

VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICES BOARD

Administration, Policy and Finance Thursday, April 23, 2015

A meeting of the Virginia Fire Services Board's Administration, Policy and Finance was held at the Hampton Inn Winchester N/Conference Center – The Jefferson at 2:00 pm. Mr. Randy, Wheeler, the Chair of Administration, Policy and Finance was not able to be present. Walter Bailey, Chairman of the Virginia Fire Services Board served as his substitute.

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Walter T. Bailey – VFSB Chair - Virginia State Firefighter's
Robert Miner – Burn Building Subcommittee Chair - Virginia Chapter of the International Association of Arson Investigators
James "Robby" Dawson – Fire Prevention Association
David Layman - Virginia Fire Chiefs Association
Bill Kyger – Association of Counties

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

James 'Randy' Wheeler – VFSB Vice-Chair & Chair of the Committee – Virginia Municipal League
Jeff Bailey - VA Chapter of the International Society of Fire Service Instructors

AGENCY MEMBERS PRESENT

Christine Lopilato Brook Pittinger Brenda Scaife
Melvin Carter Joe Thompson

GUESTS PRESENT

Chris Shaver Bruce Hull Jeff Flippo Allen Baldwin
Nathan Helsley Richard Fudkhouser Dean Farmer J.D. Orndorff
Robert Craft

CHANGES IN THE AGENDA

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. No Unfinished Business

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Review of Governor's Fire Services Awards Categories
- B. Funding Policies
 - i. Aid to Localities (ATL) Entitlement Program
 - ii. Burn Building Grant Program
 - iii. Regional Fire Services Training Facility Grant Program

- iv. VFIRS Hardware Grant Program
- v. Schedule future Burn Building Subcommittee Meetings
- vi. VFSB Meeting Schedule/Frequency

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments made.

COMMENTS FROM THE SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR

Randy Wheeler, Chairman of APF was not able to be at the meeting. Walter Bailey, Chairman of VFSB substituted for him. Mr. Bailey thanked everyone for their attendance.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

No unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS

Topic: Review of Governor's Fire Services Awards Categories

Motion: N/A

Topic Discussion: Brook Pittinger added that the committee should consider other categories to make the eligibility criteria more open. Brook Pittinger recommended modifying the Civilian Lifesaving Award to reflect a category which encompasses a larger population to allow flexibility.

Dave Layman asked when the current categories were created. Brook Pittinger stated the categories were established thirteen years ago. Therefore, reexamining would be a good idea.

Bettie Reeves-Nobles suggested creating a small workgroup to be assigned in the creation of the future categories.

Jeff Flippo stated the categories should be in accordance to population (small community vs. large community). Brook Pittinger further added that it is imperative to consider the size of fire departments as well.

Walt Bailey suggested including stakeholders to be part of this subcommittee.

Task: Bettie Reeves-Nobles will lead the workgroup. A representative from each of the major stakeholder groups will be part of the group. Walter Bailey will provide additional information to Bettie Reeves-Nobles on who within the stakeholder will be part of the group.

Vote: NA

Motion Action: To be presented at the full board meeting on Friday, April 24, 2015.

Funding Policies

Topic: Aid to Localities (ATL) Entitlement Program

Motion: Motion to invite a representative from the Attorney General's Office and stakeholders on Thursday, June 4th, 2015.

Topic Discussion: Walter Bailey suggested for the Virginia Department of Fire Programs to open a discussion with stakeholders in enhancing funding policies along with educating the public and board members.

Task: Schedule a meeting on Thursday, June 4, 2015 by the Administration, Policy and Finance Committee before the full board meeting with participation from a representative from the Attorney General's Office along with fire services stakeholders to find methods to update/enhance funding policies.

Vote: Unanimous

Motion Action: To be presented at the full board meeting on Friday, April 24, 2015.

Topic: Burn Building Grant Program

Motion: N/A

Topic Discussion: Burn Building Subcommittee chairman, Bob Miner indicated there is a need for a discussion on Burn Building Funds' flexibility. The account starts with \$1 million dollars. Bob Miner wants to know if there are other methods to utilize the Burn Building Grant.

Renovation vs. Replacement of Burn Building: Within the Commonwealth there has only been one locality that sought to *replace* a Burn Building. The board denied such request and further asked the locality to submit a *renovation application*.

A discussion ensued on modifying the policy to be flexible and allow more replacement of Burn Buildings rather than renovation as technology and training process has changed.

Ed Altizer suggested the need for the board to "evaluate" the burn buildings in their decision-making process as it relates to granting funds for replacement of a burn building or renovation.

