

Virginia Fire Prevention and Control Plan



Fiscal Years 2024 to 2028

Effective June 11, 2024

Prepared by:
Virginia Fire Services Board
Virginia Department of Fire Programs

A message from the Fire Prevention and Control Committee

The following pages represent the newly revised five-year Fire Prevention and Control Plan (FY) 2024 to 2028 for the Commonwealth of Virginia. This plan identifies strategic goals and objectives to reduce fires, casualties, property loss, and improve first responder safety by changing how people think about fire and making fire prevention a way of life in the Commonwealth.

From the United States Fire Administration: In 1971, our nation lost over 12,000 civilians and 250 firefighters to fire. To help decrease tragic losses and to promote professional development of the fire and emergency response community, Congress passed the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974. Since 1974, there has been a reduction of more than 70 percent in civilian fire fatalities and more than 60 percent in firefighter fatalities annually from fire.

Fire continues to be a problem in the Commonwealth of Virginia and as such there is a need to have a robust Fire Prevention and Control Plan. The Virginia Fire Services Board, in coordination with the Virginia fire and emergency services community, will strive for continuous improvements and seek positive results to safeguard the Commonwealth and its citizens from fire.

Virginia Fire Services Board

The Virginia Fire Services Board (the Board) is established as a policy board within the meaning of § 2.2-2100 in the executive branch of state government pursuant to § 9.1-202 of the Code of Virginia. Furthermore, the Board is given the authority to ensure the development and implementation of the Virginia Fire Prevention and Control Plan.

About the Fire Prevention and Control Committee

The Committee on Fire Prevention and Control shall be responsible for providing information and making recommendations to the Virginia Fire Services Board and Agency to ensure the development and implementation of the Virginia Fire Prevention and Control plan; advising the Agency on the development a statewide plan for the collection, analysis and reporting of data related to fires in the Commonwealth; and evaluating all fire prevention and protection programs, and make any recommendations deemed necessary to improve the level of fire prevention and protection in the Commonwealth.

Virginia Fire Service Partners

The following agencies and organizations have vested interest in the Fire Prevention and Control Plan.

Virginia State Agencies -

- Department of Fire Programs
- State Fire Marshal's Office
- Fire Marshal Academy
- Department of Forestry
- Virginia Department of Emergency Management
- Department of Housing and Community Development
- Virginia State Police

Fire Associations and Organizations –

- Virginia Fire Prevention Association
- Virginia Fire Chiefs Association
- Virginia Chapter International Association of Arson Investigators
- Virginia Fire and Life Safety Coalition
- Virginia State Firefighters Association
- Virginia Professional Firefighters Association

Current state of fire problem in the Commonwealth of Virginia

Over the last four years on average civilian fire fatality numbers have remained steady. Cooking and improperly discarded smoking materials are the top two causes of residential fires. Over a five-year period (2018 – 2022) there were 308 Civilian Fire Fatalities reported. The average median age of people that are listed for fire fatalities is 60 years old. Nationally for the last 10 years on average, 81 percent of fire deaths occurred at residential structure fires. While the number of residential fire deaths has reduced substantially since the original “America Burning” report (1974), most of these losses could be reduced through requiring automatic sprinklers systems in residential occupancies.

Absent, non-functional, or outdated smoke alarms are a real issue throughout Virginia. Three out of five fire fatalities occurred in a residence without a functioning smoke alarm. Combining smoke alarms deficiencies with no fire sprinkler system, the ability to prevent fire casualties is seemingly insurmountable.

One significant issue facing the fire service is recruitment and retention, in both the career and volunteer ranks. This challenge increases the risks for communities struggling to provide day-to-day emergency responses and as such directly impacts any capability and capacity to provide Community Risk Reduction activities.

Tall wood frame building construction is becoming increasingly popular because of material availability and costs. An uncontrolled fire in these types of buildings is a tactical challenge for firefighters and can quickly become deadly for occupants. Fire service participation in code development and education is paramount.

The Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF) suppresses an average of 700 wildfires annually burning more than 8,000 acres, it is also estimated that structural fire departments in the commonwealth suppress an additional 2,000 wildfires annually, not reported by the DOF. Virginia wildfires damage or destroy an average of 14 homes and 56 other structures each year. Virginia’s growing wildland-urban interface (WUI) presents increasing challenges for Virginia’s fire service. Wildfire hazard mitigation efforts that focus on fire prevention, Firewise construction technique, the creation of defensible space, and increases in the rural water supply for firefighting are all important steps that can be taken to reduce the threat by wildfire.

The fire service is also threatened by emerging technologies including electric vehicles, lithium-ion batteries, and energy storage systems. These technologies create increased hazards for firefighters and greater possibility of fires or prolonged incidents. These fires require different equipment and training, underscoring the need for increased efforts in both areas. The fire code, as well as funding for fire departments, must keep pace with these technologies or risk dangerous outcomes.

Plan Goals and Objectives

Goal 1 – Fire Incident Reporting. Currently, Virginia does not mandate fire incident documentation and reporting. This is a major impairment to research and analysis of fire casualty and property loss information. Incident reports on emergency responses by the fire service are submitted to NFIRS from the state and localities through the VFIRS system. The VFIRS data is the primary source of data for a wide range of analyses and reports. The availability of accurate information concerning fires and other incidents is vital in determining the best and most effective methods of both fire control and fire prevention, as well as predicting future problems in communities, and measuring program performance. The outcomes from such research and analysis can greatly assist in focused community risk reduction initiatives locally, regionally, and statewide. This information would be utilized to improve fire department service delivery and firefighter health and safety.

Objectives:

1. The method of incident documentation is not consistent across the Commonwealth, with both handwritten and electronic documentation methods being used. Therefore, discussions should begin towards requiring electronic incident documentation and reporting within the fire service community. Discussion should also begin on what challenges exist to the process of electronic fire reporting.
2. Discuss the creation of legislation requiring incident reporting with fire service stakeholder's associations and groups.
3. Identify funding for a Technology/Data Analyst position with VDFP. This position would ensure that an annual and as needed analysis of VFIRS information is completed and shared with the fire service community, the Virginia Fire Services Board, state leadership, and the public.
4. Develop a statewide policy and training program that identifies the new NERIS system as the system to capture VFIRS information. The Technology/Data Analyst, in conjunction with the VDFP CRR section, will develop and deliver a training program outlining the minimum and procedural requirements for the NERIS reporting system.
5. The Virginia Fire Services Board will continue to award the hardware (continuance) and software (new) grant programs to support the submission of emergency incident reports into the NERIS system.

Goal 2 – Practical and Useful, Statewide Fire Prevention Code. In recent Virginia code development cycles, the Statewide Fire Prevention Code (SFPC) has undergone significant changes. The primary focus of change was removing unenforceable provisions. The scope of these changes has left the fire inspector with an incomplete document as it compares to the model fire code.

Objectives:

1. The Codes and Standards Subcommittee will actively participate in the Virginia code development process. The work of this committee will directly influence the Fire Services Board's vote in the promulgation of the SFPC and the Uniform Statewide Building Code with the Board of Housing and Community Development.
2. The subcommittee will review future editions of the model codes to be knowledgeable of new or changed provisions.
3. The Code and Standards Subcommittee will actively pursue code change proposals that identify critical fire and life safety provisions, listed in the model fire code, to justify their re-establishment into the SFPC.
4. Actively participate in developing fire and building codes that coincide with best practices for new safety measures in Agrotourism activities.
5. Actively work with the Board of Housing and Community Development on the promulgation of the Statewide Fire Prevention Code. Routinely update the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to ensure the process is fair and equitable.

Goal 3 – Automatic Fire Suppression Systems in Townhouses. One of the best ways to reduce the devastation any family may experience from residential fires is to prevent them from happening in the first place. That starts with building safer homes. Compared to single family detached homes, townhouses have increased fire risk, whereas like in an apartment building, the behavior of one tenant will drastically impact the safety of neighboring families, pets, and property. There have been many incidents where a fire in one townhouse unit had catastrophic consequences on neighbors who had nothing to do with the cause of the fire. It is a demonstrated fact that home fire sprinklers are a crucial, life-saving technology, since the risk of dying in a reported home fire is 85 percent lower if sprinklers are present.

Objectives:

1. Actively pursue conversations with all stakeholders about the inclusion of model code provisions for sprinkler systems in the Uniform Statewide Building Code for all townhouses.

2. Provide information and encourage legislation that mandates sprinkler systems in all townhomes.
3. Promote research and prepare an informational document that identifies other states success data, current water supply requirements, developer and builder incentives, and average costs.

Goal 4 – Statewide Community Risk Reduction Messaging. Fire causes and casualty's trends are the basis for themes of public fire and life safety messaging in localities. There is currently no identified method to create and deploy messaging for use statewide. Because of the transient nature of our citizens and visitors there is a need to provide unified messaging across the state.

Objectives:

1. The Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP) Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Coordinator will develop a process to monitor the fire cause and casualty trends utilizing the new NERIS system which will collect and report the VFIRS information. This information will be made available to associations, localities, and other governmental agencies as available or requested.
2. The VDFP CRR Coordinator will develop a fire & life safety message calendar which will be published on the VDFP CRR section webpage. Local fire agencies can utilize this webpage to find an example message and the date it will be utilized in the VDFP Newsletter. This will provide uniform and consistent messaging for use across the state. This messaging, in as many cases as possible, will reflect the messaging schedule promoted by the USFA Fire & Life Safety Communication Initiative.

Goal 5 – Lithium-Ion Battery Safety

Lithium-ion batteries are found in devices and systems that the public and first responders use or interact with. The frequency of fire and explosion incidents involving lithium-ion batteries are increasing across the commonwealth. Battery cell overheating and rupture is possible from overcharging, overheating, short circuits, manufacturing defects, or mishandling. Overheated cells can vent flammable gas. Thermal runaway in one battery will readily spread to adjacent cells. Fires in buildings involving lithium-ion batteries create a new challenge for fire suppression and containment, and the health and safety of first responders. Propagating thermal runaway events generate more severe flammability and toxicity hazards than a typical room and contents fire.

Objectives:

1. VDFP, SFMO, and the FMA will collaborate with partners and private organizations to promote current research, findings, and industry best practices in an effort to educate the public and first responders.
2. The Code and Standards Subcommittee will actively pursue code change proposals that are consistent with current research, best practices, and future model code language.

Goal 6 – Public Safety Communication Deficiencies

In new or those existing structures that are altered in a way that affects emergency responder's ability to communicate utilizing the jurisdiction's communication system(s) there must be infrastructure and specific equipment to amplify and propagate signal strength in areas identified with poor signal coverage (dead spots). Poor signals often disrupt incident command efforts, inhibit first responder coordination, miss dispatch communication, compromise emergency responder accountability, and most importantly, adversely affect occupant and first responder safety. Conversely, poorly designed, or improperly installed signal boosting equipment can interfere with radio systems outside of these buildings. The Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code contains provisions that require amplification systems and components for communications systems utilizing radio-frequency-emitting devices. The missing critical element of this regulation for emergency responder communication enhancement systems is mandating responsibility (financial) for the equipment.

In-building emergency responder radio systems are a critical life safety technology that enable fire, EMS, and police to have an effective and reliable means in which to communicate. Whether it is a major incident or an everyday routine emergency, adequate radio communication within buildings is vital to successful and safe emergency response by today's first responders. Just like in-building standpipes are owner-provided for deploying adequate firefighting water in tall buildings, adequate in-building communication should be an owner-provided and maintained responsibility. How a building is designed and constructed, the size and use of the building, or other nearby structures can affect in-building communication. Deploying a dedicated complete system fit for the purpose of emergency responders is needed to overcome this problem.

Objectives:

1. Enhance in-building emergency responder communication coverage.
2. Coordinate with local, state, and federal agencies and workgroups to develop uniform language in codes or regulations to enhance communications for public safety organizations.

Goal 7 – Virginia Dry Hydrant Program.

The installation of dry hydrants in existing water sources address a critical need for an improved rural water supply for structural and wildland fire fighting. Virginia's Aid to Localities grant program provides \$100,000 annually for the installation of new dry hydrants, as well as the repair of existing dry hydrants. The Virginia Department of Forestry is charged with administering Virginia's dry hydrant program throughout the Commonwealth.

Objectives:

1. The Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF) will develop, promote and handle the operational aspects of the Virginia dry hydrant grant program.
2. Dry hydrant placement across the Commonwealth will be targeted to ensure that the maximum distance to any firefighting water supply will be a maximum of 6 miles.



2024 Virginia Department of Fire Programs Legislative Summary

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Introduction

This summary reflects legislation tracked by the Virginia Department of Fire Programs. This information is provided as a resource for members of the fire and EMS community, agency staff, and others who wish to have a basic understanding of legislation related to fire/EMS proposed during the 2024 Virginia General Assembly. This list is not exhaustive and does not necessarily reflect each individual piece of legislation related to fire/EMS. For more detailed information, readers should consult Virginia's Legislative Information System or contact the Government Affairs Section.

Disclaimer

This document is meant to be informative of fire service-related legislation. It does not represent the opinions of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Governor of Virginia, the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, or the Department of Fire Programs. In addition, the 2024 Virginia Legislative Priorities and Issues listed in the appendix was provided by Fire and EMS stakeholder groups and was not created by VDFP staff.

Overview

The 2024 session of the Virginia General Assembly contained a significant amount of legislation that had a direct impact on the fire service. Most of this legislation was continued to 2025 or ultimately died during the 2024 General Assembly session. The Virginia Department of Fire Programs stood ready to assist stakeholders in addressing legislation, while also speaking on behalf of the Commonwealth of Virginia regarding fire service issues.

The Department of Fire Programs, in consultation with the Governor and the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, did not sponsor any agency bills in 2024. The agency plans to continue efforts to provide enhanced retirement for VDFP employees in the field and Line of Duty Death coverage in 2025.

The Department of Fire Programs also advised the General Assembly and the Office of the Governor on several other pieces of legislation. This includes legislation related to multiple new funding streams for the fire service, multiple workgroups to examine areas such as fire/EMS funding and fire/EMS integration, expansion of Aid-To-Localities, and the creation of a grant program for toxic exposures such as cancer.

Other relevant legislation to the fire service included expanding Line of Duty Death Coverage for presumptive deaths from \$25,000 to \$100,00, the continued effort to add anxiety and depressive disorders under worker's compensation for 911 telecommunicators and securing funding for the Department of Emergency Management's Logistics Support and Coordination Center.

Partners

The Department of Fire Programs (VDFP) would like to recognize partners throughout the legislative process that assisted the agency. The work of the Department of Fire Programs would not be possible without state partners including the Policy Office of the Governor, the Office of the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, the Department of Planning and Budget, the Department of Emergency Management, the Department of Health's Office of EMS, and the staff of the Virginia General Assembly.

Additionally, the assistance of various sections of the Department of Fire Programs including the Public Information Officer, Training and Operations Branch, State Fire Marshal, and the Chief Administrative Officer should be noted.

VDFP would also like to recognize stakeholder groups who assisted the agency or interacted on weekly stakeholder calls. These included the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, Virginia State Firefighters Association, Virginia Professional Firefighters Association, Virginia Fire Prevention Association, the International Association of Arson Investigators, Virginia Association of Volunteer Rescue Squads, the Association of Hazardous Materials Specialists, the Central Virginia Firefighters Association, the Virginia Fire Services Council, the Virginia Fire Services Board, and several other organizations. Individuals and departments who provided testimony from across the Commonwealth not included above are also important partners.

Legislation

Key	
Signed into Law	
Continued to 2025	
Left in 2024/Did Not Pass	

Benefits

This section contains legislation that was related to benefits or compensation for firefighters or 911 dispatchers. *This list is not all inclusive.*

Bill # and Title: HB38 Virginia Retirement System; enhanced retirement benefits for 911 dispatchers		
Patron:	Clark	Summary: Allows local governments to provide enhanced retirement benefits for hazardous duty service to full-time salaried 911 dispatchers. The bill provides that such enhanced retirement benefits apply only to service earned as a full-time salaried 911 dispatcher on or after July 1, 2025, but allows an employer, as that term is defined in relevant law, to provide such enhanced retirement benefits for service earned as a full-time salaried 911 dispatcher before July 1, 2025, in addition to service earned on or after that date. The bill has a delayed effective date of July 1, 2025.
House Vote:	N/A	
Senate Vote:	N/A	
Governor's Decision:	N/A	
Senate Cognate:	SB472	
Action:	Continued to 2025 in Appropriations: Compensation and Retirement	

Bill # and Title: HB68 Workers' compensation; post-traumatic stress disorder incurred by dispatchers.		
Patron:	Bulova	Summary: Allows dispatchers, as defined in the bill, to claim workers' compensation benefits relating to post-traumatic stress disorder under the Virginia Workers' Compensation Act. Currently, only law-enforcement officers and firefighters may claim such benefits.
House Vote:	N/A	
Senate Vote:	N/A	
Governor's Decision:	N/A	
Action:	Continued to 2025 in Labor and Commerce: #2	

Bill # and Title: HB 274 Workers' compensation; presumption of compensability of infertility for firefighters.		
Patron:	Helmer	Summary: Provides that firefighters who suffer from infertility are presumed to have developed infertility during the course and scope of employment as a firefighter in certain instances. The bill provides that such infertility is compensable under the Virginia Workers' Compensation Act if diagnosed by a medical professional and that such compensation may include medical treatment, temporary total incapacity benefits, and temporary partial incapacity benefits for a maximum period of 52 weeks from the date of diagnosis. The bill also requires each employer of firefighters to refer a firefighter seeking infertility health care services to a licensed medical professional after January 1, 2025.
House Vote:	N/A	
Senate Vote:	N/A	
Governor's Decision:	N/A	
Action:	Continued to 2025 in Appropriations: Compensation and Retirement	

Bill # and Title: HB 300 Virginia Retirement System; enhanced retirement benefits for 911 dispatchers.		
Patron:	Ballard	Summary: Allows local governments to provide enhanced retirement benefits for hazardous duty service to full-time salaried 911 dispatchers. The bill provides that such enhanced retirement benefits apply only to service earned as a full-time salaried 911 dispatcher on or after July 1, 2025, but allows an employer, as that term is defined in relevant law, to provide such enhanced retirement benefits for service earned as a full-time salaried 911 dispatcher before July 1, 2025, in addition to service earned on or after that date. The bill has a delayed effective date of July 1, 2025.
House Vote:	N/A	
Senate Vote:	N/A	
Governor's Decision:	N/A	
Senate Cognate:	SB328	
Action:	Continued to 2025 in Appropriations: Compensation and Retirement	

