

VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICES BOARD

Full Board Meeting
Friday, September 24th, 2021
Virginia Beach Convention Center
Meeting Room 2 AB
10:00am

An annual meeting of the Virginia Fire Services Board was held on September 24th, 2021 at 10:00 am. This meeting was held at the Virginia Beach Convention Center in conjunction with the First Responders Conference at 10:00am. Board Chair, Scott Garber facilitated this meeting and the Board had a constituted quorum.

Board MEMBERS PRESENT

Bettie Reeves-Nobles Steven sites
Ernie little Abbey Johnson
Keith Johnson Jerome Williams
Scott Garber Dennis Linaburg
Jimmy Poindexter

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

Harry Lee Day
Robert Farrell
Rick Gregory
Jimmy Calvert
Ben Reedy

GUESTS PRESENT

Larry Gwaltney- Virginia State Firefighters Association
John Miller
Jeff Flippo- Frederick County Fire & Rescue/ VSFA
Mike Moles- SWVFA
Billy Hanks- Christiansburg Fire Department
Richard Harris- Kenbridge Fire Department
Greg Hunter- Fairfax County
Walt Bailey- Phenix

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AGENCY MEMBERS PRESENT

Travis Rickman	Brook Pittinger
Garrett Dyer	Bill MacKay
Theresa Hunter	Jared Goff
JP Calhoun	Tom Berry
Amanda Kennedy	

CHANGES IN THE AGENDA

The board chair stated that there was a change to the agenda to remove the Basic Law Enforcement Course 2022 Introduction Presentation from the VFMA from Jared Goff, Chief of the Virginia Fire Marshal Academy. This was a request by Jared Goff to be included in the Executive Directors Report. With no objection the agenda was approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Melvin Carter the Chief of Richmond City gave public comment as he wanted to give the board a heads up that the City would be applying for a Live Fire Training Structure Grant in the near future. Basically the structure was made in 1986 and is a regional facility. They will be approaching the board because the tower was condemned in 2018 and the building will most likely not pass inspection.

Larry Gwaltney spoke and thanked the board for choosing The First Responders Conference. He stated that they will be back in Hampton next year and hopes the board will consider attending next year. He stated that the conference planning has been a challenge this year to say the least. He thanked VDFP staff that assisted training for the conference and their communication. But he believed that the Delta variant of COVID was a catalyst for low attendance at the conference this year. Additionally he stated that Volunteer fire departments have been struggling through this year because they were unable to fundraise over the last year. Larry extended a warm welcome to everyone from the current VSFA president.

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CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of the previous meeting minutes motioned for approval was made by Keith Johnson and seconded by Ernie Little, unanimous agreement from the committee to approve the previous meeting minutes.

Liaison Reports

Risk Management Branch Report

- **COVID issues have slowly increased again.**
- **Continued on Incident Safety Officer Program (which we are accredited or since last reaccreditation – SME Group has met several times. Anticipate a pilot by late fall/winter 2021. Should be able to release the program statewide hopefully early 2022.**
- **More deliveries of 1403 Live Fire Training Update delivered.**

Final Training Injury Numbers for FY21:

<u>VDFP Training Injuries:</u>	MO –Injury From Fall: 1 FY Total: 10
Since FY Beginning: 47	MO -Exhaustion/Over Exertion: 1 FY Total: 7
Week: 5 Months Total: 5	MO- Struck By: 2 FY Total: 3
Live Fire Training: Week: 1 FY Total: 6	MO – Strains, Sprain, Pain: 1 FY Total: 19
	MO – Burn : 0 FY Total: 0
<u>Program :</u>	MO – Other: 0 FY Total: 8

