

Good morning, Gentlemen.

It is with great sadness that I find myself in a position where I have to reach out to the Board for assistance. County Administrator Robert Sivick has embarked upon a course of veiled and unveiled threats in regard to my position here in Whitfield County. I have grown weary of his 11 p.m. emails threatening my job (see below and attached). The issue at hand on this occasion is the deployment of the F-250s. To bring everyone up to speed on this issue, here are the specifics. In September and December of 2020, then Fire Chief Ed O'Brien requested funding for (13) F-250s. Three were purchased with SPLOST money and 10 were requested to be purchased through Covid-19 relief funds. Ultimately, I was informed by CFO Goddard that the 10 were purchased out of the general fund. Chief O'Brien believed that these vehicles would be better equipped to handle the increased call volume from Covid-19 related patients. He also believed that, after the medical call, the F-250s were easier to decontaminate. All of this was true in 2020 and 2021.

Now, in 2026, the issues faced in 2020 and 2021 have changed. It is my belief as Fire Chief that sending the F-250s back to the fire stations for medical use will eventually result in the death or serious injury of a civilian or firefighter. My reasoning is based on what I have seen since I have been with the county. They are as follows:

1. On most days, we have two firefighters assigned to a fire station. When a medical call comes out, those two firefighters would take the F-250 and respond, leaving the engine behind, technically out of service because there is no one available at the station to bring it in the event of another emergency. On several occasions, while responding to or coming from a medical call, that station has been dispatched to a fire or a multi-vehicle accident requiring the use of the engine, however, the firefighters are in the F-250. These incidents have caused significant delays in response because the second arriving engine now has to respond to mitigate the emergency that the F-250 could not.
2. While there is still a measure of decontamination taking place due to certain types of medical calls, it is nothing like it was during the Covid-19 era.
3. The F-250s have been out of the stations for one year now and we have not had any issues regarding response to medical or fire calls to my knowledge (Except for Vic).

Some may question fuel usage between the two types of vehicles. The F-250s get 10 mpg, while the fire trucks average around 5 mpg. Based on these figures, there is a slight savings, primarily due to the cost of diesel fuel at the moment. However, from my perspective, that savings is not near the benefit of having an engine on the scene of an emergency.

As noted in the email below, the county administrator has directed me to return all F-250s to our 12 stations by Friday. I am prepared to do whatever the Board asks of me, however, I could not do it without fully explaining my concern for the safety of our citizens and our firefighters.

I am sorry if, as Mr. Sivick say, my “actions are now publicly causing embarrassment for Whitfield County and the BOC.” It is not my intention or desire to do anything to bring reproach on the Board or our county.

Ultimately, I am asking the Board to remove the restrictions on the F-250s and allow me to keep them in their current assignments. If you decide not to, I will have the F-250s back in the stations by this Friday as directed by the county administrator.

Lastly, I recognize that this is government and you have to have a level of skin thickness at times to navigate the ebb and flow of the times. I find that I usually do pretty well with this. However, over the last few months, Mr. Sivick has made my time here with the county extremely difficult. Based on hearsay, lies, and rumors, he has painted me as someone incapable of doing this job. This information has been fed to him from a person in my office. This person has told me directly that both Mr. Sivick and Ms. Carlo have reached out to him with questions concerning my whereabouts and what I do on a daily basis. I believe that this internal issue has been dealt with. However, I refuse to be the whipping boy for Mr. Sivick. I ask you to look closely at the email below and the one attached and ask yourself how you would feel if your supervisor sent this to you in the late hours of the night. I have no confidence in Mr. Sivick as the county administrator. He has shown by his aloofness and his repeated disrespect to citizens, personnel, and the Board of County Commissioners that he does not have what is necessary to lead this county. I know that statements such as these may cost me my job as Fire Chief, however, I can not continue to be treated the way Mr. Sivick is treating me.

Thank you all.

Mon 10/12/2026 11:10 PM

Dear Paul:

Where to begin? My standard regarding senior staff is such people should be self-motivated and able to manage their Departments. As related to you in an email from July, I tell senior staff, "If I am paying attention to you, you are in trouble. If I have to tell you how to do your job, you are in big trouble." Paul, you are in big trouble for the following reasons:

1. You knew or should have known the pickup trucks in question were purchased and designated by the Board of Commissioners (BOC) for use responding to medical calls for valid financial and operational reasons. Nevertheless, you believed your authority exceeded that of the governing body by repurposing those vehicles for use by Fire Department command staff. Your actions are now known publicly causing embarrassment for Whitfield County and the BOC.
2. On Thursday the 1st we met in my office and I directed you return the trucks to their originally designated purpose. Last week I asked for an update on the status of the situation and your response indicated you would not be doing so. I had to explain to you we are bound to implement public policy decisions of the BOC regardless of whether we agree or believe those decisions wise.
3. This past Friday afternoon you sent me the attached proposal which was clearly generated by artificial intelligence as it consists of four pages of repetitive gibberish. You also asked me to tell you what to do. I will not do so as I am nowhere near as familiar with your operations, staff, and equipment as you. If I have to wade into the minutiae of the situation and instruct you how to resolve this matter, that begs the question, "what is Whitfield County paying you to do?" Again, I remind you of what I said in the aforementioned July email about having to tell you how to do your job.
4. I have no sympathy for you as the crisis you find yourself in is entirely of your creation. See item 1 above.
5. It is highly unlikely the BOC will authorize purchasing new vehicles to replace the ones you had surplussed and sold when you repurposed the medical call trucks without authority to do so. That's because you should be aware money is tight and bad behavior will not be rewarded with new vehicles. If the solution involves Fire command staff using personal vehicles for calls and mileage reimbursement, look at the policy and incorporate it into your solution.
6. As stated in one of my emails to you last week, a problem this community faces is leaders fail to see the forest for the trees. In the instant situation, the forest is complying or rectifying non-compliance with the BOC's policy decision regarding use of medical call pickup trucks. That means get them back to the stations for medical call use as the BOC directed. The trees are

use of other vehicles for your staff, the County's mileage policy, and possible procurement of additional vehicles. The trees do not take precedence over the forest and therefore will not delay resolving the obvious problem of complying with the BOC's decision regarding acquisition and use of these trucks.

7. I have not set a definite deadline for resolving this situation because I am not a micromanager and you should be able to do your job with minimal oversight by me. In other words, I am not an assistant manager at McDonalds and you are not a teenager working there in need of constant supervision. Nevertheless, if you require definite direction here it is. You are to return the pickup trucks in question to all twelve stations for use in medical calls. You are to accomplish this by the close of business on Friday the 16th. If you fail to do so that will be considered gross insubordination resulting in appropriate consequences.

I want you to succeed but it is apparent your vibrant personality is no longer sufficient to carry you. You need to start leading and managing the Fire Department. In my July email I said you were moving in the wrong direction and needed to turn things around. You are not only continuing to move in the wrong direction but actually increasing your speed. You are running out of time and I am running out of patience.

Get this taken care of. If necessary enlist the advice and assistance of a capable member of your command staff.