

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING HELD OCTOBER 28, 2025

GRANITE FALLS FIRE DEPARTMENT

SPECIAL MEETING The Granite Falls Town Council held a Special Meeting Tuesday, October 28, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Administrative Building.

PRESENT The following members of the governing body were present: Mayor Dr. Caryl B. Burns and Council Members Ritch Bolick, Larry Knight, Jim Mackie, Mike Mackie, Martin Townsend, and Tracy Townsend.

ABSENT The following member of the governing body was absent: None

STAFF PRESENT The following staff members attended the meeting: Town Manager Daniel Cobb, Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Ashley Presnell, Town Clerk Paula Kirby, Police Chief Brine Branham, Fire Chief Brian Bennett, Assistant Fire Chief Kevin Kerley, Special Projects Manager Katilyn Parlier, IT, Communications, Administrative Specialist Kara Calloway, Fire Engineer Ashley Paruch, Lieutenant Jimmy Wilson, Fire Fighter Jonathan Hary, Fire Engineer Cade Watson, Fire Engineer Ty Potter, Fire Fighter Nathan Earp, Lieutenant Justin Winebarger, Volunteer Fire Fighter Graham Triplett, and Lieutenant Jacob Craig.

VISITORS Jamie Hagerty, Paul Hagerty, Faith Naff, Ratings Inspector with the North Carolina Department of Insurance Fire Marshall Office Marcus Scott, and Bethany Scott.

NEWS MEDIA Xavier Martin, representing the News-Topic, attended the meeting.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER Mayor Dr. Caryl B. Burns called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone present.

FIRE STATION LOCATION DISCUSSED

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the needs of the Fire Department and determine how to meet those needs. Town Manager Daniel Cobb informed the Council the Town received \$5,000,000 in SCIF funding in 2024 for the construction of a new Fire Station. The cash is in the bank and is accessible. The grant money has to be spent by June 2028.

The Fire Department needs a new Fire Station, 2 new fire engines, and 1 new ladder truck. The new apparatus will not fit in the present Fire Station. The single station concept was explored and was found to be too expensive. Manager Cobb stated it would be more cost-effective to build a second Fire Station and renovate the current Fire Station.

The NC State Fire Marshals Office has confirmed a second station is warranted and should be placed in the Wal-Mart/MDI area. Ratings Inspector with the North Carolina Department of Insurance Fire Marshall Office Marcus Scott stated this location was determined by response times and structures at risk. He stated that response times need to stay within 4 minutes. Town

Staff have been in contact with property owners in this area regarding site acquisition. Manager Cobb stated that this location would assist with staying ahead of potential growth on the South end of Town.

Fire Chief Brian Bennett stated that his initial intent was to have two Fire Stations, but previous management preferred one. Chief Bennett stated that the second station would be more cost effective and would help with response times. Two employees would be at both stations at all times. The addition of three employees would be necessary to man both stations. Two fire engines would be housed at the current station, and one fire engine and one ladder truck would be housed at the new station. The Town currently has two engines and one ladder truck.

Chief Bennett stated that the 321A expansion will affect the ladder truck entering and exiting the old station. Renovations will correct this issue with the addition of a new bay located on the side of the station. The new Fire Station would have 3 bays, and required wash, gear, and decontamination rooms.

Chief Bennett could not give an estimation of the cost of the new station and renovations to the current station but stated it would most likely be over \$5,000,000. Mike Mackie stated that he wanted to stay within the \$5,000,000 if possible and asked if there may be more grant money available. Manager Cobb stated that he will always pursue any grants available and will try to keep the cost as close to the \$5,000,000 as possible.

Tracy Townsend agreed that the second station is more practical and cost effective. Mr. Townsend also asked Manager Cobb about the Fire Tax funds. Manager Cobb stated the Town budgeted \$185,000 in South Caldwell Fire District tax revenue this year. He stated that this money could be set aside in a Capital Reserve fund beginning with the FY 27 budget year.

Ritch Bolick made a motion the Council approve the construction of a second fire station and the renovations to the current fire station. Larry Knight seconded the motion, which was followed by a unanimous affirmative vote.

Ritch Bolick stated that he wants the living area updated before actual renovations begins.

Manager Cobb will reach out to architects, send out RFQ's, and determine the location.

VEHICLES DISCUSSED

Fire Chief Brian Bennett informed the Council that the Fire Department has a 2014 engine, a 1991 engine, and a 1992 Ladder truck. One of the engines and the Ladder truck need to be replaced and a new engine needs to be purchased. The vehicles have been in the CIP for several years, but new vehicles will not fit in the current fire station. Build time for engines is approximately 3 years and 4 years for Ladder trucks. Payment options are to pay up front with a discount, finance/monthly payments, or pay when the vehicles are built. Manager Cobb will research and determine the most cost-effective option. Chief Bennett stated that used trucks are not the best option because they usually have problems.

Manager Cobb stated that when the new station construction plans are underway, Chief Bennett and his staff can begin the design process for the needed apparatus.

OTHER DISCUSSIONS

- Martin Townsend asked Manager Cobb about the design of the Pinewood Road intersection. Manager Cobb will contact NCDOT and let the Council know at a later time.
- Mayor Caryl B. Burns informed the Council of an invitation to the Granite Falls Middle School and Communities in Schools of Caldwell County annual Veteran's Day appreciation breakfast and ceremony on Friday, November 7th at 8:30 a.m. to be held in the gym. RSVPs are required.
- Manager Cobb reminded the Council of the upcoming Special Meeting/Workshop to be held on Thursday, October 30th at 3:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Administrative Building.

MEETING ADJOURNED Martin Townsend made a motion the Council adjourn the meeting. Mike Mackie seconded the motion, which was followed by a unanimous affirmative vote.