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MO-Firefighter Series: 1 FY Total: 29	
MO – Mayday Operations: 4 FY Total: 7	<u>By Division:</u>
MO – HMO: 0 FY Total: 0	MO Div. 1: 1 FY Total: 5
MO- TRT: 1 FY Total: 9	MO Div. 2: 4 FY Total: 21
MO – VFMA: 0 FY Total: 1	MO Div. 3: 0 FY Total: 1
MO – DPO : 0 FY Total 0	MO Div. 4: 0 FY Total: 2
MO – Marine: 0 FY Total: 0	MO Div. 5: 0 FY Total: 2
MO ARFF: 0 FY Total: 0	MO Div. 6: 0 FY Total: 2
MO – Other: 1 FY Total: 1 (BPO)	MO Div. 7: 0 FY Total: 4
	MO Specialty: 0 FY Total: 10
	FY: (FMA: 1 TRT: 9 Marine: 0 ARFF: 0)

September 2021 Numbers (FY2022)

<u>VDFP Training Injuries:</u>	MO –Injury From Fall: 0 FY Total: 2
Since FY Beginning: 9	MO -Exhaustion/Over Exertion: 0 FY Total: 1
Week: 2 Months Total: 2	MO- Struck By: 0 FY Total: 1
Live Fire Training: Week: 1 FY Total: 2	MO – Strains, Sprain, Pain: 1 FY Total: 3

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	MO – Burn : 0 FY Total: 0
<u>Program :</u>	MO – Other: 0 FY Total: 2
MO-Firefighter Series: 1 FY Total: 4	
MO – Mayday Operations: 1 FY Total: 1	<u>By Division:</u>
MO – HMO: 0 FY Total: 0	MO Div. 1: 0 FY Total: 1
MO- TRT: 1 FY Total: 3	MO Div. 2: 0 FY Total: 3
MO – VFMA: 1 FY Total: 1	MO Div. 3: 0 FY Total: 0
MO – DPO : 0 FY Total 0	MO Div. 4: 0 FY Total: 0
MO – Marine: 0 FY Total: 0	MO Div. 5: 1 FY Total: 1
MO ARFF: 0 FY Total: 0	MO Div. 6: 0 FY Total: 0
MO – Other: 0 FY Total: 0	MO Div. 7: 0 FY Total: 0
	MO Specialty: 0 FY Total: 4
	FY: (FMA: 1 TRT: 3 Marine: 0 ARFF: 0)

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Comparison to Previous Years Injuries

Data Classification	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	Total
Total Injuries	59	61	70	47	237
Leading Type of Injury	Strains, Sprains, and Pain				
Most injuries by Division	Division 1	Division 2	Division 2	Division 2	Division 2
Percentage of Injuries during Live Fire	46%	24.50%	17.10%	12.77%	25.34%
Most injuries by Class	FF Series				
Average Age of Injured	28	30.7	27.27	28.5	28.57
Average BMI of Injured	30.6%	28.49%	29.72%	31.30%	29.93%
Percentage of Injuries-Career	47%	56.10%	43.50%	39.30%	46.78%
Percentage of Injuries-Volunteer	53%	43.90%	56.50%	61.70%	53.22%

Impacts from COVID 19 for VDFP (since 3/2020)

Date	9/20/2021
Positive Tests/Presumptive Positive	22
Close Personal Contact/Contact with Individual Testing Positive*	60
Contact with Contact	10
Quarantines in Training Programs from Positives Tests	105
Training Programs Paused or impacted from Exposure	17
PPE Exposure (Employee using provided PPE) No Quarantine	8

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Pre-existing Conditions	1
Other/Symptomatic**	5

REPORT FROM THE VDFP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Executive Director Garrett Dyer gave a report:

He started by giving an update on the Governor’s Vaccine and or testing mandate which has posed some additional strains on the agencies adjunct workforce. The agency has been asked to make a transition plan, submit legislative proposals, and budget proposals for the upcoming budget year. The Director then turned it over to Brook Pittinger to go over the update on the Agency APA Audit update.

Brook Pittinger stated that there was an update on the past APA audit which was a huge reduction in the APA’s findings going from 36 to 6 findings which revolved around mainly IT and the agency’s aging infrastructure and databases. The three administrative items identified where an item with HR and the other two were dealing with Contract administration issues. The agency is very happy with the update and we are hopeful that at the next review the APA will find no further findings.

