



A G E N D A

CORINTH-SHILOH SPECIAL PURPOSE TAX DISTRICT COMMISSION MEETING

May 08, 2025

6:00 PM

**Training Room, Corinth-Shiloh Fire Department
940 Old Clemson Highway, Seneca, SC 29672**

Call to Order

Moment of Silence

Invocation

Approval of Minutes

- April 10, 2025

Fire Chief Comments

- Monthly Report

Public Comment Session

[Limited to a total of fifty (50) minutes, five (5) minutes per person]

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

Commission Member Comments

- Mr. Marcengill
- Ms. Morris
- Mr. Walton
- Mr. Smith
- Dr. Howiler

Discussion regarding Action Items:

- Marketing Outline / Mrs. Lindsey Watley
- Fire Chief Hiring Committee / Dr. Howiler

COMMISSION MEMBERS

Dr. William Howiler, Jr.

Monty Marcengill

Misty Morris

Wayne Smith

Richard Walton

Committee Reports

- Budget and Finance / Mr. Walton

Executive Session

[upon reconvening Commission may take a Vote and/or take Action on matters brought up for discussion in Executive Session, if required]

None for this meeting

Adjourn

COMMISSION MEMBERS

Dr. William Howler, Jr.

Monty Marcengill

Misty Morris

Wayne Smith

Richard Walton



Minutes

CORINTH-SHILOH SPECIAL PURPOSE TAX DISTRICT COMMISSION MEETING

**May 08, 2025
6:00 PM**

Commissioners:

**Dr. William Howler, 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 Howler called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm

Moment of Silence:

Chairman Howler asked for a moment of silence.

Invocation:

Mr. Smith gave the Invocation

Approval of Minutes:

Chairman Howler: Requested to change the minutes from the March 11, 2025, meeting to reflect the consensus decision that was made to table a budget decision. The agenda had called for a vote on the budget, yet a group consensus was to forego a vote until further information could be reviewed and discussion could take place. A vote was taken 5-0 to amend the March 11 minutes to reflect this change.

Kevin Whelan (Staff Secretary) indicated that he had not properly formatted the minutes from March 11, 2025. He requested permission from the commission to reformat the minutes to reflect the same topic items as are stated in the agenda for that meeting. There was no objection to this request by the commission.

Chairman Howiler asked for acceptance of the minutes from the Apr 10, 2025 meeting. These minutes were approved in a 5 - 0 vote.

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:

- Call volume is still running ahead of this same time last year. April showed a 13% increase from the previous year. The overall total call volume is running 24% higher than this time last year.
- He highlighted several major calendar activities. These include the Ravenel School field day.
- New command boards have been received for coordination with the county. Representatives from the county will provide training for the boards.
- Regarding Administration and Human Resources, another volunteer has been recruited who works at the University Fire Department, so onboarding should go quickly. Additionally, 14 volunteers received their physicals.
- The Volunteer Department did receive the SAFER Grant from the State for a total \$14,050.
- It was announced this week that two county firefighters at the station have resigned from the county.

Mr. Smith asked if the county would replace these people, and the Chief answered yes.

Further comments from the Chief

- April statements were processed and provided to the accountant. CSVFD has received the quarterly check in the county for the quarter of October through December. The county indicated that the quarterly check for January through March should arrive next week.
- There is a lot of work going on concerning upkeep for the building and grounds around both the station and substation. A lawn mower was donated to the substation. "We're grateful for that donation."
- As a follow-up to last month's report, the extension cord has been repaired.
- Transportation: Ladder and hose testing have been completed. The CSVFD has begun an inventory of its supplies, furnishings, and equipment with a target finish date of December 1st.
- CSVFD is receiving a demo blade for a cut-off saw. Training will begin soon.

Public Comment Session

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- No individuals requested public comment

Commission Member Comments:

Mr. Marcengill expressed a concern that while the commission has oversight responsibility for activities at both the Corinth-Shiloh Station and Sub-station, a community rumor surfaced that people were working at the sub-station, for which he had no direct knowledge. He also questioned why the lock on the sub-station door had been disabled, effectively locking out the county.

- Chief Christenbury indicated that these items had been brought to the commission's attention. The individuals working at the substation are involved with a radio upgrade and vehicle maintenance. The wall-mounted garage door opener quit working. The department took several steps to replace it and as a temporary measure, placed a temporary key box on the door and provided the code for the keybox to the county staff as well as a visor-mounted garage door opener.

