

**VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICES BOARD**  
**Fire Prevention and Control Committee**  
**August 13, 2010**

A regular meeting of the Committee on Fire Prevention and Control was held at the Hampton Convention Center in Hampton, VA at 11:58 am. Mrs. Elaine Gall served as Chair.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT**

*Elaine Gall – Committee Chair – Virginia Fire Prevention Association*

Ed Altizer – Virginia State Fire Marshal

Michael Reilly – Virginia Chapter of the International Association of Arson Investigators

Carl Garrison – Virginia State Forester

Robert Scott – Insurance Industry Representative

Felix Sarfo-Kantanka, Jr – General Public

Brian Mullins – Virginia Board of Housing & Community Development

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT**

Joe Wilson – Industry (SARA Title III & OSHA)

**VFSB MEMBERS PRESENT**

Rick Burch

**AGENCY MEMBERS PRESENT**

Billy Shelton

Dave Jolly

Russ Chandler

Brook Pittinger

Christine Lopilato

Matthew Smith

**GUESTS PRESENT**

Kurt Kight

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Chair asked if there were any additions and/or corrections to the minutes of the June 2010 meeting. With no changes to the minutes, the June 4, 2010 meeting minutes were approved.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & MOMENT OF SILENCE**

**ROLL CALL**

**CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

**Unfinished Business:**

- A. Lifetime Achievement Award

**New Business:**

- A. No new business

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ed Altizer introduced Brett Williams, the SFMO supervisor for the Tidewater region.

Mike Reilly thanked the Agency for their hard work during the recent, unfortunate Line of Duty Deaths (LODD) in Rocky Mount VFD.

Mike Reilly also informed the Board of a recent accident in Fairfax County at Fire station 441, where the ladder extension on a piece of apparatus came into contact with a 230,000 volt power line. Fortunately there were no critical injuries, but it was stressed that situational awareness and preventing complacency is of paramount importance to protect the health and well being of the fire services.

### **COMMENTS FROM THE VDFP LIAISON Branch Chief of Training & Technical Services**

Russ Chandler provided the following report:

- Statistics on structure fires show the top cause of fires for the first half of 2010 as cooking related incidents.
- The “unknown” factor continues to dominate our records coming in second of the top three fire causes.
  - Efforts are still underway to correct this problem in hopes of bringing that figure down to show a true picture of Virginia’s fire problem. There are several avenues being discussed and we hope to implement more of these measures within the near future.
- The third leading cause of structure fires in the Commonwealth are fires related to heating equipment.
- A more compelling statistic for additional fire prevention is the fact that Virginia experienced 33 civilian fire fatalities in the first half of 2010 with an additional 244 civilian injuries. This coupled with the 188 firefighter injuries make a compelling argument for enhancing prevention efforts, even in tough economic times.

#### **Virginia Fire Marshal Academy (VFMA)**

- The Fire Inspector 1031 program conducted its spring school in Glen Allen at the VFMA office and training room. There were 27 students from Chesterfield, Colonial Heights, Richmond, Prince William, Petersburg, Henrico, Powhatan, Caroline County, Richard Bland College, Hanover, Suffolk, Alexandria, Sterling Fire Department, and Richmond International Airport.
- The VFMA completed a Fire Investigator 1033 School in Loudoun with 20 students. The students had its exam and practical parts of the class this week and they all did a great

job. The VFMA thanked the Loudoun Fire Department for its use of their facility and area of the training grounds for the school.