Bill # and Title: HB 491 Income tax, state; subtraction for volunteer firefighters and emergency medical services personnel.		
Patron:	Garrett	Summary: Provides a state income tax subtraction of \$2,000 per taxable year for bona fide volunteers who perform qualifying services, defined in the bill as volunteer firefighting and fire prevention services, emergency medical services, auxiliary police officer services, ambulance services, emergency rescue services, and all training and training-related activities required by law to perform such qualifying services.
House Vote:	N/A	
Senate Vote:	N/A	
Governor's Decision:	N/A	
Action:	Left in Finance: #1 by a vote of 5-3	

Bill # and Title: HB 631 Virginia Law Officers' Retirement System; extends membership to emergency dispatchers.		
Patron:	Cherry	Summary: Extends membership in the Virginia Law Officers' Retirement System (VaLORS) to emergency dispatchers who are employed by the Department of State Police and agencies whose law-enforcement officers are eligible for membership in VaLORS. The bill has a delayed effective date of July 1, 2025, and provides that such membership would apply only to service earned on or after July 1, 2025.
House Vote:	N/A	
Senate Vote:	N/A	
Governor's Decision:	N/A	
Action:	Continued to 2025 in Appropriations: Compensation and Retirement	

Bill # and Title: HB 1226 Workers' compensation benefits; post-traumatic stress disorder incurred by firefighters, etc.		
Patron:	Rasoul	Summary: Removes the provision in the Virginia Workers' Compensation Act that benefits for post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety disorder, or depressive disorder incurred by law-enforcement officers and firefighters acting in the line of duty shall provide for a maximum of 52 weeks from the date of diagnosis.
House Vote:	N/A	
Senate Vote:	N/A	
Governor's Decision:	N/A	
Senate Cognate:	SB593	
Action:	Continued to 2025 in Appropriations: Compensation and Retirement	

Bill # and Title: HB 1292 Income tax, state; subtraction for professional firefighter pension.		
Patron:	Askew	Summary: Establishes an income tax subtraction for up to \$20,000 of firefighter benefits in taxable year 2024, up to \$30,000 in taxable year 2025, and up to \$40,000 in taxable year 2026 and each year thereafter. The bill defines firefighter benefits to include retirement income related to firefighting services and benefits paid to the surviving spouse of a firefighter whose death occurred in the line of duty.
House Vote:	N/A	
Senate Vote:	N/A	
Governor's Decision:	N/A	
Senate Cognate:	SB61	
Action:	Continued to 2025 in Finance: #1	

Bill # and Title: SB 114 Local tax credits; emergency services providers..		
Patron:	Peake	Summary: Enables localities to by ordinance provide a credit against taxes and fees imposed by the locality to an individual who provides approved emergency services in the locality. As defined in the bill, "approved emergency services" includes professional or volunteer local law enforcement or first-responders who provide emergency services to a nonprofit organization or to the locality. The bill specifies that the credit shall not be applied against any property taxes or payments in lieu of property taxes but otherwise gives localities discretion to determine which taxes or fees are permissible uses of the credit. Under current law, localities may only provide such credit to volunteer first-responders.
House Vote:	N/A	
Senate Vote:	N/A	
Governor's Decision:	N/A	
Action:	Failed to Report in Finance and Appropriations by a vote of 7-7	

Funding

This section contains legislation that was related to funding of fire and EMS. *This list is not all inclusive.*

Bill # and Title: HB 147 Terrorism hoax incident, etc.; reimbursement of expenses incurred to localities.		
Patron:	Reid	Summary: Allows a locality that has an ordinance requiring any person over 18 years of age convicted of false emergency communication to emergency personnel to reimburse such locality at the time of sentencing or in a separate civil action to bill a flat fee of \$2,500 or a minute-by-minute accounting of actual costs incurred. The bill also allows a locality that has an ordinance requiring any person under 18 years of age convicted of false emergency communication to emergency personnel to reimburse such locality at the time of sentencing or in a separate civil action to bill a flat fee of \$2,500 or a minute-by-minute accounting of actual costs incurred, not to exceed \$2,500. Current law allows a flat fee of \$250 or a minute-by-minute accounting of actual costs incurred, in an amount not to exceed \$2,500.
House Vote:	N/A	
Senate Vote:	N/A	
Governor's Decision:	N/A	
Action:	Left in Courts of Justice	

Bill # and Title: HB 304 Virginia Firefighting Facilities Grant Program; established report.		
Patron:	Ballard	Summary: Establishes the Virginia Firefighting Facilities Grant Program for the purpose of awarding grants on a first-come, first-served basis to localities for the purpose of building and maintaining their firefighting facilities. The amount of such grants shall be as provided in the appropriation act. The Program shall be administered by the Department of Fire Programs. The Department shall develop guidelines for the Program, which shall (i) emphasize providing grants to localities that are cost burdened in the provision of firefighting services and (ii) require remedying facilities that do not meet minimum standards established by law.
House Vote:	N/A	
Senate Vote:	N/A	
Governor's Decision:	N/A	
Action:	Left in General Laws by a vote of 3-5	

Bill # and Title: HB 489 Fire Programs Fund; increases annual assessment used to fund.		
Patron:	Garrett	Summary: Provides that the portion of the Fire Programs Fund allocated to localities may be used for the additional purposes of (i) constructing, improving, or expanding fire station facilities, (ii) providing mental health resources, or (iii) hiring additional fire personnel and funding recruitment and retention programs. The bill also prohibits such funds from being used, except as provided, for the purposes of investments, operating expenses, debt repayment, taxes, or fees.
House Vote:	99-0	
Senate Vote:	N/A	
Governor's Decision:	N/A	
Action:	Continued to 2025 in Senate Finance and Appropriations	

Bill # and Title: HB 494 Virginia Fire and EMS Safety Loan Fund; created.		
Patron:	Garrett	Summary: Creates the Virginia Fire and EMS Safety Loan Fund, to be administered by the Virginia Resources Authority. Under the bill, money in the Fund would be used exclusively for the financing of purchases by local fire and EMS services of at least \$50,000 (i) for capital projects to construct or modernize facilities that house firefighting equipment or vehicles or ambulance or rescue vehicles; (ii) of firefighting apparatus, ambulances, or rescue vehicles; and (iii) of protective, accessory, or communication equipment for firefighting or EMS services. The bill also establishes the Joint Fire and EMS Loan Board, which shall be responsible for directing the distribution of loans from the Fund, with an emphasis on localities in need of financing assistance to meet minimum standards.
House Vote:	N/A	
Senate Vote:	N/A	
Governor's Decision:	N/A	
Action:	Left in Appropriations: Transportation and Public Safety by a vote of 7-1	

Bill # and Title: HB 852 Local government ordinances related to fire departments; billing on behalf of volunteer fire depts.		
Patron:	Williams	Summary: Provides that the governing body of any county, city, or town in which a fire department or fire company is established may make such ordinances in relation to the powers and duties of such fire departments or fire companies as it deems proper, including billing on behalf of volunteer fire departments for the provision of emergency medical services.
House Vote:	99-0	
Senate Vote:	40-0	
Governor's Decision:	Amend and Sign	
Action:	The governing body of a locality may bill on behalf of volunteer fire departments for the support of a licensed emergency medical service agency. This is not expected to have a direct impact on the Department of Fire Programs.	

Bill # and Title: HB 1043 Virginia Firefighting Personnel and Equipment Grant Program; established, report.		
Patron:	Sickles	<p>Summary: establishes the Virginia Firefighting Personnel and Equipment Grant Program for the purpose of providing grants to localities to hire additional firefighters and to improve their firefighting and emergency medical services. The Department of Fire Programs shall administer the Program and two types of grants shall be made from the Program. The first shall provide grants to localities to increase the number of firefighters. Such grants shall be made for up to three years and shall be used by localities for programs to (i) hire new, additional full-time firefighters; (ii) convert part-time or volunteer firefighters to full-time firefighters; or (iii) recruit and retain volunteer firefighters. The other type of grant shall be provided to localities for improving firefighting and emergency medical services. Authorized uses of grant funds include acquiring firefighting and emergency medical services vehicles and equipment and modifying facilities. For both grants, the funds shall not be used to supplant any funds currently provided by the Commonwealth or by the locality and shall be used to increase the total amount of funds available for the provision of firefighting or emergency medical services.</p> <p>The Department shall report annually, beginning November 1, 2025, to the Governor and the General Assembly information regarding a list of grants, the amount of each approved grant, information on the performance assessment system that the bill directs the Department to create, an evaluation of each grant based on such system, and any other criteria deemed relevant by the Department.</p>
House Vote:	N/A	
Senate Vote:	N/A	
Governor’s Decision:	N/A	
Senate Cognate:	SB648	
Action:	Left in Appropriations: Transportation and Public Safety by a vote of 8-0	

Fire Code/Life Safety

This section contains legislation that was related to the Statewide Fire Prevention Code (SFPC), Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC), or other fire/life safety legislation. *This list is not all inclusive.*

Bill # and Title: HB 66 Public schools; fire drills, timing and frequency.		
Patron:	Campbell	Summary: Requires every public school to hold fire drills during the school session in accordance with the requirements of the Statewide Fire Prevention Code. Current law requires such fire drills to be conducted at least twice during the first 20 school days of each school session and at least twice more during the remainder of the school session.
House Vote:	98-0	
Senate Vote:	39-0	
Conference:	House Version Agreed to	
Governor's Decision:	Signed	
Action:	Public schools will conduct fire drills in accordance with the Statewide Fire Prevention Code. Fire drills shall be conducted monthly in accordance with the SFPC.	

Bill # and Title: HB 364 Local government; water-filled fire sprinkler systems.		
Patron:	Martinez	Summary: Permits a locality to allow the installation of automatic water-filled or wet-pipe fire sprinkler systems in new townhome construction. The bill provides that such ordinance shall require the installation be completed in compliance with standards, requirements, and specifications for the installation of an automatic water-filled or wet-pipe fire sprinkler system as prescribed by the National Fire Protection Association's NFPA 13, Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems. An automatic water-filled or wet-pipe fire sprinkler system shall not be required when additions or alterations are made to existing townhomes that do not have an automatic residential fire sprinkler system installed.
House Vote:	N/A	
Senate Vote:	N/A	
Governor's Decision:	N/A	
Senate Cognate:	SB524	
Action:	Left in General Laws: Housing/Consumer Protection by a vote of 6-0	

Bill # and Title: HB 484 Consumer fireworks; authorizes use, penalties.		
Patron:	Garrett	Summary: uthorizes the use of consumer fireworks in the Commonwealth and distinguishes by definition consumer fireworks from display fireworks and permissible fireworks. The bill defines "consumer fireworks" as small fireworks devices (i) containing restricted amounts of pyrotechnic composition designed primarily to produce visible or audible effects by combustion and (ii) complying with certain federal regulations regarding composition and labeling. The bill also provides that the storage and transportation of consumer fireworks are to be considered the same hazard class as the storage and transportation of 1.4G explosives under the Statewide Fire Prevention Code (SFPC) and Uniform Statewide Building Code. The bill excludes from the provisions of the SFPC, unless prohibited by a local ordinance, (a) the sale of permissible or consumer fireworks; (b) any person using, igniting, or exploding permissible or consumer fireworks on residential or agricultural property with the consent of the owner of such property; or (c) such permissible or consumer fireworks when they are being transported from a locality where they were legally obtained to a locality where they are legally permitted. Current law only excludes sale of permissible fireworks or the use of such fireworks on private property. The bill also directs 10 percent of the sales and use tax revenue generated by the local sales and tax use on the sale of consumer or permissible fireworks to be allocated to a special fund used solely for providing funding for first responders, as defined in the bill. The bill contains technical amendments.
House Vote:	N/A	
Senate Vote:	N/A	
Governor's Decision:	N/A	
Action:	Left in General Laws: Housing/Consumer Protection by a vote of 2-6	

Bill # and Title: HB 930 Zoning ordinances; adequate public facilities.		
Patron:	Earley	Summary: Allows a locality to determine the timing of development by considering the adequacy of public facilities when making zoning decisions. The bill provides that a locality that makes a determination of inadequate facilities may reject or defer a rezoning application based solely on that determination.
House Vote:	N/A	
Senate Vote:	N/A	
Governor's Decision:	N/A	
Action:	Left in Counties, Cities, and Towns: #2	

Bill # and Title: HB 1425 Virginia Passenger Rail Authority; exempts railway tunnels and bridges from Building Code.		
Patron:	Austin	Summary: Exempts railway tunnels and bridges owned by the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRRA) from the Uniform Statewide Building Code and the Statewide Fire Prevention Code Act. The bill requires the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority to report annually to the State Fire Marshal on the maintenance and operability of installed fire protection and detection systems in its railway tunnels and bridges.
House Vote:	100-0	
Senate Vote:	40-0	
Governor's Decision:	Signed	
Action:	This bill exempts VPRRA owned tunnels and bridges from the SFPC and USBC. This exemption already exists for Virginia Department of Transportation owned bridges and tunnels.	

Bill # and Title: SB 195 Uniform Statewide Building Code; Board of HCD to convene advisory group to evaluate.		
Patron:	VanValkenburg	Summary: Directs the Board of Housing and Community Development (the Board) to convene a stakeholder advisory group including fire code officials to evaluate and recommend revisions to the Uniform Statewide Building Code to permit Group R-2 occupancies to be served by a single exit, provided that the building has not more than six stories above grade plane. The bill requires the stakeholder advisory group to submit its findings and recommendations to the Board and to the Chairmen of the House Committee on General Laws and the Senate Committee on General Laws and Technology no later than December 1, 2024.
House Vote:	96-2	
Senate Vote:	40-0	
Governor's Decision:	Signed	
House Cognate:	HB368	
Action:	The Board of Housing and Community Development must convene a stakeholder advisory group, which includes fire code officials, to evaluate and recommend revisions related to R-2 occupancies and single stairwells.	

Workgroup/Study

This section contains legislation that created a workgroup or ordered a preexisting entity to study/review an item related to fire/EMS. *This list is not all inclusive.*

Bill # and Title: HB 133 Local gov't; ongoing health care for employees exposed to toxic materials.		
Patron:	Convirs-Fowler	Summary: Directs the Department of Fire Programs to convene a work group to identify options to assist local government employee responders who were exposed to toxic materials when responding to emergencies. The bill directs the work group to assess eligibility for funding, qualifying emergencies, and other criteria and directs the work group to submit a report to the General Assembly no later than November 1, 2024.
House Vote:	98-0	
Senate Vote:	40-0	
Governor's Decision:	Signed	
Senate Cognate:	SB650	
Action:	The Department of Fire Programs will convene a workgroup of stakeholders identified in the legislation, as well as other relevant to the issue, to comply with the provisions of the bill.	

Bill # and Title: HB 492 Fire and emergency medical services apparatuses and equipment; procurement, report.		
Patron:	Garrett	Summary: Directs the Department of Fire Programs, the Department of Health's Office of Emergency Medical Services, and the Department of General Services to establish a work group to prepare statewide contract language for the procurement of fire and emergency medical services apparatuses and equipment. The bill requires the Department of Fire Programs to report the work group's findings and recommendations to the Virginia Fire Services Board and State EMS Advisory Board on or before October 1, 2024, and to make such report available to the Chairmen of the House Committee on General Laws and the Senate Committee on General Laws and Technology, upon request.
House Vote:	N/A	
Senate Vote:	N/A	
Governor's Decision:	N/A	
Action:	Continued to 2025 in Rules	

Bill # and Title: HB 1049 Firefighters and emergency medical services personnel; recruitment and professional development.		
Patron:	Batten	Summary: Requires the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, to convene a work group to (i) study the recruitment and professional development of firefighters and emergency medical services personnel, (ii) make recommendations to ensure the uniformity of training for firefighters and emergency medical services personnel, and (iii) examine whether the state regulation of firefighters and emergency medical services personnel should be consolidated under a single secretariat and if a new secretariat should be created to oversee such regulation. The bill requires the work group to submit a report to the relevant General Assembly committees by November 1, 2024.
House Vote:	N/A	
Senate Vote:	N/A	
Governor's Decision:	N/A	
Action:	Continued to 2025 in Rules with amendments	

Bill # and Title: HB 1245 Volunteer firefighters; studying recruitment and development.		
Patron:	Zehr	Summary: Directs the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security to establish a work group to study the recruitment and development of volunteer firefighters with a specific focus on providing training to volunteer fire departments, volunteer fire companies, and volunteer firefighters in a cost-efficient and effective manner and to identify and recommend eliminating any barriers to the recruitment and development of volunteer firefighters.
House Vote:	N/A	
Senate Vote:	N/A	
Governor's Decision:	N/A	
Action:	Left in Rules by a vote of 4-2	

Bill # and Title: HB 1309 St. Emerg. Medical Services Advisory Bd.; guidelines for provision of emerg. trtmt. of police dogs.		
Patron:	Campbell	Summary: Requires the State Emergency Medical Services Advisory Board, in consultation with the State Veterinarian, to develop guidelines and guidance for the provision of emergency treatment of fire, police, and search and rescue dogs injured in the line of duty and the transportation of such dogs by an emergency medical services vehicle to a veterinary care facility equipped to provide emergency treatment to such dog.
House Vote:	98-0	
Senate Vote:	40-0	
Governor's Decision:	Signed	
Action:	The State Emergency Medical Services Advisory Board will develop guidance for emergency treatment of dogs injured in the line of duty. This is not expected to have a direct impact on the Department of Fire Programs.	

Other

This section contains legislation that was related to fire/EMS but could not be categorized into an independent category. *This list is not all inclusive.*

Bill # and Title: HB 15 Warning light units, certain; increases number of units person may equip on one vehicle, etc.		
Patron:	McNamara	Summary: Increases from two to four the number of flashing or steady-burning red or red and white combination warning light units with which a member of a fire department, volunteer fire company, or volunteer emergency medical services agency and any police chaplain may equip one vehicle owned by him.
House Vote:	98-0	
Senate Vote:	40-0	
Governor's Decision:	Signed	
Senate Cognate:	SB150	
Action:	Volunteer firefighters, EMS, and police chaplains can increase the number of light units on one vehicle. This is not expected to have a direct impact on the Department of Fire Programs.	

Bill # and Title: HB 49 Window tint; emergency vehicles.		
Patron:	Taylor	Summary: Authorizes window tinting on all emergency medical services vehicles and vehicles used to fight fire, including publicly owned state forest warden vehicles. Current law authorizes tinting on the rear and rear side windows of emergency medical services vehicles used to transport patients.
House Vote:	N/A	
Senate Vote:	N/A	
Governor's Decision:	N/A	
Action:	Left in Transportation: Highway Safety and Policy by a vote of 5-3	

Bill # and Title: HB 149 Employee protections; medicinal use of cannabis oil.		
Patron:	Helmer	Summary: Amends the provision that prohibits an employer from discriminating against an employee for such employee's lawful use of medical cannabis oil, with certain exceptions, by specifying that such use must conform to the laws of the Commonwealth and by including the employees, other than law-enforcement officers, of the Commonwealth and other public bodies in such protections.
House Vote:	82-17	
Senate Vote:	26-13	
Governor's Decision:	Signed	
Action:	This bill prevents employers from discriminating against employees for the use of cannabis oil as defined in the code. This will apply to public safety agencies excluding those defined as law enforcement. Of note, fire marshals are not considered law enforcement.	

