

**Town of Rolesville North Carolina
Fire Service Unification Initiative
Session #2 Working Notes**

June 2, 2021 - 3pm-4:45pm - via Zoom

Attendance:

- Mayor Ronnie Currin, Town of Rolesville ron.currin@rolesville.nc.gov
- Commissioner Jacky Wilson, Town of Rolesville jacky.wilson@rolesville.nc.gov
- Commissioner April Sneed, Town of Rolesville april.sneed@rolesville.nc.gov
- Town Manager Kelly Arnold, Town of Rolesville kelly.arnold@rolesville.nc.gov
- Finance Director Amy Stevens, Town of Rolesville amy.stevens@rolesville.nc.gov
- Pres. Spence Jones, Rolesville Rural Fire Department (RRFD) Spence@actelectricinc.com
- Frank Pearce, Jr., RRFD Board Secretary/Treasurer N/A
- Herbert Holding, RRFD Board hholding@rolesvillefire.com
- Chief Rodney Privette, RRFD chief@rolesvillefire.com
- Assistant Chief Donnie Lawrence, RRFD AsstChief@rolesvillefire.com
- Captain Jacob Butler, RRFD jbutler@rolesvillefire.com
- Captain Brian Ward, RRFD bward@rolesvillefire.com
- Darrell Alford, Wake County Fire Services Director Darrell.Alford@wakegov.com
- Greg Grayson, NC Fire Chief Consulting as facilitator only ggrayson@NCFireChief.com

Absent:

Review of Working Notes from Session 1:

1. Kelly Arnold welcomed the group and asked Greg Grayson to review highlights of the working notes from Session 1. One correction had been noted to show Darrell Alford in attendance and that adjustment was made. Otherwise, the group gave concurrence to the working notes from Session 1.
2. Following this review, several follow up questions were brought forward.
 - a. Darrell Alford was asked for an update regarding Wake County's position on Brian Ward. Darrell advised that Wake HR had offered three options to Captain Brian Ward because he had served Wake County for over 20 years in his position at Rolesville. These were:
 - i. Retire from Wake County,
 - ii. Continue with Wake County under a contract with the Town just as the County is currently doing with RRFD,
 - iii. Separate from the County all together and work for the Town.Darrell Alford advised that Wake County was very willing to work with the Town and Captain Ward to make the transition best meet his needs and the needs of the Town.

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- b. Additional information was requested of Darrell Alford related to the Wake County service delivery standard. Wake County advised that the service delivery standard would be a part of the contract agreements in the future. However, Wake County recognized that there would be areas of the county where additional resources would be needed to meet the service delivery standards and those needs would have to be addressed in the funding process(es) with both municipalities and remaining private, non-profit fire department providers.

Publicizing Session Notes:

1. Importance of all stakeholders being aware of the ongoing discussions of the unification process was discussed. The Town discussed the recent past success of setting up a page on the Town website for modifications that were made with the Town Unified Development Ordinance and how that level of transparency was beneficial to the process with both residents and stakeholders.
2. Mayor Currin provided an example of the importance of transparency with the public on a somewhat similar issue some years back with Eastern Wake EMS so that everyone had the facts and that the rumors were managed.
3. Council Member Sneed emphasized the importance of getting out ahead of any rumors and keeping the public and key stakeholders well-informed.
4. Chief Privette and President Jones emphasized that they wanted the employees to know everything that was being discussed so that no employee was in the dark and had no surprises. Because the Fire Department Board did not meet very often, it is also important to keep the Fire Department Board of Directors well informed of the progress.
5. There was concurrence for the Town to set up a test page on the web site for this group to look at during the next meeting of the group and determine if everyone was comfortable with that platform after seeing the Town's web site page. This would be something that everyone would have easy access to and could be kept up to date. Ms. Stevens will take the lead on this initiative.

