



***Lancaster County Fire Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes***

March 5, 2026

The March meeting of the Lancaster County Fire Commission was held on Thursday, March 5th, 2026, at the Lancaster County EOC at 111 Covenant Place at 7:00 p.m. Freedom of Information Act requirements were met by notification to The Lancaster News, The Herald, Kershaw News Era, Learn TV and Fort Mill Times. The agenda was also posted on the bulletin boards at the Lancaster County Administration Building and the EOC on Thursday, February 26th, 2025.

Chairman Clint Sowell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and Tony Gainer gave the invocation.

Fire Commission Members:

Antioch – Eric Flynn*
Bell Town – Jamie Gainer*
Buford – Billy Morris*
Camp Creek – Toby Roberts*
Van Wyck – Mark Carnes*
Elgin – Billy Robinson*
Flat Creek – Ron Schachtner*
Gooch's – Terry Ward*
Heath Springs – Matthew Harris*
Indian Land – Greg Nicholson*
Kershaw – Todd Duncan*
Lancaster – Justin McLellan*
McDonald Green – Clint Sowell*
Rich Hill – Josh Alford*
Riverside – Chris Gardner*
Shiloh-Zion – Fred Plyler*
Tradesville – Jason Laney*
Unity – Kelsi Lang*
F-1 – Greg Nicholson*
F-2 – Keith Wilson*
F-3 – Britt Blackmon*
F-4 – Billy Lloyd
F-6 – Sam Plyler
F-7 – Brian Stogner
F-9 – Tony Gainer*
F-10 – Mike Magette
Administrative Assistant – Sarah Jane Goode*
* - Members Present



Visitors: Gregory Sims, County Administrator Steve Willis

Approval of the March 5, 2026 Agenda: Jamie Gainer made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Eric Flynn seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approval of the February 5, 2026 Minutes: Jamie Gainer made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Tony Gainer seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Citizen Comments: None.

Standard Operating Guideline Committee – Nothing to report.

Strategic Planning and Governmental Operations Committee – Nothing to report.

Apparatus and Equipment Committee – Nothing to report.

Budget Planning & Appropriations Committee – Nothing to report.

Personnel and Interagency Relations Committee – Nothing to report.

Old Business:

- a. Discussion concerning Fire Rescue Moving Forward – Chairman Clint Sowell stated he has been in discussion for litigation with the Lancaster County attorney regarding the McDonald Green station. He explained they have a few things that still need to be discussed and went on to state Administrator Steve Willis and himself are trying to get the process moving forward. Mark Carnes asked if the station has become a dead issue and we are no longer moving forward. Chairman Clint Sowell stated it has not and we are finally to the point to begin moving forward. Toby Roberts asked since the Commission decided on a millage instead of rooftop fee, has anyone compiled any numbers to see what type of budget it would generate so we could realistically see the type of budget we could work with. Chairman Clint Sowell stated he knows Darren Player was working on this; however, he is not sure if he passed that on to Interim Director Greg Nicholson. Greg Nicholson stated Darren Player had not passed that information on, but he would check where we are at and felt this would be discussed at the upcoming Committee of the Whole meeting. Administrator Steve Willis stated the project they are working on now is mainly capital expenditure and that it would be funded by the debt service, not fees. He went on to clarify normal expenses for the fire service will go through the regular general fund operating budget unless Council decides to change something. He stated as of right now, they are working to get trucks ordered since we are so far behind. He clarified the truck purchase would be from the general obligation debt fund. Todd Duncan asked if there was anything we could do to assist. Toby Roberts added to this statement by asking if there was something they could do to expedite the process. Greg Nicholson stated he does not think there is anything they could do at this time. He went on to explain he will be presenting the budget to Administrator Steve Willis the following day, March 6th. He stated Administrator



