

January 31, 2025

N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources  
N.C. Historical Commission  
109 E. Jones Street  
Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear North Carolina Historical Commission Members,

On behalf of Rutherford County, we respectfully request permission to relocate the Fallen Firefighters Monument currently situated on the Rutherford County Courthouse Lawn. This request is made in accordance with North Carolina General Statute 100-2.1.

The Rutherford County Firefighters Association has initiated a significant project to construct a new Fallen Firefighters Memorial on the campus of Isothermal Community College. This new memorial is designed to honor and remember all fallen firefighters who have served our community. The current memorial has reached capacity and this expansion will provide a fitting tribute to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

The Fallen Firefighters Monument, currently located on the Courthouse Lawn, is a prominent and revered symbol of our community's respect for its fallen heroes. The Firefighters Association envisions incorporating this monument into the design of the new memorial space. This integration will create a more comprehensive and impactful memorial, providing a serene and reflective environment for the families of the fallen. We believe that relocating the monument to the new memorial site will enhance its visibility and significance. It will become a focal point of a dedicated space designed to honor and remember the fallen. This new location will offer a more fitting and permanent tribute to the sacrifices made by these brave individuals. Also, the new Firefighters and Emergency Services training facility is located on the Isothermal Community College campus.

We kindly request the Commission's approval to proceed with the relocation of the Fallen Firefighters Monument. We are confident that this move will honor the legacy of our fallen firefighters and serve as a lasting testament to their courage and dedication. Thank you for your time and consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,



Steve Garrison  
County Manager



COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Bryan King, *Chairman* | Alan Toney, *Vice Chairman* | Michael Benfield | Hunter Haynes | Donnie Haulk  
Steve Garrison, *County Manager* | Hazel S. Haynes, *Clerk to the Board* | Richard Williams, *County Attorney*

## Backstrom, Parker

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**From:** Backstrom, Parker  
**Sent:** Friday, March 7, 2025 9:14 AM  
**To:** 'Frankie Hamrick'; Garrison, Steve  
**Cc:** Waters, Darin; Sutton, Jessica V; Barrick, Doug; Richard Williams  
**Subject:** RE: [External] Request to Relocate Fall Firefighters Memorial

Folks,

Thank you for this information. Given these facts, I would refer you to my guidance about what the NC Historical Commission (NCHC) will need to consider your request, as it's desired placement on state property—on the ICC campus—would indeed require approval by the NCHC. I would stress that it's better to present too much detail than not enough detail when you submit the materials required.

As mentioned, the Commission has not yet decided where it's June 10 meeting will be held but you can continue to check the NCHC website (<https://www.dncr.nc.gov/about-us/history/nc-historical-commission>) for that information, or you can always reach out again to me to inquire.

If you have any additional questions for Dr. Waters or me, don't hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards,  
Parker

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**From:** Frankie Hamrick <Frankie.Hamrick@rutherfordcountync.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 6, 2025 4:14 PM  
**To:** Garrison, Steve <Steve.Garrison@rutherfordcountync.gov>  
**Cc:** Backstrom, Parker <parker.backstrom@dncr.nc.gov>; Waters, Darin <darin.waters@dncr.nc.gov>; Sutton, Jessica V <jess.sutton@dncr.nc.gov>; Barrick, Doug <dbarrick@rutherfordton.net>; Richard Williams <Richard.Williams@rutherfordcountync.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: [External] Request to Relocate Fall Firefighters Memorial

You don't often get email from [frankie.hamrick@rutherfordcountync.gov](mailto:frankie.hamrick@rutherfordcountync.gov). [Learn why this is important](#)

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Steve, everything appears to be correct except for two facts. After speaking to the previous Fire Marshal, the monument actually belongs to the Fire Rescue Association (a 502c3). The location was the other correction, I have notated the location (marked in blue) on the attached picture as to where the college has marked off land for the monument. I hope this helps.







Sent from my iPhone

On Mar 6, 2025, at 3:52 PM, Steve Garrison <[Steve.Garrison@rutherfordcountync.gov](mailto:Steve.Garrison@rutherfordcountync.gov)> wrote:

Thank you! Please don't apologize. We are in no hurry on our end and want to ensure that we're moving forward on this correctly.

With permission, I am adding County Attorney Richard Williams, Rutherfordton Town Manager Doug Barrick and Rutherford County Emergency Management Director Frankie Hamrick. Manager Barrick and Director Hamrick have much more involvement and institutional knowledge on this than I do and this is a project that they and the Fire Chiefs Association (name?) has been working on for a number of years now. Doug and Frankie, see my comments below and please clarify and/or correct any of my comments as you deem appropriate.

Please see my comments below in **red**.

<image001.jpg>

Steve Garrison, County Manager  
Rutherford County Government  
289 N. Main St.  
Rutherfordton, NC 28139  
Office #: (828) 287-6060

<image002.png>

<image003.jpg>

<image004.jpg>

<image005.jpg>

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**From:** Backstrom, Parker <[parker.backstrom@dn-cr.nc.gov](mailto:parker.backstrom@dn-cr.nc.gov)>

**Sent:** Thursday, March 6, 2025 2:49 PM

**To:** Steve Garrison <[Steve.Garrison@rutherfordcountync.gov](mailto:Steve.Garrison@rutherfordcountync.gov)>

**Cc:** Waters, Darin <[darin.waters@dn-cr.nc.gov](mailto:darin.waters@dn-cr.nc.gov)>; Sutton, Jessica V <[jess.sutton@dn-cr.nc.gov](mailto:jess.sutton@dn-cr.nc.gov)>; Backstrom, Parker <[parker.backstrom@dn-cr.nc.gov](mailto:parker.backstrom@dn-cr.nc.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: [External] Request to Relocate Fall Firefighters Memorial

Dear Mr. Garrison,

First of all, please accept my apologies for the delay in my response to your enquiry. I am responding at the request of deputy secretary of the Office of Archives and History, Dr. Waters, who is also the secretary for the NC Historical Commission (NCHC).

