

FIRST RESPONDER COMMITTEE MINUTES

Meeting Date: February 24, 2025, 5:30 p.m., Trousdale County Community Center

Present: Amber Russell, Chris Gregory, Brian Crook, David Nollner, Judy Kerr, Steve Whittaker

Others Present: Bud Sutherland, Sheriff Ray Russell, Fire Chief Mark Beeler, Amy Thomas, Gina Duncan, Lonnie Taylor, County Mayor Jack McCall

Chairman Amber Russell called the meeting to order.

Minutes of the January 27, 2025 meeting were reviewed.

Motion to approve by Crook, second by Nollner. Motion approved.

Motion to set agenda by Nollner, second by Gregory. Motion approved.

Bud Sutherland presented Rescue Squad report. Update provided on cost of Tennessee Association of Rescue Squads membership, would be \$610 annual to cover all 17 members. Department has maximum of 20, per bylaws. One prospect currently in background check. Gregory asked where limit was mandated, apparently in their bylaws. Rescue also looking to purchase generator to replace on Rescue 1 vehicle. TARS grant for turnout gear has been submitted, expect to hear something by end of March

Rescue building has flooded recently with heavy rain, does worse every time. Water seems to be coming down from state garage area next door, some electrical outlets are sparking when plugged into, still no heat. Sheriff Russell estimated building is 30-40 years old. Sutherland said Rescue has been told all maintenance should be submitted to Public Works first and only then bid out. Mayor McCall said money has been budgeted for maintenance work previously and not spent. County has done about \$40K of improvements in recent years to building and mayor said money is in budget to make needed fixes. Mayor clarified that department head has the authority to seek outside work if necessary. Mayor plans to meet with Rescue, EMA, Public Works heads to review budget and get fixes done ASAP.

Sheriff Russell presented his department report. Has full patrol crew, just added one certified officer. One waiting to go to academy, probably in July. Still has three open dispatcher positions as one quit, one failed psychological testing. Ten deputies have gone through PIT training in Blount County. No January call report presented but sheriff said was similar to previous month.

Maintenance needs include new camera system added to jail, sheriff station, and courts. Engineer has looked at radio tower on Gravel Hill, should go to bid soon. Gregory asked if Gravel Hill tower will address radio issues on southern end of county; sheriff said it should. Sheriff also wants PA system for courts, lack of system makes it difficult to hear in holding areas.

Sheriff's budget concerns are mainly pay for staff. Received 2.5% the last two years, insurance went up 1.6% last year. Sheriff said three years ago Trousdale was even with nearby departments, now falling behind. Sheriff believes Lafayette will soon start \$5 per hour more than TCSD, Wilson is \$8-\$9 more hour, Sumner jail starts at \$25 per hour. Noted getting harder to find qualified people and that some staff may leave soon for better pay elsewhere.

Fire Chief Mark Beeler presented his department report. Contract has been signed with Vector Solutions for online training, will cost \$3,211 annually for three years. Modules being set up for volunteers to train with. Beeler met with Wayne Oakley to examine request for new storage building, believes it will need to

be designed as it would be essential services building. Beeler hopes to have preliminary site plan by committee's March meeting.

Chairman Russell presented current EMS write off policy set in 2023, already allows department head to handle as needed. No action is required from committee.

EMS - Director Matt Batey was not present but submitted report to be reviewed by committee. 166 total calls in January.

Next meeting scheduled for Monday, March 24 at 5:30 p.m.

Motion to adjourn by Nollner, second by Gregory. Motion approved.

Minutes presented by Chris Gregory.