Steve Willis has promised the budget will go through on his end. It was then clarified the budget may not be on the recommended side, but Council will be able to see what was presented. He also explained he has been speaking with Council members to see where they are regarding this endeavor. Greg Nicholson also stated if we budget for six more personnel for a secondary station, this will generate conversation amongst Council; therefore, he believes this will allow us to see where they stand. Todd Duncan asked if the six he was referring to were for a second full-time station. Greg Nicholson clarified yes. Todd Duncan asked if the plan was to still have existing personnel employ the McDonald Green station. Greg Nicholson stated yes except for one position, which is the captain position currently posted. He went on to clarify that all these positions have been approved and are in our current budget as of January 2026. He stated he believes a lot of the issue was the contract between the station and the County. Todd Duncan asked if there was a written idea of how the station would operate because he had heard differing opinions. Greg Nicholson stated he feels once we get closer to opening the station, there will be a written policy. He explained the employees will technically be for the County fire service and not the Fire Commission. He ensured the Fire Commission would understand what the duties will be for employees as well as their response areas and daily activities. Todd Duncan stated this will affect all departments; therefore, they should know what to expect. Greg Nicholson stated the process has simply been put on hold and we do not need to write policies and procedures if Council states we can no longer move forward. He went on to clarify there will be written policies in place prior to the opening of the station. He also explained that Chris Gardner and a panel of members have been working on writing preliminary SOG's. Chairman Clint Sowell stated he too has sat in on a few of the meetings regarding the SOG's for the twenty-four seven coverage station and they are continuing to work on them, however, they are not complete as of this moment. He ensured they will be completed prior to the station opening. Todd Duncan stated he does not think members are concerned with the daily duties, but instead the shift schedule, the response areas, the call types for response, etc. He went on to state he has heard the hours of 8:00am – 5:00pm will be response to the McDonald Green, Bell Town, and Gooches area and the remaining timeframe will be anywhere within the county. Chairman Clint Sowell stated everyone received the same PowerPoint regarding the station and what was included is an accurate representation of how the station will function. Mark Carnes asked if the endeavor has been postponed to January of next year. Chairman Clint Sowell stated not to his knowledge. He went on to clarify that he feels the delays have been due to the Fire Commission Director retiring and the County Administrator leaving, resulting in two interim positions. He also stated he has been in discussion with Administrator Steve Willis more so than he ever was with our previous County Administrator. Todd Duncan asked if there is any concern that Council will state this endeavor is not important since we are so close to a new budget and we have not spent any of the allocated funds for this project out of the current budget. Greg Nicholson stated he does not believe so considering Council are the ones that have delayed the process and know we have not been able to use the funds already allocated. He clarified it is not because we have not asked to use the funds and he hopes Council understands they are why we have not been able to do so. He also clarified if Council would have stopped the process, they would have rescinded their vote. Mark Carnes asked about the PowerPoint Chairman Clint Sowell mentioned. Chairman Clint Sowell stated everyone received a PowerPoint approximately two years ago.



Mark Carnes stated he did not receive a PowerPoint. Toby Roberts stated the PowerPoint was also emailed to the Commission. Chairman Clint Sowell stated yes, it was emailed but he could provide a copy. Todd Duncan stated he did not receive an email with the PowerPoint either, however, he was not on the Commission at that time. Chairman Clint Sowell stated if anyone needed a copy of the PowerPoint, to please see him following tonight's meeting and he will provide you with one. Toby Roberts asked if there had been any discussion on where the second station would be. Chairman Clint Sowell stated no, but that would be coming up shortly. No action taken.

- b. Discussion concerning Report for First Due – Todd Duncan asked how to request the training so they can start using what stations have access to now. He went on to state they can do reports on the station computer; however, nobody has been trained to do it; therefore, they are not allowed to complete the reports. Due to this, stations are still writing reports, copying and pasting the report into the spreadsheet then emailing it so that staff must spend their time entering the reports that stations already have access to. Chairman Clint Sowell stated he does know Billy Lloyd was going to send the training modules out, but he had to leave shortly before the meeting. Toby Roberts stated he spoke with Billy Lloyd prior to him leaving and he was informed Billy Lloyd was planning to begin training the departments on how to complete reports shortly. Chairman Clint Sowell stated he would like to add to what Toby Roberts stated, clarifying this is why Billy Lloyd sent the email to all Chiefs regarding placement of the iPads in the trucks. He is going to have the iPad mounts installed and get the iPads mounted in the vehicles before beginning training. Todd Duncan stated he is positive that the spots have already been marked for a couple of months for the iPad mounts. Chairman Clint Sowell stated he believes that iPad mount installation had to be put on hold as well. He went on to state that when Billy Lloyd gets the iPads mounted, he will then begin training. Greg Nicholson asked to please make sure your Chief answers that email prior to the Chiefs meeting this month so the iPads can be mounted in the trucks. He clarified he does know the iPads have been sitting for a while and do need to be installed. He went on to state there will be a command staff meeting on Monday, March 9th and he will try to get some answers then. Todd Duncan asked if iPads were here. Greg Nicholson answered yes. Todd Duncan asked if stations could have their iPad now. He went on to state they do not have to have a stand to use the iPad. Chairman Clint Sowell stated the County wants the iPads locked in to ensure they are not damaged. Greg Nicholson stated new plugs also must be installed in the trucks to accommodate the iPads. This is one of the projects Billy Lloyd has been working on to install the mounts and iPads. No action taken.
- c. Discussion concerning Fire Reports Summary – Chairman Clint Sowell stated there are still a lot of missing and incomplete reports that everyone needs to work on. No action taken.

