

CHARLTON COUNTY FIRE BOARD MINUTES
ST. GEORGE COMMUNITY ROOM
13063 FLORIDA AVE
ST. GEORGE GA, 31537
6:00 P.M.

1/27/2025 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM.

Present was Mr. Orival Thompson, Mr. Mike Harris, Mr. Kip Taylor, Mr. Lee Gowen, Chief CL Lewis, County Administrator Glenn Hull, and County Clerk Madeline Nettles.

Absent was Mr. Jesse Crews.

All guests present as recorded hereafter.

2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

Invocation was led by Mr. Gowen.

3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Thompson made a motion to adopt the agenda. Mr. Harris seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

Mr. Taylor made a motion to adopt the minutes. Mr. Thompson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

5. FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Harris made a motion to adopt the financial report. Mr. Thompson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

6. REPORTS: OWLR

Andy Heisy with the Okefenokee Wildlife Refuge was present.

Mr. Heisy had no new fires to report. The snowstorm last week helped with the draught in the area.

Okefenokee Wildlife Refuge has just welcomed an assistant fire manager on board.

As of now, there is no prescribed fires, but Mr. Heisy expects them to begin once it has begun to dry out

after the previous storm.

7. REPORTS: GEORGIA FORESTRY COMMISSION: ROGER TODD

Mr. Roger Todd could not be present. Chief Lewis reported no concerns, based on his previous conversation with Mr. Todd.

8. REPORTS:

8.I. APPLICATION FOR AFG

Chief Lewis presented the summary for the AFG application that was previously submitted. The award dates are fluctuating and dependent on remaining funds.

8.II. UPDATE ON PURCHASE OF CHIEF'S TRUCK REPLACEMENT

Chief Lewis provided an update on his truck. The truck should arrive between 2/2/25 and 2/17/25. Once it has arrived, the truck will still need to have decals applied to it.

Chief Lewis is trying to get additional equipment for the truck, such as a wench and a brush guard, to assist with fighting fires.

9. PERSONNEL REPORT:

9.I. UPDATES ON NEW APPLICANTS FOR SUPPORT STAFF AND FIREFIGHTERS

Chief Lewis presented the personnel report.

Four volunteers have left since the last meeting, but there are 4 new applicants in the works.

Chief Lewis reported that there had been previous issues with new hires not reviewing and following standard operating procedures (SOPs) like they should have been. Chief Lewis is working with leadership to revamp the process. They are looking into SOP presentations and acknowledgement forms in hopes to curtail the issue.

Mr. Gowen asked Chuck Edwards, district chief, for his opinion on the issue. Mr. Edwards expressed concerns about people that were not participating in the department, but were tying up gear, radios, and county resources, such as insurance and retirement.

Mr. Edwards reported that there is a gentleman joining the department who was trained and certified in Florida. His certification will be accepted. There is another new hire that is also certified and is currently a trainer for a different county.

Mr. Gowen asked how morale is in the department. Mr. Edwards reports that it has improved.

Mr. Gary Tippins had nothing to add or report.

9.II. REPORT ON JUNIOR PROGRAM

Mrs. Sue Turner was not present. Chief Lewis discussed the Junior Program as it was reported to him.

The program is down to only 3 members due to prior commitments and have 5 new prospects.

Mr. Gowen recommended that fire department be present at the high school career fair in March.

Mr. Edwards shared his opinions on the Junior program. Mr. Edwards feels that the program needs to be revamped. Chief Lewis and Mr. Edwards discussed how to change the program, which included changes to the current SOPs.

Mr. Thompson asked if this was something that could be prepared by the next meeting. Chief Lewis asked Mr. Edwards to review the original Junior program documents and bring him the suggested changes.

Mr. Gowen suggested possibly having a small committee in charge instead of just one person to help make the program more effective.

10. FIRE RUN REPORTS BY TYPES (ENCLOSED IN HANDOUT)

Chief Lewis presented the report on fire runs from December 1st, 2024 to January 26th, 2025.

Mr. Gowen asked how the dispatching has been. Chief Lewis reports that it has been better. Chief Lewis sat down with Mr. Edwards, Sheriff Phillips, and Tresca Brown to discuss the issues. There are still some instances where they run into problems, but it mainly seems to be insufficient information is being provided to the dispatchers.

Chief Lewis is working on getting all of the first responders in the county and the cities together to get to know one another and build relationships between everyone.

11. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR/CLERK REPORT

Mr. Gowen introduced County Administrator Glenn Hull.

County Administrator Hull announced Chief Lewis's promotion to Director of Fire and Rescue, which means he will now oversee both the fire department and EMS. County Administrator Hull reports that Chief Lewis has risen to the occasion since his new promotion and has been working well with the EMS Division Chief.

County Administrator Hull also provided an update on the Georgia Bend Fire Station Project. As of last Friday, County Administrator Hull was working with the county engineer who has identified 3 potential bidders.

County Clerk Nettles reported on the county's partnership with the Hospital Authority, thanking Chief Lewis and the fire department for their hard work and assistance in the project.

12. GUESTS

There were no comments made by the guests present.

13. EXECUTIVE SESSION (IF REQUIRED)

No executive session was required.

14. NEXT MEETING: MARCH 24TH, 2025 AT 6:00 PM AT FOLKSTON FIRE STATION

15. ADJOURN

Mr. Harris made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Thompson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:26 PM.