

# **VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICES BOARD**

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Annual Full Board Meeting

Friday, June 3, 2022

Virginia Department of Fire Programs Headquarters

1005 Technology Park Drive, Glen Allen, VA

Training Rooms 1&2

9:00 am

## **MINUTES**

The annual meeting of the Virginia Fire Services Board was held at Virginia Department of Fire Programs Headquarters in Glen Allen, Virginia. Board Chair Scott Garber facilitated the meeting and the Board had a constituted Quorum

### **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

R. Scott Garber, Chair – Local Fire Marshal

Keith Johnson, Vice Chair (AP&F Committee Chair) – Virginia Fire Chiefs Association (VFCA)

Jerome Williams, (T&E Committee Chair) – Certified Fire Service Instructor

Ernest Little, (FP&C Committee Chair) – Virginia Fire Prevention Association (VFPA)

Bettie Reeves-Nobles, (LFTS Committee Chair) – General Public

Dennis Linaberg – VA Chapter International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI)

James Poindexter – Virginia Professional Firefighters Association (VPPFF)

Abbey Johnston – Virginia State Firefighters Association (VSFA)

James Calvert – Member of Industry Representing SARA Title III/OSHA

Ben Reedy – Insurance Industry

Steve Sites – Virginia Municipal League (VML)

Donald Hart – Virginia Association of Counties (VACO)

### **Board Members Absent:**

Rob Ferrell - Virginia State Forester

Harry L. Day- Virginia Fire Service Council Member

Claudia Cotton – Housing and Community Development

### **Agency Members Present:**

Brad Creasy                      Brook Pittinger

Jamey Brads                      Theresa Hunter

Joshua Davis

### **GUESTS PRESENT**

James Hickens – Suffolk Fire & Rescue

Nathen Ramsey – Rockbridge County Fire Rescue

Larry Gwaltney – VSFA

Brandon Winesett – Montgomery County

Tyler Hall – Montgomery County

### **CHANGES IN AGENDA**

No changes were made to the agenda.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

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Mr. Larry Gwaltney advised the Board that VSFA will be holding a joint conference with the Virginia Association of Volunteer Rescue Squads in Hampton on August 10 -13, 2022. He stated his appreciation for all the hard work VDFP staff has provided with the training schedule. The conference will be held at the Hampton Convention Center and he appreciates the Board holding its meeting there. Mr. Gwaltney welcomed Chief Creasy on board and offered to support him in his appointment.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

Approval of the previous meeting minutes (February 2022). Motion for approval was made by Mr. Ernest Little and seconded by unidentified member. Unanimous agreement from the Board to approve the previous meeting minutes.

## **REPORT FROM THE VDFP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Executive Director Creasy addressed the Board and thanked everyone who reached out to congratulate him on his appointment. He stated he has been in his Executive Director role for two weeks. Director Creasy then acknowledged VDFP as having great staff and great initiatives that were started before his appointment. He stated the initiatives will be addressed in the Chief's report later in the meeting. Director Creasy provided updates on VDFP vacant positions: Government Affairs Manager; State Fire Marshal, Chief Safety Officer, Senior Intelligence Analyst Position (Fusion Center), Deputy Director and Community Risk Reduction positions.

He shared calls that the office received pertaining to several pending studies: Montgomery County; Town of Lebanon and Northumberland County. He looks forward to partnering with the Board to continue to improve the agency and Virginia's fire service.

Chair Garber advised that he would be presenting the Northumberland Study to the Board of Supervisors on the evening of July 20, 2022

## **FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL COMMITTEE**

### **A. Report From the Fire Prevention and Control Committee Chair**

Mr. Ernest Little advised that the Code and Standards Subcommittee met on June 2<sup>nd</sup> and covered several proposals for the State Fire Code. The only one item that he can recollect was not moved forward due to construction language.

### **B. Report From the Virginia State Fire Marshal:**

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Mr. Joshua Davis stated this was his first time attending the Board meeting in this capacity. He shared SFMO is moving forward with success and good outcomes. One of those was him being invited to speak at the DHCD Building Safety Month Proclamation event. Mr. Davis shared that the State Fire Marshal position is still vacant. As of May 25, 2022 the Commonwealth had 15 fatal fires and one the prior evening which was not confirmed yet. SFMO continues to work on fast lab trailer, but supplies with the contractor are issues (supply chain). Pyrotechnics testing was completed on March 22, 2022 for all testing and permissible manufacturers. The list has been created and is on the SFMO website. Staff are able to assist with any questions. The SFMO will be partnering with Inspection Reporting On-Line (IROL). Virginia will be the first to partner with a third party inspector that will assist with data collection on sprinklers, alarms and hood systems. IROL will have the data available to jurisdictions and make it accessible to the 62 counties SFMO is responsible for.