Before we are able to guide you in your efforts to "relocate" the Fallen Firefighters Memorial by way of approval by the NC Historical Commission (NCHC), I'd like to ask for a few more details.

As we read your letter it appears to us that the crux of the issue is that Rutherford County really wishes to install a brand new memorial to fallen firefighters on the property of the Firefighters and Emergency Services training facility on the campus of the Isothermal Community College, rather

than physically relocate the memorial currently on the county courthouse lawn to the new location. Is this correct? **The intent is to retain the current monument but move it to the Isothermal Community College (ICC) and then purchase and erect a second monument to co-locate next to the original monument as the original monument is full and no new names can be added to it. I may have misstated where the intended location will be on the ICC campus. Doug and/or Frankie please clarify. I believe there have been some additional conversations about placing the two monuments on the ICC Loop Road somewhere on the ICC campus. Please advise.**

<image006.png>

Is the Firefighters and Emergency Services training facility a part of the Isothermal Community College property or owned by the Firefighters and Emergency Services training facility, a private (non-state) entity? **The training center is located on the ICC property and is used jointly by the County emergency services responders and ICC staff for EMT and BLET certification classes. The property is State owned.**

If the former, can you confirm that the site chosen for the new memorial is owned by the state? **Yes, this property reflected on our Tax System GIS file as parcel #1615885 under the ownership of ICC.**

Do you propose Rutherford County continuing to own the memorial itself or are you proposing that the state take ownership of it? Note that privately-owned memorials can be placed on state land if approved by the NCHC. **Doug and/or Frankie, I assumed that the County owns the current memorial but I am uncertain. Please advise.**

Here's why those questions are pertinent. As it stands currently, the memorial appears to be owned by Rutherford County and residing on county property. On this standing alone, the NCHC would have no jurisdiction since N.C.G.S. 100-2.1 (attached) pertains to state-owned "public property," be it a memorial/monument or a piece of real estate. It does not pertain to county, municipal, or local "public property." Presuming the proposed new monument is going to be placed on state property, per my query above, then, yes, it would have to be approved for placement by the NCHC.

For the NCHC to consider such a proposal, it would need to receive proposed plans, in writing, that include the following:

1. Confirmation that the sited property is state-owned and written documentation that its placement is approved by the community college. **Understood.**
2. A map showing the exact location on campus where it would be placed. **Understood.**
3. The proposed memorial's measurements (H x L x W) including the size of the memorial's "footprint". **Understood.**
4. A detailed description of all the materials from which the memorial and its foundation would be made. **Understood.**
5. The wording that would be featured on the memorial or associated signage and where that wording would be placed. **Understood.**
6. Artistic rendering(s) of the proposed memorial showing dimensions. **Understood.**
7. A representative to present it to the NCHC in person and be available to answer questions from the commissioners. **Understood.**

I would have to receive these materials for dissemination to the Commission at least seven days in advance of the meeting at which the issue is to be discussed, and earlier if at all possible.



The next meeting of the NC Historical Commission will take place in Raleigh on Tuesday, March 18. It seems unlikely that the information you would need to pull together could be ready by March 11, but if it can be let me know. The meeting following the upcoming one will be held on June 10, though a location has not yet been chosen. (It will likely be outside Raleigh somewhere.) **Thank you. Depending on Manager Barrick and Director Hamrick's advisement, I think it is likely that June 10<sup>th</sup> is the more reasonable/logical date.**

I hope this has been helpful to you and I stand ready to answer any questions you may have. **Yes, thank you.**

Kind regards,  
Parker Backstrom  
Executive Assistant to the Deputy Secretary and Assistant Secretary of the NCHC

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**From:** Waters, Darin <[darin.waters@dncr.nc.gov](mailto:darin.waters@dncr.nc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 7, 2025 11:41 AM  
**To:** Backstrom, Parker <[parker.backstrom@dncr.nc.gov](mailto:parker.backstrom@dncr.nc.gov)>  
**Subject:** FW: [External] Request to Relocate Fall Firefighters Memorial

Parker, We can discuss next week. I have acknowledged receipt of the letter and told Mr. Garrison that we'll follow up with information regarding when the commission will consider their request. Thanks, D

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**From:** Steve Garrison <[Steve.Garrison@rutherfordcountync.gov](mailto:Steve.Garrison@rutherfordcountync.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 31, 2025 12:18 PM  
**To:** Waters, Darin <[darin.waters@dncr.nc.gov](mailto:darin.waters@dncr.nc.gov)>  
**Subject:** [External] Request to Relocate Fall Firefighters Memorial

You don't often get email from [steve.garrison@rutherfordcountync.gov](mailto:steve.garrison@rutherfordcountync.gov). [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dr. Waters, I hope this email finds you well.

Please see the attached and advise if anything additional is needed from Rutherford County or if there is another staff member that we need to send this request to for the NC Historical Commission Board Members to consider. Thanks in advance for your advisement and assistance.

<image001.jpg>  
Steve Garrison, County Manager  
Rutherford County Government  
289 N. Main St.  
Rutherfordton, NC 28139  
Office #: (828) 287-6060

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<image003.jpg>

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