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TAZEWELL COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS APPROVES NEW FIRE COMPANY

New Structure Strengthens Coordination and Support for Fire Services Countywide

TAZEWELL, Va. — Tazewell County is strengthening its approach to fire protection with the establishment of a new fire company designed to improve coordination, expand resources and provide additional support to the men and women serving communities throughout the county.

The Tazewell County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the roster for the new fire company at its regularly scheduled October meeting, allowing the company to move forward with operations. The new structure was developed in response to challenges facing local fire departments, including recruitment and retention, funding, training, an aging volunteer base, equipment maintenance and the need for greater consistency in operations.

“Our volunteer firefighters provide an essential service to the people of Tazewell County, and it is important that we give them the support and resources they need to continue that work,” said Supervisor Chuck Presley. “This new structure allows us to strengthen fire protection across the county while making better use of our resources and creating greater opportunities for training, recruitment and coordination.”

The fire company will operate under the direction of Fire Chief Russell Stowers, who will serve in a part-time capacity, along with three part-time Battalion Chiefs assigned to the Northern, Central and Southern areas of the county.

Brian Lowe will serve as Northern Battalion Chief and will spearhead recruitment and retention efforts countywide. George Pilkins will serve as Central Battalion Chief and will lead training initiatives, while Mike Bennett, Southern Battalion Chief, will oversee apparatus maintenance and testing.

The new model will provide opportunities for shared resources, increased purchasing power, coordinated training and recruitment, a uniform rank structure and greater access to state and federal grant opportunities.

“This gives us a more organized and efficient way to support fire protection throughout Tazewell County,” said County Administrator Eric Young. “By coordinating resources and addressing needs on a countywide basis, we can provide our departments with additional support while improving the long-term sustainability of these services.”

Funding for the fire company will come from a combination of state and local sources, including the county’s meals tax, Casino Tax Revenue Sharing Program and funding through the Virginia Department of Fire Programs.

The new battalion structure will become operational October 15, 2026.