

**Fire Station Study Committee Meeting**  
**Wednesday July 30, 2014**  
**3:00 pm**  
**Chowan County Public Safety Center**  
**305 West Freemason Street**

Minutes

The Fire Station Study Committee of the Chowan County Board of Commissioners met on Wednesday July 30, 2014 at 3:00 pm at the Chowan County Public Safety Center. Present: Commissioners Emmett Winborne, Alex Kehayes, John Mitchener and Jeff Smith. Additional Committee members present Kevin Howard, County Manager; Craig Forlines Town Fire Chief and Centerhill Crossroads Fire Department Chief Mike Hamilton.

Clerk to the Board Susanne Stallings was also present.

Tony Bailey, Eastern Regional Representative of the Office of the State Fire Marshall was also present.

**Election of Chairman**

The Committee discussed the need to appoint a Chairman for the committee.

Board Clerk Susanne Stallings opened the floor for nominations.

Commissioner Winborne nominated Commissioner Smith.

There were no further nominations.

Ms. Stallings asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Ms. Stallings turned the floor over to Chairman Smith.

**General Discussion**

Commissioner Smith stated the purpose of this committee was to give a recommendation to the full Board of Commissioners regarding recent discussions about fire insurance, additional stations and the fire tax. He stated he wanted it to be clear that while the focus of the discussion would be on the Yeopim area of Chowan County, that there is fire protection currently in place for that area. He provided an example of the response time that was shared by him from a constituent that lives in the Yeopim area of the County.

Commissioner Kehayes expressed his concern over the distance from the Town to that area.

Chief Forlines noted that the fire department's rating does not take response time into account.

Commissioner Winborne stated he appreciated the mission of the committee. He stated he hoped to learn what the needs are for this area and then consider the funds available to address these needs.

Commissioner Mitchener stated his desire to assist residents in that area of the county with reducing their homeowners' insurance rates.

Chief Hamilton stated his main focus is fire coverage and the safety of his firemen. He noted that by adding a station to this area, there will still be many residents who do not receive a break on their homeowners' insurance.

Chief Forlines stated his goal was to disseminate the correct information to the committee and the public regarding all the rules that govern fire departments. He provided the Committee with information regarding the criteria that is looked at when a fire department receives its rating from the State and the details of fire inspections. He noted the Board should keep in mind that three maps each serve a different purpose but should be considered. He stated these maps are the Response Maps, Insurance Maps and Fire District Maps. He noted Chowan County currently has three fire districts (Edenton, Centerhill and Belvidere). He provided the Committee with copies of the most current Fire insurance district maps for Chowan County. The Committee discussed the materials reviewed by Chief Forlines regarding rating criteria as well as State requirements. The Committee also discussed the areas of the County currently not covered in the 6 mile fire insurance district maps.

The committee discussed the current fire tax at 5 cents and the statute requirements for increasing the fire tax. It was noted that the maximum increase could go to 10 cents.

Commissioner Kehayes asked what the cost would be to start a new fire department.

Chief Forlines stated approximately \$400,000 to \$2 million is needed depending on if the equipment is new or used and the personnel expense. He noted that turnout gear for a single fire fighter is approximately \$3,600 per fireman.

Commissioner Smith stated he would like to see the data of the tax values by district as well as the fire tax collections by district. He noted a substation as previously proposed could be manned by 8 people and a new fire department would require 20 people on the roster.

The Committee noted the following information is requested by the committee to be discussed at the next meeting:

- Property values broken down by fire insurance districts (Centerhill, Belvidere and Edenton) and also the property values of the properties not included in the 6 mile fire insurance districts.
- The General Statutes that govern a fire tax including what is required to increase a fire tax
- Find out the collection rates per district of the fire tax.

The Committee discussed their next meeting, Board Clerk Susanne Stallings will schedule the next meeting and notify the members.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.