Mr. Marcegill continued his remarks, indicating that the county council had appointed the commission with the responsibility, notably to include creating a budget and hiring a Fire Chief. His concern was that the hiring committee being considered would review the applications for the position and only select one or two to be presented to the commission. Such a process would (in his opinion) diminish his leadership capacity.

- Chief Christenbury clarified that there are presently no applicants or candidates. The suggestion offered was intended to streamline the process, allowing both the commission and volunteers to interview the final candidates. The number of final candidates has not been determined. It is the responsibility of the commission to establish the process.

Mr. Marcengill expressed his desire to review all the applications. He further suggested that the County Fire Department be included in the hiring process, in particular, the County Fire Chief, because they will have to work together.

Ms Morris: Indicated the need to start assessing and begin work on upgrading the substation. Additionally, the appearance of the station should be upgraded to present a better appearance to the prospective new chief.

Mr. Smith expressed his belief that the whole commission needs to have input into the process of the Fire Chief candidates to be considered instead of the hiring committee alone. The commission should lean on broader expertise in making its selection, including input from the county.

Mr Smith also expressed his desire for earlier access to meeting minutes.

- The Staff Secretary committed to making the draft minutes of each meeting available within two weeks of each meeting.

Mr. Walton indicated the need to finalize the procedure for selecting a Fire Chief. He also commented on an experience in the past month wherein the school bus he was driving was involved in a traffic accident. The accident was sufficiently serious that several children were hospitalized. He commended the Firefighters who came to the scene and not only treated the injured but supplied an immediate calming influence.

Dr. Howler: Updated the commission on the county's budget process. The county had the first reading of the budget with two more readings to come. There has been no objection to the SPD budget by the council or the public. He commended the commission for their hard work and diligence.

Discussion regarding Action Items:

Marketing Outline / Mrs. Lindsey Watley: Described the proposed marketing initiative she has put forth for the commission's consideration

- As the transition that onboards the professional firefighters, the commission should educate residents:
 - What is the special tax district
 - How does it benefit the community
 - Highlight the collaboration between the volunteer organization and the special tax district.
 - Foster Community engagement to encourage residents to participate in the meetings here provide feedback.
 - Build trust and maintain transparency about the financial and operational aspects of the fire department.
 - Feature new staff as they're hired and continue to feature the volunteer bios on social media.
 - When does the tax district budget go into effect?
 - How is the volunteer department supporting calls at this point when you call 911?
 - Create an infographic to be released on the website that outlines each role and where they come together, and throughout the process. Identify the timelines for transition. Provide financial breakdowns
 - Create FAQs.
 - Plan to use Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, and encourage engagement on those. It will be necessary to fully understand the impact of the Freedom of Information Act.
 - Outreach to local media as we start to hire a fire chief. This will include press releases and feature key stakeholders in newspaper, radio, and TV segments.
 - The website should engage the community by including an area for them to put in a request for information and ask questions.
 - The website should include the hours of operation and phone numbers.
 - It is important to build a feedback Community input button or form on the website
- Commenting on the Marketing Plan, Ms. Morris agreed with the idea of the feedback button and also an alarm that would piggyback on it. That would provide an opportunity for people to express opinions. She shared her opinion that the community at large does not understand how they are heard by the County Council. This commission should be a bit more interactive.
- L. Watley commented that in an open Forum, you wouldn't shut the public's comments off. The public would be allowed to converse back and forth with each other, but as an official entity, she suggested that the public be encouraged to email or use a provided form to contact the fire department. Commission members could make themselves available to sit down and discuss this issue and bring it to the commission meeting. This provided people an avenue to express opinions without just publicizing them and going back and forth on comments with people. We would not censor anyone's comments. Nothing would be deleted. It's a public forum, so it would provide people a way to provide that information to the commission and the volunteer department.
- Ms. Morris agreed that a constant back and forth can cause problems. She asked if the forum could include an automatic feed button that encourages a member of the public to send any comments to the commission.
- L Watley indicated that there could be.

