Service at Fire and Rescue Stations – Tommy Long, Emergency Services Director.

- Mr. Long said in the budget this year, it was agreed that all the utilities were to be paid for directly without the departments having to pay those individually, and it was questioned if Internet would be included in that. Mr. Long said they were under the impression that was the case because these departments depend on the Internet to do their fire reports.

- Mr. Long said they wanted to make that request that be paid as well directly, instead of them having to pay out of their own funding.
- Mr. Fulmer asked if all of the stations are on Carolina Connect. Mr. Long said they are not; they have some that utilize MiFi because they do not have the option of Carolina Connect. He said some also have Comcast.
- Mr. Fulmer said he agrees with that, he asked Mr. Shacker if that needed to go before full council, to which Mr. Shacker said no, he believes the committee is sufficient.
- Mr. Sease made a motion to have the station's Internet bills to be sent to Administration for payment; Mr. Fulmer provided the second and the motion as approved 2-0.

5. Public Comments.

- Mr. Daniel Werts said he came to inform the committee of the all-time low for the fire service in the county. He said they are deprived of manpower, equipment, resources and funding. He said as volunteers that give Newberry County a free service, their backs are against the wall. He said it seems anytime something comes up involving funding to provide a better service to residents, they have to give up more time to plead their case of why. He said a six-figure sign on Highway 773 probably did not require the effort the volunteers had to put forth as they had to come down to show they needed internet at a station to do the requirements they had to do. He said that should not have been up for discussion unless someone at the county was willing to take on doing their many reports. He said it seems this county has a few employees that can add, delete or change whatever involving the fire service without any knowledge of why. He said a few weeks ago they sat in a meeting involving a new fire station only to be questioned why they could not wait on a washer or dryer. He said it was also mentioned they could not leave the bedrooms unfinished; he said the money was in the budget until other areas of scope were being talked about being added to the budget. He said he does not see any open sheetrock in this building. He said as a taxpayer he

looks at cost analysis down the road and a remodel to go back and do what was in the original scope of budget will cost the taxpayers more. He said as an example, the Belfast Fire Station does not have any restrooms. Mr. Werts said most of the time those with boots on the ground know where their needs are more than the sharpest pencil in the desk and should be invited to the table to discuss this before being shot down. He said they also had to fight to get grass cut at fire stations, he said they are firefighters not maintenance or yard guys. He said things such as this is what prevents them from finding new members. He said he is asking for support to keep volunteers for the county versus the near future option of a full-time paid fire service which will cost the taxpayers. He said if anyone thinks this is too much, they have applications for people willing to join. He said a standard for the trucks must be established and a quick buy is not always good business. He said he was on the committee, but he removed himself due to not receiving data requested in a timely fashion.

- Mr. Nick Huffstetler said they need to jump on the truck as soon as possible, he said if they wait on the next truck from this particular rep, it would be 2027 or even further down the road at a higher cost. He said the current truck is supposed to be here around September.
- Mr. Keith Minick said he was asked to come forward and speak about what is coming down the pipeline with OSHA regulations. In January this year the standards have been revised. He said there was a short window to respond – which has been extended to July 22, but they are trying to extend it even further. He said the NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) which they try to adhere to, he said it is hard and a challenging and expensive process. The problem they are seeing with the standards is that OSHA is now requiring about 25 of those standards, no longer recommending. He said right now Newberry County pays about \$280 for a physical, if these standards go through, it'll increase to \$1,500 per person. He said they need safety, but some of these standards will be a burden. He said they need to submit to OSHA their concerns, it can be departments, Mr. Long on behalf of the county can submit the concerns.

- Mr. Gregg Grantham said he came up at the last meeting and brought up the idea of going and taxing some of the Airbnbs and wondered if they thought about that and Newberry County is the only county not taxing them as others are.
- Mr. Richard Wymer asked if anything else has come about regarding going back and billing some of the wrecks that they run; Mr. Shacker said they have sample ordinances staff has been reviewing and they agreed a Newberry County Council Work Session would be the best time to discuss that ordinance.

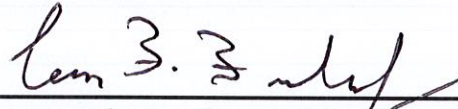
6. Comments from Committee Members.

- Mr. Sease thanked everyone for coming out, and he knows they have a lot of needs, and they are trying to work to make it better.
- Mr. Fulmer thanked everyone for coming out, he said he used to be a volunteer firefighter and the reason he is not now is because of the increase in requirements in training, etc. and he went to work for himself and if he didn't work, he didn't get paid. He said he was a certified interior firefighter and the requirements for that now, he could not meet. However, the service of the volunteers (fire and rescue) is tremendous, and the average resident does not have a concept of that. He said the tax savings the residents alone get from that volunteer service is tremendous and one way or another they have to figure out how they can provide their volunteers with what they need.
- Mr. Fulmer added that they recognize employees for their service, and he doesn't know what it would take, but they need to recognize volunteers as well.
- Mr. Fulmer said he thinks they are moving in the right direction.

7. Adjournment.

- Mr. Sease made a motion to adjourn; Mr. Fulmer provided the second and the motion was approved 2-0. The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

**NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL PUBLIC SAFETY
AND COURTS COMMITTEE**



Leon Fulmer, Committee Chairman



Andrew Wigger, Clerk to Council

Minutes Approved: 7-17-24

Custom vs. Commercial

Pros and Cons

Public Safety Committee

July 8, 2024

Pros:

1. **Availability-** Most manufacturers have trucks already scheduled to be built or are coming off the line that meet our needs. (Commercial Cabs are having to come from another manufacturer therefore “Fire Trucks” are not a priority due to these companies ability to make more profit on other types of vehicles. Dump trucks, Tractor trailer trucks, etc.)
2. **Build Time-** Manufacturers can give a timeline for delivery date due to Custom trucks being made at one plant. (Sole Source)
3. **Actual Price for Budget-** Custom cab truck manufacturers can lock in the price before the truck is built due to Sole Source building. (Commercial Cab trucks have to wait on availability of a cab and chassis and depending on the wait time the price goes up with industry increases. Therefore fire truck builders can't give a set price for us to use at budget time.)
4. **Safety-** Our Engines are the most used apparatus in the fire fleet therefore they need to be as safe as we can make them. Custom cab trucks meet NFPA standards for roll over protection and typically offer roof crush ratings more than twice the GVWR. (Commercial cab trucks have to meet their industries standard and aren't always reinforced to meet NFPA's standard.)
5. **Options-** The cabs are more open and give us more options with seating or storage within the cab of the truck. (Commercial cab trucks have the same cab as any other commercial truck on the market.)
6. **Service-** Custom truck manufacturers have service centers close enough to us they can usually have a technician on location within 1-2 hours and can repair or replace most anything from the cab to the body. (Commercial cab trucks require the company who built the cab and chassis to make repairs to the cab of the truck.)
7. **Parts Availability-** Both vehicles now use readily available parts to repair marker lights and other normal lighting by going to a Truck parts store.

Cons:

1. **Price-** Commercial Cab trucks are typically cheaper (\$30,000-\$100,000)
2. Both require outside company for motor and transmission repair.
3. **Build Time-** Both have build times from 12-36 months
 - Can we hold over budget money knowing this fact