C. Report From the Department of Forestry:  
No report was made

D. Report From The Codes and Standards Subcommittee

**Topic:** Appointment of new Codes and Standards subcommittee member

**Motion:** To appoint Logan Stanley of Fredericksburg as members of the Code Subcommittee.

**Topic Discussion:** Mr. Little stated that Logan Stanley was recommended to be a member of the Code and Standards Subcommittee. He then made a motion to accept him as a new member.

**Vote:** Unanimous

**Action:** Motion Approved to have Mr. Logan Stanley added to the Code and Standards Subcommittee

Vice-Chair Johnson asked Mr. Little about the consensus vs. non-consensus items status. Mr. Little advised the bulk were the non-consensus items. There were three work groups formed: 1. In Building Communication – that report is moving forward; 2. Active Shooter – that report is moving forward; and 3. Residential Sprinklers – there are three proposals, the committee did support all three recommendations. He also shared that there was a pretty good discussion on lithium ion battery technology

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and other technology similar to that. Just about every jurisdiction in Virginia will be dealing with that issue. In his opinion the fire code is not caught up to the technology. Mr. Little went on to share details on an Arizona incident and the 2024 IFC proposal to be put in the 2021 Code.

Vice-Chair Johnson stated he wanted to update more on the three study groups developed separately and apart from 2021. Vice-Chair Johnson sits on Board of Housing and Community Development and reviewed in-building communication, residential sprinklers and active-shooter hostile event. He provided the legislative summary of each item.

## **E. Unfinished Business**

VFSB/ BHCD Memorandum of Agreement update:

Mr. Little stated that he spoke with Cindy Davis at the VFPA conference in Virginia Beach concerning the MOA. She advised that the MOA was at DHCD and is on the new Director's desk and the review is pending. He noted it has been almost one year since it was sent over.

## **F. New Business**

Fire Prevention & Control Document – Revised Work Session Dates

Mr. Little spoke about the February 2022 meeting discussion to have a work session at the VFSB April Meeting, which was subsequently cancelled. His hope is that it will be at the next meeting in Hampton.

## **LIVE FIRE TRAINING STRUCTURE COMMITTEE**

### **A. Report From The Live Structure Committee Chair**

Ms. Betty Reeves-Noble advised that there are three items for today's agenda.

### **B. Report From the Chief of Training-**

No report given

### **C. Unfinished Business**

Review of On-Going Live Fire Training Structure Grants

Ms. Reeves-Nobles advised there is information and asked Ms. Hunter to review.

Ms. Hunter highlighted that the Scott County burn building is complete and held the ribbon cutting on May 10, 2022.

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## D. New Business

### 1 Topic: City of Suffolk one year grant extension

**Motion:** To approve the one year grant extension for the City of Suffolk was made by Ms. Johnston and seconded by Unidentified Member.

**Discussion:** Mr. James Dickens from the City of Suffolk thanked the board for the original grant and preceded to give a status update on the project progress. He stated that the initial site was on 120 acre parcel of land and the portion selected for burn building was in the developed portion of the parcel. The Master Plan for the entire parcel has grown in scope which made the burn building site move and resulted in additional master planning work. Due to several issues, he outlined Suffolk was not able to obtain a building permit and start construction by July 1, 2022. He respectfully requests an additional extension.

**Vote:** Unanimous to grant the extension

**Action:** motion carries

### 2 Topic: County of Rockbridge one year grant extension

**Motion:** To approve the one year grant extension for the County of Rockbridge was made by Ms. Johnston and seconded by Mr. Sites.

**Discussion:** Mr. Nathan Ramsey from the County of Rockbridge thanked Ms. Hunter and the Board for its time. He stated their burn building is currently not in good shape and some issues have been beyond their control. Their plans are on the 7th review by the agency's A&E firm as of last week. He shared there has been lag times and things missed from their A&E firm and that the firm has had staffing issues which created several delays. They are requesting another one year extension. They understand it is not normal to have three extensions and are still supported by the Rockbridge Board of Supervisors and have the support of Buena Vista and Lexington.