- Ms Morris suggested another marketing suggestion. A meet-the-heroes day. We, as a commission and a department, could consider hosting a couple of meetings closer to meet the new Chief. It would not have to be expensive. It could just be to get people to be a little bit more engaged.
 - L. Watley agreed to add this item to the marketing plan.
- Mr. Walton asked how the decision of alarm response would be made when there are two separate fire entities: the professional and the volunteer.
 - Chief Christenbury explained that coverage decisions are made in fire department meetings. When calls come in, members know which seat they are in. What happens right now is that volunteers will come to the station for a few hours, and they'll coordinate with each other over assignments.
 - Ms. Morris asked if volunteer recruitment could increase and how this might happen.
 - Chief Christenbury explained that the organization has established a successful pattern of recruiting students who typically serve for periods ranging from one to four years. Many of these students secure employment and remain with the organization until they eventually move on or graduate. This has created a stable foundation of personnel. The organization also attracts individuals who relocate to the area. The organization is currently not accepting volunteers due to challenges associated with managing a volunteer force of 38 individuals.
 - Ms. Morris asked if the CSVFD recruits students for training as EMTs at TCTC. She shared a story about a young man from her church who will soon turn 18 and is pursuing EMT training at TCTC. When this individual contacted one volunteer department, they dismissed him due to his current age of 17. Upon contacting Seneca City, he was informed that they don't accept volunteers. Misty expressed concern about growing call volumes in the area outpacing available resources and inquired how the commission might help address this shortage.
 - Chief Christenbury discussed a former volunteer who served approximately 20-25 years ago and now has more free time since his children have graduated. This individual has no interest in firefighting but wants to contribute in other ways. Kevin mentioned that there is a place for everyone willing to help and identified several alternative volunteer pathways:
 - Utilizing experienced individuals as training instructors to help with basic training sessions.
 - Incorporating safety officers, referencing a recent NIOSH report following a firefighter fatality in the Lexington-Columbia area, which recommended more safety officers at incidents
 - Creating driver positions for those with CDLs who can obtain emergency vehicle driver training without serving as active firefighters.
 - L. Watley expressed the opinion that the commission can't let people forget that there are still Volunteers in the department and that there still is a need, and so that just requires communication and culture. When an individual who is interested in volunteering is identified, there is broad community knowledge about how this person might apply.
 - Ms. Morris reacted positively to the statement that there is "a place for everyone." She opined that perhaps former or current Duke employees might be potential volunteers

since they have some of the training. This may also be something to highlight on the website.

Fire Chief Hiring Committee / Dr. Howiler outlined the proposed structure for the Fire Chief hiring process:

- The process includes:
 - The hiring committee will provide regular reports to the Commission, increasing in frequency as the process advances
 - Commissioners will have visibility into all applications
 - After initial resume screening, the committee will present their selections at a Commission meeting for feedback
 - The committee will regularly update the Commission on the narrowing process
 - The goal is to interview 3-5 final candidates
 - All Commissioners will have the opportunity to interview final candidates and provide input.
- The following interview components were discussed:
 - Commission interview sessions
 - Community input opportunities
 - Potential use of "Spark" software program that would send 5 questions to candidates to assess communication style
- Dr. Howiler suggested the committee include:
 - Two Commissioners (Mr. Howiler and another)
 - Chief Christenbury
 - Brandon Shirley (noted as a valuable resource due to experience setting up a tax district fire department)
 - A volunteer firefighter representative
 - Community members
- Additional Considerations were mentioned by commission members
 - Discussion about potentially asking a retired Fire Chief from surrounding departments (Center, Clemson, Anderson) to serve on the hiring committee.
 - Chief Christenbury mentioned collecting job descriptions from various sources, including Anderson County, City of Walhalla, and several cities in North Carolina. These job descriptions are available on Google Drive or can be sent as PDFs
 - Dr. Howiler noted that most job descriptions are "boilerplate."
 - Chief Christenbury emphasized developing a description specifically for "people of interest" in the fire department to provide basic information
- Ms. Morris raised the issue that during a recent commission meeting regarding the formation of a fire chief hiring committee, concerns were raised about committee composition and community perception. Members of the community have expressed to her their concerns about potential community misperceptions regarding Chief Christenbury's role in the process. She expressed that some community members have incorrectly assumed that Chief Christenbury is positioning himself to become chief, a misconception that persists despite clarifications on the organization's website.

