

Minutes
Justice & Public Safety Committee Meeting
Wednesday, February 19, 2025
6:00pm

The Committee met on the above date for a Justice & Public Safety Committee Meeting at 6:00pm in the large conference room at the Heckle Complex, 1070 Heckle Boulevard, Rock Hill, SC. The following members were present: Council member Tom Audette, Council member Watts Huckabee, and Council member Tommy Adkins. Also present were Assistant County Manager, David Garner and County Attorney, Michael Kendree.

Council member Tommy Adkins called meeting to order

Discussion regarding the 5-year and 10-year Fire and EMS Vision for York County

Assistant County Manager, David Garner presented the 5 and 10-year plan for Fire and EMS. Mr. Garner reported that he would like input from all Council members on how the plan should look going forward.

Strategic Plan Alignment: “Safe Community:

- Improving response times
 - Developing and retaining professional staff
 - Increasing emergency services engagement
 - Aligning public safety entities
 - Leveraging data and technology
1. Improved response reliability:
 - a. The transition to a unified fire service system with 24/7 staffing ensures reliable and effective emergency response countywide.
 2. Increased professionalism:
 - a. Centralized governance, consistent training, and adherence to national standards enhance the professionalism and accountability of fire services.
 3. Enhanced community safety:
 - a. Proactive risk reduction programs and fire-based EMS integration improve public safety outcomes and community resilience.
 4. Transparent and accountable operations:
 - a. Regular reporting on safety metrics and community feedback loops aligns emergency services with public expectations.

Fire

- 16 fire departments
 - Mostly volunteer supplemented by paid staff
- Fire advisory committee
- 3 roving squads (county paid staff)

- Business hour response
- Varied funding models
 - 7 tax districts
 - Rural fire millage
 - Municipal Fire/County response
- Geography
 - Urban and rural response areas
- Varied LOS
 - EMS, Rescue, HazMat, etc
- Decentralized Training
- Vehicle replacement program

EMS

- 3 EMS providers in York County
 - Piedmont EMS (Hospital), Fort Mill EMS, River Hills EMS
- Varied LOS depending on staffing and system status
- PSC (911) dispatches for all units
- Limited fire support for EMS
- No countywide EMS funding mechanism
- Urban v. rural response times (8-20+min)
- No in-house training or medical control program
- Up to date EMS deployment software in PSC

Current Efforts

- York County conducting strategic planning session with all 16 fire districts
 - Current themes: strong community relations, manpower shortages, recruitment & retention challenges, high cost of equipment/apparatus, opportunity for higher training frequency/development
- Fire tax board training
 - Dedicated fire accountant
 - Direct engagement with all fire tax boards
- Monthly EMS meetings with Piedmont Hospital EMS
 - Regular reporting of response times, staffing levels, etc. with direct input and responsiveness with hospital management
- Recently updated PSC software to incorporate emergency medical dispatch (newest version), MARVLIS integration, and process improvement/quality assurance
- Purchase and deployment of 49 MDT's for fire apparatus

5-year vision

Establishing a unified and modernized fire service system

Goal: Build a foundation for consistent governance, funding and operations while addressing immediate coverage and service gaps.

- Governance and Organization
 - Standardization
 - Oversight of fire service
- Funding and resource allocation
 - Adequate funding mechanism
 - Equipment rotation and replacement schedule
- Coverage and staffing
 - Expansion of coverage with updated staffing/deployment model
- Training and safety
 - 5-year training curriculum
- Public safety integration
 - Collaboration with special operations, EMS and law enforcement

10-year vision

Expanding a unified, efficient, and resilient fire service

Goal: full integrate governance, funding, staffing, and service delivery that meets the needs of York County's growing population.

- Governance and Organization
 - Unified fire service
 - Streamlined decision making (singular board)
- Funding and resource allocation
 - Centralized funding mechanism
 - Strategic resource placement
- Coverage and staffing
 - 24/7 operations
 - Expand full-time staffing
- Training and safety
 - Countywide training requirements
- Public safety integration
 - Expansion of EMS response
- Infrastructure
 - Strategic growth/consolidation of infrastructure
 - Standardized fleet
- Risk Reduction
 - Data driven approach to high-risk areas
- Strategic metrics
 - Achieve 90% or greater compliance with response times
 - Urban: 10 minutes or less
 - Rural: 13 minutes or less

- 100% compliance with national safety and training standards

EMS 5 and 10-year plan

5-year vision

- Expand data collection
 - Countywide EMS data system
- Strengthen partnerships
 - Improve dispatch processes
 - EMS/Fire cross training
- Evaluate County Role
 - Increased county oversight
 - Public-private partnerships
 - Funding
- Hospital coordination
 - Increase data sharing
 - Reduction of ED overcrowding

10-year vision

- Expand County EMS role
 - York county EMS feasibility
 - EMS oversight body
 - Countywide QA/QI system
- Fire & EMS integration
 - Formal fire rescue response
 - Evaluate fire-based EMS transport
- Increase efficiency
 - Tiered response integration
 - Delayed dispatch, BLS, ALS QRV
- Hospital contracts
 - Evaluate hospital-based EMS efficiency

Committee members would like the Sheriff's Department and all fire departments to be included in the plan.

Mr. Garner stated that staff is working on adding funding to the upcoming budget to start the process.

Motion was made by Council member Tom Audette and seconded by Council member Watts Huckabee to approve the minutes from the March 20,2024 Justice and Public Safety Committee meeting. Motion Carried.

Chairman Tommy Adkins stated that he would like to have bi-monthly committee meetings going forward. Clerk will schedule the next meeting in April.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Council member Watts Huckabee and seconded by Council member Tom Audette. Motion Carried.