MINUTES
VOLUNTEER FIRE AD HOC
CHAIRMAN, J. WES WYNNE
JUNE 9, 2026

Present:
J. Wes Wynne, Chairman
Chris Shoemaker, Vice-Chairman
Ben Harris, Commissioner
David Klein, Commissioner
Sam Thornton, Chief
Curtis Williams, Citizen
Absent:
Scotty Bush, Chief
Chris Edgerton, Chief
Henry DeGroot, Citizen

Also Present:
Jennifer Mitchell, minute taker

Chairman Wynne called the regular meeting of the Volunteer Fire Ad Hoc to order with an invocation by Comm. Harris on Tuesday, June 9, 2026, at 5:32 p.m. in the Sumner County Administration Building. A quorum was present.

3. Approval of Agenda.

Comm. Harris moved, seconded by Chris Shoemaker, to approve the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval of the Minutes of May 12, 2026.

Chris Shoemaker moved, seconded by Comm. Klein, to approve the minutes from May 12, 2026. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Recognition of the Public.

None

6. Old Business.

b. VFD Budgets.

Without objection, Chairman Wynne moved item 6b ahead of item 6a.

Comm. Klein reported that budget information had been received from several volunteer fire departments and incorporated into a draft chart of accounts. The Committee discussed the need to establish a standardized budget template before entering department-specific financial data.

Mr. Klein stated that additional budgets are still needed from several departments and that the template remains a work in progress. Once completed, the information will be reviewed with participating fire chiefs for accuracy.

Chairman Wynne requested that the updated spreadsheet be distributed electronically for review prior to the next meeting.

No action taken.

a. Funding Ideas for VFD's.

The Committee discussed long-term funding options authorized under Tennessee law for volunteer fire departments. Discussion included:

- Donations
- Fire and Emergency Service Tax Districts
- Situs-based funding sources
    - Sales tax revenues generated in unincorporated areas
    - TVA Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) revenues
    - Beer and alcohol tax revenues
    - Utility-based fire service fees
- General fund revenues

Members reviewed statutory requirements, examples from other Tennessee counties, and the advantages and disadvantages associated with each funding option. Discussion also included the need for additional financial analysis, property valuation data, and budget information from individual departments before recommendations can be developed.

The Committee discussed the importance of establishing a countywide fire service structure and the potential need for a county fire coordinator position to assist with budgeting, recruitment, fundraising, and long-term planning.

Chairman Wynne requested members continue researching funding alternatives and prepare information regarding the pros and cons of fire tax districts and situs-based funding options for discussion at the next meeting.

No action taken.

7. New Business .

a. Recruitment Assistance.

The Committee discussed ongoing challenges related to recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. Members noted that declining volunteer participation continues to affect response capabilities and operational sustainability. Discussion included potential incentives, compensation models utilized by other departments, and the role a county fire coordinator could play in supporting recruitment and retention efforts countywide.

Chris Shoemaker introduced the Volunteer Fire Education Incentive Program, which provides $600 annually to volunteers who complete 30 hours of service and other requirements. Mr. Shoemaker also introduced the wheel tax exemption, which requires a resolution passed by the county commission.

After discussion, Chris Shoemaker moved, seconded by Comm. Harris, to move forward with the wheel tax exemption and forward to Health and Emergency Services Committee. The motion carried unanimously.

8. Adjournment. Chairman Wynne declared the meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m. upon motion by Comm. Harris and seconded by Comm. Klein.

Prepared by Jennifer Mitchell