Mr. Dyer announced that there are a few vacancies in the agency first is Vanessa Copeland the Agency’s PR Director and our Training and Operations Chief Mackay. Additional openings include Curriculum development and instructional support, Deputy State Fire Marshal 1 positions in south west which has proven difficult to find qualified applicants. As the agency is responsible for 62 of the 95 counties in the state. The agency is also requesting additional staff in the budget process this year.

Going back the Fire Marshal’s Office 49 reported fire fatalities 28 are confirmed and 21 are still pending. The state does not have a mandatory reporting we get those statics from open source outlets such as local news and following up with localities to determine cause of death. As it relates to ImageTrend records management system will be replacing the State Fire Marshal’s database. Jay Davis has been doing a tremendous amount of work and doing a great job getting the project off the ground. In addition the

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agency has been in discussion regarding the 2018 Statewide Fire Prevention Code Updates specifically to address Mobile Food Preparation Vehicles permitting. The State Fire Marshal's Office cannot currently have a fee structure in place for any permits as it relates to this issue. The Acting Executive Director Dyer welcomed new VDFP staff member Jared Goff as the new Chief of the Virginia Fire Marshal Academy to give an update on his office. He stated that the VFMA has made significant steps to rework the Basic Law enforcement Course 1031. Which is a 10 week school that trains local Fire Marshals to have police powers based on title 27. The assessed the program form a financial and DCJS compulsory standards they decided to make a bold move and establish 11 working groups comprised of many local and state agencies to take a look at the current standards March 2022 is the projected end date for the course roll out. They are extremely proud of as they are looking at this course from the scope of a detective investigator rather than a street level officer. Which is at a higher level and different than the current course. In regards to timing the course is looking to be roughly 10- 16 weeks depending on the amount of content for the workgroups. He also spoke about the DHCD VFMA relationship is very strong. They have been working very closely to make sure they are staying informed and are actively participating in the conversation. They are establishing further education on regards to 1033 which is outdated. They are attempting to provide further guidance and process improvements for these courses. Such as going from paper to mostly google based forms, which will hopefully give a 24 hour turn around rather than weeks. The VFMA is also looking at establishing workgroups for both 1033 and Basic Law Enforcement Bridge Course. The BLE Bridge Course would provide a pathway for individual's with a previous law enforcement certification to make their onboarding easier. Lastly the VFMA conducted a survey to gauge what the localities feel about being included in the Title 9 definition of Law Enforcement officer for those that meet the Title 27 definition of having police powers and how not being included in the definition affects them. We have received roughly 27 surveys back at this time. The VFMA is looking forward to increasing training and onboarding new instructors in the future.

The Director discussed the agency's Diversity and Inclusion plan which identified a lack of diversity in our adjunct workforce. So the agency will be looking for additional routes to recruit and retain instructors. VDFP has been participating in many different statewide conference to make sure that we are staying abreast of things going on at the national and state level. Additionally Board Member Jimmy Calvert came forward with a training opportunity early last month in a continuing effort to meet the VDFP/VFSB initiative in the Five-Year Strategic Training Plan to investigate partnerships with governmental and private industry representatives to

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obtain alternative means of financial support for career & volunteer fire department training and advise jurisdictions regarding the implementation of such alternatives.

A group of 10 Virginia First Responders attended the Counterterrorism Operations Support (CTOS) Preventive Radiological/Nuclear Detection Onsite Training Program at the Nevada National Security Site in August of this year. This federally funded (FEMA) training allows approved First Responders to attend world class training programs without any financial burden to the student or their respective response agencies. The Commonwealth of Virginia Responders represented nine different response agencies/jurisdictions.

- Appomattox Volunteer Rescue Squad
- Bedford County Company 5 Volunteer Fire Department
- Brookneal Volunteer Fire Department
- Campbell County Company 18 Fire, EMS, & HazMat Department
- Fairfax County Fire Department
- Lynchburg Fire Department
- Pamplin Volunteer Fire Department
- Virginia Fire Service Board
- York County Fire & Life Safety Department

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In closing VDFP was awarded the 2020 Safety Drivers Award because of the exceptionally low crash rates from DGS.