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County Pay Plan:

- 1) Darrell Alford discussed Wake County's fire service pay plan structure with the group. There is a market evaluation conducted by Wake HR every three years and the next revision will be due in late 2021. He discussed the differing levels of employees and employee schedules, such as those that worked 40-hour work weeks and those that worked 24-hour shifts, which have built in overtime calculated in compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act.
- 2) When funding cost share agreements with municipalities and contracting fire departments, Wake County will fund a portion of those salaries as long as those salaries are within the designated bands. There are those cases when changes are made by the Towns or fire departments, that the Wake County service district may take two years to fully catch up with the proper cost share amount because there is a limited amount of funding, and the system cannot absorb but so much of an increase. An example of this occurring was when the Town of Wake Forest assumed responsibility for their fire department. The same occurred with the Town of Knightdale.
- 3) Wake County funds a portion of four firefighters in single station departments (like Rolesville is currently) in order to meet minimum federal OSHA requirements for entry into Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (IDLH) structures.
- 4) Wake County also funds retirement benefits in alignment with the current percentages in NCLGERS, recognizing that some fire service providers are in NCLGERS and others are not. Furthermore, Wake County provides a portion of annual physicals for all firefighters, which is a national industry standard.
- 5) Chief Privette and Darrell Alford agreed that Rolesville was fully falling within the current Wake County pay scale ranges. Chief Privette advised that the RRFD currently provides raises when Wake County funding allows for raises. That is dependent upon each fiscal year budget.
- 6) Mr. Alford acknowledged that Wake County's compensation ranges were currently behind market for the Triangle and that keeping the salary ranges competitive was a constant struggle.
- 7) The County's pay ranges or bands are rather large. As an example, a Fire Chief has a range of \$91K to \$150K. As an example for Rolesville, whatever that salary was for Rolesville, the Wake County service district would pick up 48.51% of the total salary due to the cost-share percentage calculation (using square footage, property value, heated square footage, square mileage, on a 3 year rolling average, etc.). It must be

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emphasized that any position that the Wake County service district funds, must have a direct benefit to the unincorporated district served.

- 8) The current Wake County fire service pay plan as provided by Darrell Alford is attached below:

Appendix A:
Position Titles and Hourly Rates / Salary Ranges

Full Time (> 40 Hour) Shift Employees

Grade/Code	Position Title	Minimum	Midpoint	Maximum
FS 1	Firefighter 1	10.27	N/A	N/A
FS 2	Firefighter 2	11.54	15.11	18.68
FS 3	Firefighter 3	12.43	16.02	19.61
FS 4	Driver/Operator	13.17	17.13	21.09
FS 5	Officer 1 (Company Officer)	15.57	20.09	24.61
FS 6	Officer 2 (Chief Officer)	62,000*	78,690*	95,380*

* Annual salary shown for exempt employees

Full Time (40 Hour) Non-Shift Employees ¹

Grade/Code	Position Title	Minimum	Midpoint	Maximum
FS 6	Officer 2 (Chief Officer)	62,000*	78,690*	95,380*
FS 7	Executive Officer 1(Asst. Chief)	70,000*	90,717*	111,433*
FS 8	Executive Officer 2 (Deputy Chief)	75,000*	98,183*	121,366*
FS 9	Executive Officer 3 (Fire Chief)	91,000*	120,928*	150,856*
FS 10	Administrative Assistant	14.25	19.24	24.22
FS 11	Administrative Assistant 2	18.98	25.62	32.27

* Annual salary shown for exempt employees

Part Time (< 40 Hour) Employees

Grade/Code	Position Title	Minimum	Midpoint	Maximum
FS 1	Firefighter 1	15.71	N/A	N/A
FS 2	Firefighter 2	17.64	23.81	29.99
FS 3	Firefighter 3	18.52	25.00	31.49
FS 4	Driver/Operator	19.92	26.90	33.87
FS 5	Officer 1 (Company Officer)	23.25	31.38	39.52
FS 6	Officer 2 (Chief Officer)	26.97	36.41	45.86
FS 7	Executive Officer 1(Asst. Chief)	33.65	43.61	53.57
FS 8	Executive Officer 2 (Deputy Chief)	36.06	47.20	58.35
FS 9	Executive Officer 3(Fire Chief)	43.75	58.14	72.53
FS 10	Administrative Assistant	14.25	19.24	24.22
FS 11	Administrative Assistant 2	18.98	25.62	32.27

Yellow highlights = updated changes

¹ As of the July 2019 Salary Update, there were no approved full-time 40-hr/week positions in Grades FS1, FS2, FS3, FS4, FS5 or FS6.