- She opined that Chief Christenbury should be involved throughout the hiring process due to his valuable expertise and understanding of the department. Nevertheless, she felt that giving him official committee membership with voting privileges could create an appearance of impropriety or favoritism. She expressed that the commission exclude Chief Christenbury from formal committee membership to protect both his reputation and the department's credibility from unfounded allegations of a "fixed" selection process.
 - Ms. Morris emphasized that her statements were not intended as disrespect toward Chief Christenbury, whose character and commitment she explicitly praised, but rather to ensure that the hiring process would be perceived as transparent and fair by all community members, even those who might be misinformed about Kevin's actual role and intentions.
- Dr. Howler asked how Chief Christenbury's involvement could be misunderstood since he is not applying.
 - Ms. Morris expressed that Chief Christenbury's involvement in every step of this process could make Chief Christenbury look bad. She emphasized that the commission should avoid making the department or the commission look bad. While this gossip and chatter is not true, the commission should avoid any kind of impropriety.
 - Mr. Marcengil indicated his surprise that the committee intended to hire someone for 2 years, then give the position to Chief Christenbury.
 - Dr. Howler shared from his training in psychosomatic medicine that a lot of people who are unhappy enjoy being unhappy because it makes them feel good. He expressed that in 20 or 30 years of observation, he has found this to be true. He further shared that his experience indicated that these people are usually the most outspoken people.
- Questioned by Mr. Marcengil, Chief Christenbury, about his intent. Chief Christenbury indicated no intent to retire early from Clemson. The Clemson Chief just announced his retirement. Chief Christenbury has several years left before retirement.
- L. Watley suggested that the commissioner facing questions about Chief Christenbury reference a newspaper article in which Chief Christenbury explained his future plans and indicated her belief that community rumors were unfortunate because they could deny the commission the input of a valued resource.
- Ms. Christenbury shared her experience as a Behavior Analyst when new analyst positions are opened. While her company's management provides good guidance, it is more valuable to have another Behavior Analyst involved in the hiring process. In the situation where the commission has the opportunity for involvement from someone who has the same history as the Chief and is dedicated to the department, it makes sense to take advantage of the expertise. She further offered that she and Chief Christenbury would not need the added income when he retires from Clemson.
- Mr. Marcengil indicated that he felt a responsibility to make the hiring decision of the new Chief and did not want to avoid his duties by letting somebody else make the decision.
- Mr. Smith expressed his opinion that more of the commissioners should be involved.

- Dr. Howiler opined that involving all five commissioners would slow down the process. He suggested this process:
 - By streamlining the initial work of identifying candidates, the hiring process can move forward. All commissioners would have access to the whole process. This would create transparency and there's ownership for the whole commission for the application, all the way through the interviewing process.
 - The commission will help generate the job description. All five commissioners will review the candidate. Once the candidates are reviewed, the commission could meet to go through the list methodically and identify preferences.
 - The commission could then send that list to the committee to conduct the interviews. The commission won't interview every day. They might have three interviews in one day.
 - This way, only two commissioners need to participate in each interview panel, which makes the process more manageable. Then you start narrowing the list down. You can come back to a commission meeting and say, "This is the feedback we got from the 15 interviews we conducted, and based on this feedback, we want to narrow this down."
 - Then you might narrow it down to ten candidates. I think having the commission involved in every aspect of the process makes sense, with the committee serving as an interview committee that helps move the process along as weeks and months go by to get everything completed.
- Mr. Marcingil related a conversation he had with a member of the community in which he described the proposal that a hiring committee would give the commission 15 applicants to select from. The individual he was talking to just threw his hands up, indicating his displeasure with the process.
- Dr. Howiler indicated that the plan was to permit participation from the commission while permitting some ability to efficiently move the process forward. He expressed the hope that the process would identify a number of candidates in the hope that a consensus could be reached.
- L. Watley suggested drafting a written plan for all commissioners to review. It could set a process to receive all applications and identify the top five candidates. These top five can be interviewed. Each commissioner could do something similar. The commission could establish a qualifications list, then come together and review those final people. This provides the added value of allowing the community to know the process. This allows the commission to review all the applications and decide their top five.
- Referring back to the community rumor that Chief Christenbury would work to secure the chief position upon his retirement from Clemson, Dr. Howiler asked how many people had said this. Mr. Marcingil indicated two people.
- Chief Christenbury asked K. Whelan and L. Watley to work on a proposed hiring plan as suggested for review by the Commission. The plan would be provided to the commission before the next scheduled meeting. The commission would provide feedback, and there would be a proposal ready for discussion and vote. Our objective should be to hire someone around **January 2026**.
- Chairman Howiler accepted this plan without objection from the commission. He invited commission members to provide input to him on a common job description based on the samples provided.