

**LUNENBURG COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
KENBRIDGE EMERGENCY SQUAD BUILDING
KENBRIDGE, VIRGINIA**

Minutes of February 16, 2017 Joint Meeting with Kenbridge Emergency Squad

The Lunenburg County Board of Supervisors Joint Meeting with Kenbridge Emergency Squad was held on Thursday, February 16, 2017 at 6:00 pm at the Kenbridge Emergency Squad Building on Fifth Avenue, Kenbridge, Virginia. This meeting was a continuation of the regularly-scheduled February 9, 2017 meeting and held in conjunction with the Active Members of the Emergency Squad. The following Board of Supervisors members were present: Supervisors Frank Bacon, Edward Pennington, T. Wayne Hoover, Charles R. Slayton, Alvester Edmonds, Robert Zava, County Administrator Tracy M. Gee, and County Attorney Frank Rennie. The Supervisor seat for Brown's Store District was vacant due to the recent death of Supervisor David E. Wingold, Sr.

Chairman Slayton called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Chairman Slayton then turned the meeting over to Public Safety Committee Chair, Supervisor Hoover.

Supervisor Hoover thanked the present members of the Kenbridge Emergency Squad (KES) for attending the roundtable discussion. KES active members present were: Bernice Thompson, Connie Moore, Woody Conner, Glenda Conner, Chris Craft, and Vicki Smith.

Supervisor Hoover gave an overview regarding Kenbridge Emergency Squad (KES) and the meetings of the Strategic Planning Committee for the disposition of KES. The County is required to designate an emergency response agency as a part of the County's Emergency Response Plan. Currently, KES is designated to the area that includes the Town of Kenbridge and the southern region of the County. Mr. Rodney Newton, KES Administrator, recently gave notice that he must step down as administrator of KES effective February 28th due to other responsibilities. Mr. Newton advised that he is concerned about staffing, budget, and failure of KES to make calls. Mr. Newton researched the cost for paid providers, but the cost proved to be too expensive. After discussion of the cost and required call volume associated with contracting paid service providers versus the cost of hiring additional providers with a 70/30 County/Town share, the suggestion was made by the Committee for Kenbridge Fire Department (KFD) to consider a merger with KES. KFD would need to apply for an EMS license and insurance provider licensing, then KFD could manage the EMS for the Kenbridge service area. After several meetings with the parties of interest, KES, which is an independent organization, rejected KFD's offer and requested to merge with Victoria Fire and Rescue instead. Supervisor Hoover explained that although the County determines the emergency response agency, KES is in charge of its own assets and may choose the agency of which to reallocate those assets. KES By-Laws state that the corporation is controlled by the "active members" who are actively running calls and participating in meetings and training. They would continue to operate in the same building in the Town of Kenbridge; however, they would have to operate under the Victoria Fire and Rescue name.

During the previous week's Board meeting, Victoria Fire and Rescue (VFR) Chief Rodney Newton stated that he would assist in either option the Board chose as emergency services were needed for the citizens of the community. He suggested that the Board consider tabling the issue until the March Board meeting, in hopes that a determination could be made at that time. Supervisor Hoover suggested the Board hold a joint meeting with the members of KES, which facilitated this meeting. The Committee still wants KES to consider the merger with KFD and wishes to discuss this further.

Supervisor Hoover indicated that the County and Town cannot afford to purchase a new ambulance and emergency equipment and the KFD merger would require a transfer of the assets to KFD. KFD would eventually move the operations to the Fire Department building downtown. Victoria Fire and Rescue merger would keep the KES building in operation and partially staffed. Supervisor Hoover requested input from the KES members.

Woody Conner indicated that KES has been struggling with fewer volunteers over the past few years and other Kenbridge partners did not assist them, but VFR always helped them. The members were not interested in the other options because the VFR merger would be seamless. VFR is familiar with KES and is experienced in emergency medical services and operations already.

Bernice Thompson echoed Mr. Conner's sentiments. She also mentioned that training was not available with KFD for emergency medical services education.

Mr. Conner went over the extensive training schedules for the positions in an EMS agency and the costs to outsource those courses, but VFR already has resources for training.

Chris Craft indicated that the VFR merger is a long-term fix, whereas other options did not look favorable for the long-term.

Vicki Smith indicated that she personally asked KFD for help several times with no success. Ms. Smith stated that the patients are not concerned with where the help comes from, so long as someone shows up in an emergency.