Bill # and Title: HB 163 Higher educational institutions, public; student identification cards, emergency services website.		
Patron:	Cole	Summary: Requires each public institution of higher education to maintain and annually update as necessary to ensure accuracy and currency a website page that includes telephone numbers for certain emergency services enumerated in the bill and to include (i) the URL of such website page on each new digital student identification card and any replacement digital student identification card issued by the institution beginning with the 2024-2025 academic year and (ii) the URL of or a QR Code that directs to such website page on each new physical student identification card and any replacement physical student identification card issued by the institution beginning with the 2024-2025 academic year.
House Vote:	100-0	
Senate Vote:	40-0	
Governor's Decision:	Signed	
Action:	This bill requires public institutions of higher education to include and annually update a website page that lists telephone numbers for local law enforcement, fire departments, and emergency medical services.	

Bill # and Title: HB 933 Alzheimer's disease and dementia; training for dispatchers, firefighters, etc.		
Patron:	LeVere Bolling	Summary: Requires certain agencies in the Commonwealth to develop curricula and provide training related to Alzheimer's disease and dementia to dispatchers employed by or in any local or state government agency, firefighters, and emergency medical services personnel. This bill is a recommendation of the Virginia Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Commission and the Commonwealth Council on Aging.
House Vote:	98-0	
Senate Vote:	40-0	
Governor's Decision:	Signed	
Action:	<p>This bill requires that fire departments and emergency medical services agencies provide training on Alzheimer's disease and dementia as provided in the bill, including</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Techniques for respectful and effective communication2. Techniques for addressing the behavioral symptoms, including alternatives to physical restraint3. Protocols for identifying and reporting incidents of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of individuals to adult protective services4. Protocols for contacting caregivers when an individual is found wandering or during an emergency or crisis situation5. A reference list of local resources available and a reference list of local and national organizations that assist law-enforcement personnel with locating missing and wandering individuals <p>The Department of Fire Programs must provide appropriate continuing education.</p>	

Appendix

1. Virginia LIS Link
<https://lis.virginia.gov/lis.htm>
2. 2024 Virginia Legislative Priorities and Issues
3. 2024 VDFP “Bills to Watch”

Virginia Fire Services Board

Full Board Meeting

Tuesday, June 11, 2024

Virginia Department of Fire Programs

1005 Technology Park Drive, Glen Allen, VA 23059

2:00 PM

AGENDA

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE**
- 3. ROLL CALL**
- 4. SIGN-IN SHEETS FOR GUESTS**
- 5. CHANGES IN AGENDA**
- 6. PUBLIC COMMENT**
- 7. CONSENT AGENDA**
 - a. Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting (February 2024)
- 8. REPORT FROM VDFP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**
- 9. REPORT FROM THE FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL COMMITTEE**
- 10. REPORT FROM THE LIVE FIRE TRAINING STRUCTURE COMMITTEE**
- 11. REPORT FROM THE FIRE EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMITTEE**
- 12. REPORT FROM THE ADMINISTRATION, POLICY, AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**
- 13. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD**
- 14. FULL BOARD BUSINESS**
 - a. Unfinished Business
 - i. Report from the VFSB Board Clerk
 - ii. Election of Chair Pro-Tem
 - iii. Report from the Nomination Committee

Virginia Fire Services Board

Full Board Meeting

Tuesday, June 11, 2024

Virginia Department of Fire Programs

1005 Technology Park Drive, Glen Allen, VA 23059

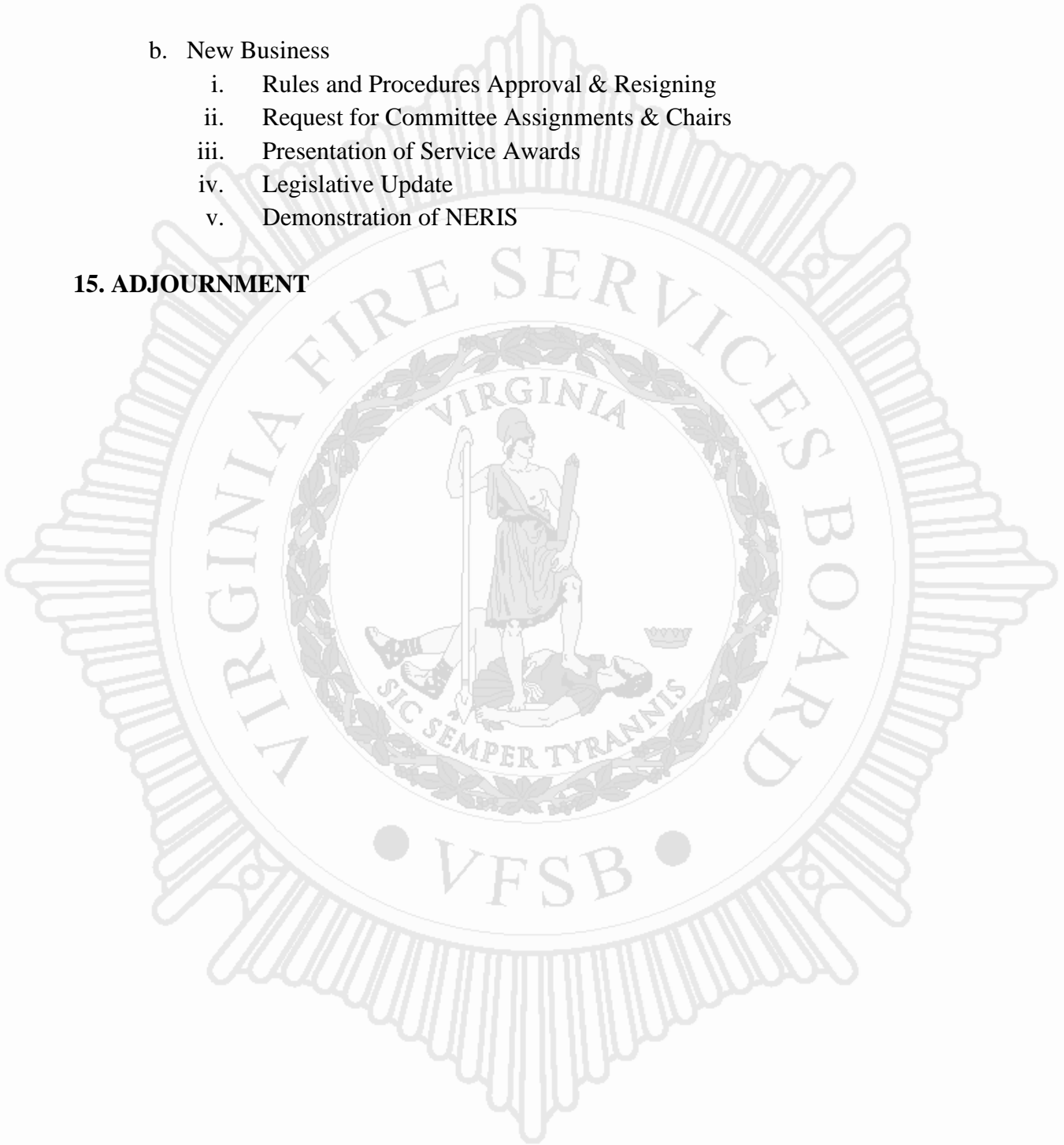
2:00 PM

iv. Election of Officers

b. New Business

- i. Rules and Procedures Approval & Resigning
- ii. Request for Committee Assignments & Chairs
- iii. Presentation of Service Awards
- iv. Legislative Update
- v. Demonstration of NERIS

15. ADJOURNMENT



Virginia Fire Services Board

Administration, Policy, and Finance Committee

Tuesday, June 11, 2024

Virginia Department of Fire Programs

1005 Technology Park Drive, Glen Allen, VA 23059

1:00 PM

AGENDA

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE**
- 3. ROLL CALL**
- 4. SIGN-IN SHEETS FOR GUESTS**
- 5. CHANGES IN AGENDA**
- 6. PUBLIC COMMENT**
- 7. CONSENT AGENDA**
 - a. Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting (February 2024)
- 8. REPORT FROM VDFP ADMINISTRATION**
- 9. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIR**
- 10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
 - a. Town of Lebanon Fire Study
- 11. NEW BUSINESS**
 - a. VFSB Lifetime Achievement Award
 - b. Patrick County Fire and EMS Study Request
- 12. ADJOURNMENT**

Virginia Fire Services Board

Fire Education and Training Committee

Tuesday, June 11, 2024

Virginia Department of Fire Programs

1005 Technology Park Drive, Glen Allen, VA 23059

11:00 AM

AGENDA

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE**
- 3. ROLL CALL**
- 4. SIGN-IN SHEETS FOR GUESTS**
- 5. CHANGES IN AGENDA**
- 6. PUBLIC COMMENT**
- 7. CONSENT AGENDA**
 - a. Approval of the minutes of the previous meetings (February 2024)
- 8. REPORT FROM THE VDFP CHIEF OF TRAINING**
- 9. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIR**
- 10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
 - a. OSHA Emergency Response Proposed Standard
- 11. NEW BUSINESS**
 - a. Virginia Five Year Strategic Training Plan
 - b. “Smoke Buildings” Use in Fire Training
- 12. ADJOURNMENT**

Virginia Fire Services Board

Fire Prevention and Control Committee

Tuesday, June 11, 2024

Virginia Department of Fire Programs

1005 Technology Park Drive, Glen Allen, VA 23059

10:00 AM

AGENDA

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE**
- 3. ROLL CALL**
- 4. SIGN-IN SHEETS FOR GUESTS**
- 5. CHANGES IN AGENDA**
- 6. PUBLIC COMMENT**
- 7. CONSENT AGENDA**
 - a. Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting (February 2024)**
- 8. REPORT FROM THE VIRGINIA STATE FIRE MARSHAL**
- 9. CODES AND STANDARDS WORKGROUP UPDATES**
- 10. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIR**
- 11. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
 - a. Fire Prevention and Control Plan**
 - b. BHCD/VFSB MOU Update**
- 12. NEW BUSINESS**
- 13. ADJOURNMENT**

FY-2024 Fire Programs Fund Aid to Localities Payments

Pay Cycle	Date Pymt. Requested	No. of Localities	% of Localities	Amount	% of Funds
1	9/22/2023	107	33.2%	\$15,606,285	38.5%
2	12/22/2023	69	21.4%	\$8,972,480	22.1%
3	3/15/2024	25	7.8%	\$3,490,771	8.6%
4	6/21/2024	110	34.2%	\$12,296,294	30.3%
4.2	6/21/2024	5	1.6%	\$75,000	0.2%
Funds Released		316	98.1%	\$40,440,830	99.8%
Total Funds Not Released		6	1.9%	\$90,000	0.2%
ATL Total		322	100.0%	\$40,530,830	100.0%

ATL Forfeitures FY 2024

1	353	Dendron (Town)	\$15,000
2	381	Hamilton (Town)	\$15,000
3	410	Middleburg (Town)	\$15,000
4	439	Quantico (Town)	\$15,000
5	449	Saltville (Town)	\$15,000
6	452	Scottsville (Town)	\$15,000
		Total	\$90,000

FY2024 Live Fire Structural Budget:

Carried forward Balance from FY23	4,560,417
FY24 Annual Appropriation	975,000
VFIRS FY23 Carryover	8,900
Total FY 24 Funding	5,544,317

	Total Project Awarded	Prior Year Payments	FY24 Estimated Payments	FY24 Actual Payments	Obligation Balance
<u>Burn Building Construction Projects</u>					
FLUVANNA, County FY18	480,000	112,500	0		367,500
HANOVER County FY20	450,000	112,500	337,500	337,500	0
SUFFOLK County FY21	480,000		112,500		480,000
GOOCHLAND County FY23	480,000		112,500		480,000
RICHMOND City FY23	480,000		0		480,000
HALIFAX County FY24	480,000		0		480,000
HOPEWELL City FY24	480,000		0	-	480,000
	<u>3,330,000</u>	<u>225,000</u>	<u>562,500</u>	<u>337,500</u>	<u>2,767,500</u>
<u>Burn Building Renovation / Repair Projects</u>					
Lynchburg City (repair) FY22	38,849		38,849	38,849	0
Virginia Beach City (repair) FY22	34,549		34,549	34,549	0
Buckingham County (repair) FY22	8,820		8,820	8,820	0
Roanoke City (repair) FY23	78,909		78,909	78,909	0
Wise Town (repair) FY24	12,800		12,800	12,800	0
Chilhowie Town (repair) FY23	17,800		17,800		17,800
Pulaski Town (repair) FY24	28,588		0		28,588
Farmville Town (repair) FY24	25,000		0		25,000
VDFP MBT (Renovation) FY24	438,986		0		438,986
	<u>684,301</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>191,727</u>	<u>173,927</u>	<u>510,374</u>
<u>Impingement Project estimated Budget over 5yrs</u>					
<u>(Repair-Thermal Lining FY22) \$732,284 ea yr</u>	<u>582,284</u>				<u>582,284</u>
Winchester City (renovation) FY24 award	150,000		150,000	150,000	0
	<u>732,284</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>150,000</u>	<u>150,000</u>	<u>582,284</u>
<u>Regional Fire Services Training Facilities Projects</u>					
Richmond City FY22	50,000		50,000		50,000
Rockingham County FY22	50,000		50,000	50,000	-
King and Queen County FY24	50,000		0	-	50,000
	<u>150,000</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>100,000</u>	<u>50,000</u>	<u>100,000</u>
<u>DFP BBldg Supt - A/E Contract</u>					
DFP BBldg - Inspections A/E Contract	525,000	-	250,000	45,205	479,795
DFP BBldg - Consulting	75,000		75,000	49,004	25,996
DFP (DIRECT) BBldg - Mobile Burn Cells	0	-	0	-	-
	<u>600,000</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>325,000</u>	<u>94,209</u>	<u>505,791</u>
NEW Construction Projects	3,330,000	225,000	562,500	337,500	2,767,500
RENOV / REPAIR Projects	684,301	0	191,727	173,927	510,374
Impingement Project (Repair-Thermal Lining)	732,284	0	150,000	150,000	582,284
RFSTG Projects	150,000	0	100,000	50,000	100,000
DFP <u>direct</u> BBldg Support	600,000	0	325,000	94,209	505,791
Total Multi-Year Awards	<u>5,496,585</u>	<u>225,000</u>	<u>1,329,227</u>	<u>805,636</u>	<u>4,465,949</u>

Estimate Cash on hand 5/20/24 4,738,681

Unobligated 272,732

FY2025 Proposed Live Fire Structural Budget:

Carried forward Balance from FY24	4,738,681
FY25 Annual Appropriation	975,000
VFIRS FY24 Carryover	19,400
Total FY 25 Funding	5,733,081

	Total Project Awarded	Prior Year Payments	FY25 Estimated Payments	FY25 Actual Payments	Obligation Balance
<u>Burn Building Construction Projects</u>					
FLUVANNA, County FY18	480,000	112,500	0		367,500
SUFFOLK County FY21	480,000		240,000		480,000
GOOCHLAND County FY23	480,000		480,000		480,000
RICHMOND City FY23	480,000		112,500		480,000
HALIFAX County FY24	480,000		112,500		480,000
HOPEWELL City FY24	480,000		0	-	480,000
	<u>2,880,000</u>	<u>112,500</u>	<u>945,000</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2,767,500</u>
<u>Burn Building Renovation / Repair Projects</u>					
Chilhowie Town (repair) FY23	17,800		17,800		17,800
Pulaski Town (repair) FY24	28,588		28,588		28,588
Farmville Town (repair) FY24	25,000		25,000		25,000
VDFP MBT (Renovation) FY24	438,986		438,986		438,986
	<u>510,374</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>510,374</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>510,374</u>
<u>Impingement Project estimated Budget over 5yrs</u>					
<u>(Repair-Thermal Lining FY22) \$732,284 ea yr</u>	<u>732,284</u>				<u>732,284</u>
	<u>732,284</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>732,284</u>
<u>Regional Fire Services Training Facilities Projects</u>					
Richmond City FY22	50,000		50,000		50,000
King and Queen County FY24	50,000		50,000	-	50,000
	<u>100,000</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>100,000</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>100,000</u>
<u>DFP BBldg Supt - A/E Contract</u>					
DFP BBldg - 5 Year Inspections A/E Contract	555,000	45,205	250,000		509,795
DFP BBldg - Consulting	75,000	-	75,000		75,000
DFP (DIRECT) BBldg - Mobile Burn Cells	0	-	0	-	-
	<u>630,000</u>	<u>45,205</u>	<u>325,000</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>584,795</u>
NEW Construction Projects	2,880,000	112,500	945,000	0	2,767,500
RENOV / REPAIR Projects	510,374	0	510,374	0	510,374
Impingement Project (Repair-Thermal Lining)	732,284	0	0	0	732,284
RFSTG Projects	100,000	0	100,000	0	100,000
DFP direct BBldg Support	630,000	45,205	325,000	0	584,795
Total Multi-Year Awards	<u>4,852,658</u>	<u>157,705</u>	<u>1,880,374</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4,694,953</u>

Estimate Cash on hand 5/20/24 5,733,081

Unobligated 1,038,127



Virginia Department of Fire Programs Government Affairs

June 2024 Virginia Fire Services Board Meeting Schedule

VFSB Schedule

- **Tuesday, June 11, 2024**
 - **10:00 AM** – Fire Prevention and Control Committee
 - **11:00:AM** – Fire Education and Training Committee
 - **1:00 PM** – Administration, Policy, and Finance Committee
 - **2:00 PM** – Full Board

Town of Lebanon

FIRE STUDY

In consultation with the Virginia Department of Fire Programs.



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STUDY TEAM

Virginia Fire Services Board

Ben Reedy

Insurance Industry

Virginia Department of Fire Programs

Chad Stanley

Division Chief 4

Ken Brown

Coordinator of Community Risk Reduction

Spencer Willett

Government Affairs Manager

The group above is herein after referred to as “Study Team.”

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Virginia Fire Services Board would like to extend thanks to the following organizations and individuals for their contribution to this study:

Russell County Board of Supervisors

Drew Shortt, Lebanon Town Manager

Lebanon Town Council

Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department

Lonzo Lester, County Administrator

Chief John McCoy, Lebanon Vol. Fire Dept.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report documents the findings and recommendations for the Town of Lebanon Fire Study. This study and the information contained herein should not be construed as legal advice or as binding recommendations for the Town of Lebanon. This report provides guidance to the Lebanon Town Council, the Town Manager, its fire department, and other stakeholders in the community regarding public safety. The town should strive to meet and/or exceed the recommendations contained in this report.