- In addition to this school, the VFMA opened its 1033 Fire Investigator School in Damascus on Monday July 12<sup>th</sup>. Unfortunately, student enrollment was too low to conduct the class, even after reaching out to other agencies in the area. The school was cancelled and will be rescheduled at a later date.
- The Public Fire Educators side of the VFMA has conducted several classes in Pub Ed I and Juvenile Fire Setter over this quarter. All classes have had at least 15 students in each and some are over 20. We have been to Bristol, Alexandria, and Virginia Beach. JD Jenkins was chosen by the NFPA to attend their conference in Las Vegas. Although expenses paid by NFPA he represented Virginia as he has always done.
- VFMA is part of the Metro Arson Task Group, a subgroup of the Central Virginia Fire & Arson Association. The team was activated on Friday July 23<sup>rd</sup> to assist Petersburg with their large loss from Saturday July 17<sup>th</sup>. The agency provided an air-conditioned trailer on Friday evening and returned on Saturday at their request to install wireless connectivity.
- Chief Bailey was able to be on hand most of Monday and Tuesday to render assistance as requested and was able to turn it into an opportunity to educate on how to handle large loss incidents. We did receive praise from team members and from Petersburg. In addition, Chief Bailey was able to render assistance in helping Petersburg to get their own trailer thanks to the cooperation and assistance of the Department of Emergency Management.

#### **COMMENTS FROM THE VDFP LIAISON Fiscal Services Director**

Christine Lopilato provided the following information:

- Application Submission Reminders:
  - FY11 VFIRS Hardware Grant applications are due postmarked by August 31, 2010
  - FY11 Training Mini Grant applications are due postmarked by September 30, 2010
- VFIRS Hardware Grant Ranking Criteria Changes – Enclosure 1

#### **COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIR**

Elaine Gall thanked the committee for the opportunity to be the Chair of the committee and looks forward to working with everyone.

#### **REPORT FROM THE CODE SUB-COMMITTEE**

Robby Dawson provided the following information from the latest ICC Hearings:

- The Board of Housing and Community Development's (BHCD) met on July 26, to approve the final drafts of the states proposed 2009 building and fire codes.

- The base documents were the 2009 International Code Council's (ICC) International Building Code, International Fire Code, International Residential Code, and the other ICC Codes including Plumbing, Mechanical, and Existing Building Codes. Prior to the full Board meeting, the Board's Codes and Standards Committee met to discuss some remaining items to recommend to the full Board.
- The Fire Board Code Committee (FBCC) spent many hours developing and submitting code changes and attending meetings at both the state and national levels to support our proposals and proposals by others that will increase protection for building occupants and fire fighters.
- The FBCC also provided testimony opposing proposals that would reduce safety below that established by the ICC's set of model codes. The provisions indicated below are only a few of the hundreds of changes that will be in the 2009 Virginia Codes but are represent some of the more significant issues.
- The Board adopted the proposed SFMO fees, which were presented as a part of the Statewide Fire Prevention Code (SFPC) full package containing dozens of changes to the existing 2006 SFPC. The motion was made and seconded to approve the Fire Code as recommended by the Codes and Standards Committee.
  - The proposed fees included new fees for inspection of adult and child day care centers and assisted living facilities licensed by the Department of Social Services, for indoor flame effects at shows and for certification of pyrotechnicians.
  - The changes also increased permit fees for storage and use of explosives and pyrotechnics.
  - The new fees are estimated to bring in more than \$55,000 and \$11,000 for increases in existing fees. We anticipate an average of 100 pyrotechnician certifications per year that would generate an estimated \$15,000 per year in revenue.
- After months of discussion and two public hearings, the BHCD did not adopt requirements for automatic sprinkler protection for one and two family dwellings or townhouses. There was no discussion of the sprinkler issue at this meeting. The BHCD had previously voted to eliminate the residential sprinkler requirement from the 2009 Virginia Residential Code.
- The Board did add two of the Virginia Residential Sprinkler Coalition's code change proposals concerning the IFC Appendices to the body of the fire code.
  - These deal with fire service water supplies and fire hydrant locations. Basically the changes allow localities to use the Appendices for fully sprinklered residential developments. The Code Committee will be evaluating these changes, as their impact is not fully understood at this point.
- Established provisions for a fire command center in high-rise buildings that would increase the minimum size from 96 SF up to 200 SF if required by the building official after consultation with the fire chief. This is an improvement over the current 2006

state codes but somewhat different than the 2009 ICC Codes requirement of a minimum 200 SF in all cases.