Keith Johnson gave the agency accolades to the agency in regards to the APA audit findings. In addition he spoke to the remarks by Jared Goff and spoke to the importance of certifications around the state for Fire Marshals. They want to do the right thing but need to know what to complete to be in compliance with certifications. He thanked Jared Goff for giving a great presentation to the BHCD.

Scott Garber gave accolades to the agency on the vaccination requirement roll out process.

FIRE EDUCATION & TRAINING COMMITTEE

A. Report from the VDFP Branch Chief of Training and Operations

Chief Mackay Spoke about some training opportunities around the state. He also stated that VDFP was looking too possibly secure some funding to offset the cost and to help support individuals attend the National Fire Academy. Training and Operations continues to deliver programs while navigating the daily impacts associated with COVID-19. Additionally, work remains ongoing with the updating of programs that are due for revision to comply with both IFSAC and Pro Board requirements. VDFP is accredited by IFSAC for 14 of its programs and is accredited by both IFSAC and Pro Board for over 20 individual programs. Recently, VDFP has conducted Train the Trainer updates associated with the Firefighter I/II programs. These updates, which were delivered in a virtual format were attended by more than 1,000 VDFP Adjuncts and locality based instructors. The 2019 standard year program has been released and so far the feedback appears to be very positive. In the next few months a revised EVOC program will be released as well as an updated Instructor Series. In early 2022 it is anticipated that the updated Officer programs will also be released. The National Fire Academy has approved all of our course requests for federal FY 2022. Annually, they fund a minimum of 9 deliveries for each state. Our NFA on-site state weekend is March 26 and 27 with the following being offered in Emmitsburg:

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- W0166 EMS Functions in ICS
- W0635 Best Practices in Community Risk Reduction
- W0612 Command and Control of Wildland Interface Fire Operations for the Structural Fire Chief
- W0648 Leadership in Supervision: Frameworks to Success

In State deliveries will include the following:

- Leadership in Supervision: Creating Environments for Professional Growth. This will be held in South Hill on December 4 and 5, 2021
- Fire Investigations for First Responder. This will be presented January 18th and 19th in Manassas Park
- Decision Making for Initial Company Operations. This will be presented January 20 and 21 in Glen Allen
- Health and Safety Program Manager. This will be presented twice. One offering will be in New Kent on February 19th and 20th. The other offering will be in Chilhowie on May 14th and 15th.

Work also continues with the Delegated Authorities to formalize and standardize the entire process. We are also moving the Delegated Authorities out for under the respective Divisions, and giving them a centralized coordination point in Glen Allen. The localities were solicited for funded course requests for the first half of FY 23 (July 22 – December 22). I will have to say that the amount of requests is down significantly. Along the lines we are exploring options to better utilize CSOD and its “visibility/availability” feature to better support delivery and attendance.

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B. Report from the Training and Education Committee

i. Chair Jerome Williams gave a report to include the following:

Our stakeholders have asked us to look at following:

- Bulk processing of Pro-board Certifications through VDFP vs jurisdictions doing themselves
- We have been ask to Address which phase of Cornerstone we are in and to have that phase moved up allowing jurisdictional training officers to access and update their personnel's training files

The Fire Education and Training Committee will be looking over the Five-Year Strategic Training Plan that was updated in August of 2019 to see what changes need to occur.

Mr. Rickman has put the 2022 Governor's Fire Service Awards process on our radar the committee looks forward to working with him this project.

Mr. Chairman that is the update from the Fire Education and Training Committee

C. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

D. NEW BUSINESS

FIRE PREVENTION & CONTROL COMMITTEE

A. Report From the Fire prevention and Control Committee Chair

- #### i. Ernie Little gave his report stating that the committee met and discussed the Board of Housing and Community Development and Virginia Fire Services Board Memorandum of Agreement. The code has gotten significantly larger over the years, in 2016 the construction requirements were removed which have also taken out operational items which

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were placed back in for the 2018. He thanked the acting Executive Director and Jared Goff for the participation with DHCD and moving forward in communication effort. It is the hope that BHCD will accept the MOU for the upcoming code cycle for a better process. The second item was that the committee will be looking at the Fire Prevention and Control Plan at their next meeting.