**Vote:** Unanimous to grant the extension

**Action:** motion carries

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## **FIRE EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMITTEE**

### **A. Report From The Education and Training Committee Chair:**

Mr. Jerome Williams stated they are moving forward with the five year plan and due to the interest of time advised Mr. Brads would provide an update.

### **B. Report From The Chief of Training**

Mr. Jamey Brads provided a summary of the status of the five year plan, hiring of FTE's, and the development of instructor's permission in cornerstone. He provided updates on several training programs to include EVOC series, Development of officer instructor series and reassigned program management of SME's. Ms. Johnston asked will the agency explore other instructor disciplines in the on demand system like it did for EVOC. Mr. Brads answered yes there is a need for on-demand and the agency will pick a few things but are exploring all options. He stated the ITR Module has gone from Commonwealth of Virginia Learning Center (COVLC) and will be up in June within VDFP Cornerstone on-demand. Incident safety, foam awareness, watercraft rescue, and FFI and II Train the Trainers continue to be offered at the local level. QA Division and IT are working with a vendor to initiate on-line testing. However, the agency will not go 100% away from paper. On-line testing will solve some problems and provide the ability to have analytics when retesting. This will allow efforts to be focused and gives the student the ability to see where they may be lacking. Mr. Brads further stated that the agency is working on test administrator and test updates which may be done on-demand / virtual instructors for localities that can facilitate test proctors.

Mr. Brads stated that delegated authority is moving forward and that the agency decided to get all delegated authority jurisdictions together: Prince William, Fairfax Co., Henrico and Virginia Beach just submitted paperwork to become delegated authorities. This extends ability to do credentialed accredited testing in house. Mr. Brads provided information on the work groups and the manual they are drafting. He went into the training statistics and the cause for training cancelations.

### **C. Unfinished Business**

#### **CSOD Phase II updates**

Mr. Brads stated the agency implemented on line course evaluations. VDFP received over 800 since February when it was implemented and it was not mandatory to fill out the evaluation. The evaluations were instructor led hybrid training, and 13 sessions with 555 instructors participated with mandatory participation for adjunct instructors.

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## **D. New Business**

Mr. Brads spoke on certifications and how they are seen on a student transcript. Vice Chair Johnson asked why students receive a certificate for showing up.

Mr. Brads explained that the certificate of completion was issued at the end of each session however that's changing. He was presenting to the Board for feedback.

## **ADMINISTRATION, POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**

### **A. Report from the Administration, Policy and Finance Committee Chair**

Vice-Chair Johnson commented on the Montgomery County Study and stated that studies are important to all stakeholders around the Commonwealth that engage with the Board. Studies are tremendously labor intensive and he expressed the importance of getting the worksheet filled out when the request comes in. He stated that the proper expectations should be set. The studies are an overview of fire/rescue systems and not intended to be forensic studies of systems or departments. It is important that we learned from Montgomery County and improve the process. The completion of the studies cannot fall to 1-2 individuals on the board but all board members need to participate. Ms. Reeves-Nobles shared that it is not that they did not want to participate but that they were not selected. She volunteered several times but was not contacted. Ms. Reeves-Nobles went on to say she served on a couple of studies and they were very good and hope everyone gets involved.

### **B. Report from the VDFP Administration**

#### **i. VFSB Budget Review**

Ms. Theresa Hunter provided an overview of the budget. The FY23 budget will have a starting balance of 5,215,674 with 4,159,134 obligated to existing projects. The unobligated balance of \$575,000 is available for grant funding in FY23

#### **ii. ATL Disbursement Status**

Ms. Hunter provided an overview of the outstanding ATL localities. She shared the notification process the agency followed and the resulting forfeitures.

### **C. Unfinished Business**

#### **Topic: Montgomery County Fire & EMS Study**

**Motion:** To revise the Montgomery County Study was made by Chair Garber and seconded by Mr. Poindexter.

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**Discussion:** Vice Chair gave an overview of the study's history and the VFSSB members who served on the review committee. He thanked the participants for the tremendous amount of work put forth in getting the report where it is today.

Mr. Tyler Hall and Mr. Brandon Winesett from Montgomery County stated they appreciate all the effort on the part of the Board to get this product finalized. They shared their excitement about having the product. Ms. Johnston shared there were some technical edits made.

