

Fire Tax District Year End Summary

Fiscal Year: July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016

Keowee Fire Department

The Keowee Fire Tax District (District) was created by Oconee County Ordinance 2003 - 12 in August 2003 to provide fire protection services. The District is unique in Oconee County. The remainder of the County receives fire protection services from either a municipality fire service (3) or a county volunteer fire department. As a separate public entity, the District is overseen by a commission elected from district members who serve a four year term, unless filing the unexpired term of a commissioner who leaves the commission.

Commission responsibilities include financial oversight, submission of an annual budget to the Oconee County Council and employment of the District Fire Chief. The 2016 commissioners are: Doug Carlson, Don Chamberlain, Larry Gabe, Karen Graves and Jim Henderson.

Keowee Fire Department (KFD) continues to deliver a high level of professional firefighting and emergency service to the District and surrounding areas through mutual aid. The District encompasses 30 square miles and includes both residential and commercial customers including the Oconee Nuclear Station.

Under the direction of Chief Caudill, Asst.Chief/Fire Marshall Shirley and Captains Caldwell, Mansfield and Merritt, highly trained firefighters and volunteers provide excellent fire and emergency services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The department is well equipped to meet the special needs of the District and often uses its specialized equipment for mutual aid calls outside the district. KFD operates from two locations to better serve the members of the district: the main station and headquarters on Stamp Creek Road and the substation on Doug Hollow Road, serving the southern end of the district.

Operational Results

The Department responded to 507 calls during the 2015 - 2016 fiscal year which represents a 5% increase over the prior year. Total calls included 108 fire calls, 235 medical calls and 91 miscellaneous service calls. The department maintains its record of responding to 100% of the dispatched calls within the District.

KFD has recently been licensed by DHEC to provide advanced care services. KFD will begin working under the medical control of Greenville HealthCare System. When details are finalized, KFD will allow firefighters who are certified Emergency Medical

Technicians (EMTs) to provide an advanced level of care when responding to medical emergency calls.

There were two significant fire events. The most significant event was a transformer fire at the Oconee Nuclear Station. KFD and Duke engage in ongoing joint training exercises in case of onsite fires. The training was evident in the quick containment and suppression of the fire. KFD and the Duke fire brigade were supported by 4 other fire departments. Duke Energy recognized KFD for its outstanding work. The second was a major structure fire, the Waterside Crossing Clubhouse. Though this was a mutual aid call, KFD was first on scene and maintained command until the fire was contained and extinguished.

On July 1, 2016, the Commission and KFD welcomed County Rescue 22 into new space as its home in the KFD annex located adjacent to the main station. KFD and R22 members prepared the space. The Commission approved the use of the space not only to provide new space for Rescue 22 but also for the possibility of shared training opportunities. Both R22 and KFD respond to medical emergency calls within the KFD District.

KFD staff work together to insure a high state of readiness to deliver fire and emergency service excellence by skilled firefighters. Firefighter safety and training are top priorities for KFD. There was no loss of manpower due to injury this year. For the fiscal year ending in 2016, the department personnel participated in 4076 hours of training including local, state and national educational opportunities. The equipment and apparatus are tested on a regular schedule and constantly maintained to insure availability when a fire or emergency occurs.

The department and commission support the Firewise initiative in conjunction with the National and South Carolina Forestry service. Keowee Key, Keowee Harbors, Wynward Pointe communities and Waterford communities have established active programs. The Department inspects fire extinguishers. The department also sells fire extinguishers and lock boxes for house key access in case of an emergency. The department prepares Home Prefire plans and carries an electronic version of the plan on the engine. The department also conducts Firewise property inspections and makes recommendations on fire resistant landscaping.

KFD supports the community through participation with Toys for Tots, food drives, the Honoring their Service events at Keowee Key and the 18th District Amateur Emergency Radio field day event. Asst. Chief/Fire Marshal Brandon Shirley continues to actively participate in planning the 9/11 Memorial that will be located north of the new Walhalla High School on Highway 11.

Financial Results

The District continues to maintain a strong financial position through planning, conservative budget management by Chief Caudill and Asst. Chief Brandon Shirley and

focus on reserving for future equipment, apparatus and facilities replacements. District assets equaled \$2,303,336 at the end of the fiscal year.

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2106, the Department received \$789,660 in revenue. The primary source of revenue was from a 14.5 mil assessment paid by the property owners of the District. Additional major contributions come from Oconee County Emergency Services and through a service contract with Duke Energy for Oconee Nuclear Station protection.

The District operated within its budget and was able to make additional contributions to the capital replacement funds. Staffing continues to be the most significant expense, followed by the bond payment and bond interest payment. The bond was used to build the headquarters and station and to equip our primary station, headquarters and the substation on Doug Hollow Road. KFD finished the year with 5 full-time, 12 part-time and 9 volunteer firefighters. The operating budget continues to be challenged by a declining number of volunteers, a nationwide trend, creating a need for additional paid staff to continue to deliver the level of service that is expected and required.

In 2016, the commission and department management refined the future replacement schedules and reserving in anticipation of future major expenditures. Within the next 12 months, decisions will be made on life safety equipment (firefighter air pack) replacement and future engine replacement (vintage 70's and 80's). The life expectancy for an engine is estimated by industry standard at 20 years but through stringent inspection and maintenance procedures KFD has extended the useful life of the District equipment.

The District is required to have an annual audit by an independent accounting firm. The Certified Public Accounting firm, Payne, White and Schmutz conducted the audit, using guidelines set by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board. The 2015 fiscal year audit report completed in October confirmed that the financial statements fairly represented the financial position of the District in accordance with accounting principles that are generally accepted in the United States.

A copy of the Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Report for the last fiscal ending June 30, 2015 is available for review by members of the District upon request at Headquarters. A copy of the year-end financial statement for the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2016 is also available upon request at Headquarters located on Stamp Creek Road.

Special Recognition

Commissioner Don Chamberlain has served the commission as Chairman for 12 years. He was the constant as other commissioners served their terms and were replaced by new commissioners. He and his fellow commissioners guided the department from a volunteer based organization to the well trained, professionally staffed department it is today.

Chief Caudill, Asst. Chief Shirley/Fire Marshall and Captains Caldwell, Mansfield and Merritt lead daily and challenge the firefighters to deliver superior service to the District.

Commissioner Doug Carlson has chosen not to run for reelection. He will be greatly missed. He has worked tirelessly on the Firewise initiative. He has been instrumental in developing a process and the structure for the new Apparatus committee.

Conclusion

The commission is pleased to provide this annual summary, updating the members of the District on the progress of its fire and emergency service. The commission encourages you to visit your fire station, meet those who serve, ask questions and support the department.

The commission meets monthly on the third Monday at 3:00 PM. You are invited to attend and participate through your comments as the commission sets the strategic direction for the department. Information about the department, commission and meetings is available at the website, www.keoweefire.com.

As a reminder, always call 911 for emergency assistance. The Oconee County emergency call center is under the direction of the Oconee County Sheriff's Department. The operators are trained to dispatch the necessary and appropriate response for your fire and emergency needs.

Finally, we cordially invited you to attend our bi-annual open house, Saturday, October 8, 2016.

Respectfully submitted by the Keowee Fires Tax District Commission

Jim Henderson, Chair