

VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICES BOARD

Full Board Meeting

Friday, June 12th, 2020

Meeting held electronically through Google Hangouts

10:00am

A regular meeting of the Virginia Fire Services Board was held on June 12th, 2020 at 10:00 am. This meeting was held electronically through Google Hangouts as a result of the State of Emergency initiated by the Honorable Ralph Northam, Governor of Virginia. Board Chair, Walter Bailey facilitated this meeting and the Board had a constituted Quorum.

Board MEMBERS PRESENT

David Collins Hankley	Harry L. Day
James Alan Calvert	Dennis Linaburg
James Moore Stokely	Jerome Williams
Bettie Reeves-Nobles	Keith H Johnson
Walter T Bailey	Robert Farrell
Ernest H Little	James Davis Poindexter
Scott Garber	
Stephanie L Koren	

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

Rick Gregory

GUESTS PRESENT

Larry Gwaltney

AGENCY MEMBERS PRESENT

Travis Rickman	Brook Pittinger
Mike Reilly	Briant Atkins
Theresa Hunter	Bill MacKay
Jeff Liebold	

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CHANGES IN THE AGENDA

The Chairman Walt Bailey proposed 3 additions to the agenda to be discussed at the meeting. The first was adding section for FIRE EDUCATION & TRAINING COMMITTEE to give a report. To the agenda to allow for a report from the Education and Training Committee. The other two additions were under New Business adding “iii. Full Board discussion for next in person meeting” and under Live Structure “ii. OSB discussion”. With no objections the changes to the agenda were approved by the board and moved forward.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were offered during the meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

AGENCY REPORTS

REPORT FROM THE VDFP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Executive Director Reilly gave an update to the committee on the COVID pandemic and how that event has effected the agency and training during this time. He also discussed an update with the APA audit and how the agency was working to resolve these issues working with IT staff. The Executive Director gave an update on the Chief Administrative Officer and the pending criminal case moves forward he clarified that the issue was dealing with the Scholarship reimbursement fund. Lastly the executive director talked about the fiscal impacts to the COVID Pandemic and that we are hoping that the impact will not be as severe as we thought.

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FIRE PREVENTION & CONTROL COMMITTEE

A. Report From The Department of Forestry

The State Forester Rob Farrell discussed how his agency is currently working through the Pandemic and how they are operating during this time. They are working on multiple issues at once to include the pandemic, hurricane season, and the 1st amendment protests. They have 137 applications currently for Fire Expense Grants which they are awaiting on funds. The dry hydrate program is continue forward. They have 22 new hydrates 27 repairs with most of the repairs are taking up much of those funds.

B. Report from The Codes and Standards Subcommittee

Ernie Reported that yesterday was the final edit session with DHCH and they worked through almost ever chapter and discussed how we did not get to go back and review chapters 1-10 in the sub workgroups with DHCD. But on another note the committee was able to work through all of the edits for the 2018 code edit cycle amendments which had roughly 4,000 amendments proposed and about 2,500 of our edits were put back into the code.

The Chairman inquired about all of the chapters that would be voted on at the current meeting and Ernie Little clarified the process that we take to move those efforts forward.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Ernie Little discussed the memorandum of understanding between BHCD and VFSB and that they are working to make some changes to that document and will hopefully have something to govern over the next cycle.

NEW BUSINESS

- I. **Topic:** Review and approval of Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 38, and 39 edits of the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code

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Motion: To Approve Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 38, and 39 edits of the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code as submitted by the Fire Prevention and Control Committee

Topic Discussion: N/A

Vote: It was unanimously supported by the committee

Motion Action: The Chapters will now be presented to the Board of Housing and Community Development to be considered in the code making process to make changes to the current edits to the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code.

ii. **Topic:** Amendment to the VFSB Rules of Procedures

Motion: To move this item forward to the next meeting for a second reading per the boards Rules of Procedures.

Topic Discussion: The Chairman of the Fire Prevention and Control Committee discussed why this change was necessary and how this change will aid the board in advancing the Code and Standards subcommittees work with the Statewide Fire Prevention Code. He clarified that we would be making the change strictly for the subcommittee changing the constituted quorum from a majority to 5 members of the committee. Ernie Little asked the clerk of the committee if he had missed anything and the clerk clarified that this change would allow for the committee to have more flexibility. He also determined that after further review that for this change to take affect that there would have to be two readings of this proposal on the agenda before it could be approved at the next meeting. The Chairman clarified that no vote would be needed today to make the change but instructed the clerk to make sure that it was on the agenda for the next meeting and for current members to review it for the next meeting.

