

**NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL PUBLIC SAFETY AND COURTS COMMITTEE
MINUTES
February 9, 2026**

The Newberry County Council Public Safety and Courts Committee met on Monday, February 9, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. in Council Chambers at the Courthouse Annex, 1309 College Street, Newberry, SC, for a special called meeting.

Notice of the meeting was duly advertised, as required by law.

PRESENT: Stuart Smith, Committee Chair
Karl Sease, Committee Member
Ted Luckadoo, County Administrator
Eric Nieto, I.T. Director
Brandon Wicker, Emergency Services Coordinator
Andrew Wigger, Clerk to Council/PIO

ABSENT: Leon Fulmer, Committee Member
Jeff Shacker, County Administrator

Mr. Smith called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Mr. Sease led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Election of the 2026 Chairman – Jeff Shacker, County Administrator.
 - Mr. Smith said with Mr. Fulmer not being here, they will table this agenda item until the next meeting.
2. Additions, Deletions and Adoption of the Agenda.
 - Mr. Sease made a motion to accept the agenda as presented; Mr. Smith provided the second and the motion carried 7-0.

3. Updates on Physicals and Software – Brandon Wicker, Emergency Services Coordinator.

- Mr. Wicker said the physicals are going fairly well, with about 36 people signed up. He said the physicals have changed this year as they are doing them at Newberry Health and they are a little more comprehensive.
- There are new OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) standards requiring all members of the department to have some form of physical. He said they have been doing some digging to find different counties doing tiered physicals. There would be one tier for operators and another tier for everyone else. They are looking to do two tiers of physicals, one that would cut out the treadmill and possibly the lung capacity test.
- Mr. Wicker said they have put in a budget request for more money for the physicals, to get ahead of the curve.
- Mr. Sease asked regarding the individuals who have not completed the lung capacity test, whether they would not be able to wear the SCBA; Mr. Wicker said that is correct and they will work out what is most needed for that tier of physicals.
- Mr. Smith asked about the physicals taking place working around schedules, Mr. Wicker said they have some morning slots and some afternoon slots with the latest being around 7 p.m.
- Regarding software, Mr. Wicker said the departments have been using ImageTrend four about 15 years, and about a year ago questions came up about the difficulty of the system. He said they started looking if there was an easier way to use the system without much luck.
- Mr. Wicker said they looked at other systems including ESO and First Due. He said ESO is rather pricey for the way they'd need it set up, but it's a good system. He said First Due works similar to ESO, neighboring counties seem to like the First Due system, and the price wasn't as high.
- Mr. Wicker said ESO was priced at about \$47,000 annually, First Due was \$29,600 annually.
- Mr. Wicker said he is asking tonight to do a prorated account that would begin as soon as they get the paperwork out, March-July, and then start the new contract in August. The amount for the prorated portion would be a little over \$18,000 more.

- Mr. Sease said they would just recommend it to full council, Mr. Luckadoo added that it would give staff a chance to look over the request and the numbers.
- Mr. Luckadoo asked what the current cost was, Mr. Wicker said it was in the neighborhood of about \$20,000.

4. Update on Emergency Services Projects – Tommy Long, Emergency Services Director.

- Mr. Long provided an update on what has been going on with Newberry County Fire and Rescue.
- Station generators have been going in at Pomaria, Little Mountain, Newberry Rescue, St. Phillips. They are in the process of putting in the pads now and should be completed by around April.
- The two new ambulances have been put into service. Fairview's new engine should be delivered in the next few weeks.
- St. Phillips roof repair has been completed and that should take care of the leaks.
- Mr. Sease asked if the roof repair was due to the recent hailstorm; Mr. Long said it was not and something they noticed when Hurricane Helene came through.
- Mr. Smith asked what the plan for the ambulances that will be taken out of service; Mr. Long said that they will try and sell them and put that money back into replacing another vehicle.

5. Update on Newberry County EMS – Mike Hall, Newberry County EMS Director.

- Mr. Hall provided updates on staffing, he said that when he started in November, there were five vacancies with three of those being filled and the need to fill the other two.
- For his upcoming budget request, Mr. Hall requested two additional trucks as two of his current trucks are over 200,000 miles and two others are over 250,000 miles. He said if they don't get the two trucks this year, they will have to get them next year.

- Mr. Hall has made a request to have supervisors backfill their positions to get them off the trucks. He said Newberry County is the only county in the area that still has supervisors on the trucks. He said they cannot be successful doing multiple jobs.
- Mr. Hall said they have made some adjustments to how they handle mutual aid for neighboring counties. He said that Newberry County EMS is receiving calls a lot of times because the other county has an extended ETA for low acuity calls, taking resources out of the county to send to another county for something that is not high acuity nature. They have started a policy internally where they are not sending resources outside of the county for low acuity calls.
- Mr. Smith asked what the year model of the two ambulances that were over 200,000 miles; Mr. Hall said he did not have the fleet list, but he can provide that. He added the fleet average per year is 30,000-40,000.