Burn Building has/is at times been privately built by a locality. Such locality is eligible to come to VFSB seeking renovation costs.

Annual Inspections: Annually localities have to provide VDFP information related to their annual inspection.

Five Year Review/Inspection: All Burn Buildings in the Commonwealth are provided a letter asking them to provide access to their respective Burn Building for a five year review delivered by TSG. Localities have the option to allow such access or deny. There have been instances where a locality has refused the five year review.

Dave Layman cited that the refusal to conduct the five year review whether the Burn Building was built with Burn Building Grants or private funding creates a difficult decision-making process when such locality comes in front of the board seeking renovation funds.

Christine Lopilato offered that Code §38.2-401 references \$1 million to be used for regional fire services training facilities, the VFIRS program, and construction or repair of burn building projects. Currently, the VFSB has allocated \$25,000 to VFIRS and \$975,000 to burn buildings. However, the VFSB can amend the amount allocated for VFIRS Hardware Grants. Additionally, the VFSB may amend the Regional Fire Services Training Facilities Grant Program to increase grant award limits from \$50,000, and can also increase the eligible projects in the current Policy to create additional funding opportunities through the Regional Fire Services Training Facilities Program.

Task: Walt Bailey requested a review be conducted before the June 6, 2015 board meeting related to;

- Burn Building Grant Policy
- Regional Fire Services Training Facility Grant Program
- Inspections: the number, type, and length of reviews/inspections done on Burn Buildings in Virginia.

Task: Walt Bailey further added that the Administration, Policy and Finance Committee and guidance from the Burn Building Subcommittee should modify the current Burn Building Contract with respect to longevity of a building/infrastructure. The Administration, Policy and Finance Committee will make such modifications during the meeting on Thursday, June 4, 2015 with attendance from a representative from the Attorney General's Office and stakeholders.

Vote: NA

Motion Action: To be presented at the full board meeting on Friday, April 24, 2015.

Topic: Regional Fire Services Training Facility Grant Program

Motion: N/A

Topic Discussion: The grant which provides localities with the ability for acquisition, renovation, repair, service, and management of fire services training props to provide training opportunities.

Task: Walt Bailey requested a review be conducted before the June 6, 2015 board meeting related to;

- Regional Fire Services Training Facility Grant Program

Vote: NA

Motion Action: To be presented at the full board meeting on Friday, April 24, 2015.

Topic: VFIRS Hardware Grant Program

Motion: N/A

Topic Discussion: The grant which allows up to \$1,000 per department.

“Grant funds may not be used for anything other than specified VFIRS ‘hardware’- inclusive of a computer, Tablet and mi-fi peripherals, as such may be later defined by the Agency; and may not be retroactively applied to acquisitions that predate an award.”

The committee discussed pricing for other hardware which cost less than \$1,000 that will still allows fire departments to access VFIRS. A policy was suggested which requests prospective applicants to submit an application with the cost of the future hardware that is to be bought. Christine Lopilato offered that the application process could be modified to incorporate State contract rates for hardware (desktops, laptops, tablets) that applicants could reference and the VFSB could use as baseline grant award allowances.

The current policy cites; *“Each grantee shall have 180 days after receipt of its award to procure the necessary hardware and train personnel”*.

Task: Walt Bailey requested for the agency to get a data on the number of VFIRS Grant requests along with those awarded.

Vote: NA

Motion Action: To be presented at the full board meeting on Friday, April 24, 2015.

Topic: Schedule future Burn Building Subcommittee Meetings

Motion: N/A

Topic Discussion: Burn Building Subcommittee Chairman, Bob Miner suggested to have the Burn Building Subcommittee Meeting on Thursday, June 4, 2015, before the Administration, Policy and Finance Meeting.

Vote: NA

Motion Action: To be presented at the full board meeting on Friday, April 24, 2015.

Topic: VFSB Meeting Schedule/Frequency

Motion: N/A

Topic Discussion: With respect to frequency, Walt Bailey asked if the board needs to meet five times a year as opposed to four times, as done within the last few years. Bill Kyger added that additional meetings will cost more. He also added that if the VFSB strategically schedules its meetings around the Commonwealth allows stakeholders to be part of.

The committee decided to continue having four meetings per year, with the November Meeting being held at other parts of Virginia.

Vote: NA

Motion Action: To be presented at the full board meeting on Friday, April 24, 2015.

ADJOURNMENT

The subcommittee adjourned at 3:30pm.

Clerk of the Committee

REVIEWED BY:



Christine Lopilato
Director of Finance

April 23, 2015

Date

Enclosures:

NA