



St. Matthews Fire Department
Station 2
1313 Bridge Street
St. Matthews, SC 29135
Chief Gregory A. Sandlin

Dear Rep. Russell Ott,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am the Fire Chief of St. Matthews, contacting you in regards to available funding to help renovate the old National Guard Armory here in St Matthews into a new Fire Station. The current station was the old Highway Department maintenance yard that was turned over to the fire department in 1955. The buildings on site have since deteriorated significantly and since I became Chief two years ago, I have done what I can to improve on what we have, but fortunately growth and expansion has rendered a necessary change.

The main truck bay was added some years ago but, roof leaks and uneven grading have given way to constant flooding around our main response apparatus. The parking lot is asphalt and does not hold up to the weight of fully loaded fire trucks. With the asphalt breaking down all of the time and being patched over we have a very rough driveway that is very hard on the fire trucks. Because of this we are also limited to small water flow when training in hopes of not causing further damage. We have an old pole barn style building that was partially enclosed to house two of the trucks. We need to keep the fire pumps from freezing in the colder months and it is not feasible using the later installed small space heater, which is also not cost effective. My office is attached to a small bay where we keep our brush truck for woods and grass fires so when it is started the diesel fumes fill my office. Our bunk room was built into another small bay where our rescue truck is parked and we have the same issue of diesel fumes getting into the same room where we sleep. Also, when it rains water seeps under the floor tiles in the bunk room. The living area is small and out dated. Because we are a combination department, meaning we are made up of career and volunteer firefighters, we often find ourselves without the necessary accommodations to host several members at one time. Our volunteers are the backbone of this department and sacrifice their time to give back to the citizens of St. Matthews, as well as the surrounding County. A new facility would offer a more suitable atmosphere for the brothers and sisters of this fire service to come together and take pride in what they do.

Having a new station would also allow us to reduce maintenance cost on the trucks caused by the old parking lot and its degradation. Along with the apparatus, we have run into the need for more ample storage area for backup equipment such as hose, ladders, and foam. The storage situation now gives temptation for theft and “misplacement” due to lack of security throughout the various storage buildings at our current site. The old National Guard Armory is an already gated area that, with time and renovation, will provide the necessary space to hold all of our apparatus and equipment in one secure location.

We here at St. Matthews Fire Department want to thank you firsthand for your help in this process and are open to any and all help we can get. St. Matthews is a small town that takes pride in its businesses as well as its public servants. We want to do everything we can to create a facility that welcomes the public to come and learn more about what we do and how we can help, but also what they can do to come together for safety in their homes. Community outreach is an essential part of what we do as a fire service, and being able to safely bring residents to the fire house and educate them provides greater outreach along with the already astounding relationship we have built through visiting schools, care facilities, and public events. Thank you again for the opportunity and we look forward to hearing your questions or concerns, as well as hopefully welcoming you to our new facility in the future.

Best Regards,
Chief Gregory Sandlin
St Matthews Fire Department

CC: Rosyl Warren, Town Administrator
Mayor Helen Glover-Carson and Town Council