



Minutes

CORINTH-SHILOH SPECIAL PURPOSE TAX DISTRICT COMMISSION MEETING

June 12, 2025 6:00 PM

Commissioners:
Dr. William Howiler, Jr
Mr. Monty Marcengill
Ms. Misty Morris
Mr. Wayne Smith
Mr. Richard Walton

Corinth-Shiloh Fire Commission met at 6:00 PM at the Corinth-Shiloh Fire Department, 940 Old Clemson Highway, Seneca, SC, with all Commissioners, Fire Chief Kevin Christenbury, and members of the public in attendance.

Press: Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, notice of the meeting, date, time, place of meeting, and agenda were posted on the bulletin board at the Corinth-Shiloh Fire Department, 940 Old Clemson Highway, Seneca, SC, and the fire department website [www.corinthshilohfd.com]. In addition, it was made available [upon request] to the newspaper, radio stations, television stations, and concerned citizens

Dick Mangram- 101.7FM WGOG (Golden Corner Radio Station)

Call to Order:

Chairman Howiler called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm

Moment of Silence:

Chairman Howiler asked for a moment of silence.

Invocation:

Chief B. Shirley gave the Invocation

Approval of Minutes:

Chairman Howiler: Moved to approve the minutes from the May 8, 2025, meeting this was seconded by Ms. Morris. Motion Approve 5-0

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Fire Chief Comments:

Chief Christenbury offered his monthly report, which is included in the supporting documents of this meeting. Some of the items discussed include:

- Operational Overview
 - Department call data updates through May 2024, reveal patterns of increased service demands and resource allocation needs.
 - Moving into the summer months, the department is experiencing the typical seasonal slowdown that comes with June and July. Volunteer activity has naturally decreased as members take vacations and adjust their schedules for summer activities. In response to this predictable pattern, we've temporarily adjusted our monthly volunteer meetings, scheduling, and training programs to accommodate the reduced availability while ensuring we maintain operational readiness.
 - Our facility continues to serve the broader community beyond emergency services, with the local Girl Scout Troop utilizing our meeting space three to four times this month.
- Human Resources
 - There is encouraging progress in our staffing efforts with the arrival of one new applicant, a Clemson student who brings valuable EMT certification to our team. While her availability will be limited as she returns to school in August, her skills and training represent exactly the kind of qualified personnel we need to strengthen our emergency response capabilities.
 - Our grant activities continue to show positive results, with follow-up completed on the V-Safe Grant award from last month. This funding has enabled us to move forward with approved vehicle purchases that will enhance our operational capacity and ensure we have reliable equipment for emergency response. The success of this grant application demonstrates the value of our strategic approach to securing external funding for critical needs.
 - Building on this momentum, the CSVFD initiated the application process for the SAFER Grant, a recruiting and retention grant that could provide additional resources for our personnel development efforts. The application period is currently open, and the department is moving forward with the necessary documentation and planning to position itself competitively for this funding opportunity. These grant activities are enabling strategic equipment and staffing improvements that might otherwise strain our operational budget.
- County Coordination and Staffing Changes
 - Our relationship with county operations is undergoing some transitions that will require attention and coordination in the coming weeks. The county is implementing staff changes that will bring new personnel into roles that affect our operations. Fortunately, one of the incoming staff members is returning to a position he held previously, bringing familiarity with our district and established relationships with our volunteers. This continuity will be valuable during the transition period.
 - However, we'll also be working with one entirely new staff member who is unfamiliar with our operations. This will require some additional coordination and orientation to ensure smooth working relationships and effective communication channels. These staffing changes reflect broader organizational adjustments at the county level that we'll need to monitor and adapt to as they develop.
- Technology Infrastructure

