

TIMELINE OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SMITHS STATION FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

September 2012

50\$ fire fee is passed county wide on a beat-by-beat vote. Smiths Station Fire Coverage area passes with approx. 80% support.

Early 2020

Covid brings into focus the finite amount of funding to keep fire department operational and the fact that there has been no increase to the fire fee in 8 years.

Smiths Station Fire & Rescue begins looking around the state to see how other non-city fire departments are funded and discovers that many large non-city departments are organized as either Fire Authority's under Title 11, Chapter 88, Code of Alabama, 1975 or as Fire Districts under Title 11, Chapter 89, Code of Alabama, 1975. Including 1 in our county and at least 2 in neighboring Chambers County.

May 18, 2020

Met with Smiths Water & Sewer Authority during a regularly scheduled board meeting to make a presentation on the possibility of merging to become a combined Water, Sewer, & Fire Authority.

Late 2020

Delayed by Covid and in the midst of dealing with Covid problems, Smiths Water & Sewer indicates they aren't sure it's the best time to merge.

2021

Smiths Station Fire & Rescue continues searching for the best way to move forward for the community while struggling to keep volunteers and keep up with demand for emergency services, especially in the midst of a pandemic that cause volunteer numbers to go down and calls for emergency services to go up.

Late 2021

Faced with a nationwide shortage of Paramedics and other medical professionals and still in the midst of a pandemic, Smiths Station Fire & Rescue began losing Licensed and Trained Ambulance personnel to other area services that were able to offer sign on bonuses, higher pay, insurance, and retirement benefits. As a result, Smiths Station's Ambulance was having to shut down on certain days and at certain times due to lack of licensed staff.

Jan 24, 2022

Faced with mounting losses, no immediate funding option, and no funding to compete with other area services for Licensed Ambulance personnel, the Smiths Station Fire & Rescue meets in regular open session and made the difficult decision to temporarily suspend Ambulance Operations until a funding source can be secured.

The board also voted to proceed with attempting to form an independent Fire District under Title 11, Chapter 89, Code of Alabama, 1975.

February 5, 2022

After months of random availability due to staffing shortages the lifesaving Smiths Station Fire & Rescue Ambulance service is suspended. This suspension adds additional strain to the EMS system in the entire county. This suspension of service is widely publicized online and in the news media and Smiths Station Fire & Rescue repeatedly states they are aggressively looking for a way to get the ambulance back into operations as soon as possible. The story is even picked up by some national news outlets.

February 7, 2022

A request is made with the City of Smiths Station for the fire department to be added to the agenda for the February 22, 2022, City Council agenda to discuss the formation of a Fire District. This agenda is a matter of **PUBLIC RECORD** and was posted in advanced of the meeting in accordance with State Law.

February 15, 2022

A 42 slide PowerPoint presentation that is to be used during the February 22, 2022; meeting is sent to the City. This presentation discusses in detail the need and process of forming a Fire Protection District as well as ambulance information, comparison with other local departments, and proposed expenditures if the district is established.

February 17, 2022

The official application to form the Smiths Station Fire Protection District is signed in accordance with § 11-89-3, Code of Alabama 1975.

While **not** required by law, but in the interest of transparency, a copy of this application is recorded into the **PUBLIC RECORD** with the Lee County Probate Judge in MISC Book 1331 page 631 – 651.

The application is officially delivered to the City of Smiths Station for consideration at the February 22, 2022 council meeting.

February 17, 2022

A packet containing a request to be added to the February 28, 2022 County Commission agenda to discuss the formation of a Fire District and the application for establishment of a fire protection district and a printed copy of the PowerPoint slides is hand delivered to the County Commission Office in Opelika. This agenda is a matter of **PUBLIC RECORD** and was posted in advanced of the meeting in accordance with State Law.

February 22, 2022

The Smiths Station City Council meets in regular open session. Representatives from Smiths Station Fire & Rescue present the aforementioned PowerPoint Presentation in open session and field questions from council members. Resolution 2022-460 supporting the formation of the Smiths Station Fire Protection District is passed unanimously.

This meeting was open to the public and the minutes thereof are **PUBLIC RECORD** which are easily accessed through the city's website. In addition, as is standard practice, CTV Beam filmed the entire meeting and played it on Ch 9 public access

February 23, 2022

City of Smiths Station Resolution 2022-460 is recorded into **PUBLIC RECORD** at the Lee County Probate Judges Office in DEEDS Book 2657 Page 446, 447, 448.

February 23, 2022

A copy of City of Smiths Station Resolution 2022-460 is delivered to the county commission via email

February 23 – March 2, 2022

Public copies of the City of Smiths Station Resolution 2022-460 are posted in 4 public places inside the city, which are: City Hall, Rainbow Foods, Terry's Grocery, and the USPS Office in Smiths Station.