New Business:

- a. Discussion concerning Fire Commission Budget – Greg Nicholson stated the current budget numbers are included in your packet. He went on to explain that the numbers are looking good



and above most of our percentages. The numbers are a little low on a few line items but some of those are a one-time purchase agreement or something similar. He will be presenting all budgets tomorrow, March 6th, as well as the Indian Land budget to Administrator Steve Willis. He assured us everything discussed was added to the budget and clarified the main thing requested was an increase in equipment funds to help offset shipping and taxes. Chairman Clint Sowell stated six positions were previously discussed. Greg Nicholson stated those would be in the 144 budget with wages. He went on to explain this budget will ask for six fire fighters, one mechanic, one assistant mechanic, and one Community Engagement and Fire Safety Coordinator for the Fire Marshals office. He clarified the maintenance division is getting further behind and last he heard from Billy Lloyd; there were four hundred forty-seven maintenance requests in line to be completed. This is why they are requesting two more positions in the maintenance division. The Fire Marshals are trying to complete inspections as well as handle all community engagement tasks including public speaking, installing smoke detectors, and more. The requested position for their division will help cover these tasks and in their down time, they can assist with completing inspections. Billy Robinson stated Chairman Clint Sowell mentioned the phone service reimbursements being increased. Greg Nicholson stated he is almost positive this amount was increased in the proposed budget but will check to make sure. No action taken.

- b. Discussion concerning Board and Commissioner of the Year – Chairman Clint Sowell asked for a nomination for Commissioner of the Year. Justin McLellan made a motion to nominate Clint Sowell as Commissioner of the Year. Greg Nicholson seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.
- c. Discussion concerning Approval to Move Recruitment and Retention Awards to April – Chairman Clint Sowell stated Brian Stogner has requested approval to move the Recruitment and Retention awards from March to April. He clarified it is difficult for Brian Stogner to get everything together by March. Greg Nicholson asked if this was the one for scholarships. Chairman Clint Sowell stated this is the awards for call volumes where members receive a plaque. Todd Duncan made a motion to move the Recruitment and Retention Awards to April. Toby Roberts seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.
- d. Discussion concerning Call Types – Nothing to report. No action taken.
- e. Discussion concerning Approval of Fire Department AFG Grants – Todd Duncan asked if anyone has heard when the grants are going to open this year. Chairman Clint Sowell stated he has not heard anything. Todd Duncan stated he has heard since the government was shut down for three months, they are looking to possibly open grants this month. Chairman Clint Sowell stated he has not seen anything regarding this. Todd Duncan stated funds were just awarded the first of January, so they are way behind. No action taken.