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- Perhaps the most significant operational change we're managing this period is a critical transition in our reporting systems. The county has purchased new reporting software that represents a fundamental shift in how we document and track our activities. We're transitioning from Federal reporting requirements of the NFIRS system to the NERIS reporting system, with the changeover scheduled for January 1, 2026.
- This transition has required immediate action because our current program is incompatible with NERIS, necessitating the adoption of entirely new software. Several key personnel completed training last week to prepare for this change, and the county has already installed the new Alpine program on our department computers. The new system operates as a web-based platform with computer-specific access links, which will require some adjustment in our daily procedures but should ultimately provide improved functionality and integration with county operations.
- The short turnaround time for this implementation has required focused attention and rapid adaptation, but we're prepared to make the transition effectively on the scheduled date of July 1, 2025 to the county Alpine Software to be able to make the transition from NFIRS to NERIS on January 1, 2026.
- Financial Management and Budget Transition
 - Our financial management has reached an important milestone with all current statements now received from our accountant, bringing us current on all financial reporting requirements. These statements have been provided to Mr. Walton for review, ensuring proper oversight and transparency in our financial operations.
 - Beginning July 1st, we're implementing a significant budget transition that will shift us from our current structure to the CSFD budget system. This change maintains our volunteer department funding source while providing enhanced capabilities for monthly expense tracking and reimbursement request monitoring. The new structure will give us better visibility into our spending patterns and more efficient processes for managing financial transactions.
- Facilities and Infrastructure
 - Our building and grounds maintenance activities this month have been more extensive than usual, addressing several unexpected issues while also making progress on planned improvements. We encountered a significant septic system problem that required pumping the tank due to “wet wipe” blockages. Despite ongoing notices and education efforts about proper waste disposal, wet wipes continue to be flushed, creating expensive maintenance issues that we're working to prevent through continued education.
 - Equipment failures have also demanded attention and resources this month. Our ice machine failed completely, prompting the need to purchase a replacement unit. The bay door experienced a malfunction that required repair services last week, temporarily affecting our operational efficiency. Most significantly, an overheating situation caused our water heater to fail, with replacement installation scheduled for Monday.
 - These maintenance challenges, while disruptive, are being addressed systematically to restore full operational capacity. We've also made progress on planned improvements, receiving sketches for proposed sub-station work that will enhance our service coverage. Additionally, we've initiated our equipment inventory process, which will provide better tracking of our assets and help us plan for future replacement and maintenance needs.

- Equipment and Communication Issues
 - Our operational readiness has been affected by radio communication problems with Engine 33. These issues require resolution to maintain proper communication capabilities during emergency responses.
- Question
 - Ms Morris asked Chief Christenbury to confirm that they would get two bids (high and low) for the sub-station work.
 - Chief Christenbury confirmed.

Public Comment Session

If you are not able to attend in person and you have a comment, you may submit it by emailing kwhelen@corinthshilohfd.com or calling 864-710-7011, so that your comment may be read into the record.

Ryan Phillips asked what value members of the commission place on the opinions of the volunteers who have served within this community.

- Chairman Howler ruled that there could be a discussion between members of the community and the commission.
- Ms. Morris and Mr. Marsengil responded that the opinions of the members of the volunteer organization should be prominently considered in the commission's work. They also indicated that members of the community are increasingly interested in the work of the commission because they would like to improve the fire and rescue services in the CSVFD. They would also like to see improved coordination with the County.
- R. Phillips concluded by stating that a lot of the volunteers are hoping to build stronger relationships with commission members.

Jeff Browning

- Indicated that he has been in the area for 10 years and is a member of the CSVFD. While not a professional firefighter, through his volunteer training, he has become an Engineer and is qualified to drive a Fire Engine. He urged the commission to consider that it was the volunteers who started this process. They care deeply about the future process. He asked that the selection process for a chief be focused on the best intentions for CSVFD. He opined that the commission should not focus on potential outside pressures and external opinions.
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Commission Member Comments:

Mr. Howier

- Made comments regarding the need to refocus the commission's effort now that the budget has been approved. Planning should begin to determine the proper use of tax revenue. The commission should look for opportunities to find lower-cost options where possible.