6. Recent Winter Storm Response – Chris Johnson, Board of Rescue Squads Chair.

- Mr. Johnson wanted to highlight data from the last two winter storms.
- During those two weekends, all the squads combined responded to 38 calls for service, 16 ambulance responses or transports.
- During the peak of the storm, the chiefs and department heads agreed for the low acuity calls they would either not respond an ambulance or they were going to respond QRV first.
- A minimum of 30 members were standing by at the stations for response, and that number peaked at 40 volunteers staffing the stations. Station 13 averaged two to three personnel, Station 14 (during the ice storm) managed between five and eight, and four to five personnel during the snowstorm.
- They also assisted with the emergency shelter and keeping a check on them. Station 15 was manned with one to five personnel at times Saturday to Sunday, during the snowstorm. They responded to a call and were able to bring two of the uninjured individuals back to their station, out of the weather.
- Station 16 was manned for a total of seven days, between the two storms, with a minimum of three personnel at all times.

- Station 17 had three personnel staffing their station. Station 18 averaged 10 personnel staffing their station both weekends. Station 19 averaged eight personnel staffing their station.
- During the ice storm, Stations 18 and 19 responded to a wreck with entrapment. Station 19 along with EMS responded to a cardiac arrest on Sunday of the snowstorm and were able to get a pulse back – Station 19's ambulance had to transport that patient to Columbia during the storm. That truck is 25 years old and needs to be replaced.
- Mr. Johnson said he is impressed with what the volunteers were able to accomplish during the storms.
- Mr. Smith thanked Mr. Johnson and all the chiefs for their hard work and all of the volunteers work and assistance during the storms.

7. Presentation from Joe Palmer, Friendly Fire Chief.

- Mr. Palmer presented a proposed plan to improve Newberry County fire services, which would require additional revenue, staff, new capital, etc. Mr. Palmer also provided data on current response times, along with other pertinent data for fire services.
- Mr. Luckadoo asked Mr. Palmer if he had heard of Emergency Services Consulting International; Mr. Palmer said he had heard of them but never worked with them.
- Mr. Luckadoo said he used them for the fire chief search at Lexington County, but they provide master planning services and will bring people in.
- Mr. Palmer said getting someone to facilitate that would benefit the county so they can have collective conversation regarding this issue.
- Mr. Sease said that he has been on the committee the last couple years and realized the county is behind. He said there was a plan to buy a truck every year, and they didn't do that. He said they need to get a plan together to start thinking about the future. He said they cannot do it all at once, but they can start chipping away.
- Mr. Luckadoo said he believes there is value in having an intermediate facilitator leading that charge and doing an independent evaluation and review. He said he thinks they will create a roadmap based on your current situation and funding. Mr. Palmer said he thinks that is a grand idea.

8. Public Comments.

- Mr. Terry Russell, fire rescue chief of Stations 10 and 15 in Chappells, he said they have 10 members, he said he guesses the committee received the proposed plan, but he had questions regarding the plan. He asked if this would be a continuing millage increase or a one time only; Mr. Smith said that is something they'd have to work on, and this is only the planning stages. He said there has been a rolling stock plan for years, and the emergency service director puts in the budget what they need, but they are not bought. He said this is a Council and Administrator issue, and if they ask for equipment and cut out of the budget, where does it go. He said if they say they need five trucks, and they don't get five trucks, their board doesn't have any teeth. He said he is not in the way of hiring or getting equipment for what they need to do, but having paid firefighters in the city does not help the people of Chappells.
- Mr. Paul Cromer, of Fairview Fire Department, said he wanted to back Mr. Palmer, he said there is no doubt at Fairview that they need help, and they've known that for a long time. He said he does not think they can do the job today without paid firefighters. He said they are very interested in getting paid firefighters. He said he knows you have to crawl before you can walk, and he knows if they can do only a little at a time, they'd appreciate it.

9. Comments from Committee Members.

- Mr. Sease said you have different groups all over the county and they have stations that definitely need help. He said if they can get some paid firefighters that can roam around the county, especially during the day, that could improve response times. He said they need to get a plan together, have a group come in and do an evaluation to help find the county's needs.
- Mr. Smith thanked the volunteers for all their hard work, day in and day out. He said they have come a long way, and they are working on improvements and finding the best solution.

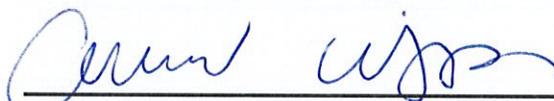
10. Adjournment.

- Mr. Sease made a motion to adjourn; Mr. Smith provided the second and the motion carried 2-0.
- Newberry County Council Public Safety and Courts Committee adjourned at 6:28 p.m.

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AND COURTS COMMITTEE**



Stuart Smith, Committee Chairman



Andrew Wigger, Clerk to Council

Minutes Approved: 2-18-26