Vote: No vote was taken

Motion Action: To Place this on the agenda for the next meeting for full approval by the board.

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The Chairman of the Fire Prevention and Control Committee asked to speak before the Board moved on to discuss future meetings such as June 26th which will be a joint hearing of the Board of Housing and Community Development and the Virginia Fire Services Board, June 23rd which is the first workgroup meeting with DHCD, and workgroup 2 will be held on June 30th to discuss further changes.

The Chairman asked the clerk to make sure the board had the appropriate information to attend the meetings especially the joint meeting on June 26th. Keith Johnson who is the VFSB Representative on the Board of Housing and Community Development clarified that the 26th meeting will be a public hearing on code proposals.

Bettie suggested that we make an additional change to the Board procedures to change the language in the procedures to change all the references to Chairman to either "Chair Person" or just "Chair". The Clerk made it clear that the change would have to go through the two step process to make the change. The chairman then instructed the Clerk to look through the document to determine any other places that needed to change to make the document gender neutral. Keith Johnson inquired about a legislative change that requires by law on July 1. The Chairman request that the clerk research the change.

FIRE EDUCATION & TRAINING COMMITTEE

A. Report from the Training and Education Committee

The Chair Jimmy Calvert gave a report to the board and talked about COVID 19 and how it affected training here at VDFP. He also discussed the arrival of cornerstone and applauded the agency for creating a great platform top aid in training. He then moved on to the Fiver Year Strategic Plan and stated that he believed we have completed Goal #1 which looks to improve the use of technology in the daily training operations, which he believed has been completed with the implementation of cornerstone. He then moved on to Goal #5 to evaluate the required class hours and certification training programs the program went through accreditation and was recertified. The next goal was goal #6 which improve the documentation of the fire department membership roster for the commonwealth which a letter was drafted to go to the chairman which once sent out will help to satisfy that goal. Lastly he talked about the ban on OSB's that director Reilly discussed.

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B. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

N/A

C. NEW BUSINESS

ADMINISTRATION, POLICY, AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

A. Report from Administration, Policy and Finance Committee

Chairman Walt Bailey gave comments in regards to the current state of departments during COVID and some of the opinions that he has heard from smaller departments in the Commonwealth

Chairman of the Administration, Policy, and Finance Committee spoke in regards to the committee and stated that the Chairman's remarks were spot on regarding the Increase of Aide to Localities. He read a substitute motion for the board to consider that was brought forth by the committee which stated, “

“Substitute Motion to Increase the Aid To Localities minimums from \$10,000 to \$15,000 for towns and from \$20,000 to \$30,000 for counties and cities for only Fiscal Year 2021. Pending Budget Projections to accommodate an increase for all localities. In the event of a budget projection shortfall, the Virginia Fire Services Board directs Virginia Department of Fire Programs Staff to format new minimums to ensure all localities remain at or above the Fiscal Year 2020 funding level.”

The motion was passed unanimously by the committee for the full boards consideration. The Chairman explained the effects of the motion and the reasoning behind the change and applauded the committee.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. **Topic:** Increase of Aide to Localities minimums with substitute motion recommended by committee

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Motion: Substitute Motion to Increase the Aid to Localities minimums from \$10,000 to \$15,000 for towns and from \$20,000 to \$30,000 for counties and cities for only Fiscal Year 2021. Pending Budget Projections to accommodate an increase for all localities. In the event of a budget projection shortfall, the Virginia Fire Services Board directs Virginia Department of Fire Programs Staff to format new minimums to ensure all localities remain at or above the Fiscal Year 2020 funding level.

Topic Discussion: The Executive Director of VDFP stated that they did have the fiscal staff take a look at this proposal and stated that a spreadsheet had been sent out to the committee showing how much of an increase was needed to make the change currently being proposed.

Vote: The Vote was unanimous for the full board to approve the increase.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Topic:** Southampton Final Study

Motion: To approve the study as written was made by Ernie Little and Seconded by Jim Stokley

Topic Discussion: The Chairman stated that Jimmy Calvert and himself participated in the study and made minor edits then asked for any further comments there were none.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to approve the study as written

Motion Action: To issue the Southampton study to the locality as written.

2. **Topic:** Greene County Final Study

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Motion: To hold off on the approval of the final study until Bettie Reeves-Nobles edits are incorporated into the study.

Topic Discussion: Bettie Reeves- Nobles stated that she did not have enough time to make the proper changes to the study which she participated on. She asked the committee to hold off on approving the study as written to be approved at the next meeting.