This study was requested by a resolution of the Lebanon Town Council to analyze the following working areas which include:

- Organization
- Budget and Administration
- Training
- Delivery of Services
- Fleet Design and Management (Equipment/Apparatus)

The study was conducted by the Virginia Fire Services Board in partnership with the Virginia Department of Fire Programs. The Virginia Department of Health's Office of EMS was not included in the study considering the Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department is not a licensed EMS agency. The above referenced working areas served as a guide for the study team to identify issues, evaluate current fire operations, and make recommendations to improve the service of the volunteer fire department. Of note, Russell County was not a formal member of the study requested by the Town of Lebanon but provided information as requested by the study team.

The Virginia Fire Services Board, as well as the Department of Fire Programs, apologize for the delay in the production of this report. The study team noted that many of the original issues identified in the original request for the study were remedied or in the process of being addressed during the site visit. The Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department presented a professional organization that was focused on improving resources, training, and other areas for the betterment of their response district. The recommendations contained in this report are areas for possible improvement as the department and the Town of Lebanon look towards the future.

The study team recommends that the Town of Lebanon, in partnership with the Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department, conduct a community risk assessment. A community risk assessment offers valuable insight into the response needs of the community, target hazards, response capabilities, and priorities for emergency response. This assessment can offer a roadmap for many of the other recommendations in the report. As a component of the assessment, the fire chief should also assess the status of the fleet of the Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department. Utilizing data from both assessments, the fire chief should draft and submit a report on the need for an aerial device in the Town of Lebanon.

Firefighter training is an important component of any fire department. The study team was impressed by the training program and information presented during the site visit. The team recommends that training programs be formalized in writing for each position type, specifically interior firefighters and personnel who operate department owned or operated vehicles. The

Town of Lebanon could also work with Russell County and other localities in the region to create a regional fire training center utilizing grant funds. This would address the significant distance from Lebanon to regional training sites.

The Town Manager should include the fire department in the capital improvement plan, and the Fire Chief should work to create a capital improvement plan related to apparatus, facilities, equipment, and any other large scale funding needs. This improvement plan is a necessity with rising costs of said items for a relatively small locality such as Lebanon. In addition to the capital improvement plan, a strategic plan should be developed. The Fire Chief should work with members of the Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department to identify goals for the department, the Town Manager with the Lebanon Town Council and Mayor, and both with members of the community to formulate the Town of Lebanon Fire Protection Strategic Plan.

Although the department did not report issues with membership, the study team recommends that recruitment and retention be improved. National and state data show that volunteerism is in decline and suggests greater recruitment and retention initiatives are needed. The Fire Chief and the town should work together to review fire department culture, establish a recruitment and retention plan, and incentivize joining the Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department.

Communication should be improved between the fire department and town leadership. The Fire Chief and Town Manager should meet more frequently, and the department should annually host town leadership to improve working relationships. The department and the town should also establish written procedures for budgeting and a means for the fire chief to provide written reports on the actions of the department.

The fire department should formalize operations, training, and other areas in standard operating procedures and/or guidelines (SOP/SOG). These SOPs/SOGs should ensure the safety of the public and the firefighters. Specific areas to review could include training requirements, drivers training, expectations on emergency incidents, etc. The study team also strongly encourages the department to report fire incidents to VFIRS and NFIRS so that data can be used to better illustrate the needs of the fire service nationally, as well as in the Commonwealth of Virginia. This data is also key in many federal and private grant applications.

Both the Lebanon Town Council and the Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department are encouraged to work together to find sustainable and appropriate funding and support for fire suppression in the Town of Lebanon.

METHODOLOGY

The following is an overview of the study process:

PHASE I: INITIATE PROJECT

Objectives: Initiation of Study

To initiate the study, the Lebanon Town Manager sent a Resolution, on behalf of the Town Council, to the Virginia Fire Services Board requesting a review of the fire department in the town (Reference Appendix A).

The town requested the following areas of concentration:

- Organization
- Budget and Administration
- Training
- Delivery of Services
- Fleet Design and Management (Equipment/Apparatus)

A study team was convened and the study team began by reviewing data submitted by the fire department and the town, including the self-assessment questionnaire. The team also began collecting and reviewing existing data, memorandums of understanding and relevant policies and procedures.

As part of Phase I, the study team met with leadership from the town to establish working relationships, make logistical arrangements, and determine communication lines. During these meetings, the study team discussed the objectives of the project and identified any issues and concerns central to the study.

PHASE II: OBTAIN STAKEHOLDER INPUT

Objectives: Conduct Leadership Interviews & Capture Input from the Departments

The second phase of the study consisted of leadership interviews and department evaluations. The expectations were as follows:

- Identify opinions of department personnel concerning the operations and performance of their department;
- Identify issues and concerns of personnel regarding fire and rescue services;
- Identify perceived gaps in existing service levels and new priorities in mission; and,
- Identify strengths and weaknesses as perceived by departmental personnel.

The study team, in coordination with town leadership, developed a schedule of face-to-face interviews with the fire department, town officials, as well as county leadership as outlined below.

The study team met with leadership from Russell County to include a member of the Board of Supervisors and the County Administrator. The study team also met leadership from the Town of Lebanon, including members of the Town Council and the Town Manager. These meetings provided important information on the role of the fire department in the community.

All interviews were conducted during an allotted timeframe and a considerable amount of information was collected. A public hearing was advertised by the town and held on December 13, 2023 to give the public an opportunity to share feedback with the study team regarding the fire department in the Town of Lebanon.

During the interviews and public hearing, the study team received information regarding volunteer staffing levels, service delivery, budget information, apparatus, relationships between the town and volunteers, and other information about the operation of the volunteer department. The discussion also provided an opportunity for leadership to share comments regarding service delivery of fire services in the town and possible areas for improvement.

PHASE III: PREPARE ANALYSES AND DEVELOP CORE STRATEGIES

Objectives: Evaluate Current Trends and Prepare a Report

The third phase of the study involved further investigation and understanding of the organizational structures, operations, limitations, achievements, and opportunities for improvement within the fire department. The activities that supported this process consisted of additional requests for information not already obtained in Phase I and II of the work plan. Data requests, made in this phase of the study, attempt to address any issues that emerged from the interviews, and further evaluate implications of the operational issues cited. During this phase, the study team worked with fire department personnel and other departments to obtain additional information. Data obtained during the study process also assists the study team in identifying issues influencing the current levels of service.

PHASE IV: PREPARE FINAL REPORT

Objectives: Prepare and Present Final Report

The final phase of the study involved documenting the results of all previous tasks into a written report with critical components, such as an executive summary, methodology, background, and findings and recommendations. Once completed, a draft report was shared with the Lebanon Town Manager to ensure the technical content in this report is accurate. Upon receiving corrections, the study team revised the draft report, as needed, to assist in the preparation and issuance of the final report.

TOWN INFORMATION

The Town of Lebanon is located in Russell County in Southwestern Virginia. Lebanon is surrounded by Russell County and serves as the county seat. The town was created in 1819 when a commission was developed to select a new county seat for Russell County that would be more centrally located.¹

The town has 4.83 square miles of land, although the fire department covers a larger service area including the town and parts of unincorporated Russell County immediately surrounding the town. Lebanon is primarily served by U.S Route 19.

The estimated population in the Town of Lebanon in 2022 was 3,139 people with a median household income of \$50,287 and a total of 1,276 housing units.

The town operates under the guidance of a Town Council comprise of 6 council members. The Town Manager serves as the Chief Administrative Officer and serves as the primary manager of town business. The Town of Lebanon also has an elected Town Mayor elected separately from the town council who serves as chief executive. The Lebanon Fire Department Chief is selected by the members of the Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department. Lebanon does not have any current paid fire department staff. Of note, Lebanon Fire Department does not provide emergency medical services as licensed through the Virginia Department of Health.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations contained in this study are not a requirement for the town to implement. The recommendations are to be used as a guideline of potential solutions that could assist the town as it further develops its capabilities to provide fire protection. Many of the recommendations contained in this report may be sought through a partnership with Russell County. An investment by both the Town of Lebanon and Russell County must continue to be made in fire protection and the provision of emergency medical services. The purpose of the study is to review weaknesses, and highlight strengths, found during a review of the Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department. The recommendations contained in this report are directed to better serve the citizens and visitors of the Town of Lebanon, while also calling attention to specific areas for improvement for firefighters and the department.

Some recommendations below refer to National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards. Much of this report is provided with reference to NFPA 1720: Standard on Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments.

According to chapter 1 of NFPA 1720, the standard defines “levels of service, deployment capabilities, and staffing levels for substantially volunteer fire departments. It contains minimum requirements for deploying fire suppression and EMS for service delivery, response capabilities and resources. It also contains requirements for managing resources and systems such as health and safety, incident management, training, communications, and pre-incident planning. It

¹ History, Town of Lebanon

addresses the strategic and system issues involving the organization, operations, and deployment of a volunteer fire department.”²

The National Fire Protection Association provides industry-wide best practices for fire and EMS service. Although the NFPA standards are considered best practices, the study team understands that not all NFPA standards are attainable in individual jurisdictions. The Town of Lebanon should work collaboratively with the Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department to determine best practices that are attainable for the department.

Some of the below points are considered recommendations to improve services, while other points commend the work of the Town of Lebanon and Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department.

I. COMMUNITY RISK ASSESSMENT

CRR is defined by Vision 20/20 as “a process to identify and prioritize local risks, followed by the integrated and strategic investment of resources (emergency response and prevention) to reduce their occurrence and impact.” CRR provides a focused approach to reducing local identified specific risks while also identifying areas for improvement within a department or community. Each CRR plan will be unique to each locality, based on the types of risks identified for that community and the needs identified. The study team recommends a holistic community risk assessment that looks at the Town of Lebanon overall, with specific emphasis on identifying the types of emergency responses, the equipment needed to effectively respond, and the funds required to provide this response.

Risk assessment is the identification of potential and likely risks within a particular community and the process of prioritizing those risks. It is the critical initial step in emergency preparedness. The response environment looks at the type of incidents to which public safety organizations in the community respond, and the capabilities of these organizations.

Of note, the department mentioned the need for an aerial device in the Town of Lebanon. Russell County, as a whole, does not possess an aerial device and relies on the Town of Abingdon to respond by request. A community risk assessment can provide insight on this request. The study team commends the department for identifying hazardous materials in the response area and conducting preplans of businesses in the area. These are crucial to fire prevention and community risk reduction.

Recommendations:

1. The Fire Chief should conduct a narrow-focused CRA of emergencies in the response district, including the type of emergency, frequency, and type of resource(s) needed. This process should also include a review of community profile information, event history and response capabilities of both the department and mutual aid departments. By examining the types and frequency of incidents to which the Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department responds, a CRA will help focus and prioritize the fire prevention/loss prevention activities of both the community and department. For example, examining the number of

² NFPA 1720: Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments.

firefighters, as well as the type of apparatus needed (engine, ladder, rescue, etc) can help the department make long term decisions.

- a. The Fire Chief could request the VDFP CRR Coordinator return and assist the county in its Community Risk Assessment (CRA).
 - b. NFPA 1720 indicates that the emergency services engage in the development of a community risk management plan for fire, emergency medical service, and hazardous materials use, storage, and transportation within the county.
2. The Fire Chief should conduct a fleet risk assessment. From this fleet risk assessment, the Fire Chief should work with the department and leadership from the Town of Lebanon and Russell County to plan for the replacement or updating of apparatus. A fleet risk assessment should include at a minimum:
 - a. A focus on apparatus that meet community specific needs such as population density, zoning, development, previous call data, etc.
 - b. The age of the apparatus.
 - c. The average use of the apparatus annually.
 - d. The ability of the apparatus to provide the adequate resources needed on regular responses identified in the community risk assessment.
3. The Fire Chief should, utilizing call data and the community risk assessment, provide a report to the Lebanon Town Council on the possible need for an aerial device for use by the Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department. This report should note, in an annual period, the number of calls that the department could have effectively used an aerial device to complete a victim rescue. It should also note and list buildings in the first due response area that a ladder truck would be beneficial (three stories or more when considering elevation).
 - a. Upon completion of this report, the Town of Lebanon should consult with Russell County about the need for an aerial device countywide. If a need is identified countywide, the localities should partner to purchase the aerial device and place it at an appropriate location. Some localities have purchased specialty apparatus for use by multiple volunteer departments that received training to use it. For example, the aerial device might be owned by Russell County and be available for use by multiple departments who received training on the device.
 - b. The study team recommends that any aerial device be equipped with the ability to serve as an elevated master stream. This creates a more versatile apparatus that could not only operate in a victim rescue capacity, but also in a fire suppression role.

II. TRAINING

One of the most important components of any fire department is maintaining that firefighters are prepared to respond effectively to emergencies that they face. The study team noted that the Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department conducts regular training, has two training officers who actively work to further their own education to pass on, and keep records of their training through a document referred to as “LVFD Training Minutes”. The study team applauds the department for making notable progress in the training arena.

Recommendations contained below are directed at formalizing this training, as well as increasing the ability to conduct training by investing in a long-term training site in cooperation with other regional partners.

Recommendations:

1. The Fire Chief should, through either standard operating procedure or the department’s bylaws, require certain training be conducted to be considered for certain roles on an emergency scene. The study team was provided with internal programs for releasement as a driver/pump operator, as well as a requirement to have Firefighter I before becoming interior qualified. The team recommends that these requirements be formalized. In addition, the department should establish training requirements that:
 - a. Utilize accredited classes when necessary, such as Basic Pump Operator or Firefighter I or II. These classes add credibility to programs and are nationally recognized.
 - b. Establish guidelines for those riding in charge of apparatus or who will serve in a command capacity on an incident scene.
 - c. The Department of Fire Programs Division Chief 4 should be consulted for further development of firefighter training and relevant classes for the area.
2. The Fire Chief should, through either standard operating procedure or the department’s bylaws, establish and require all personnel who drive department vehicles to have met certain requirements. Recommended requirements include Emergency Vehicle Operators Course as taught by the Department of Fire Programs, the Virginia Association of Volunteer Rescue Squads, or VFIS, certain hours or drive time in ideal conditions with a qualified field training officer, certain hours or drive time at night with a qualified field training officer, written assessment of the departments safety and risk management policies, as well as applicable laws of the commonwealth.
3. The Town Manager, with the support of the Town Council and Fire Chief, should consult with Russell County on the possible creation of a fire training center in the area. Other jurisdictions may be able to partner in this process as well. The study team noted that training facilities were not in close proximity to the town.
 - a. The Town of Lebanon, with partnership from other regional localities, could explore the construction of a live fire training structure. The Virginia Fire Services Board offers up to \$480,000 for the construction of a structure based on 4 prototypes.

- i. Refer to the Department of Fire Programs' *Live Fire Training Structure Grant Program*³
 - b. The Town of Lebanon, with partnership from other regional localities, could utilize the Regional Fire Services Training Grant Program to purchase other training props for confined space SCBA, mayday training, drafting, flashover simulators, LP gas, or other props that could be utilized for firefighter training.
 - i. Refer to the Department of Fire Programs' *Regional Fire Services Training Grant Program*⁴
- 4. The Fire Chief should continue to support and encourage members to attend training conferences/conventions such as the Virginia Fire Rescue Conference, the Virginia First Responders Conference, FDIC, and others. These conferences offer insight into how other departments train and provide services to the community. Networking can also prove beneficial for the development of tactics and other recommendations contained herein.

III. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The study team reviewed the apparatus and equipment operated by the Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department. The team notes that the equipment was in working order and well maintained. Recent data suggests that the cost of apparatus and major equipment such as self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), hose, and other essential equipment is quickly outpacing most department's ability to purchase the equipment.⁵ The below recommendations are related to long term planning for both the Town of Lebanon and the fire department. A capital improvement plan (CIP) is "a community planning and fiscal management tool used to coordinate the location, timing and financing of capital improvements over a multi-year period — usually 4-6 years."⁶

Recommendations:

1. The Lebanon Town Manager should, in consultation with the Lebanon Town Council, include fire department equipment such as apparatus in the town's capital improvement plan.
2. The Fire Chief should implement a capital improvement plan that addresses apparatus, equipment such as hose, turnout gear, and self-contained breathing apparatus, facilities, and other long-term projects for fire suppression as identified in the risk assessment.
3. Apparatus needs should be identified in the risk assessment and replacement should be scheduled as a component of the capital improvement plan.

³ Live Fire Training Structure Grant Program

⁴ Regional Fire Services Grant Policy

⁵ Service to the Commonwealth

⁶ Planning Implementation Tools Capital Improvement Plan

4. Facility upgrades should be identified in the risk assessment and repairs/upgrades be scheduled as a component of the capital improvement plan.
5. Any other major, reoccurring purchase should be scheduled as a component of the capital improvement plan.
6. Additional information on developing a capital improvement plan:
 - a. Planning Implementation Tools Capital Improvement Plan⁷
 - b. Effectively Developing a Capital Improvement Plan for the Rio Rancho Fire Department⁸

IV. STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic planning is defined as the “going organizational process of using available knowledge to document a business's intended direction. This process is used to prioritize efforts, effectively allocate resources, align shareholders and employees on the organization’s goals, and ensure those goals are backed by data and sound reasoning.”⁹ Although most people, and department members, often do not consider fire departments to be a business, there are numerous connections that make strategic planning worthwhile. For fire departments, strategic planning should prioritize efforts and allocate resources based on the community’s need backed by data and reasoning. Recommendations below relate to the Town of Lebanon, utilizing data, community engagement, and information obtained from risk assessments, creating a strategic plan related to fire protection.

Recommendations:

1. The Fire Chief should, consulting with the membership of the Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department, draft a list of short- and long-term goals of the department. These goals can vary widely based on a review of the department up to and including equipment, facilities, training, personnel, and other goals. Short term goals should be identified for the next 1-2 years, while long term goals should range from 5-10 years. The Fire Chief and his officers should determine what avenues exist to meet these goals.
2. The Town Manager, in consultation with the Town Council, should draft a list of short- and long-term goals for fire protection. These goals can vary widely based on a review of the community and could include changes to the fire department or other infrastructure such as zoning and water supply. Short term goals should be identified for the next 1-2 years, while long term goals should range from 5-10 years. The Town Manager should determine what avenues exist to meet these goals.
3. The Fire Chief and Town Manager should hold a series of community meetings to solicit goals from the community related to fire protection. These community meetings should

⁷ Planning Implementation Tools Capital Improvement Plan

⁸ Effectively Developing a Capital Improvement Plan for the Rio Rancho Fire Department

⁹ Why is Strategic Planning Important

be well advertised and be an open forum for citizens to discuss needs and their intended goals.