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Mr. Smith

- Asked about the possibility of the commission issued access cards for station door entry
- Chief Christenbury indicated he would determine how that might be accomplished

Ms. Morris

- Stated her belief that it was important that the Firefighters know that they are welcome to provide direct input to the commissioners. She cited the example of her position on the building and ground committee; as those decisions are made, she will remain open to input from the firefighters. She feels that support of the firefighters is a key responsibility of the commission.

Mr. Marcingill

- Cited personal experience to indicate his belief that often a group of workers makes better hiring decisions than the people in charge. He believes that the people who will work with an individual every day should have an active part in the hiring process.

Discussion regarding Action Items:

- District Startup Update / Mr. Brandon Shirley
 - B. Shirley spoke with satisfaction about the milestones accomplished to date: the ordinance passing and the budget being approved. He indicated that the efforts continue to complete incorporation actions and set up a bank account. He anticipates this work concluding in August.
- Fire Chief Hiring Process Presentation / Mrs. Lindsey Watley

L. Watley reported that at the last commission meeting, she was asked to outline a hiring process that would give all commissioners an opportunity to provide input on applicants, ensure transparency about who has applied, and establish a written outline of hiring procedures. With this directive in mind, she developed a comprehensive approach that takes all these concerns into consideration. She outlined the process and provided the members of the commission a proposed process for selecting the new CSFD Fire Chief.

- This position is particularly significant as it will set the tone for the department moving forward, making it crucial that the hiring process is perceived as fair, honest, and above board. The proposed process acknowledges that while some positions can be filled quickly with a month-long interview cycle, this role requires a more extensive timeline due to the amount of feedback needed at each step and the importance of getting this decision right.
- Three-Round Decision-Making Process
 - She structured the hiring process around three distinct rounds, each serving a specific purpose in narrowing the candidate pool while ensuring comprehensive evaluation. The process begins with individual application reviews and progresses through committee interviews to culminate in in-person meetings that include representatives from all interested parties.

- The first round addresses the commission's desire for everyone to know who has applied for the position. Every application received, whether that number is 15 or 205, will be distributed to each commissioner and volunteer panel member for individual review. This approach ensures that no qualified candidate is overlooked and that every participant has the opportunity to form their own initial impressions of the applicant pool.
- During this phase, each participant will take time to absorb the information presented in the applications and rank candidates based on the attributes they believe would make a good fit for the department. The ranking system assigns point values, with each individual ranking their candidates from first to fifth place. Because five people are contributing to this process, it's possible that multiple candidates could achieve the same point values, meaning we might advance more than five applicants to the second round. This flexibility ensures that strong candidates aren't eliminated simply due to rigid numerical constraints.
- The second round introduces our hiring subcommittees, recognizing that interviewing a large number of candidates is extremely time-consuming and requires dedicated focus. She proposed establishing two balanced subcommittees that reflect the commission and the volunteers.
- These subcommittees would conduct virtual or in-person interviews with the 5-10 candidates who advanced from the first round, with the format determined by candidate availability. Following these interviews, the organization would reapply the point value system to narrow the field to the final three candidates who would advance to the third round.
- The third round represents the culmination of the process. The commission will; schedule three days in November for this phase (this can be adjusted if the process yields more than three finalists. The structure of these three days alternates between different groups meeting with candidates, ensuring everyone has quality time for evaluation while building toward a unified decision.
- Each day would begin with the commission meeting individually with a candidate, allowing commissioners to hear their story, understand their vision, and make personal connections. The afternoon would shift to volunteer meetings with the same candidate, giving our volunteer force equal opportunity for evaluation and input. The day would conclude with a meet-and-greet at the fire station, bringing everyone together in an informal setting where candidates can interact with the entire team.
- This approach serves multiple purposes beyond simple evaluation. It ensures that our new chief feels invested in by both the volunteers and the commission, creating buy-in from all stakeholders in the hiring process. The meet-and-greet component is particularly important as it allows candidates to see how they connect with our entire organization and gives our team members a chance to observe how candidates interact in a less formal environment.
- This meet and greet time will also allow the candidates an opportunity to cast their vision of the future direction of the department.
- **Feedback Integration and Decision Making**
 - Following the third round of interviews, volunteers will have the opportunity to provide structured feedback through forms that capture both positive impressions and concerns about each candidate. This information will be compiled and shared with the commission, ensuring that volunteer perspectives are fully integrated into the final decision-making process.