Vote: With no objections the Chairman approved the request to hold off final approval pending the edits of Mrs. Reeves- Nobles.

Motion Action: Hold off on approval of the Greene County Study until edits are approved by Bettie Reeves-Nobles

3. **Topic:** Nottoway County Fire & EMS Study Request

Motion: Lee Day made the motion to approve the study which was properly seconded by Bettie Reeves- Nobles

Topic Discussion: The Chairman discussed how Nottoway County was aware that we would have some dilemmas completing the study because of COVID.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to approve the Nottoway Fire & EMS Study to be conducted

Motion Action: To reach out to Nottoway County to start the Fire & EMS Study process.

LIVE STRUCTURE COMMITTEE

A. Report from the Live Structure Committee

The Chairman of the committee discussed the meeting and the main conversation to deal with the impingement protection issue which will be voted on at the next meeting of the Live Structure Committee in October.

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B. Unfinished Business

C. New Business

1. **Topic:** Class “B” fuel to Class “A” fuel Conversion- Live Fire Training Structure Policy addition

Motion: To approve the Class “B” fuel to Class “A” fuel Conversion to be added to the Live Fire Training Structure Policy as presented

Topic Discussion: The Chairman asked the Clerk to explain the changes to the policy that will be added into the Live Fire Training Structure Policy. Lastly the Chairman wanted to confirm that this policy addition had been vetted by the Structure Group. The committee clerk confirmed that the structure group helped to format the changes.

Vote: Unanimous

Motion Action: To publish the new Live Fire Training Structure Policy with the updated language.

D. OSB Discussion

The Executive Director kicked off this discussion talking about how the Governor charged him with the duty of reducing the amount of cancers firefighters are exposed to in the everyday work. After the review of many studies and speaking with the CDFP Safety officer that there are considerable amount of carcinogens that are released in the use of flash over simulators. These carcinogens are being impregnated into the firefighters gear as well as the firefighters this was supported by blood and urine tests that were conducted after the use of OSBs which showed high volumes of carcinogens. The Executive Director would like to support a ban for the use of OSBs in training environments given the risk to our states firefighters. He spoke about how he knew the importance of how important it is to show real world scenarios in training but he believed that the risks far outweigh the risks of the continued used of OSBs in training

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environments in Virginia. The agency has asked stakeholders to help push out the message since VDFP cannot issue a ban on the use of OSBs to stop the use. There is movement to change the code in NFPA1403.

The Chairman discussed how he has not heard any opposition to the ban on OSBs as it will protect our firefighters in the state and urged the Executive Director to move forward with a policy change if needed.

COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIR

The Chairman spoke of how we are in uncharted waters with the current Pandemic and operating completely online during the state of emergency. He discussed that we will have some issues regarding the budget due to the current pandemic and that will be something that we will have to deal with in the future budget issues. He thanked Ernie Little and Keith Johnson for their work on the Statewide Fire Prevention Code since that is where the work is done to hopefully prevent fires before they have a chance to start and spread.

FULL BOARD BUSINESS

A. Unfinished Business

B. New Business

i. June Elections Rescheduled

The Chairman discussed that since we had to operate online for this meaning that we were going to push the June Elections to the Fall meeting so that we can hopefully have an in person meeting to conduct the elections.

ii. Nominations committee designations.

The Chairman asked for volunteers for the nominations committee that would convene to bring forth members for election the following board members volunteered to participate on the nominations committee which will meet prior to our next meeting to discuss the elections at our next full meeting of the Virginia Fire Services Board.

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Nominations Committee:

Bettie Reeves- Nobles

Jimmy Calvert

Lee Day

David Hankley

- iii. Full Board discussion for next in person meeting

The Chairman discussed how he would like to push off the next meeting to late September early October timeframe and asked the Board the opportunity to work with staff to determine a time to safely host an in person meeting during that time period. None of the members objected to that end.

The Chairman called for any further comments Dennis Linaburg spoke about funding at his local department and some of the issues that they are having due to the lack of fundraising because of the COVID pandemic. Keith Johnson also spoke about how this pandemic has affected all members of the fire service even in Northern Virginia and they have asked at the Federal level to open up grants for all fire departments for impacts of tax revenue in the future.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made to adjourn by Lee Day and seconded by Jim Stokley, committee adjourned at 12:03pm

Clerk of the Committee: Travis Rickman

REVIEWED BY:

Brook Pittinger

Deputy Executive Director