4. The Town Manager and Fire Chief should, utilizing information from the Town Council's list, Fire Chief's list, goals identified by the community, and information from the community risk assessment, draft a strategic plan for fire protection in the Town of Lebanon. This plan should be presented and adopted by the Town Council in a public meeting.
5. The Fire Chief and Town Manager should meet biannually to discuss meeting the goals identified in the strategic plan.
6. More information on strategic plans:
 - a. Four Steps to High-Impact Strategic Planning in Government¹⁰
 - b. Fire Department Strategic Planning 101¹¹

V. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

The Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department is made up of dedicated volunteer firefighters who provide fire suppression and other rescue services to their fellow citizens. The Commonwealth of Virginia, as a whole, has seen a steep decline in volunteer first responders for a variety of reasons. This poses a significant threat to public safety in Virginia if numbers continue to decline. The leadership of the department did not report issues related to having adequate members to respond to emergency calls. However, the study team also learned that there was no formalized recruitment or marketing of the department. The Town of Lebanon and the leadership of the Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department must remain committed to recruitment and retention to maintain an adequate number of first responders. The study team did not see indications that paid staff were required for fire suppression at this point, but always recommends that localities annually reassess risk and the availability of volunteer first responders.

Recommendations:

1. The Fire Chief should review fire department culture and encourage a modification of the "how we do things culture". This starts with an assessment to determine what the main operational areas are for their organization, such as operations, administration, fundraising, training, etc. The department could target recruitment of individual members to handle non-emergent functions such as fundraising, entering fire reports, marketing/social media initiatives, fire & life safety education and community programs, human resource management, station & apparatus maintenance, and in-house training. By utilizing these specialized groups to achieve specific tasks, it works to free up the demands on those members that are interested in responding to emergencies and maintaining the necessary training.

¹⁰ Four Steps to High-Impact Planning in Government

¹¹ Fire Department Strategic Planning 101

2. The Fire Chief should create a Recruitment and Retention Coordinator or place this role under a current officer's duties. This position should develop a Recruitment and Retention Plan for the Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department that considers classes of membership, means of recruiting, and retention programs where applicable.
 - a. Utilize the National Volunteer Fire Council outline for volunteer agencies.¹²
 - b. Reference the United States Fire Administration's Retention and Recruitment for the Volunteer Emergency Services¹³
 - c. Market the department through social media and other means to solicit volunteers.
 - d. Highlight noteworthy calls for service, training, or volunteer accomplishments on social media.
3. The Lebanon Town Council should consider reducing or eliminating certain fees or taxes related to town services where applicable for all bona fide volunteer firefighters. The council could work with the Fire Chief and Town Treasurer to determine who would be eligible for these incentives and the relative cost to the town. If the town chooses to implement a retention initiative such as this, the Fire Chief should be required to develop standards for active membership and annually submit a list of members to the Town of Lebanon.
4. The Fire Chief should create an incentive program funded through donations from the community or other revenues. This incentive fund should be utilized to provide funds to volunteers to purchase individual equipment items not provided by the department. A SOP should be implemented that outlines the program requirements and how funds would be disbursed equitably. Similar programs found in other areas are based on various concepts including:
 - a. A monetary stipend based on active membership or on a per call basis.
 - b. A points-based system where a member receives points for components like calls ran, meetings attended, training attended, etc. These points equate to dollars, which eventually cap at a certain amount set to make sure sufficient funds are available.
 - c. A flat rate based on yearly donations to the program or money allocated that is equitable to all members who meet certain requirements stated in the policy.
 - d. A certain item or piece of equipment provided to all members who meet certain requirements stated in the policy.
5. The Fire Chief could consider the development of a tuition reimbursement program to take online classes, attend community college courses, or complete a relevant degree. Although this investment could prove costly, the chief could adopt this as a component of an incentive program. Grants may be available to assist with these programs. The department may also partner with a private funding source or business to sponsor 1-2 members each year under this program.
6. The Town Manager, in consultation with the Fire Chief, could consider applying for a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Staffing For Adequate Fire and

¹² Develop a Recruitment and Retention Plan

¹³ Recruitment and Retention for Volunteer Emergency Services

Emergency Response (SAFER) grant for recruitment and retention. This grant program was specifically designed to assist departments in increasing or maintaining frontline firefighters and meeting NFPA 1710 or 1720.¹⁴ The study team specifically recommends that the department apply under the recruitment and retention category. For more information, please consult the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

- a. SAFER Program: Recruitment and Retention Of Volunteer Firefighters Request Details Information¹⁵

7. The Fire Chief, in consultation with town leadership, should explore joining the Volunteer Firefighters' & Rescue Squad Workers' Service Award Program (VOLSAP). VOLSAP, created by state statute, is a mechanism by which optional retirement savings for volunteer firefighters and rescue squad workers can be invested. Members contributions, coupled with contributions made by the department/locality, are invested by the Virginia Retirement System, and can be withdrawn at a certain age much like a standard employee retirement.¹⁶

VI. COMMUNICATION

Communication is considered to be one of the most important components of any organization. In public safety, communication can often be the lifeline in critical incidents that ensures necessary resources are assigned to an incident or operating effectively. This importance translates to the communication channels between the officers of the Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department, firefighters, town leadership, and ultimately to the wider public that is served. The study team encountered, through meetings with all parties, a need for increased communication between the different facets mentioned above.

Recommendations:

1. The Fire Chief should have monthly meetings with the Town Manager to ensure regular and transparent communication.
 - a. The Fire Chief should provide a report to the Town Manager that includes call volume, an update on membership, a log of broken or equipment requiring maintenance, and any extensive purchases that the department will not be able to handle within the normal operating budget.
2. The Town Manager should create a standardized process for the Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department to make annual budgetary requests and one-time purchases.
3. The department should host the town council for an overview of the department, a demonstration of equipment, and general interaction to increase relationships between the two groups periodically.

¹⁴ Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response

¹⁵ SAFER: Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Request Details Information

¹⁶ Virginia Volunteer Firefighters' & Rescue Squad Workers' Service Award Program

4. The Fire Chief could designate a public information officer (PIO) that would be responsible for documenting calls, posting on social media, and creating a monthly newsletter for distribution to interested citizens, town leadership, and department members. This newsletter could include a message from the chief, information on calls in the previous month, training events, fundraising, and other pertinent information.
 - a. “Six Benefits of Effective Public Information Officers” *Fire Engineering*¹⁷

VII. SOP/SOG

Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) are written guidelines that explain what is expected of emergency personnel in performing their duties. SOGs are a “how-to” guideline to follow in order to achieve a desired goal. SOGs are not necessarily rules or regulations, but rather a path to achieve specific goals and objectives. Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) are formal policies that specify a course of action, thereby ensuring efficiency, predictability, consistency, and safety.¹⁸

The study team, when meeting with leadership from the Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department, was provided a copy of the organizations Constitution, as well as training materials, training requirements and other documents. The study team was also informed, through various meetings, of apparatus accidents that had occurred approximately 2-3 years prior. The team recognizes that the department has taken an active approach to addressing issues identified after the accidents, including driver training requirements and written tests for driver/pump operators. The below recommendations serve to further formalize the departments operations and training.

Recommendations:

1. The Fire Chief, in consultation with the officers of the department, should develop, publish, implement, and oversee standard operating procedures and guidelines. The Fire Chief and his officers must have the authority and tools to enforce SOPs and SOGs.
 - A. SOPs/SOGs should highlight firefighter safety and safe, industry standard practices for fire suppression.
2. The Fire Chief should, through SOP/SOG, develop minimum training requirements for interior firefighters. The Department of Fire Programs recommends that interior firefighters have a minimum of Firefighter I before entering an immediately dangerous to life and health (IDLH) environment.
3. The Fire Chief should, through SOP/SOG, develop minimum training requirements related to driving department vehicles. These training requirements could include credentialed classes such as EVOC, drive time under a field training officer, certain age requirements, etc. These training requirements should be shared with the town and the departments’ insurer to maintain that proper training is being provided before operating an emergency vehicle.

¹⁷ Six Benefits of Effective Public Information Officers

¹⁸ Standard Operating Procedures: The First Step to a Safer Fireground

4. Other SOP/SOG should be created outlining expectations on the fireground or emergency scene, requirements to act in charge of a scene, annual or regular training requirements, command procedures, mutual aid, use of personal protective equipment (PPE), and others as deemed necessary.
5. Examples of SOP/SOG:
 - A. Amherst County, Virginia Standard Operating Guidelines (2012)¹⁹
 - B. Bronson Volunteer Fire Rescue Standard Operating Guidelines (2010)²⁰

VIII. REPORTING

Incident reports on emergency responses by the fire service are submitted to NFIRS from the Commonwealth of Virginia through the VFIRS system. The information in these fire incident reports describes the type of incident responded to, where it occurred, the resources used to mitigate it, and other information designed specifically to understand the nature and causes of fire, hazardous materials (HazMat) incidents, and emergency medical service (EMS) incidents. Information is also collected on the number of civilian or firefighter casualties and an estimate of property loss. The VFIRS data is the primary source of data for a wide range of analyses and reports. The availability of accurate information about fires and other incidents is vital in determining the best and most effective methods of both fire control and fire prevention, as well as predict future problems in communities, and measuring the programs' performance.

VDFP is developing a new interactive website in which this fire data will be available for all localities whose fire department is identified by an FDID number. In the coming 18 months a new system, NERIS, will replace the nationwide NFIRS system while still utilizing a simplified VFIRS version. This will allow the state and local departments to view, utilize and analyze this information in a proactive manner.

Recommendations:

1. The Fire Chief should ensure that all emergency calls that the Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department responds to are reported via VFIRS. Not only does this process provide insight into the departments' emergency responses and trends, but it can also provide a means of comparing local trends to regional and national trends. This will also be important to understanding requests in the capital improvement plan, strategic plan, and determining the need for specialty apparatus. Grants often require justification of need, which call volume showed in an official reporting mechanism such as VFIRS and NFIRS can be used for.
2. The Fire Chief should prepare for the transition from NFIRS to NERIS being administered through the U.S Fire Administration. As stated above, this information is critical for the identification and mitigation of any community risks. The transition to NERIS is expected to provide faster and more effective data for the fire service.

¹⁹ Amherst County Standard Operating Guidelines

²⁰ Bronson Volunteer Fire and Rescue Standard Operating Guidelines

3. If the department requires additional funds to purchase hardware related to fire reporting, it should consider asking the Town of Lebanon to apply for a VFIRS Hardware Grant from the Department of Fire Programs.
 - a. VFIRS Hardware Grants²¹

IX. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

The below recommendations are included as a component of the report because study team members felt that the information was both pertinent to the Town of Lebanon, as well as most fire and EMS studies conducted by the Virginia Fire Services Board. The recommendations are broad but encompass best practices to support future growth for the town and the Commonwealth of Virginia, as well as the safety and well-being of first responders and the citizens they protect.

Recommendations:

1. Cancer prevention is important in the fire service. Cancer is the leading health risk facing firefighters, largely due to the chemicals and carcinogens they are exposed to while engaged in response activities.²² Chemically based plastics are in use in nearly every product in our homes, business and vehicles and when they burn, their chemical composition changes.
 - a. The Fire Chief should develop operational SOP's that establish safe cancer prevention practices such as:
 - i. Gross decontamination after fire incidents
 - ii. Washing of firefighter PPE following fire or hazardous materials incidents
 - iii. A fire hood exchange program
 - iv. Shower facilities at the fire station
 - a. The Fire Chief should encourage /facilitate National Firefighter Registry (NFR) sign up. The Firefighter Cancer Registry Act of 2018 mandated the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) create a voluntary registry of firefighters to collect health and occupational information to determine cancer incidence in the U.S. fire service. In response to this mandate, CDC's National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) established the National Firefighter Registry (NFR).²³ The NFR will help researchers better understand and reduce cancer in firefighters by matching the information provided by participating NFR firefighters with cancer diagnosis information from state cancer registries. This matching process will allow NIOSH to study the relationship between firefighting and cancer outcomes over time.

Step 1: Firefighters sign up for the NFR.

²¹ VFIRS Hardware Grant Policy

²² Lavender Ribbon Report-Best Practices for Preventing Firefighter Cancer

²³ H.R 931 Firefighter Cancer Registry Act of 2018

Step 2: NIOSH researchers match firefighter profiles with potential information in state cancer registries over time. This makes it possible to study the relationship between firefighting and cancer over time, even if cancer diagnoses occur in the future.

Step 3: NIOSH captures work history details. This information can be used to better understand firefighters' exposures and how they may be related to cancer.

Step 4: Stronger evidence can help inform new health and safety measures to protect firefighters from cancer. Combining information from firefighters across the U.S. will help researchers better understand cancer and its risk factors in the fire service, which could ultimately help reduce cancer among firefighters for generations to come.

2. It is recommended that the Fire Chief create an equipment maintenance program to increase the life of apparatus and reduce repair costs. This equipment maintenance program should consider variables such as age and mechanical condition, as well as the use level of each apparatus.
3. The Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department should undergo annual audits by an outside entity. This information should be submitted to the Fire Chief and Town Manager for review. This maintains transparency over funds appropriated from the town, donations, and grant funds from other entities such as VDFP.
4. The Fire Chief should consider working with Russell County to utilize centralized purchasing for fire equipment. County procurement staff and the chief, in consultation with other fire departments in the county, could identify areas that the county could assist with purchasing supplies for the volunteer departments.
 - a. Many items can be centrally stored and distributed. In addition, many equipment purchases could be made county-wide to increase interoperability and reduce costs
5. Although not a specific area requested for review, the study team noted that some issues were reported with dispatch. The Fire Chief should consult with the Russell County Sheriff's Office on any issues related to the dispatching of fire apparatus and work to remedy any issues.

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APPENDIX A

Resolution requesting the Virginia Fire Services Board conduct a comprehensive analysis of the
Town of Lebanon Fire Department of Russell County, Virginia

NELSON A. "TONY" DODI, Mayor
DeANNA C. JACKSON, Vice Mayor
KEVIN L. BLANKENSHIP, Town Manager
KEVIN D. TILLER, Town Attorney



TOWN OF LEBANON

Telephone (276) 889-7288 Fax (276) 889-7288
465 West Main Street
P.O. Drawer 309
Lebanon, Virginia 24266

COUNCIL MEMBERS

A. DOYLE FIELDS
SCOTT J. GILMER
MARY J. STANLEY
M. ELIJAH LEONARD
W. BRADLEY LAMBERT

RESOLUTION REQUESTING A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS (STUDY) OF THE TOWN OF LEBANON'S FIRE DEPARTMENT

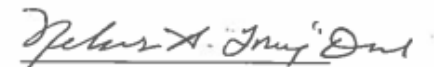
WHEREAS, the Fire Department is among the highest priorities demanded and expected by our citizens who deserve prompt and professional response every time they call 9-1-1; and

WHEREAS, the Lebanon Fire Department volunteers give unselfishly of their time from responding to service calls for the Town of Lebanon citizens;

WHEREAS, the Mayor and the Lebanon Town Council Members demonstrates its genuine commitment to this organization by appropriating \$93,323.20 in the current fiscal year for normal, recurring needs, while considering special requests as necessary; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Mayor and the Lebanon Town Council formally requests the completion of a Comprehensive Analysis (Study) of the Town of Lebanon's Volunteer Fire Department.

Adopted, August 16, 2021


Nelson A. "Tony" Dodi, Mayor


Diane Nunley, Clerk of Council

APPENDIX B

Letter Requesting a Fire Study from the Lebanon Town Manager

NELSON A. "TONY" DODI, Mayor
DeANNA C. JACKSON, Vice Mayor
KEVIN L. BLANKENSHIP, Town Manager
KEVIN D. TILLER, Town Attorney



TOWN OF LEBANON

Telephone (276) 889-7200 Fax (276) 889-7208
485 West Main Street
P.O. Drawer 399
Lebanon, Virginia 24266

COUNCIL MEMBERS
A. DOYLE FIELDS
SCOTT J. GILMER
MARY J. STANLEY
M. ELIJAH LEONARD
W. BRADLEY LAMBERT

August 3, 2021

Mr. Mohamed G. Abbamin, MPA
Policy Manager
Virginia Department of Fire Programs
1005 Technology Park Drive
Glen Allen, Virginia 23059

RE: Comprehensive Analysis Study of Fire System Request – Town of Lebanon

Dear Mr. Abbamin;

This is to request the services of the Virginia Fire Services Board (VFSB) in conducting a complete and thorough review of the Town of Lebanon's Volunteer Fire Department.

This study has the support of the Town of Lebanon's Mayor and Town Council as shown by the attached resolution adopted at the Town of Lebanon regular monthly Town Council meeting August 16, 2021.

The requested areas of concentration of this study include:

- Organization
- Budget and Administration
- Training
- Delivery of Services
- Fleet Design and Management (Equipment/Apparatus)

It is the Town Council's proposal to have a complete and thorough review of the aforementioned areas of concentration and a comprehensive list of recommendations to enhance the delivery of services to the citizens of the Town of Lebanon.

Your Consideration of this request at the next available opportunity would be greatly appreciated. I am available to respond to any questions you might have regarding this request. I can be reached by phone at 276-889-7200 or by email at kblankenship@lebanonva.net.

Sincerely,

Kevin L. Blankenship, Town Manager

APPENDIX C

Scope of Study Agreement between the Virginia Fire Services Board and the Town of Lebanon



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Keith H. Johnson
VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICES
BOARD CHAIR

Virginia Department of Fire Programs

Scope of Fire and EMS Study Agreement

between the

Town of Lebanon

and the

Virginia Fire Services Board

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this agreement is to establish mutually accepted duties, responsibilities, and expectations between the Virginia Fire Services Board, its designated Fire and EMS Study Committee and the locality which has requested the Fire and EMS Study/Technical Assistance from the Virginia Fire Service Board. The agreement is provided to help define activities and expectations between both parties.

AGREEMENT

- Study results/recommendations shall be comprehensive in nature and shall be consistent with and organized according to a final revised scope of work as negotiated between the Study Committee and the locality prior to the formal commencement of the Study. ****Refer to Self-Assessment Questionnaire for Scope of Study.**
- While questions of staffing ratios, response time, capital equipment purchases, etc. are relevant to the Study process, the locality should not expect detailed recommendations in these areas beyond system-wide recommendations.
- Study Results will be openly presented to the elected/appointed governing body, the requesting agency as well as any additional requesting organization(s);

- The time frame noted for technical assistance will be accepted;
- All relevant organizational data will be made available to the study committee; and,
- Locality will provide to the Virginia Department of Fire Programs a central point of contact. Please ensure the contact is available Monday – Friday from 9 am to 5 pm, and nighttime and weekends as needed.
- Within 6 to 9 months of the Study completion, the Department of Fire Programs will email the locality a feedback follow-up survey. It is requested that the locality complete the survey so the Agency and Board can gain valuable in-sight into the success and areas of improvements for future studies. Your participation in the feedback survey is important to the Agency and Board.

