FORSYTH COUNTY

FIRE COMMISSION

Walt Beroth - Chairman

Forsyth County Fire Commission Meeting Minutes

October 12, 2026

The Fire Commission met in regular session at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, October 12, 2026, in the meeting room at Forsyth County Fire Division Station 9, 3000 Aviation Drive, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Attendance

Present

Walt Beroth, Chair
Eddie Bottoms, Member
Gary Styers, Member
Carl Walker, Member
Don Martin, Member
Shane Moore, Member
Brian Tuttle, Member

Absent

Andrew Gray, Vice Chair
Steven Roberson, Member
Fred Fanklin, Member
Richard Linville, Member

The Fire Services Director and Assistant Chief of Operations were also present.

Chair Beroth called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance.

Commissioner Moore led the invocation and Chair Beroth led the pledge of allegiance.

Approval of the Minutes

Minutes from the September 21, 2026 meeting of the Fire Commission were presented. One correction was presented. Assistant Chief Vogler stated that the delay in air packs is tied to air bottles being manufactured. Should arrive sometime around the first of the year per Rinhardt. Commissioner Walker moved that the minutes be accepted as presented with the correction. Commissioner Tuttle seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

The public is invited to make comments regarding the business of the Fire Commission. Speakers are given three minutes to make their comments, and the public comment portion of the meeting is to last no longer than 30 minutes.

Chief Brooks discussed relief fund.

Justin Owens provided an update on the ARPA trucks. Will be delivered within the next month or so. Had questions about the titling of the trucks.
Commissioner Martin commented that a letter or MOU should be written to explain the parameters of the ownership of the trucks and the county's authority.

Commissioner Beroth asked about the delivery timeline. Chief Vogler stated that final inspection on those 4 trucks will begin this week and then 2 finals the first week in November and the last final will be in the last week in November. Depending on the inspections, delivery is typically a few weeks after. Chief Vogler is in the process of finalizing a transportation contract with First Choice for the delivery of these trucks. Chairman Beroth suggested coming back to this and adding it as new business.

Old Business

Subcommittee Reports:
Contracts: Chairman Beroth stated that the Contracts Subcommittee was unable to meet and the next meeting will be Wednesday, October 28 at 3:00 p.m.

Personnel: Chairman Bottoms stated that the committee is reviewing data and the next meeting has not been scheduled.

Capital: Chairman Walker presented that they developed a form that the county has previously been used by the county, but with an addition on instructions as to how to fill it out. The subcommittee could then use the information submitted by the Chiefs to determine needs. Much of this is contingent on the Strategic Planning Committee. The subcommittee also recommends and ISO meeting/class to determine departmental equipment requirements.

Chairman Beroth asked if departments use a letter or MOU with other departments to bring necessary equipment. Commissioner Walker affirmed that this is a common practice for ISO requirements.

Chairman Beroth expressed frustration that the purchased pagers and air packs have not been distributed. He stated the process when going through the county is very lengthy. He recommended finding a remedy for the lengthy procurement process. Commissioner Walker stated that it has been his experience that the county's purchasing process is slow and needs attention.
Chief Smith stated that the procurement policy has been changed and should streamline process.
Commissioner Walker asked if any other consortiums were being used other than the Sherrif's department.
Chief Vogler confirmed that other purchasing consortiums are approved.

Strategic Planning: Member Styers presented that the subcommittee discussed recommendations for mergers and minimum staffing. Regarding mergers, the financial stress for the affected departments is gone with the new funding structure. At this point, there are no recommendations for mergers. For minimum staffing and oversight, within 10 years each operational fire station to maintain qualified or FTE certified personnel. Data was also discussed and are in the process of gathering more data to prove if we are hitting the 2-person minimum. The data will be hard to obtain unless everyone is using Staffworks. Also reviewing data on missed calls and turn out on calls.

Chairman Beroth asked if there is any idea of how many departments are utilizing Staffworks. Member Styers is unsure.

New Business

Belews Creek Building Proposal: Chief Smith reported on behalf of Chief Brian Smith that part of the building is settling. This was mentioned in the 2025 study. Over the summer, this has gotten worse and are looking to repair the building. First bid from Groundworks was $45,000 and is now down to $38,000. Chief Brian Smith is actively trying to get more bids, but the companies are wanting sealed engineered drawings. We will let Belews Creek know how to proceed by the November 2nd meeting.