- f. Notes from Greg Nicholson Regarding Next Full Time Station – Greg Nicholson stated he knows there has been a lot of discussion on putting staff in for a second station and the location has not been decided. He will be presenting the budgets, but once he presents to Council, it will be difficult to ask for more funding and personnel when we have not narrowed down a location. He believes it will be beneficial to have the second station location decided so that he can speak on its behalf when presenting budgets. He stated he could explain once McDonald Green has started, we have the second location already determined and he can speak as to whom the six additional personnel will be for this station and the area they will serve. He explained he believes it will be difficult to persuade Council on funding for a second station and personnel if the location is unknown. Chairman Clint Sowell stated he recalled Darren Player was going to get some data for the Commission to review to assist in determining the second station location and that decision was to be made by the March meeting. Greg Nicholson stated he has only seen heat maps where the highest concentration of call volumes are located. These maps remove the City and Indian Land area. He stated McDonald Green is located on the highest area. Chairman Clint Sowell stated it has been discussed for the second station to be located at Shiloh Zion, Rich Hill, and Buford. Eric Flynn asked if we are going to use a station like McDonald Green or will a new station be built. Chairman Clint Sowell stated it would essentially be like McDonald Green, and it looks as if the highest concentration areas are more on the east side of the county. Greg Nicholson stated he could gather new heat maps. He went on to clarify the budget presentation to Council is mid-April and asked if an agreement can be made on the second location prior to then. He stated he will try to send something out to everyone that shows the heat map and ideas for the second location. He also agreed it would be beneficial to select a station that already has some type of living quarters instead of starting from scratch, but the decision is up to the Commission. He clarified McDonald Green is considered the west side of the county so the east side or south side would be ideal. Chairman Clint Sowell stated since the budget presentation is mid-April, they will attempt to get all the information out as soon as possible so the Commission can determine the next location by the April Fire Commission meeting. Greg Nicholson stated this will also be discussed at the upcoming Chiefs' meeting and he will send all the information out in an email so a decision can hopefully be made by the following Fire Commission meeting. Chairman Clint Sowell stated your packet includes a color-coded calendar as well. The legend with the Fire Chiefs meeting schedule will be updated and sent out by email so that everyone will have all meeting dates and locations as well as all due dates. Chairman Clint Sowell went on to state the second round of matching funds will now be open. As of the meeting, there is a total of \$18,817.07 available and this will be first come first serve to those that wish to participate. He explained if there were something you would like to order, get your order as soon as possible. Terry Ward stated Gooches would like to freeze their original matching funds amount for the time being as they have a few projects in the works that they would like to use these funds for. Mark Carnes asked if that meant the second round of funds was not available at the moment. Chairman Clint Sowell stated for Gooches, yes, however, it is available for everyone else. Mark Carnes asked if there was a time orders were supposed to be submitted by. Chairman Clint Sowell stated there is usually a timeline, however, we did not have a deadline this year considering catalogs were released so late. No action taken.



Miscellaneous Items:

- a. Grants Update – Chairman Clint Sowell stated he hopes everyone has completed their V-Safe paperwork. March 26th is the deadline to have all V-Safe paperwork submitted. Please be sure to get with you Chiefs and get those completed if they have not already done so.
- b. Training Report – Britt Blackmon presented the training report. If anyone has any questions, please contact the training division.

The Pump Ops class was cancelled due to not being able to find an instructor. Pump Ops has been rescheduled for Friday – Sunday July 10th – 12th, Friday – Sunday July 17th – 19th, then test on Saturday July 25th. This will be held at Kershaw. Greg Nicholson asked if there was a reason this would take place at Kershaw. Britt Blackmon stated there are a few people working in Kershaw and they can move the trucks for the instructor. Britt also stated today was the last day for FDIC submissions. He had eight submissions for volunteers. Tomorrow morning, March 6th, he will formulate an email to the executive committee so they can look at the criteria and come to a decision. Mark Carnes asked if someone could take Fire Fighter 1 without having hazmat. Britt Blackmon stated no, hazmat awareness and hazmat ops are pre-requisites.

SCFA

County SCFA Catalog Courses

- January – June 2026 Lancaster County SCFA Catalog Courses are in your packet. Members can sign up for classes via the portal. Please look at cutoff dates and prerequisites.
- July – December class request by April meeting.

High School Program

- Students are now in Firefighter 1.

Rescue

Rescue Drills

- Large Truck Extrication training May timeframe

Social Media / Station History

Top 3 Training Hours in Packet

- c. Maintenance Report – Chairman Clint Sowell stated there is nothing to report on maintenance per Billy Lloyd.
- d. Commissioner Station Announcements – Chairman Clint Sowell stated McDonald Green will have their BBQ this Saturday, March 7th. Billy Robinson stated Elgin will have their BBQ last



weekend in March. It will be Thursday March 26th and Friday March 27th only. Josh Alford stated Rich Hill will try to have their BBQ March 28th.

Adjournment:

Toby Roberts made a motion to adjourn. Jason Laney seconded the motion, which received unanimous approval. The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

***For the Commission,
Sarah Jane Goode***