REVIEW AND TERM

This agreement shall be in effect until the end of the Fire and EMS Study.

SIGNED

We do hereby acknowledge and agree to abide by the provisions of this Memorandum of Understanding.

 <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/> <p>Chairman, Virginia Fire Services Board</p>	<p>10/19/2023</p> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/> <p>Date</p>
 <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/> <p>Authorized Locality Representative</p>	<p>10/17/23</p> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/> <p>Date</p>

APPENDIX D

Other resources available to the Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department and the Town of Lebanon

1. Manuals

- a. NVFC: Understanding & Implementing Standards: NFPA 1500,1720, and 1851
 - i. https://www.nvfc.org/resource_item/understanding-implementing-nfpa-standards-1500-1720-1851-english/
- b. NVFC: Understanding & Implementing Standards: NFPA 1407 and 1021
 - i. <https://www.nvfc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Standards-Guide-Vol2-1407-1021.pdf>
- c. NVFC: Psychologically Healthy Fire Departments Implementation Toolkit
 - i. <https://www.nvfc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/PHFD-Implementation-Toolkit.pdf>
- d. NVFC: What to expect: A Guide for Family Members of Volunteer Firefighters
Volunteer Fire Services Culture: Essential Strategies for Success
 - i. <https://www.nvfc.org/guide-for-family-members-of-volunteer-responders-now-available/>

2. Informational Sheets

- a. Training Volunteer Firefighters to be Combat Ready
 - i. Section 9: Developing and Implementing Training Best Practices
 - ii. Appendix B: Sample Knowledge and Skills Based Annual Training Topics Plan
 - iii. Appendix E: How to Use NFPA Standards To your Department's Advantage
 1. <https://www.iafc.org/docs/default-source/1vcos/operational-training-guide.pdf>
- b. The 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives
 - i. <https://www.everyonegoeshome.com/16-initiatives/>
- c. VFIS: NFPA 1500 Fire Department Occupational Safety, Health and Wellness Program Worksheet (2018 Edition)
 - i. <https://education.vfis.com/Portals/0/Documents/wellness/NFPA-1500-Worksheet-2018-Edition.pdf>
- d. NVFC: Conducting a Recruitment and Retention Needs Assessment
 - i. <https://www.nvfc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/RR-Needs-Assessment.pdf>

Virginia Fire Services Board

Administration, Policy, and Finance Committee

Thursday, February 22, 2024

Virginia Fire and Rescue Conference

1000 19th St, Virginia Beach, VA 23451

1:00 PM

MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Administration, Policy and Finance Committee was held at the Virginia Fire-Rescue Conference in Virginia Beach, Virginia. The meeting was called to order by Board Vice Chair Abbey Johnston and a quorum was present.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Abbey Johnston, Committee Chair – Virginia State Firefighter’s Association
Bettie Reeves-Nobles – General Public
James Calvert – Industry (SARA Title III/OSHA)
Steve Sites – Virginia Municipal League
Ben Reedy – Insurance Industry
Donald Hart – Virginia Association of Counties
Walt Bailey – Virginia Fire Service Council

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

Keith Johnson – Virginia Fire Chief’s Association

AGENCY MEMBERS PRESENT

Nicholas Nanna, Deputy Director
Theresa Hunter, Chief Administrative Officer
Spencer Willett, Government Affairs Manager

GUESTS PRESENT

Larry Gwaltney Robby Dawson

CHANGES IN THE AGENDA

No reported changes to the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comment provided.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion: To approve the minutes of the previous meeting (November 2023)

Motion: Hart, **Second:** Bailey

Discussion on the Motion: None

Virginia Fire Services Board

Administration, Policy, and Finance Committee

Thursday, February 22, 2024

Virginia Fire and Rescue Conference

1000 19th St, Virginia Beach, VA 23451

1:00 PM

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Minutes approved

REPORT FROM VDFP ADMINISTRATION

Chief Administrative Officer Theresa Hunter provided an update on the Aid to Localities and the Live Structure Budgets'. She also addressed open grant projects. All documentation was provided to the Board prior to the meeting. No questions were asked by committee members.

COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIR

Committee Chair Abbey Johnston thanked Department of Fire Programs (VDFP) staff for their hard work, as well as Committee members participating in the work of the Fire Services Board (VFSB). She recognized that VFSB Chair Keith Johnson was unable to be at the conference due to the recent line of duty death of Firefighter Trevor Brown.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Virginia Fire Services Board Studies Review

i. Alleghany County Fire and EMS Study Report

Johnston asked that Spencer Willett provide an update for the Alleghany County Fire and EMS Study. Willett stated that the study was complete and included in the Board Packet. Willett thanked board members for participating in the study.

Motion: To approve the Alleghany County Fire and EMS Study Report as presented

Motion: Bailey, **Second:** Calvert

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Report adopted, sent to VFSB

ii. Town of Lebanon Fire and EMS Study Update

Willett provided an update on the study for the Town of Lebanon. VDFP and VFSB members were on site in December. The General Assembly session has delayed the report from being final for the February VFSB meeting. VDFP staff will provide the report for VFSB approval at the next VFSB meeting.

Virginia Fire Services Board

Administration, Policy, and Finance Committee

Thursday, February 22, 2024

Virginia Fire and Rescue Conference

1000 19th St, Virginia Beach, VA 23451

1:00 PM

NEW BUSINESS

a. Rules of Procedure Update

Willett spoke on the Rules of Procedure update. At the previous VFSB meeting, the Board adopted new Rules of Procedure that created the Codes and Standards Workgroup. The language creating this workgroup was outdated. After a meeting of the workgroup, new language was recommended. The language adopted at the December VFSB meeting was incorrect. This change brings the language up to date.

Motion: To approve the Rules of Procedure as presented

Motion: Calvert, **Second:** Bailey

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Rules of Procedure adopted as presented, sent to VFSB

b. Report on the 2024 General Assembly Session

Johnston thanked Spencer Willett and other staff involved with legislative work. She also thanked the other board members who represent various groups on the board who were involved in legislation. She highlighted the excitement of having so many people involved in the process. She encouraged people to continue to push forward next session.

Willett thanked many of the board members and staff who assisted during legislative session. He highlighted the pieces of legislation that spawned from HB 2175 (2023) and the many issues related to funding these priorities. He also highlighted HB133/SB650, which would create a toxic grant exposure fund. VDFP had issue with the broad scope of the language. This bill is now only a workgroup which VDFP will lead. HB66 clarifies fire drills in schools and states that the Statewide Fire Prevention Code will be the presiding factor on the number of fire drills. He also spoke about an Aid-To-Localities (ATL) workgroup that could be formed to examine a new funding formula. This was originally a bill to increase ATL, but now directs a workgroup to look at other formulas that could include land mass or fiscal stress. Budget amendments were also discussed, including funds for the State Fire Marshal and funds for a review of fire and EMS funding in the Commonwealth. This review would also include examining the combination of fire and EMS administration at the state level.

Virginia Fire Services Board

Administration, Policy, and Finance Committee

Thursday, February 22, 2024

Virginia Fire and Rescue Conference

1000 19th St, Virginia Beach, VA 23451

1:00 PM

ADJOURNMENT

Clerk of the Committee

Spencer R. Willett



Virginia Fire Services Board

Fire Prevention and Control Committee

Thursday, February 22, 2024

Virginia Fire and Rescue Conference

1000 19th St, Virginia Beach, VA 23451

3:00 PM

MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Fire Prevention and Control Committee was held at the Virginia Fire-Rescue Conference in Virginia Beach, VA. The meeting was called to order by Chair Steven Sites and a quorum was present.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Steven Sites, Committee Chair – Virginia Municipal League
Billy Hanks – Local Fire Marshal
JM Snell II – Board of Housing and Community Development
John Miller – Department of Forestry
Dennis Linaburg – Virginia Chapter of IAAI
Ernie Little – Virginia Fire Prevention Association

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

Keith Johnson – Virginia Fire Chiefs' Association

AGENCY MEMBERS PRESENT

Billy Hux, State Fire Marshal
Spencer Willett, Government Affairs Manager

GUESTS PRESENT

Robby Dawson
Matthew Clark
Andrew Milliken

CHANGES IN THE AGENDA

PUBLIC COMMENTS

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion: To approve the minutes of the previous meeting (November 2023)

Motion: Little, **Second:** Linaburg

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Virginia Fire Services Board

Fire Prevention and Control Committee

Thursday, February 22, 2024

Virginia Fire and Rescue Conference

1000 19th St, Virginia Beach, VA 23451

3:00 PM

Action: Minutes approved

REPORT FROM THE VIRGINIA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

State Fire Marshal Billy Hux provided updates from the State Fire Marshal's Office. This included the delivery of the FAST lab trailer and updates on the actual fabrication of the project. He also provided information on the report from the workgroup led by the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) looking at fire marshal law enforcement powers. This report has been circulated to fire marshals. The office began conducting contract food truck inspections which will be completed annually. There were no questions from the committee.

CODES AND STANDARDS WORKGROUP

Andrew Milliken provided an update on the workgroup. He highlighted the changes made to the group which will make it easier to meet with the demanding workload imposed by the code development cycle. The workgroup met last month to discuss the reopening of the 2021 codes to comply with an executive order to reduce regulations. Milliken provided comment to the Board of Housing and Community Development (BHCD) opposing this. BHCD did not reopen the codes and the workgroup is waiting to hear more about the 2024 code development cycle. He also spoke about SB195 and the workgroup proposed to look at single exit stairwells in certain occupancies.

Little asked for further information on the single stairwell legislation. Milliken provided information on why the legislation was sought, including redevelopment of areas with small square footage, as well as the economic incentive of having only one stairwell. It was not supported in the last code cycle and is now going to a study. He clarified it was HB368 and SB195. Spencer Willett also stated that VDFP and SFMO were opposed to the legislation.

COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIR

Steven Sites spoke about the business of the committee that would be discussed in Unfinished Business, as well as thanking them for being present for an evening meeting. Sites shared information from Keith Johnson related to Executive Order #19 and the fire code. The Department of Housing and Community Development recommended reopening the 2021 codes to make reductions as required in the executive order. BHCD met and voted against this, choosing instead to look at these reductions during the 2024 code cycle. Sites also spoke about the pace of the code cycle being faster because of this. Johnson has been working with DHCD

Virginia Fire Services Board

Fire Prevention and Control Committee

Thursday, February 22, 2024

Virginia Fire and Rescue Conference

1000 19th St, Virginia Beach, VA 23451

3:00 PM

staff about whether reductions made during previous cycles could be counted towards the executive order, allowing the 2024 cycle to go through its normal process.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Fire Prevention and Control Plan

The Fire Prevention and Control Plan was not included in the Board Packet. Sites suggested that at the next committee meeting this plan would be on the docket for final approval before being provided to the Virginia Fire Services Board (VFSB). He mentioned that the Department of Forestry would need to include further information, specifically including their dry hydrant grant program.

b. BHCD/VFSB MOU Update

Willett spoke about the document being at the Office of the Attorney General (OAG). The attorney's for BHCD and the VFSB are reviewing this document. Willett suggested a meeting between the two boards to go over the document, including Chief Johnson and Chief Sites. Sites clarified that the OAG was working on a path forward, not edits to the document. Willett confirmed this was the case.

NEW BUSINESS

a. 2024 Standard Fire Prevention Messaging

Sites spoke about the committee and VDFP Community Risk Reduction (CRR) working together to create Virginia specific messaging outside of fire prevention month. Virginia could focus on the issues affecting Virginia specifically, such as types of fires, etc. Sites asked the committee to think about this topic and bring ideas to the next meeting.

b. 2024 Fire Prevention and Codes Legislation

Sites stated that Andrew Milliken gave a good update on the single stairwell bill. Sites also spoke about HB66 and the number of fire drills required in schools. The Department of Education told schools that fire drills were conducted at a different interval than the fire code requires. HB66 would clarify that fire drills follow the fire code. Some legislators misinterpret this to create more fire drills.

Willett spoke about the fireworks legislation and the involvement of VDFP/SFMO. He further explained that the agency was asked to work with the sponsor of the bill to make changes. The sponsor took all edits recommended by VDFP/SFMO, leading to

Virginia Fire Services Board

Fire Prevention and Control Committee

Thursday, February 22, 2024

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1000 19th St, Virginia Beach, VA 23451

3:00 PM

the agency supporting the legislation. Sites suggested that the fire service look at this legislation before next session because the sponsor plans to bring the bill back. He further spoke about this bill directing funding for fire departments and fire marshals from the sales. The fire service needs to weigh the risks posed by fireworks with the benefits offered. This legislation was permissive, and the fire service needs to consider what it could accept in this area.

Dennis Linaburg asked further questions about Title 9/27 and fire marshals. Sites spoke about the sudden release of the report and explained that he met with the sponsor of the bill requiring the workgroup which spurred its release. Sites stated that he felt the submission of the report from the Office of the Governor to the General Assembly after crossover was strategic.

Willett stated that the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) submitted the report before it was due. Both agencies followed up on the submission and could not get an answer relating to its status. The issue is that the report was provided after crossover and that the senate bill from the previous session required reenactment. Since the senate cannot act on senate legislation, this bill is dead. Willett suggested that stakeholders use the report to draft and support legislation next session. He also stated that VDFP will try and work with DCJS to draft legislation to submit as part of VDFP's legislative proposals. DCJS is ready to begin the process but will not take information from fire marshals until they are legally allowed to. DCJS will not hold information they are not legally allowed to hold.

Hux stated that HB66 had passed out of subcommittee moments before. Willett asked Hux to thank Assistant State Fire Marshal Bower for testifying in his stead.

ADJOURNMENT

Clerk of the Committee
Spencer R. Willett

Virginia Fire Services Board

Full Board Meeting

Friday, February 23, 2024

Virginia Fire and Rescue Conference

1000 19th St, Virginia Beach, VA 23451

10:00 AM

MINUTES

The Virginia Fire Services Board meeting was held at the Virginia Fire-Rescue Conference in Virginia Beach, VA. The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Abbey Johnston and a quorum was present.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Abbey Johnston, Vice Chair – Virginia State Firefighter’s Association

Billy Hanks – Local Fire Marshal

Bettie Reeves-Nobles – General Public

James Calvert – Industry (SARA Title III/OSHA)

Steve Sites – Virginia Municipal League

Donald Hart – Virginia Association of Counties

Jerome Williams - Certified Fire Service Instructor

JM Snell II– Board of Housing and Community Development

John Miller, on behalf of Rob Farrell – Virginia State Forester

Dennis Linaberg – Virginia Chapter of IAAI

Jess Rodzinka – Virginia Professional Fire Fighters

Ben Reedy – Insurance Industry

Walt Bailey – Virginia Fire Services Council

Ernest Little – Virginia Fire Prevention Association

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Keith Johnson, Chair – Virginia Fire Chiefs’ Association

AGENCY MEMBERS PRESENT

Brad Creasy, Executive Director

Nicholas Nanna, Deputy Director

Theresa Hunter, Chief Administrative Officer

Billy Hux, State Fire Marshal

Jamey Brads, Chief of Training and Operations

Spencer Willett, Government Affairs Manager

GUESTS PRESENT

Larry Gwaltney

Brandon Proffitt

Robby Dawson

Jimmy Poindexter

Eddie Ferguson

Taylor Goodman

Billy Creasey

Jeff Flippo

Glenn Dean

Lee Day

Virginia Fire Services Board

Full Board Meeting

Friday, February 23, 2024

Virginia Fire and Rescue Conference

1000 19th St, Virginia Beach, VA 23451

10:00 AM

CHANGES IN THE AGENDA

Board Clerk Spencer Willett recommended adding the presentation of service awards immediately after the committee reports. Without objection the board added this agenda item.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Larry Gwaltney provided comments related to the death of former VFSB member Jim Stokely.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion: To approve the minutes of the previous meeting (December 2023)

Motion: Bailey, **Second:** Little

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Minutes approved

REPORT FROM VDFP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Executive Director Brad Creasy presented. Creasy discussed agency initiatives including online testing, changes to the Training and Operations Branch, and VDFP support of stakeholders during legislative session. Creasy also outlined the agency's support of Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Terry Cole meeting with fire chiefs. He recently met with firefighters and chiefs in Virginia Beach. Director Creasy also thanked Hanover Fire-EMS for hosting Secretary Cole and VDFP at their live fire training structure where the Secretary was able to conduct one evolution to experience live fire.

REPORT FROM THE FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL COMMITTEE

Committee Chair Steve Sites provided the report. He stated that the State Fire Marshal provided an update on the mobile FAST lab, which is a long overdue project as a result of the pandemic. The committee also discussed fire prevention related legislation in the General Assembly, including legislation concerning fireworks and to create a workgroup that would examine single stairwells in R-2 buildings. Both the Department of Housing and Community Development and VDFP are opposed to the legislation. The Fire Prevention and Control Plan was discussed, and the final draft will be presented to the VFSB in June. The committee also reviewed the VFSB and Board of Housing and Community Development Memorandum of Agreement. A meeting is planned soon to discuss getting this agreement moving forward. Consistent fire prevention messaging year-round was discussed by the committee, which would include partnering with VDFP Community Risk Reduction Coordinator Ken Brown.

Virginia Fire Services Board

Full Board Meeting

Friday, February 23, 2024

Virginia Fire and Rescue Conference

1000 19th St, Virginia Beach, VA 23451

10:00 AM

REPORT FROM THE LIVE FIRE TRAINING STRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Committee Chair Bettie Reeves Nobles provided the report. She stated that a final report from The Structures Group was presented to the committee. Mike Matthews provided answers remotely to questions posed by the committee. Reeves Nobles asked committee members to submit recommended edits/changes to the policy to VDFP. These changes will have to go through a regulatory process, which Spencer Willett presented on. This process could take 6-8 months to complete. Requests for edits to the policy made in December only warranted two recommended updates. Reeves Nobles has asked the committee to make changes and come prepared to discuss at the next meeting. She discussed a remote meeting possibly being held in April.

Fluvanna County and the City of Richmond spoke on their grants and requested extensions. Fluvanna County, in their request, also asked for a conversion of their grant to a container style structure. Both requests were approved by the committee. VDFP also requested funds to upgrade and refurbish their mobile burn trailers, which was approved by the committee. Goochland County also provided comments on their project during public comment.