Chairman Beroth asked if this is a semi-emergent repair and can wait. Chief Smith confirmed barring any major disasters but needs to be addressed sooner rather than later.

Chairman Beroth understands that county staff wants this to go through the Fire Commission and come to the County Commissioners with a recommendation. Chief Smith confirmed that anything coming out of the capital overlay fund will be approved by the Fire Commission and then presented to the County Commissioners if it reaches the $50,000 or more threshold. Chief Smith was asked if VFIS will cover and will reach out to Chief Brian Smith to find out.

Piney Grove Truck Purchase: Chief walker stated that Piney Grove **r**eceived a payout from VFIS for $750,000 stemming from a loss that occurred June 23, 2026. Prior to that, conversations were had with state representatives about funding for a truck. We received approval from the County Commission but held off purchasing because of all the funding changes. We are now in need of two trucks and need up to $350,000 from the overlay fund. These trucks will be coming in right below $1 million per. We currently have one truck in the shop with a blown engine and are down the other because of the loss. Commissioner Martin asked if any salvage money was received for the totaled truck. Chief Walker confirmed they did not. They were compensated for all equipment attached to the truck totaling roughly $28,000.

Chairman Beroth asked when the approval from the County Commissioners was received. Chief Walker believes it was in August of 2023. Chief Vogler confirmed it was in August of 2023, not to exceed $750,000. Chairman Beroth asked for clarification that the approval from 2023 was for $750,000, and now with the addition of insurance and grant money, all that is being requested is $350,000. Chief Walker confirmed up to $350,000 for the purchase of 2 trucks.

Commissioner Martin asked if the second truck will be titled to the County. Chief Walker expressed his opinion that everything at Piney Grove Fire Department belongs to Piney Grove taxpayers.

Chairman Beroth asked for a motion to recommend that Piney Grove can spend up to $350,000 for the purchase of 2 fire trucks out of the overlay. Commissioner Martin made the motion to pass, Chief Bottoms seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Tuttle asked, moving forward how will this process work regarding project bidding. Chief Vogler stated that this will go through the Capital Subcommittee and recommended developing specs for the standardization of future purchases.

Old Business

Department Budgets: Chairman Beroth requested the Commissions' thoughts on the department budgets being presented to the Fire Commission for recommendation to County staff and Commissioners for approval. Although it is a lot or work, it is part of the Fire Commission's mission. Discussion landed on a consensus that review by the Fire Commission will provide better recommendations and more transparency to staff and County Commissioners. Chairman Beroth said there will be some ideas presented at the November 2nd meeting.

Municipal Department Matrix: Chief Smith presented implementing a matrix to provide funding to the municipal departments. The goal is to provide structured guidance for annual funding. We hope to run some numbers to present at the November 2nd meeting. Chief Bottoms asked if we could make this applicable countywide. Chief Smith replied that the request was for a matrix for just for Rural Hall and King, but if the Commission wants to expand, we can work on that. Chief Walker supports creating a matrix that will work for the county and utilizing it throughout. Chief Bottoms does not want to detract from the charge of creating a matrix for King and Rural Hall but wanted to know if we could eventually apply the matrix to all departments.

Reserve Fund Formula: Chairman Beroth stated that some departments have quite a bit of fund balance while others have none. When a request comes in, the first question has been, what is in your fund balance. A decision needs to be made as to how much fund balance a private, non-profit can carry. Chairman Beroth asked Chief Smith if the County has any guidance. Chief Smith advised that Kyle Haney would be back and would reach out to him for guidance.

State Grants: Chief Smith presented that 7 departments received grants. The State sent the money to the County, to then disburse to the departments. The first one is the $1 million for Piney Grove for the truck. The other 7 will be receiving $250,000 to be used for capital needs and distributed Beeson's, Belews Creek, Lewisville 11 and 13, Salem Chapel, Piney Grove, and Walkertown. It will be roughly $28,571 per department. The County Manager reached out to Sen. Jones for guidance and Sen. Jones agreed to Fire Commission oversight of the funds. The Fire Chiefs were asked what their capital needs were and will bring those back to the Fire Commission for approval.

Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Forsyth County Fire Commission will be November 2, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. in the meeting room at Forsyth County Fire Division Station 9, 3000 Aviation Drive, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chairman Beroth asked for a motion to adjourn. Chief Walker moved for adjournment. Commissioner Martin seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

F. Walter Beroth, Chair	**Jenna Karber, RMS Administrator**
Forsyth County Fire Commission	Secretary to the Forsyth County Fire Commission