B. Report From The Department of Forestry

John Miller was present representing Robert Farrell and reported the following:

Virginia Dry Hydrant Program

The Dry Hydrant program work is now underway with two new contractors for the 2022 fiscal year. KCH Contracting out of Richmond is covering those projects for the eastern half of Virginia and RX Fire out of Lexington is now covering those projects in the western half of the state. Both contractors have now completed about 10 - 12 projects each and are working well.

For FY 2022, 45 new installations and 30 repair projects are scheduled for completion.

Volunteer Fire Assistance Grants (VFA):

The Volunteer Fire Assistance Program (VFA) provides federal financial assistance from the U.S. Forest Service through the Virginia Department of Forestry to help organize, train and equip fire departments in rural areas to suppress fires. 141 Virginia fire departments received \$247,150 in VFA assistance for FY 21.

The Many Faces of VDOF Emergency Response

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Although the VDOF's main bread and butter lies in providing forest management and conservation expertise to forest landowners across the Commonwealth, VDOF is also the only agency in the Commonwealth whose personnel must serve as both firefighters and law enforcement officials. 2021 has been a busy year for the agency on the emergency response front. The following is a summary of the many responses of the agency to date.

January – May: 35 personnel provided direct support of Virginia's COVID-19 vaccination effort. Providing support and assistance to VDEM and VDH in the establishment of vaccination centers across the Commonwealth. VDOF personnel provided nearly 8900 hours of overtime in support of this mission.

February: 18 personnel provided ice storm related response and support across Southside Virginia. The work included chainsaw road crews and direct support of three different county EOCs.

January – July: VDOF responders suppressed 275 wildfires that burned more than 5200 acres. Perhaps more importantly, the agency's response efforts were responsible for protecting 201 homes and 186 other structures, with a total value protected exceeding 39 million dollars!

May: Two personnel provided COVID-19 related support in IL and RI, and one additional responder supported federal prescribed burning activities as a Helicopter Manager in both NC and VA.

May – through 09/24/2021...and counting: 62 VDOF responders have supported 33 different wildfire incidents in 10 different western states (AZ, CO, ID, MT, NM, OR, SD, UT, WA, and WY). It is also a safe assumption that western fire activity will continue into October, so those requests for assistance will continue to come our way. It is also important to note that agency personnel take their own vacation time to help with western fires. This opportunity provides a mechanism for VDOF employees to be picked up by one of the federal agencies while they are deployed, providing them with the opportunity to both earn extra income and gain valuable experience that can be used back here at home.

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September 1-3: Local VDOF personnel were some of the first state agency responders on scene to support the initial response to the extreme flooding in Hurley, VA.

C. Report from The Codes and Standards Subcommittee

No Report

D. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- i. Topic: VFSB/ BHCD Memorandum of Agreement
Discussion: No further discussion

E. NEW BUSINESS

ADMINISTRATION, POLICY, AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

A. Report from Administration, Policy and Finance Committee

Keith Johnson gave a report about the items that have come out of the committee that were discussed today. He thanked Walt Bailey for his service and being in attendance at the meeting and to the board. In addition the Chair of the Committee discussed the current A& E firm solicitation that is currently underway for the Live Fire Training Structures around the state. They are currently in the negotiation phase and have narrowed it down to two companies. The current contract expires in November. A huge thank you to Theresa Hunter with VDFP who is always a huge help. Lastly the committee for the Montgomery County Fire & EMS study has been appointed. These studies are extremely important and really help localities around the state.

B. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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- i. **Topic:** Northumberland Fire & EMS Study Draft review

Motion: To Approve the final Study.

Topic Discussion: The draft was completed and sent to the county for review. The committee moved to approve the study as written and send to the locality.