Motion: To approve the Fluvanna County, City of Richmond, and Department of Fire Programs requests recommended from the Live Fire Training Structure Committee as a block.

Motion: Reeves Nobles

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Fluvanna County, City of Richmond, and Department of Fire Programs requests approved as a block

Walter Bailey stated his support for the committee examining Prototype 4 because of the cost effectiveness of the structures. The funds available have not increased and costs to produce standard buildings is increasing. The modular concept is more cost effective in most cases. Bailey questioned what the cost of a container style structure, built using TSG's recommended Prototype 4 plans, would cost. If the cost is substantial, the board is wasting time.

Motion: To convene a working meeting of the Live Fire Training Structure Committee before the June meeting of the VFSB to address Prototype 4 and the grant program.

Motion: Johnston, **Second:** Linaburg

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: The Live Fire Training Structure Committee must meet prior to the June VFSB meeting.

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10:00 AM

REPORT FROM THE FIRE EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

Committee Chair James Calvert recognized the Division Chiefs from VDFP, where the rubber meets the road for VDFP. He also recognized the work of the Logistics Division in maintaining the equipment needed for VDFP training classes behind the scenes. He provided an update on the realignment of the Training and Operations Branch to better meet the needs of students. Special Operations has updated seven programs and the Logistics Division has updated their audio/visual capabilities. The trench trailer has been updated and the mobile burn trailers are approximately 14 years old. Two of the trailers will be updated and a capital planning process is being implemented to examine the long-term replacement of these trailers. An annual instructor update was held where 573 instructors participated. VDFP has also processed over 13,000 ProBoard certificates.

Calvert also spoke about new and emerging training. It is imperative that the board consider different training props and equipment as the fire service develops. He also spoke to Virginia State Weekend at the National Fire Academy. Calvert stated Virginia should have the best showing because of how great Virginia's fire service is. He also spoke about how every fire chief should submit nominations for the Governor's Fire Service Awards. These awards are prestigious, and the awards committee should have copious amounts of applications to review.

Calvert provided an update on proposed regulatory changes related to emergency response by OSHA. This would be an unfunded mandate in many areas. Calvert stated he would work with Spencer Willett to provide the weblink for public comment, which is due by May 6th. The proposal would add 22 NFPA standards by reference, making them requirements for certain fire departments related to industrial firefighting. This could increase costs for fire departments. Virginia would have 12-18 months to comply.

REPORT FROM THE ADMINISTRATION, POLICY, AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Committee Chair Abbey Johnston provided the report. The committee approved the Alleghany County Fire and EMS Study Report, received an update on the Town of Lebanon Fire Report, and approved changes to the VFSB Rules of Procedure.

Motion: To approve the Alleghany County Fire and EMS Study Report and VFSB Rules of Procedure as a block

Motion: Johnston

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Alleghany County Fire and EMS Study Report and VFSB Rules of Procedure approved.

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PRESENTATION OF SERVICE AWARDS

Vice Chair Johnston presented Lee Day, Scott Garber, and Jimmy Poindexter a plaque commemorating their prior service on the Virginia Fire Services Board. Board Clerk Willett read a biography for each member for the board and assembled guests.

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

Board Vice Chair Abbey Johnston spoke to the tragedy experienced by Loudoun County, the Sterling Volunteer Fire Department, and Board Chair Keith Johnson. Johnson appreciates the outreach and support from across the fire service and the board. She spoke to the honor of supporting not only the public, but each other. Johnston also read an email from a member of the public concerning Keith Johnson. The email highlighted his hard work, the challenge of being Chair of the VFSB, and the role representing the fire service on the Board of Housing and Community Development (BHCD). Johnston recognized his strong work representing the fire service on that board.

Johnston recognized the hard work of VDFP and mentioned how many simply see the issues experienced when working with VDFP. She called attention to the many good things being done by the agency and its staff that go unnoticed. She specifically highlighted the legislative process and its burden. She thanked all in the room who were involved in the process and participated in lobbying for fire service issues. She also thanked members of the board and specifically the committee chairs.

FULL BOARD BUSINESS

a. Unfinished Business

Bailey spoke to HB2175 (2023) and how the VFSB did not have the time to review this before legislative season. Bailey believes the board should have a position paper to express to the Governor the crisis in the fire service related to fire/EMS funding. He stated that the board should support the recommendations contained in the report.

Steven Sites reported on the recent meeting of the BHCD to discuss reductions in building and fire codes as required by Executive Order #19. The Department of Housing and Community Development suggested that BHCD reopen the 2021 codes. Keith Johnson made a motion to deny this and instead look at reduction to regulations during the 2024 code cycle. BHCD voted in favor of Chief Johnson's motion. Sites stated that the Office of the Governor may count reductions already completed during the 2021 code cycle.

b. New Business

a. Information from the VFSB Clerk

Board Clerk Spencer Willett provided housekeeping updates including travel and future meetings of the board. Willett implored the board to

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remain active to make sure that staff can adequately reflect its wishes related to policy and decisions for the fire service.

b. Future Meetings of the Virginia Fire Services Board

Willett spoke to future meetings, including the planned meeting for the First Responder Conference in September. The board still needs to set meetings in June and December. The June meeting will be one day at VDFP in Glen Allen. Willett requested that members submit their availability. The December meeting should be hosted by a board member. Last year it occurred in Charlottesville, hosted by the Department of Forestry and Jess Rodzinka. He asked interested board members to express interest.

Reeves Nobles asked about a timeline for the Live Fire Training Structure Committee to meet. Willett stated that it would need to be coordinated between the board, VDFP, and TSG. Johnston stated it only needed to include VDFP and the board. Reeves Nobles asked if Willett could coordinate the meeting. Willett stated he could coordinate the meeting as is done normally.

ADJOURNMENT

Clerk of the Board
Spencer R. Willett

Virginia Fire Services Board

Fire Education and Training Committee

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Virginia Fire and Rescue Conference

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MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Education and Training Committee was held at the Virginia Fire-Rescue Conference in Virginia Beach, Virginia. The meeting was called to order by Committee Chair James Calvert and a quorum was present.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

James Calvert, Committee Chair – Industry (SARA Title III/OSHA)
Jerome Williams – Certified Fire Service Instructor
Abbey Johnston – Virginia State Firefighter’s Association
Donald Hart – Virginia Association of Counties
Jess Rodzinka – Virginia Professional Fire Fighters
Ben Reedy – Insurance Industry
Walt Bailey – Virginia Fire Services Council
Ernie Little – Virginia Fire Prevention Association

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

AGENCY MEMBERS PRESENT

Nicholas Nanna, Deputy Director
Jamey Brads, Chief of Training and Operations
Spencer Willett, Government Affairs Manager

GUESTS PRESENT

Larry Gwaltney	Lee Williams	Chris Shaver	Jim Hawley
Taylor Goodman	Priscilla Pardue	Amanda Kennedy	Jeff Flippo
Scott Garber	Mike Moles	Vernie Francis III	Joey Bona
Darrell Hudson	Mike Watkins	Robby Dawson	Richard Constantino

CHANGES IN THE AGENDA

No changes were reported to the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comment provided.

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CONSENT AGENDA

Motion: To approve the minutes of the previous meeting (December 2023)

Motion: Bailey, **Second:** Johnston

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Minutes approved

REPORT FROM THE VDFP CHIEF OF TRAINING

Chief Jamey Brads reported on a realignment of resources in the Training and Operations branch. Divisions' 1, 3 and 7 will be processed by the Accreditation section, as well as localities with delegated authority on testing. The division chiefs are still handling the scheduling of classes and day to day operations. Administrative assistants in these divisions are being reallocated to the Learning Development and Accreditation sections. In July, the remainder of the division offices will see a similar process begin. There will still be a presence in each division area geographically, but the process will be centralized for consistency. The new realignment went into effect February 10th, 2024. Chief Brads mentioned that David Jolly in Accreditation and Amanda Kennedy in Learning Development are working together to make sure this is happening correctly. Also, Division Chief 7 Marc Brade has stepped into the role that was once held by Jeff Liebold related to curriculum development in addition to his Division 7 duties. Jeff Liebold is returning as an adjunct instructor and Division Chief 6 Dennis Price is set to retire at the end of March, but also plans to come back in an adjunct status.

Chief Brads also gave an update on Special Operations. He highlighted the reaccreditation of technical rescue classes under the 2021 edition of National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1006. The Logistics Division has acquired new equipment from other state agencies to help with conferences and events across the commonwealth. VDFP continues to build out trailers to enhance training, although there are maintenance issues with some of the trailers.

The Learning Development section has assisted with making 20 online courses available on demand through Cornerstone. Training staff is continuing to rectify issues in Cornerstone for stakeholders. VDFP held its annual Instructor In-Service, with 572 instructors participating. Brads stated that technical difficulties resulted in some instructors missing the meeting. Locality instructors were also invited to participate, and this type of event will continue to occur every six months. There were three Instructor Symposiums in 2023 that netted about 600 train-the-trainers at the locality level, as well as adjunct instructors for VDFP. Instead of utilizing pre/post-testing and shadow time, the agency is moving towards a task book to gain approval as an instructor.

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The Accreditation section issued 13,000 ProBoard Certificates in 2023. On average, the agency usually produces about 10,000. The agency is absorbing the cost, which saves the localities and firefighters funds.

The agency is currently in the final stages of securing a vendor to provide online testing. The first vendor that was selected did not work out due to technological requirements. The new vendor is used by some Virginia jurisdictions already, so the agency feels it is a step in the right direction. The project will take another 60-90 days, followed by the implementation of online testing. This will be completed in phases. There will be an update on this at the June VFSB meeting.

Lithium-Ion training related to electric vehicles mandated by the General Assembly is being developed by a group of nationally recognized instructors from Virginia that are collaborating with agencies around the country that provide this training. They are working with a videographer to shoot video and determine how it will be delivered on Cornerstone. The agency is on track to deliver that program within the timeframe set by the General Assembly. The Modular Firefighter I pilot program is complete and the results on testing and retesting were high. The agency did identify some issues where the students were not grasping the material early on. The second pilot will be finished by the end of the month. There has been feedback on some parts of the class not aligning, which the agency will review. Chief Brads shared statistics on the classes offered by the agency, which were included in his written board report.

COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIR

Chair James Calvert spoke about a recent stance on ICS 300 and 400 that affects a student's ability to take other classes based on when they took the prerequisite classes. Chief Brads mentioned that the agency currently has a workgroup with the Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) to look at bridging the gap between the old program and the new one. Chief Brads also mentioned that some vital information is included in the new version.

The Chair asked for the division chiefs to raise their hand and mentioned the importance of students getting to know them within their locality. He also mentioned the importance of the Logistics Division.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. EV Fire Training Update

The Chair chose to move forward since this was discussed during the Chief of Training's Report.

b. Virginia State Weekend at the National Fire Academy Update

The National Fire Academy (NFA) state weekend is March 23rd & 24th, 2024. The Chair mentioned that the agency is paying for it and encouraged everyone to go back to their departments and encourage people to attend. The lodging, class fees and meals are all paid for. The only cost involved is the travel to get there. Chief Brads mentioned that several of the classes are full since it is a joint state weekend between several states. It is a two-step process including registration on Cornerstone and filling out the NFA application.

c. Hazardous Materials Program

The Chair stated that he received feedback from students that want hazmat technician classes but are not able to secure a spot. This process is handled by VDEM which runs a Virginia specific hazmat technician program. Some departments are sending personnel to Alabama or other states to take the 40-hour class that is International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) and ProBoard accredited for Hazmat Technicians under federal standards. Calvert questioned why more hazmat technician classes could not be offered.

NEW BUSINESS

a. North Carolina Modular Firefighter I Program

The Chair yielded the floor to Walt Bailey to discuss North Carolina's program. Bailey spoke about the history of modular firefighter training in Virginia as mandated by the General Assembly and the current format. He further stated that some departments had concerns about getting the program in Virginia when compared to the North Carolina class. He spoke with the Assistant Fire Chief in Durham, NC, as well as other officials in North Carolina, about their version of the program. The goal is to get students the same training as someone who graduated from a recruit school of a career department. The program is separated into 18 modules and about 400 hours. The modules align with the semester breakdown of the high schools, which account for 53 programs within the state. About 58 community colleges also teach the course and its free to attend amongst the fire service. In North Carolina, you can attend either the high school or college training

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depending on a person's schedule. The class is taught using Jones & Bartlett materials and there is a test that is recorded at the end of each module. By the end of the 18 modules, a firefighter is certified as a Firefighter II, as well as in traffic incident safety, safety and survival of the firefighter, hazmat and a 16-hour EMS module unless they are already a certified EMT or paramedic. Students can enter the system at any phase even if the program has already started. The high school program is a 2-year commitment and has been very successful. There is no minimum number of students needed for the class, though most likely it will not be held for just one person. The cost is \$35 per student per module. Bailey reported that other states have followed this program and are also having success. He requested a group of VDFP stakeholders visit North Carolina and meet with officials there.

Deputy Director Nicholas Nanna mentioned that he, Executive Director Brad Creasy, and Chief of Training of Operations Jamey Brads are planning a trip to see how Pennsylvania operates its fire training programs at the state level, but will add North Carolina to the list. They also plan to visit other states to look at best practices. Pennsylvania has a good program that is delivered through the community college system.

b. New and Emerging Technology in Fire Training –

The Chair turned the floor over to guest speaker Jim Hawley with Draeger to speak on emerging technology, specifically fire training structures. The Chair stated the presentation was not meant as a sales pitch. Hawley spoke on Class A and B containerized burn buildings and masonry burn buildings, some of which are starting to be condemned because of their usage, weather, and other issues. Some, if renovated or added on to, can still meet the NFPA 1402 standard and be a combination masonry and steel building. A live fire structure is any building that allows for repetitive live fire burns. Draeger follows NFPA 1402 guidelines when building their product, as do most manufacturers. He stated that containers were very flexible and showed a video of a 4-level system. Most of them can handle several levels and props. Most containers are very self-sufficient when they go into the field. Container manufacturers work with the locality to design it to their specifications and needs. He also stated the ability to move these structures is an added benefit. Draeger works with the fire department's budget to build these training structures in phases. The ability to change fire dynamics is also an added benefit. Most containers are maintenance free, but do require training in order to properly use and train with the prop safely. Hawley mentioned that the containers are also a good learning tool for instructors because they can manipulate what's going on inside

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the container, learning how changes affect fire behavior. He showed the Committee and those in attendance videos and pictures from various departments that were using containers across the country.

c. Dept. of Fire Programs Testing and Certification –

The Chair chose to move forward since this was discussed during the Chief of Training's Report.

d. OSHA Emergency Responder Notice of Proposed Rulemaking Discussion –

The Chair mentioned that the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) is considering a new Emergency Response Standard that covers not only fire brigades but also volunteers. He mentioned this could have a significant impact to the whole nation and Virginia. This change could save lives among firefighters by requiring training, but concern remains related to how this effects volunteer firefighters. Twenty-two NFPA standards will be incorporated by reference, which means they will hold the force of law if this comes to pass. Currently, there are no mandated fire training programs in the commonwealth. Public comment is still being accepted online through May 6th. Calvert encouraged people to comment on the proposed changes. OSHA violations could be very costly, ranging from \$16,000- \$160,000. He mentioned that a willful violation that results in a death could result with management being criminally liable for that violation if it was known and not corrected. The proposal also includes a requirement to follow manufacturer specifications, which is usually 10 years for turnout gear. Calvert mentioned that during many of the Board's studies, a significant amount of gear was beyond the 10-year period. The Chair stated that this new standard has a very good chance of being implemented. Calvert would like to present on the topic during the First Responder Conference if the Virginia State Firefighters Association approves.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chair called for any final thoughts, and hearing none, the Committee adjourned.

Clerk of the Committee
Spencer R. Willett

Summary of Open Project 5-20-2024

Burn Building Construction Projects: 6 open

FLUVANNA County awarded FY18 480,000

- No update

SUFFOLK County awarded FY21 480,000

- TSG is reviewing the building drawing. Second round of cursory review process initiated on 4/26/2024. Permit deadline is July 1st 2024.

RICHMOND City awarded FY23 480,000

- No Update

GOOCHLAND County awarded FY23 480,000

- TSG's is conducting the cursory review of plans. VA Department of General Services is reviewing the procurement method used to obtain building. Building permit deadline is set for July 1st 2024.

HALIFAX County awarded FY24 480,000

- Working with vendor on building drawing - Locality currently working with WHP on drawings of building, also working with engineer to survey property, permit deadline is set for September 22nd 2024.

HOPEWELL City awarded FY24 480,000

- Orientation meeting was conducted in January. No further update.

Burn Building Renovation / Repair Projects

Town of Chilhowie (repair) FY24 awarded \$17,800

- Grant award in June 2023. The locality has until June 2024 to complete project.

Town of Farmville (repair) FY24 awarded \$25,000

- Repair project was approved in March 2024 for 50% funding due to locality's lack of annual reports. Locality has until March 28, 2025 to complete project.

Town of Pulaski (repair) FY24 awarded \$28,588

- Grant award was approved in January 2024. Locality has until February 14th 2025 to complete project as outline in application received.

Fire Programs, Training and Ops – Mobile Burn Trailers (renovation) awarded \$438,986

- Grant approved by Board at February Meeting. No update to report.

Fire and EMS study

Name: Scottie Cassell

Title: Emergency Management Director

Locality Name: Patrick County

1. **This request is being made by** County of Patrick.
2. **Scope of Study:** Due to new leadership in the county, we are asking for this study to be conducted so that day to day operations can be researched for shortcomings and areas of improvement can be found as well as long term goals being set, specifically balancing volunteer agencies along with career staff.
3. **Have you had a VFSB study in the past?** No Patrick County has never had this study done.
4. **Has a private consultant of other entity completed or is in the process of completing a review or study of your fire and EMS system?** No Patrick County has never had a study like this done.
5. **Is there a financial need for a study/review in your locality? What is the financial need?** Yes, as a rural economically distressed County we have to be very judicious with our funds/budget.
6. **Is this request based on a recent incident or issue related to fire/EMS? What is the incident/issue?** Not one incident, with new leadership we feel the need to look at the fire and rescue system.
7. **Does your organization have a current organizational chart?** Each volunteer department/squad keeps up with their own, but they do fill out a sheet letting me know

who their officers are. As for Station 8 we are in the process of redoing ours due to shift changes.