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RRFD Assets:

- 1) Chief Privette reviewed the apparatus assets of the RRFD. The fire department currently has a total of 14 vehicles and holds the title to all of the apparatus. Using the VFIS schedule, the current fleet has a value of \$2,708,000. Chief Privette also noted that the department will be receiving two new apparatus at a value of \$1.3 Million, which would bring the approximate total apparatus value to approximately \$4million. However, within this number, two vehicles are owned by Wake County – a brush truck (valued at \$85K) and a tanker (valued at \$310K). Also, when the new apparatus comes in, the RRFD plans to sell an older truck. Therefore, the total projected value of apparatus would be closer to \$3.5Million.
- 2) The above also includes two antique fire apparatus – a 1958 truck, which was the year the fire department started valued at approximately \$40K, and an antique Kaiser brush truck, which is still occasionally used.
- 3) There is approximately \$367,000 of “loose equipment” owned by the RRFD. This would include air packs, hose, tools, etc.
- 4) Regarding real property, the RRFD currently owns (and holds the title to):
 - a. 104 East Young Street \$1,109,000 tax valuation
 - b. Chamber Building \$400,000 tax valuation
 - c. 204 East Young Street Not known – former EMS Building
 - d. Land on Old Pearce Road \$265,000
 - e. Land on Burlington Mill Rd. \$125,000
 - f. Land on Mitchell Mill Rd. \$171,000

There has not yet been any appraisal of the above real property. However, Chief Privette estimated the total value of real property to be between \$2-\$3 million.

- 5) Chief Privette gave additional clarification about the RRFD ladder truck. At the time of the purchase of the truck, it was not supported by the County and fell wholly to the Town. However, the County now helps fund maintenance and operations of the ladder truck.
- 6) Some discussion was held about the antique trucks. Best practice in municipal mergers is for the private, non-profit corporation to maintain ownership of the antique trucks to be used in parades and fund-raising activities. The group was in concurrence with that concept. An example given was the Wake Forest Firefighters Foundation.

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- 7) A list of current assets of the RRFD as provided by Chief Privette is as follows (noting the department ATV and trailer are not on the list below):

Auto Schedule Summary

Veh. Num.	Year	Make	Model	PE Code	V.I.N.	Value
1	1958	CHEVY	ANTIQUE	OTH	V6M582112950	\$ 40,000
2	1967	KAISER	BRUSH VEH	BV	16357	\$ 30,000
3	1998	FREIGHTLINER	PUMPER TANKER	PT	1FV6JLCB2XH926065	\$ 280,000
4	1998	FREIGHTLINER	RESCUE HVY	RTH	1FV6JLCBONHA01738	\$ 200,000
5	2005	PIERCE	PUMPER TANKER	PT	4PICC01AX5A005534	\$ 280,000
6	2005	INT' L	TANKER	T	1HTMKAZR86H257231	\$ 310,000
7	2008	FORD	BRUSH VEH	BV	1FDAX57R78ED63441	\$ 85,000
8	2008	CHEVY	TAHOE CHIEF'S VEH	OTH	1GNFK13048J183745	\$ 40,000
9	2009	CHEVY	2500 ASST CHIEF'S VE	OTH	1GCHK53K09F189167	\$ 40,000
10	2011	CHEVY	TAHOE CHIEF'S VEH	OTH	1GNSKBE09BR118545	\$ 45,000
11	2009	FERRARA	AERIAL	AD	1F950813X9H140698	\$ 905,000
12	2012	PIERCE	PUMPER	PR	4P1C501A5CA012696	\$ 375,000
13	1996	SCOTTY	FIRE SAFETY TRAILER	OTH	900233	\$ 28,000
14	2019	DODGE	FIRST RESPONDER	FR	3C6UR5CJ8KG629696	\$ 50,000

Evaluating the Potential FY 22-23 Fire Department Budget:

- 1) Need to Evaluate What Costs Would Look Like Under Unification
 - a. Discussion was held regarding the need to dig deeper to evaluate potential costs for the next fiscal year and to understand the potential budget impacts and what transitional costs may be. The group gave consensus to form a sub-committee to address this issue to include Chief Privette and Ms. Edna Allison from the RRFD, Darrell Alford and Aaron Brown from Wake County and Amy Stevens from the Town of Rolesville with Greg Grayson to provide technical assistance.
 - b. This group will study this issue and report back to the larger body when they have enough information to do so.
 - c. Regarding timelines, Mr. Alford advised that Wake County will have forms out in November of this year for FY 22-23. The County's funding decisions are generally complete by April 15 for the coming fiscal year.
 - d. Greg Grayson reported back to the group from the North Carolina League of Municipalities (NCLM) regarding the additional costs that would be incurred for worker's compensation under the NCLM versus the North Carolina Volunteer Safety Workers' Compensation Fund. The NCLM has quoted an approximate annual cost for the Town of \$26,000. Chief Privette reports that the department is paying approximately \$14,225 annually now, or a delta of \$11,775 additional

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cost to be insured under the NCLM, which is required if the fire department were part of municipal government.

Next Session:

1. Agreement was to hold the next meeting of this group on June 23 at 3pm.
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88951693308?pwd=TzVKUQzRnRwbVhiVzBjcGplVGYwZz09>
2. Chief Privette requested to hold a physical meeting of the group in July.
3. Current employees expressed concerns about how some of the issues impacting them might be impacted. They were encouraged to send those questions to Greg Grayson and those would be identified on future agenda(s) as appropriate.
 - a. Kelly Arnold advised the group that the Town had a new Human Resources Director beginning June 28, who would be an important component to the work ahead.
 - i. HR Questions subsequently submitted included:
 - Will RRFD employees remain in their current positions at current pay rates?
 - Are RRFD employees subject to demotion from their current positions due to job requirement changes after the unification? Example, a two- or four-year degree requirement for officers. Will current officers be “Grandfathered” in their current positions?
 - When will RRFD employees be eligible for promotions? What would a promotional process look like under the town?
 - RRFD employees have spent most of their careers serving the citizens of Rolesville. Will their hire date with the town mirror their hire date with RRFD? The hire date will affect accrual rates of vacation leave, longevity pay, parental leave, and post-retirement health care among others.
 - Are RRFD employees subject to a probationary period?
 - Will vacation and sick time that has been accrued before the unification be honored and moved with them to the town?
 - RRFD employees work 24-hour rotating shifts. The town does not currently have any 24-hour staff. How will this be incorporated into the town’s employee policies. Examples are, accrual and use of vacation and sick leave, pay periods, overtime, and holidays. A 56-hour employee with less than 4 years on the job accrues 134.4 hours a year equaling to 12 vacation days. 134.4 hours taken by 24-hour staff equals 5.6 vacation days.

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- What will be the out-of-pocket cost to the employees for the retirement system? RRFD pays 100% of health, dental and eye insurance premiums. Will the town continue this benefit?

Key Group Decisions Made During This Session (Session #2):

2a) Agreement that the Town will set up a preliminary informational page on the Town web site regarding the unification process to keep all stakeholders up to date.

2b) Agreement that under a merger, any antique trucks would remain under the ownership of the private, non-profit corporation and would not become Town assets.

2c) Agreement to establish a budget subcommittee to project potential FY 22-23 costs should the fire department be under Town Government and report back to the full group.

Previous Key Group Decisions:

1a) Agreement was to set the target date of merger/unification for July 1, 2022, with a revisit of that date in December, 2021 to determine the feasibility of that date.

1b) Agreement to keep volunteer firefighters and that message needs to be clearly articulated by all, to help counter any inaccurate media reporting.

1c) Agreement to support volunteerism and that a volunteer stipend was important and should remain regardless of any changes.

1d) Agreement that the mutual goal was to retain good fire employees and be able to recruit good fire employees in the future.

1e) Agreement that the current full-time fire employees would remain as Town employees if merged as long as they met the Town's minimum employment requirements.

1f) Agreement that after the merger, the Town would have the full responsibility of hiring new firefighters if someone left by attrition.

1g) Agreement that all fire employees would be required to operate under the Town of Rolesville requirements once they became employees of the Town.