Vote: Unanimous

Motion Action: To send the final report to Northumberland County

C. NEW BUSINESS

- i. **Topic:** Town of Lebanon Fire & EMS Study Request

Motion:

Topic Discussion: The Chair stated that the locality has requested that the board come and take a look at their single volunteer fire department. The request was submitted by their Town Manager Kevin Blankenship. The Chair stated that if all goes well the board will complete the assessment in conjunction with the Montgomery County Study.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

Motion Action:

- ii. **Topic:** VFIRS Grant

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Motion:

Topic Discussion:

County:	Grant Amount:
Greene County	\$2,100
Boydton Town	\$700
Chase City Town	\$700
Colonial Beach Town	\$700
Newsoms Town	\$700
Saint Paul Town	\$700
Saxis Town	\$700
Woodstock Town	\$700
South Boston Town	\$700
Winchester City	\$700

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

Motion Action

iii. **Topic:** Regional Fire Training Grant

Motion:

Topic Discussion: The Regional Grant Committee met on September 23rd at 11:20am at the Virginia Beach Convention Center to review the applications submitted by Richmond and Accomack. The committee was comprised of Keith Johnson and Scott Garber. After a thorough review and ensuring that the applications met the Board’s Policy guidelines. The members suggested that Accomack and Richmond should be granted the full amount of \$50,000. The applications that were received

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requested the following: Accomack County \$55,833.60; Richmond City \$50,000.00. After review the board members wanted to stick with the maximum award amount in the policy at \$50,000.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

Motion Action

iv. Topic: Fluvanna One Year No Cost Extension

Motion:

Topic Discussion: Fluvanna's County Administrator attended the committee meeting yesterday and requested a formal extension for their Live Fire Training Structure Grant.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

Motion Action:

LIVE STRUCTURE COMMITTEE

A. Report from the Live Structure Committee

No report the committee did not meet

B. Unfinished Business

C. New Business

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COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIR

The Chair gave a report stating that he is very humbled and honored to be able to serve as the Chair of the Virginia Fire Services Board. His goal during his tenure will be to focus on inclusion and participation by all of our board members. As he would really like board members to step up and participate on a more frequent basis. Over the next few months the Chair will be meeting with VDFP staff and various stakeholders to discuss the vision of Virginia's fire service and how the board can move forward and be an advocate for training that meet the needs for the Virginia fire service community. The Chair and Vice Chair have been in communication with their new committee leadership and within the coming months the board will reassess and do a thorough review of the Fire Prevention and Control Plan along with The Five Year Strategic Plan. Once this work is completed the chair would like for the board to engage in a Strategic Planning Process to collaborate and discuss ideas to become more adaptable to meeting Virginia Fire Service's needs. The Chair congratulated Bettie Reeves-Nobles on her reappointment and Abbey Johnston on her appointment to the board. In closing, the Chair gave a quote stating, "Do the right thing, do something kind today, and go out and make a difference." His belief it is the board's job to make a difference in the Fire Service Community.

FULL BOARD BUSINESS

- A. Unfinished Business
- B. New Business

Final Comments: The Clerk of the Board did announce that the board will have a December Meeting for possibly the week of the 13th of December in Glean Allen at VDFP Headquarters. As the Chair of the Fire Education and Training Committee discussed please be on the lookout for the 2021 Governor Fire Service Awards which will have an extended timeline to accept nominations. The clerk also took the time to thank the Virginia Department of Forestry and the Virginia Department of Health's Office of Emergency Medical Services for their help on the most recent Fire & EMS Studies. They are a vital part of the suggestions and work that we do to help and advise localities around the state. Those partnerships should be built upon to continue into the future.

Keith Johnson gave an additional reminder that the Virginia Fire Chiefs Conference is still a go for the week of the February 21st, 2022. He hopes that we all can attend and move forward with the conference. The Chair also stated that the Boards February Board Meeting will be held at the Virginia Fire & Rescue Conference.

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ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made to adjourn by Keith Johnson and seconded by Jimmy Poindexter, Board adjourned at 11:13am

Clerk of the Committee: Travis Rickman

REVIEWED BY:

Brook Pittinger
Deputy Executive Director

DRAFT