**Motion:** To add Ms. Brook Pittinger as author of the Study was made by Vice Chair Johnson and seconded by Chair Garber.

**Vote:** Unanimous to make the author changes.

**Action:** motion carries

**Vote:** Unanimous to accept revised Montgomery Fire & EMS Study

**Action:** motion carries

## D. New Business

### 1 **Topic: Updates to the Rules of Procedure Policy**

**Motion:** To approve changes to the rules and procedures made by Ms. Reeves-Nobles and seconded by Mr. Little.

**Discussion:** Mr. James Poindexter discussed removing the requirement to have handwritten motions. Vice Chair offered to delete 7.4 conduct of business in committee, fifth line which states: *all motions or resolutions offered during a committee meeting shall be presented in written form at the time of resolution.*

**Motion:** To remove all references within the policy referring to motions and resolutions being written was made by Mr. Linaburg and seconded by Ms. Reeves-Nobles.

**Vote:** Unanimous to remove the handwritten directive from the policy.

**Action:** motion carries

**Vote:** No vote on accepting the changes to the rules and procedure. Pending



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## **2 Topic: ATL Policy Change - Minimums Permanent Increase**

**Motion:** To permanently increase the ATL minimums and update the policy was made by Mr. Linaberg and seconded by Dr. Calvert.

**Discussion:** In April 2020 the Board took action and upgraded the minimum for cities and counties to \$30,000 and towns to \$15,000 for one year only. The same thing happened in 2021. The change before the Board is to make this the permanent ATL minimums moving forward.

**Vote:** Unanimous to remove the handwritten directive from the policy.

**Action:** motion carries

## **COMMENTS FROM CHAIR OF THE BOARD**

Chair Garber thanked the board, the agency and the Virginia's fire service for the opportunity to serve the last year and stated that it was one of the most humbling experiences of his career. He said he has taken away the understanding of the deep level of work commitment and dedication that continues to drive the fire service. He went on to state that his new commitments elsewhere requires he step down from Chair and seek the Vice Chair role.

## **FULL BOARD BUSINESS**

### **A. Unfinished Business**

Vice Chair Johnson inquired about the status of the Government Affairs Liaison position. He emphasized the importance of the position and thanked staff for filling in. The meeting dates for the next two meetings were discussed. No decision was made for the December meeting. The topic will be discussed at the August meeting in Hampton VA.

### **B. Elections of Officers: Chair and Vice Chair**

Chairman Pro-Tem Jerome Williams oversaw the election process and thanked Ms. Reeves-Noble and Ms. Johnston for serving on the nominations committee.

The Chair position had one candidate Mr. Keith Johnson who ran unopposed. Chairman Pro-Tem Williams called for floor nominations for the Chair position. With no response he called for a vote. There were no opposition. Mr. Keith Johnson was approved as the Board Chair.

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The Vice Chair position had one candidate Mr. Scott Garber who ran unopposed. When Chairman Pro-Tem Jerome Williams called for floor nominations for the Vice Chair position. Mr. Steven Sites nominated Abby Johnston and was seconded by Mr. Ben Reedy. Ms. Johnston accepted the nomination and provided a brief summary of her qualifications. Mr. Garber also provided a summary of his qualifications.

Candidates for Vice Chair:

Scott Garber

Abbey Johnston

Chairman Pro-Tem Jerome Williams announced that a secret ballot election would take place and the board motioned for a recess while the votes were cast and counted. After the recess Chairman Pro-Tem Williams reported that Ms. Abbey Johnston was the new Vice Chair.

## **C. New Business**

Mr. Johnson the new Board Chair stated that he would send an email request to the Board members for volunteers for the various committee assignments and chairs. He also stated the desire to have a 1-2 day educational retreat for the Board members.

Mr. Calvert brought forward information regarding the meeting he attended in Bedford Town by Public Safety Assistant Secretary. He further discussed Hazardous Materials operation.

Mr. Poindexter questioned the board quorum requirements for meetings. He indicated the rule hinders their ability to do business. Ms. Pittinger provided the rules as it pertains to the regulatory boards and policy boards. Mr. Poindexter thanked everyone and stated as he is leaving the Board he hopes it's better now than when he joined.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Johnson called for the meeting to be adjourned

Clerk of the Committee: Brook Pittinger

Theresa Hunter (drafted minutes from audio transcript)

**Reviewed by:**

Executive Director Brad Creasy