There are several other significant changes in the new codes that will impact fire prevention and fire protection both positively and negatively that have been adopted.

Selected other provisions that will increase safety for citizens and fire fighters include:

- In response to 2010 legislation requiring certification of pyrotechnicians, BHCD adopted the requested SFMO provisions. Based on the legislation, the SFPC provisions require certification, establishes who must be certified as a “shooter” at public displays and establishes that one person at each site must be certified. The legislation required the State Fire Marshal’s Office to develop the certification testing program including Criminal History Checks.
- Adopted provisions requiring a standard key for fire department emergency operation of elevators that is approved within the jurisdiction by the fire official.
  - Alternative, owners may install a secure lock box accessible to and meeting fire department requirements for the emergency operation key. The intent was meet the 2012 ICC Codes standard for less confusing emergency operation keys and save time during a response by limiting the number of keys or making the appropriate key readily available.
- Adopted provisions for lock boxes for other keys or material when required by the fire official. This puts in the code provisions that fire officials have been using for several years.
- Adopted provisions that portable electric space heaters must now be listed by an approved testing laboratory to meet UL Standard 1278. Previously, the code required the listing but referenced no standard. Without an appropriate standard, a fire official would have no way of determining if the listing actually provided safety.
- Adopted provisions that smoking or open flames may not be within 20 feet of fuel dispensing devices. The current code does not permit smoking or open flames but does not establish a distance.
- Adopted provisions to increase the minimum distance between spectators and pyrotechnic displays to 100 feet for each inch of shell size from the previous 70 feet. This was supported by the industry.
- Adopted provisions that would reduce requirements for flame resistance of upholstered furniture and mattresses in dormitories when the dormitory is protected by automatic sprinkler systems.
  - The 2009 SFPC will contain provisions that “newly” introduced furniture and mattresses must meet specific standards for flammability. The standards are listed in the code.
  - Similar provisions have been in place for I-1 uses (such as Assisted Living Facilities), I-2 uses (such as nursing homes), and I-3 uses (such as correctional facilities) for several years.

- This is new for all facilities, to require that the newly introduced furniture and mattresses pass a cigarette ignition test.
- Adopted a requirement for sprinklers in newly licensed Assisted Living Facilities housing up to 8 individuals who are not capable of self preservation. Also, those residents not capable of self preservation must be located on the lowest level of egress with access by ramps if a change in elevation exists.
  - While this is a new provision in the state code, it falls far short of the provisions of the ICC Codes but is a much needed step forward.
- Carbon Monoxide alarms will be required in new Institutional and Residential use groups including single family dwellings based on classification by the Uniform Statewide Building Code. (State Chiefs proposed change).
- Added a requirement for fire extinguishers in the kitchen areas of single family dwellings and townhouses as substitute for requiring residential sprinklers.
- Removed exception that allowed portable fire extinguishers to be omitted in Group A, B, and E occupancies but retained the exception for all R-2 uses.

The BHCD did not adopt several provisions that were approved by the ICC in the 2009 ICC Building and Fire Codes. Among provisions that were not included by the BHCD, that will reduce safety for Virginia citizens and fire fighters are:

- Reduced sprinkler requirements for new schools. The 2009 ICC Codes were amended to require sprinklers in all E uses (schools) more than 12, 000 SF in area. The old requirement was 20,000 SF. The BHCD raised the threshold back to 20,000 SF based on a request by private schools as being too costly.
  - However, schools will not be eligible for the thousands of dollars in savings given as tradeoffs for sprinkler systems in schools, including reduced exit capacity, elimination of the requirement for fire rated corridors including openings protected by self closing or automatic closing fire doors, with fire door hardware, and protection of penetrations by plumbing and mechanical systems.
- Removal of the requirement for sprinklers in newly licensed Group Homes housing up to 8 individuals who are living in a state licensed facility and are not capable of self-preservation. Virginia Codes have never required sprinklers for this type of facility although all national codes have contained the requirement for many years.
- Continued the exception for sprinklers in new apartments and other R-2 Use Group such as college student housing up to three stories if public water is not available (pressure and/or volume). Again, the reason was costs. The ICC Codes have required sprinklers in all R-2 uses since their 2003 Codes were developed. Virginia has adopted the exception in both previous editions of the State Codes. For two story buildings no additional fire protection is required to replace sprinklers although one exit from each unit is required to be an exterior exit. For three story buildings, a two hour fire barrier is required between every two units (or dorm rooms). This provides no additional protection for those in what would be the unit of origin and an adjoining unit while significantly increasing the cost of the fire barriers.