February 28, 2022

The Lee County Commission meets in regular open session. Representatives from Smiths Station Fire & Rescue make essentially the same presentation that was made to the City of Smiths Station. Commissioners ask questions and unanimously approve a resolution of support after review by the County Attorney. (Commissioner Long abstained based on his prior service on the SSFR board)

This meeting was open to the public and the minutes thereof are **PUBLIC RECORD** which are easily accessed through the city's website. In addition, as is standard practice, this meeting was broadcast on Facebook and the County website. This meeting can also be played back at any time. Further, several news outlets were in attendance and stories referencing the fire district appeared on at least 2 TV News Outlets and 2 newspapers, in addition to the online and social media pages of each.

March 7, 2022

With the county attorney having finished his review of the application and resolution a signed copy of the resolution is delivered to Smiths Station Fire & Rescue. This resolution is a matter of **PUBLIC RECORD** and appears in the official minutes of the county commission, which are easily accessed via the county's website, among other methods.

March 9, 2022

Documents are filed with and accepted by the Alabama Secretary of State Officially establishing the Smiths Station Fire Protection District.

The documents are a matter of PUBLIC RECORD and are easily accessible on the Secretary of States website.

March 25, 2022

The Smiths Station Fire Protection District is granted governmental entity access to the Alabama Secretary of States Open Meetings Notification Website.

March 31, 2022

The Smiths Station Fire Protection District adds of all its regular scheduled board meetings for the remainder of 2022 into the Secretary of States Open Meetings Notification Website.

April 5, 2022

The Smiths Station Fire Protection District holds its first board meeting. This meeting is open to the public and notification was given via the Alabama SOS Open Meeting Website.

No member of the public attends.

By-Laws of Board are established, voted on, and approved.

Agenda & Minutes are available for public review on district website.

April 8, 2022

Singed bylaws are filed with the Alabama Secretary of State. These documents are a matter of PUBLIC RECORD and are easily accessible on the Secretary of States website.

May 3, 2022

The Smiths Station Fire Protection District holds regular board meeting. This meeting is open to the public and notification was given via the Alabama SOS Open Meeting Website.

No member of the public attends.

Agenda & Minutes are available for public review on district website.

May 17, 2022

The www.smithsstational-fpd.gov website is created and FAQ's about the fire protection district are posted. These FAQ's are continually updated throughout the process. A link to this site is added to the districts primary website which is: www.fire.smithsstational.gov

June 7, 2022

The Smiths Station Fire Protection District holds regular board meeting. This meeting is open to the public and notification was given via the Alabama SOS Open Meeting Website.

No member of the public attends.

Agenda & Minutes are available for public review on district website.

August 2, 2022

The Smiths Station Fire Protection District holds regular board meeting. This meeting is open to the public and notification was given via the Alabama SOS Open Meeting Website.

No member of the public attends.

Agenda & Minutes are available for public review on district website.

Mid-August 2022

Smiths Station Fire Protection District prints 15,000 double sided trifold fliers to be mailed to every address in the district. These flyers are titled "FIRE FEE INFORMATION GUIDE" and include sections titled "NEW FIRE FEE EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 1, 2022", "FUTURE PLANS", and "WHERE ARE WE NOW AND WHATS CHANGING"

The new rates are also included in this flyer.

Late August 2022

Smiths Station Fire Protection District prints mails approx 14,000 of the aforementioned double sided trifold flyers to every address in the district using USPS "Every Door Direct Mail" Service.

August 20, 2022

Facebook Post, phone calls, and emails indicate that citizens have begun receiving the trifold flyers that were mailed.

September 1, 2022

A flyer announcing the Town Hall meeting is created and posted online to the Fire Departments Website and to all social media platforms.

The flyer is emailed along with a press release to 14 different reporters at WTVM, WRBL, Ledger-Enquirer, Opelika-Auburn News, CNAW2, Opelika Observer, and the Montgomery Advertiser. The release requests the news media notify the public and attend the town hall.

Smiths Station Fire Protection District adds official notice of the September 9th Town Hall to the Alabama Secretary of State Open Meetings website.

September 9, 2022

Smiths Station Fire Protection District holds a town hall meeting at Station 1 on Lee Rd 430. Meeting is open to the public and attended by citizens, students, and elected officials.

Meeting is also broadcast live on Facebook, YouTube, Rumble, and district website. Live feedback is accepted from the internet during the Q&A session.

A recording of the meeting is made available for play back minutes after the meeting ends. The meeting can be played back on Facebook, YouTube, Rumble and our website.

A copy of the PowerPoint discussed in the townhall video is posted online where it can be viewed or downloaded by any member of the public.

WTVM attends the meeting.

September 6, 2022

The Smiths Station Fire Protection District holds regular board meeting. This meeting is open to the public and notification was given via the Alabama SOS Open Meeting Website.

No member of the public attends.

Agenda & Minutes are available for public review on district website.

October 4, 2022

The Smiths Station Fire Protection District holds regular board meeting. This meeting is open to the public and notification was given via the Alabama SOS Open Meeting Website.

No member of the public attends.

Agenda is available for public review on district website. Minutes will be available after they are approved.