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Kershaw elects new fire chief

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Jan 24, 2023



Larry Ammons

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Larry Ammons was elected Kershaw's fire chief by a unanimous vote at Kershaw Town Council's meeting Monday, Jan. 23.

The members of the fire department choose who they want to lead them, and Town Council holds the final vote to make it official, said Kershaw Mayor Mark Dorman.

Ammons, who has been with the Kershaw Fire Department for 10 years, said the fire chief's duties and responsibilities are to "mitigate all hazards in our fire district, especially town limits."

He said some of his main goals for his year-long term are to increase firefighter and staff training, and secure plans and funding for a new fire station.

"We are in dire need of a new building, so we need to try and secure funding for that, and a location," Ammons said. "I'll have to work with the town on that. We're running out of room (in the current station); we've got trucks stacked in there."

Fire Station 11, Kershaw's current building, was built in 1979-80 with funding raised through barbecue sales. It took the firefighters nearly 60,000 hours of cooking and selling barbecue to raise the roughly \$60,000 to build it.

“You can’t build one like that nowadays,” Ammons said. “They’re like \$4 million. Can’t sell enough barbecue to build a fire department.”

Station 11 is staffed by 25 firefighters, mostly volunteers. Ammons said there are also three full-time firefighters who work 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday, to cover while volunteers are at work.

“After that (5 p.m.), it’s strictly a volunteer station,” Ammons said.

Ammons’ term will last one year, but he is eligible for re-election for as many years as the department’s firefighters want him.

“We elect every year, but you could be doing a good job and go on until you decide to hang it up,” he said.

Ammons said he hopes he can fill the big shoes of those who came before him as fire chief, do the job justice and “make sure everybody goes home every night.”

Haley