- Reduced egress capacity if a building has sprinklers. Although sufficient exit capacity is necessary for emergencies other than fire and panic situations, the egress may become backed up before sprinklers operate. The 2009 ICC Code eliminated the reduction in egress capacity in buildings with sprinklers recognizing many emergencies that are not a result of a fire and therefore sprinklers would not activate.

The next step is to continue the Administrative Act process with review by the Governor and others in the process.

Mike Reilly thanked Robby Dawson for his service to the Codes & Standards Subcommittee as the Subcommittee Chair.

#### **COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN**

Brian Mullins also thanked Robby for his service to the Fire Sprinkler Coalition. BHCD is also developing ideas to inform homeowners on residential sprinklers and their usage in a residential setting.

Mike Reilly also congratulated Brian Mullins on his appointment to Chair of the Board of Housing and Community Development.

#### **REPORT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY**

Carl Garrison provided the following report:

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- Under the 2008 Farm Bill all state forestry departments had to publish their state forestry plan and copies of the DOF Plan is available on their website for downloading. Carl provided the committee with copies of the plan's assessment – Enclosures 2, 3, 4 & 5. It was noted that fire prevention activities continue to be an important practice within the DOF.
- Southern Group of State Foresters – held their annual meeting in June 2010 and the following are highlights from the meeting.
  - There were no compact requests within the last two months;
  - The Southern area had 110% of national wildfires; 106% acres were burned; 49% of the fires in the Nation were in the southeast portion of the US; and 49% of the large fires occurred in the southeaster part of the US; and a total of 193 structures were burned because of wild fires.
  - Anticipate La Niña weather affects to occur in the latter part of 2010 and as a request there will be less frequent rain; but more scattered events.
  - Passed the Fire Prevention Strategies for the Southeastern Group of State Foresters. The Fire Prevention Strategies includes 5 objective and 5 action items.

- PBS has started filming for a documentary, Burn Zone, which will focus on state wildland fire fighting activities.
- The Boy Scout Jamboree, which was held at Fort AP Hill, included a DOF exhibit that included fire suppression and prevention information and there were approximately 47,000 boy scouts that visited the DOF booth.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

#### Topic: Life Time Achievement Award

**Motion:** None

**Discussion:**

The committee reviewed the policy put together by the Agency at the Board's request. This policy will be reviewed and voted on at the Administration, Policy, and Finance Committee.

**Vote:** None

**Action:** None.

### NEW BUSINESS

#### Topic: VFIRS Hardware Grant Ranking Criteria Changes

**Motion:** To accept the revised VFIRS Criteria Ranking Scale beginning in FY 2011 as presented by VDFP staff.

**Discussion:** None

**Vote:** Unanimous

The Agency provided the Board with a review of the modifications being recommended for the VFIRS Hardware grant program.

**Action:** To present at the Full Board.

### ADJOURNMENT

The Committee adjourned at 12:42 am

Clerk of the Committee  
Matthew C. Smith

**REVIEWED BY:**

Russell K. Chandler

Russell K. Chandler  
Brach Chief of Training & Technical Services

August 16, 2010

Date

**Enclosures:**

1. New VFIRS Hardware Grant Ranking Recommendations
2. Issue B1: Protect Forest and Woodland Home Communities From Wildfire
3. Goal 1: Protect the citizens, their property and the forest resource from wildfire
4. Interagency Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Strategy (Southern Area)
5. Interagency Fire Prevention Education Strategy (Southern Area)

APPROVED