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- The process will conclude with a workshop scheduled for December 2nd during regular commission meeting time. This session will include the commission, volunteer panel, B. Shirley, and the selected community members, providing a forum for comprehensive discussion of all feedback and evaluation results before making the final selection.
- Transparency and Communication Standards
 - Throughout this process, all involved should provide complete transparency to the community. The entire process outline will be released to the public, and the commission has already shared the draft to demonstrate its commitment to openness. When candidates apply, they will receive clear communication about what to expect, including the extensive nature of the process and the timeline involved.
- Community Member Involvement and Expectations
 - The selection of community members for the hiring subcommittees requires careful consideration of the time commitment involved. We want to stress that this process will be extremely intensive during the evaluation period, requiring significant investment from participants. Community members must be prepared to attend all sessions consistently and provide thoughtful feedback throughout the process. This commitment is essential for maintaining the integrity and effectiveness of our evaluation system.
- Timeline Considerations and Implementation
 - The extended timeline reflects our recognition that this hiring decision cannot be rushed. Unlike positions that might be filled within a month, this role requires the comprehensive feedback and evaluation that our multi-round process provides. The timeline also accounts for the coordination required among multiple participants and the need to accommodate candidate schedules while maintaining our evaluation standards.
 - This hiring process represents more than just filling a position; it establishes the foundation for how our department will operate and sets expectations for future leadership transitions. By investing the time and effort required for this comprehensive evaluation, we are demonstrating our commitment to finding the right leader who can bring our community together and guide the department effectively.
 - The proposal we have developed is intended as a starting point for discussion and is open to edits and modifications based on commission feedback. Our goal is to create a process that serves our community well and results in the selection of a fire chief who can successfully lead our department into the future while maintaining the trust and support of all stakeholders involved.
- Reacting to the proposal, B. Shirley made these comments
- The screening process would be helped along by a score sheet that would encourage a balanced consideration of various attributes
 - Chief Christenbury endorsed this idea
 - L. Watley indicated that she would prepare a score sheet
- Would the commission consider paying travel expenses and lodging for individuals selected for interview who are outside the local area
 - L. Watley, the idea of a three-day interview time was designed to allow for a single visit rather than multiple visits

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- Mr. Walton indicated that it was reasonable to expect that we will receive applications from individuals outside our area who might desire travel expenses paid
- B. Shirley indicated that individuals who learn that travel expenses are not paid may desist. If the Commission found it useful, they could offer a nominal amount.
- Mr. Walton asked if there are common places where fire department jobs are posted.
 - Several people indicated that there were
- B. Shirley indicated that by limiting the geography of the posting, it may reduce the need for travel and relocation expenses.
- Mr. Walton made a motion for the commission to adopt the process. Ms Morris Seconded. The process was adopted by the Commission 5 - 0.

Draft Fire Chief Job Description / Dr. Howler

- Dr. Howler asked that the members of the commission review the Fire Chief Job Description
- Chief Christinbury indicated that he would share the Job Description with the Volunteers and get their input

Action Items:

- Chief Christinbury will investigate getting cards so that the Commission members have building access
- L. Watley will prepare a score sheet for applicant review
- Chief Christinbury indicated that he would share the Job Description with the Volunteers and get their input

Committee Reports

- None

Executive Session:

- None for this meeting

Adjourn:

Mr. Marcengill made a motion to adjourn, Mr. Smith seconded, approved unanimously, to adjourn at 7:12 pm

Respectfully Submitted:

Kevin Whelan
Staff Secretary

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Next Meeting:

July 7, 2025 – Monthly Meeting

6:00 pm, Training Room, Corinth-Shiloh Fire Department
940 Old Clemson Highway, Seneca, SC 29672