

WV STATE FIRE COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING/HEARING

December 3rd, 2025

Morgantown Marriot Waterfront, Morgantown WV.

The official business meeting was called to order at 1:33pm by Chairman Grant Gunnoe.

ROLL CALL: by Kathryn L Burns

Commissioners Present

Steven Byers, Carl Eastham, Doug Estep, Edward George, Grant Gunnoe, Phil Hart, Tom Keefer, Brian Jones, Doug Mongold, Jim Oldaker, Ted Shriver and Virgil White.

It is noted that Counsel Brandolyn Felton-Ernest is in attendance as well.

Commissioners Absent

None

1) Consideration of FDC2025-029

a) Hearing on FDC2025-029 – Smithers VFD Decertification

Counsel swore in all potential witnesses.

Chairman Gunnoe asked who was in attendance for Smither's VFD.

Mayor Cavalier stated that Lenny Jarrett (tentative Fire Chief) and she are in attendance.

Assistant State Fire Marshal Bradley Scott read a summary/timeline of the investigation.

State Fire Marshal Kenneth Tyree read:

1. The statement of charges dated October 10th, 2025
- 2) A letter received from the Fayette County Commission Counsel Michael W. Taylor, in favor of the decertification of the Smither's VFD.
- 3) A letter from the Chief Mike Myers with the Boomer VFD, in favor of the decertification of the Smither's VFD.

John McGinnis Vice President of Fayette County Fire Fighters Association addressed the Commission in favor of the decertification.

Marty Blakenship, Chief of Glasgow VFD addressed the Commission in favor of the decertification after unsuccessful attempts to assist in its reorganization.

Mayor Anne Cavalier (Smithers) addressed the Commission and Staff sharing her opinion on how the department arrived at the closure under the previous administrations. She noted the attempts made and the assistance provided to

re-organize the department with the most recent being Lenny Jarrett agreeing to be the new Fire Chief. She disagreed with multiple items noted in the letter from the Fayette County Commission as well as Boomer and Glasgow being able to provide adequate coverage. She then requested Mr. Jarrett discuss the plans he wishes to put into place.

Mr. Jarrett provided a brief synopsis of the plans to reorganize the department. He provided information addressing the lack of a fire hose on a scene that was outlined in ASFM Scotts timeline of the investigation. He answered questions from the Commission on potential numbers of members, their training levels, his previous tenure as a firefighter and assistant chief, his role on scene and response percentages per CAD reports.

Following Mr. Jarrett's testimony, Mayor Cavalier requested if the Commission would consider instead of Decertification to give the department 6 months to get to be where they need to be while being operational. She also noted that contrary to an earlier vote to decertify the department, that city council has now voted to keep the department.

A discussion was held at that time on the 501 classification of the department and per Marty Blankenship they are a 501c4.

Commissioner Mongold made a motion to go into executive session, seconded by Commissioner Eastham. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

Commissioner Mongold made a motion to leave executive session, seconded by Commissioner Eastham. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

Chairman Gunnoe entertained a motion.

Commissioner Eastham made a motion as Chairman of the Disciplinary to revoke the Certification of the Smithers VFD based on evidence and testimony provided to the Fire Commission, seconded by Commissioner Jones. With the ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

Chairman Gunnoe informed the Department of the Decision verbally and that it was effective immediately and noted that a Final Written Order will be sent with instructions for any appeal process.

ADJOURN:

Commissioner White moved to adjourn at 2:30pm, seconded by Commissioner Mongold. Without objection, meeting adjourned.