Glenda Conner thanked the Board for the roundtable discussion. Ms. Conner feels that the VFR merger is best because they already work well with VFR.

Connie Moore discussed the cost and time for training for EMS certification. Ms. Moore indicated volunteers are hard to come by, but there will be a bigger group of people with the merger. Ms. Moore stated that this is not a "money-making" organization and would not help any agency increase revenue above their expenses.

After all seated KES members had an opportunity to speak, Chairman Slayton opened the meeting for questions.

Former KES member, Curtis Craft spoke in support of VFR merger.

Others spoke in favor of the KFD merger, including: KFD member Ty Dunbar, citizen Karen Schumaker, KFD member Tyler Anderson, KFD member Michael Gee, KFD member Noah Dunbar, and KFD member Steven Schumaker.

Citizens Wanda Rich-Morrison and Patricia Harper-Tunley indicated their concerns about KES and KFD not working together. They are concerned that the organizations might not be able to put personal feelings aside to answer the calls.

Citizen Mike Hankins is concerned that VFR might not be able to get to citizens in time; one bad outcome could damage the reputation of both squads.

Kenbridge Mayor and KFD member Emory Hodges asked the 11 past members of KES in the room to stand. Mayor Hodges and KFD Fire Chief Dicky Harris indicated that the problems are drama and bickering and that there should not be just six people making the decision. Mayor Hodges stated that he really hopes this works out. Chief Harris denied that KFD refused to help KES, but indicated the members reluctance to deal with the drama.

Former Kenbridge Councilmember and current KFD member Jack Roberts indicated that he was a charter member of KES and worries that the time and money that many Kenbridge residents put in the organization will go to Victoria. The history and investments will go away with the VFR merger.

After more discussion among those present, Chairman Slayton closed the floor.

Supervisor Edmonds indicated that the citizens want to see the Squad management stay in Kenbridge. Supervisor Edmonds asked for the KFD members who are willing to take calls to stand and nine members stood. He stated that he knows there is friction, but really wants to see a merger with KFD.

Supervisor Pennington stated that he wants to see unity and people get along so they can do their job. He wants to see everyone put aside personality problems and be willing to merge and move forward.

KES members stated that the KFD merger is a takeover and they would not be welcome in the organization.

Supervisor Bacon suggested a three to six-month trial basis of KFD working with the existing KES organization to increase volunteerism and working together.

KFD member Steven Schumaker indicated that he would not come to work the people at KES.

Walter Thompson noted that a merger means that the current KES members should not have to apply for membership in the KFD, they should be accepted no matter what.

KES members indicated on-by-one that they want to merge with VFR.

Supervisor Zava stated that a decision needs to be made regarding the Emergency Response Plan agency coverage area and the Board needs to choose between KFD or VFR. Due to KES's refusal to transfer assets to KFD, he must recommend the VFR merger.

Supervisor Zava made motion, seconded by Supervisor Bacon, to change the current Kenbridge Emergency Squad response area to Victoria Fire and Rescue with Supervisors Hoover and Slayton also voting yes and Supervisors Edmonds and Pennington voting no for a 4-2 split in favor.

Supervisor Edmonds made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Pennington and unanimously approved, to enter Closed Session citing Virginia Code Section § 2.2-3711A7 Legal Consult.

CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED SESSION MEETING

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of Lunenburg County, Virginia (“Board”) convened a Closed Session Meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section §2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, requires a certification by the Board that such Closed Meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board hereby certifies that, to the best of each member’s knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from Open Meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the Closed Meeting to which this certification resolution applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the Closed Meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the Board.

| VOTING YES | VOTING NO | ABSENT |
|-----------------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| Supervisor Bacon | | |
| Supervisor Edmonds | | |
| Supervisor Hoover | | |
| Supervisor Pennington | | |
| Supervisor Slayton | | |
| Supervisor Zava | | Vacant District #2 Seat |

Supervisor Zava made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Edmonds and unanimously approved, to return to Open Session.

Supervisor Bacon made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Pennington and unanimously approved, to authorize County Attorney Rennie and Administrator Gee to request a Writ of Special Election for a Special Election on November 7, 2017 at the General Election for the vacancy in the Brown’s Store District.

Supervisor Bacon made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Hoover and unanimously approved, to adjourn the meeting.

Tracy M. Gee, Clerk
County Administrator

Charles R. Slayton, Chairman
Board of Supervisors