8. **Does your organization have a map of current response districts?** Yes, each department/squad has its own response area.
9. **What best describes your fire operations response?** The County of Patrick runs 1 career staff department which is responsible for both fire and EMS. There are also 9 volunteer fire departments that operate in the county.
10. **What best describes your EMS operations response?** The County of Patrick runs 1 career staff department which is responsible for both fire and EMS. The county also has 6 volunteer rescue squads at this time. But one of the squads, Jeb Stuart, has stated that they will close down as of June 1, 2024.
11. **Please answer the following questions:**
 - A. **How many career personnel do you have and what is their role?** At this time, we have 12 full time personnel with the plans of adding 4 more as soon as we can. We also have 12 part-time personnel. Their roles are to give medical care and fire support as trained.
 - B. **How many active, riding volunteers do you have and what is their role?** On paper we have around 200, active volunteers are around 100 between fire and EMS.
12. **Is your organization established by local or county government?** The county does have one local government ran station, it is known as Patrick County Fire & EMS or Station 8. All the volunteer departments/squads are their own LLC or INC companies.

- 13. Please attach a list of departments with the chief/captains name and contact information to this application that are participating in this study/review.** I have attached a copy of the latest fire and EMS leadership.
- 14. Does the local government's establishing ordinance clearly authorize all services that are provided by your organization? If no, please explain what is not authorized currently.** At this time we only have one ordinance that gives some power to the Emergency Management Director, but each squad was given a DORA letter to operate and both departments/squad charters lay out some of this. The charters are kept in the courts records as well as in the office of the Emergency Management Director.
- 15. Does your organization have stated short and long term goals?** This is an area that myself and the new county leadership are starting to work on and put into writing, but nothing is in formal writing at this time.
- 16. Do you operate under a centralized Fire and EMS authority?** All fire and EMS are given permission and a territory to cover by the Board of Supervisors. They in turn appoint someone to oversee these departments/squads, and that duty is given to the Emergency Management Director.
- 17. If yes to the above, what is the title of the position that oversees the central Fire and EMS organization?** This falls under the duties of the Emergency Management Director.
- 18. Is there an organization or similar body that discusses Fire and EMS issues collaboratively? Please provide the contact information for the leadership of the organization?** We do have a Fire & Rescue Association but it has become more of a reporting out thing. We have formed an ESAC committee that is made up of all the leads of the departments/squads. We also still have a Recuse Association that meets and talks

about rescue issues and the fire chiefs meet to talk about fire issues. At this time nothing goes to the board that does not go before the ESAC committee. This is headed up by the Emergency Management Director.

19. Does the local government provide funding? Please provide the most recent most

recent budget(s) for the fire and EMS organizations from the locality. The county does fund both the volunteer fire and EMS with capital improvement and annual contribution money. We also as a county carry the disability insurance. I have attached a copy of last year's volunteer's budget. Both fire and EMS have an increase in this year's budget which has not been approved yet.

20. Does your organization charge for service? The county does soft bill for its EMS calls.

21. Does the jurisdiction/local government own the following:

- a. Fire Apparatus** the county does not own any fire apparatus.
- b. EMS Vehicles** the county does have 3 ALS ambulances at this time, with one unit needing replacement.
- c. Stations** the county has one station that is manned 24-7.

22. Does your organization have a capital improvement plan or apparatus replacement

schedule? The county run department does it on a as needed base, as for the volunteers the county does give capital improvement money out on a rotation. I have added a copy of that rotation to this package.

23. Does your organization track maintenance of apparatus and equipment? Yes, we do

in a spreadsheet that we have to keep for OEMS.

24. Does your jurisdiction/locality have a:

- a. Fire Marshal** at this time we do not.

b. Public Fire and Life Safety Educator the county does not have one at this time, each department does do some safety education as does the Emergency Management office.

c. Fire Corps Program at this time the county does not have one.

25. If you have a fire marshal, do they regularly inspect places of public assembly? Does your fire marshal have police powers? We do not have one.

26. Does your jurisdiction/locality have a:

a. A Coordinated Centralized Training Program for Fire

b. A Coordinated Centralized Training Program for EMS

c. A Fire Training Officer

d. An EMS Training Officer

At this time all the duties and officers listed below fall on the duties of the Emergency Management Director.

27. Has your jurisdiction/locality adopted the Statewide Fire Prevention Code? Was this adopted in full or by complaint only? No

28. Does your jurisdiction/locality provide public fire and life safety activities? If so, please provide examples of these activities below. Most of the fire departments do some form of this for the public. We would like to do more but with limited staff it is hard.

29. Does your jurisdiction/locality have formal written Mutual or Automatic Aid agreements with your neighboring jurisdictions/localities? Yes, we do with all of the six neighboring jurisdictions, four in Virginia and two in North Carolina, and these are kept in the Emergency Management Director's office.

30. **Does your jurisdiction/locality have current, written Standard Operating Procedures that all organizations follow?** Station 8, which is the county run station, does. They are kept at Station 8, both in the office and in the living area of the personnel. All other stations and squads run under their own SOPs.
31. **Does your jurisdiction/locality have established written response time criteria?** We do have them for EMS.
32. **Does your jurisdiction/locality have centralized and structured dispatched criteria with predetermined response criteria?** Yes, we do, but this is a ongoing process.
33. **Does your dispatch center practice Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD)?** Yes, they have practiced EMD for the last few years.
34. **Is your jurisdiction/locality NIMS compliant?** To the best of my knowledge we are, we are also looking at have some of those classes soon.
35. **Is your jurisdiction/locality have a written policy for minimum staffing level for:** At this time there is no written policy at this time.
36. **Does your jurisdiction/locality have a structured Recruitment and Retention program?** No, we do not have one at this time. This is something we as a county are looking at how to implement.
37. **Does your jurisdiction/locality have minimum standardized training requirement?**
What are those requirement? The county ran staff must have FFI at a minimum to fight fire and have to be at least EMT-B on the EMS side. As for the volunteers there is no set standard by the county.
38. **How many of your firefighters have the following certifications:** These numbers are only Station 8:

- a. **FFI:** 2
- b. **FFII:** 10
- c. **Instructor:** 2
- d. **Officer I:** 2
- e. **Other:**

39. **How many of your EMS have the following certifications:** These numbers are only
Station 8

- a. **NPP:** 8
- b. **EMT-I:** 2
- c. **EMT-A:** 3
- d. **EMT-B:** 11

40. **Does your jurisdiction/locality have centralized data collection system?**

- a. **Fire-VFIRS** not at this time, we are working on getting back on this system.
- b. **EMS-PPDR** yes, we do as a county.
- c. **EMS-VPHIB** not at this time.

41. **What is the daytime population of the area being served?** It is close to the night time,
but we do have the 58-expansion project going on and a lot of travelers. As for the
number I am not sure.

42. **What is the nighttime population of the area being served?** As of 2022 it was 17,643.

43. **Does your locality have municipal water and who maintains the system?** The county
does have its own PSA. It is maintained by the PSA Director and county maintenance
department. The water comes from the Town of Stuart which maintains the water
treatment plant.

44. Is there a hydrant system in your locality? There are a limited number of hydrants in the county that run along East 58 to the Patrick Springs area. We also have a few that run from Henry County to Fairystone State Park off of Route 57. The location of the hydrants are on the maps at dispatch and known to the departments in which they are located.

45. How many dry hydrants does your locality have? Are these marked in a map or other source for fire response? We do have a few dry hydrants in the county but are very hardly used due to the lack of up keep. We do have multiple water access points and they are known to the departments that use them. A record of those are kept in the Emergency Management Director's office.

46. What prompted your request for a study? We as new leadership in the county have seen the need for change because systems that worked 10 years ago are not working. We know we have short falls and we as a county want to learn and implement best practices. We see somewhat of a broken system and are looking for help in improving our systems for not only today but for the future.

47. Please provide any additional that you believe would be beneficial to the study team. We have heard great things about the studies in other areas and what they have been able to change. We the new leadership and the heads of every department/squad are looking forward to working with the team to make Patrick County Fire and Rescue a better and safer place.



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Keith H. Johnson
VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICES
BOARD CHAIR

Virginia Fire Services Board

Scope of Fire and EMS Study/Review Agreement

between

Patrick County, Virginia

and the

Virginia Fire Services Board

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this agreement is to establish mutually accepted duties, responsibilities, and expectations between the Virginia Fire Services Board, its designated Fire and EMS Study/Review team, and the locality which has requested the Fire and EMS Study/Review from the Virginia Fire Service Board. The agreement is provided to help define activities and expectations between both parties.

AGREEMENT

- Study/review results and recommendations shall be comprehensive in nature and shall be consistent with and organized according to a final revised scope of work as negotiated between the study team and the locality prior to the formal commencement of the study/review. The scope of work should be communicated in writing as a part of the request letter;
- While questions of staffing ratios, response time, capital equipment purchases, etc. are relevant to the study/review process, the locality should not expect detailed recommendations in these areas beyond system-wide recommendations;
- Study/review results will be publicly presented to the elected/appointed governing body, the requesting agency, as well as any additional requesting organization(s);
- The time frame noted for the study/review site visits will be accepted and presented by the locality to all participating agencies;
- All relevant organizational data will be made available to the study/review team including but not limited to:

- Budgets
- Call response data
- Standard Operating Procedures and Guidelines
- Job Descriptions
- Information on any Fire/Rescue Association
- The locality must advertise the public hearing on their website, and through local print media and social media, on behalf of the study/review team.
- The locality must notify all study/review participants of the public hearing and the site visit schedule;
- The locality must provide a list of each department participating and the primary point of contact for that department prior to the commencement of the study/review;
- The locality will provide to the Virginia Department of Fire Programs a central point of contact. Please ensure the contact is available Monday – Friday from 9 am to 5 pm, and nighttime and weekends as needed;
- The Department of Fire Programs will solicit feedback from the locality 9 months after the report is presented to the locality's governing body. It is requested that the locality complete the survey so the Agency and Board can gain valuable insight into the success and areas of improvements for future studies. Your participation in the feedback survey is important to the Agency and Board;
- The locality must provide copies of any fire/EMS related study conducted in the previous 10 years.

REVIEW AND TERM

This agreement shall be in effect until the end of the Fire and EMS Study or 18 months after the approval of the application for a study by the Virginia Fire Services Board. The Virginia Fire Services Board may extend this term in the event of an emergency or situation that would severely impact the outcome of the study.

SIGNED

We do hereby acknowledge and agree to abide by the provisions of this Memorandum of Understanding.

Name: Keith Johnson

Chair, Virginia Fire Services Board

Beth Simms

Date

5/13/2024

Name: Beth Simms, County Administrator
Authorized Locality Representative

Date



COUNTY OF PATRICK

Office of the County Administrator

April 9, 2024

Attn: Virginia Fire Services Board
105 Technology Park Dr.
Glen Allen, VA 23059

RE: Comprehensive Analysis Study of Fire/EMS System Request - Patrick County

This letter is to request the services of the Virginia Fire Services Board (VFSB) in conducting a complete and thorough review of the fire and EMS system in Patrick County.

This study has the support of the Patrick County Board of Supervisors and County Administrator as shown by the attached Resolution of Support adopted at the Board of Supervisor's meeting held on April 8, 2024.

The requested areas of concentration of the study include:

- Organization
- Budget
- Personnel
- Training
- Fleet Management (Equipment/Apparatus)
- Emergency Services Council
- Patrick County Fire & Rescue Departments

It is the Board's and County Administration's proposal to have a complete and thorough review of the aforementioned areas of concentration and a comprehensive list of recommendations to enhance the delivery of services to the citizens of Patrick County.

Your consideration of this request at the next available opportunity would be greatly appreciated. Scottie Cassell is our Director of Emergency Services and is available to respond to any questions you may have regarding this request. He may be reached by phone at 276-692-7731 or by email at scassell@co.patrick.va.us

Sincerely,

Beth Simms
County Administrator



COUNTY OF PATRICK

Board of Supervisors


Resolution

of the Board of Supervisors of Patrick County, Virginia
authorizing the request of a Virginia Fire Services Board study

WHEREAS, Patrick County requests the services of the Virginia Fire Services Board (VFSB) in conducting a complete and thorough review of the fire and EMS system in Patrick County; and

WHEREAS, the requested areas of concentration of the study include organization, budget, personnel, training, fleet management (equipment/apparatus), emergency services council, Patrick County Fire & Rescue Departments; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of Patrick County, Virginia hereby adopts this Resolution of Support for a complete and thorough review of the aforementioned areas of concentration and a comprehensive list of recommendations to enhance the delivery of services to the citizens of Patrick County.

By: 
Brandon J. Simmons, Chairman
Patrick County Board of Supervisors

Date: 04/08/24

Attest: 
Amy Walker, Clerk

The County of Patrick will not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, national origin, age, marital or veteran status, medical condition or handicap, or any other status protected by law. We are an Equal Opportunity Employer.

VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICES BOARD



RULES OF PROCEDURE

Preamble

(To be Published)

Article I Name and Offices

Section 1.1 **Name.** The name of the organizations shall be the Virginia Fire Services Board (VFSB).

Section 1.2 **Offices.** The principle office for the Virginia Fire Services Board shall be located within the offices of the Virginia Department of Fire Programs.

Article II Purpose, Powers and Duties

Section 2.1 **Purpose, Powers and Duties.** The Virginia Fire Services Board shall function as a policy board within the Virginia Department of Fire Programs. The Virginia Fire Services Board shall have the specific powers and duties enumerated by § 9.1-203 of the *Code of Virginia* and other duties enumerated by § 38.2-401 of the *Code*. Section 9.1-202 of the *Code* designates the Virginia Fire Services Board as one of the Commonwealth of Virginia's policy boards and as such it has the characteristics of any policy board, commission or council as described in § 2.2-2100 of the *Code*.

Article III Members

Section 3.1 **Members.** There shall be fifteen (15) members of the Virginia Fire Services Board appointed by the Governor, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly as follows: one (1) representative of the insurance industry; two (2) members of the general public with no connection to the fire services, one (1) of which shall be a representative of those industries affected by Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA), Title III and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) training requirements; and one (1) representative from each of the following organizations: the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, the Virginia State Firefighter's Association, the Virginia Association of Professional Firefighters, the Virginia Fire Services Council, the Virginia Fire Prevention Association, the State Chapter of the International Association of Arson Investigators, the Virginia Municipal League, the Virginia Association of Counties; a local fire

marshal as defined by § 27-30; and a certified Virginia fire service instructor. Of these appointees at least one shall be a volunteer firefighter. In addition to the gubernatorial appointees, the following persons shall serve as ex officio members of the Virginia Fire Services Board: State Forester and a member of the Board of Housing and Community Development to be appointed by the chair of that Board.

Article IV Officers

Section 4.1 **Number and Title.** Members of the Virginia Fire Services Board shall elect annually from its membership two (2) officers a Chair and a Vice-Chair.

Section 4.2 **Election.** The officers shall be elected for a term of one (1) year at the annual meeting (June) of the Virginia Fire Services Board. Newly elected officers shall assume their respective offices at the first scheduled meeting following the election.

Section 4.3 **Nominees for Election.** When more than (1) person is nominated for election as an officer voting shall be conducted by a Nomination Committee. The Chair Pro-Tem shall appoint a two (2) member Nomination Committee to conduct the election and report the results.

Section 4.4 **Removal.** Members of the Virginia Fire Services Board may vote to remove an officer, i.e. the Chair or Vice-Chair, when it is determined that the best interests of the Virginia Fire Services Board are not being served. The vote for removal will be by two-thirds (2/3rds) of the members present.

Section 4.5 **Replacement.** A special election may be conducted at any meeting of the Virginia Fire Services Board to replace an officer, i.e. the Chair or Vice-Chair, who has been removed, incapacitated or resigned.

Section 4.6 **Duties and Authorities.** The officers shall perform specified duties and shall have the power to exercise specific authorities as provided by these Rules of Procedure.

Section 4.7 **Chair.** The Chair shall call meetings of the Virginia Fire Services Board and set the agenda for such meetings. The Chair shall have the power to appoint committees, assign responsibilities and appoint a Board member to serve as the VFSB Representative on the Board of Housing and Community Development. The Chair shall be an Ex-Officio member of all committees except the Executive Committee and the Nomination Committee. As an Ex-Officio member of a committee, the Chair shall have the same rights as other committee members except the Chair is not obligated to attend committee meetings.

Section 4.8 **Vice-Chair.** The Vice-Chair shall assume the duties of the Chair in his/her absence and shall perform other duties as assigned by the Chair.

Section 4.9 **Appointment of a Chair Pro-Tem.** The Chair of the Virginia Fire Services Board shall appoint a Chair Pro-Tem when the Chair vacates the chair and the Vice-Chair is unavailable during meetings.

Section 4.9.1 **Election of a Chair Pro-Tem.** The Virginia Fire Services Board may elect a Chair Pro-Tem to preside during meetings to remove any officer. The Virginia Fire Services Board shall elect a Chair Pro-Tem during meetings when there is a call for an election.

Article V Meetings

Section 5.1 **Regular Meetings.** There shall be no more than six (6) regular meetings of the Virginia Fire Services Board during each fiscal year (1 July to 30 June). The Chair shall determine the date, time and location of the meetings.

Section 5.2 **Annual Meeting.** There shall be one (1) annual meeting of the Virginia Fire Services Board to be held during June of each year. The Chair shall determine the date, time and location for the annual meeting.

Section 5.3 **Special Meetings.** The Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security may call a special meeting of the Board should circumstances dictate. The purpose of the special meeting shall be stated in the written notice of said meeting and concurrent with public notification as required by [§ 2.2-3707](#) of the *Code of Virginia*. Except in the case of emergency, there shall be at least five (5) working days between the date of the written notice and the date of the special meeting.

Section 5.4 **Clerk.** The Executive Director of the Virginia Department of Fire Programs shall recommend the appointment of a Clerk to the Chair of Virginia Fire Services Board. The Clerk will publish the call for meetings and record, publish, distribute, maintain, store and destroy all committee, subcommittee and Virginia Fire Services Board meeting records and minutes in accordance with State law and policy of State Librarian of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Section 5.5 **Waiver of Notice.** Any member of the Virginia Fire Services Board may waive notice of any meeting before, at or after such meeting. Attendance of a member at a meeting of the Virginia Fire Services Board shall constitute a waiver of notice of such a meeting, except where a member attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business because the meeting is not lawfully called or convened. Neither the business to be transacted nor the purpose of any regular or annual meeting needs to be specified in the notice of such a meeting.

Section 5.6 **Quorum.** A majority of the members of the Virginia Fire Services Board shall constitute a quorum. The Chair shall determine that a quorum is present before calling a meeting to order. The minutes shall reflect the name of the members present. If less than a quorum is present, a majority of the members present at the meeting may postpone or delay the meeting without further notice until a quorum is present.

Section 5.7 **Order of Business – Regular Meetings.** At regular meetings the order of business shall be as follows:

- Call to Order
- Pledge of Allegiance & Moment of Silence
- Roll Call
- Sign-in sheet for guests
- Changes in the agenda
- Public comments
- Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting
- Report From The VDFP Executive Director
- Report from the Fire Prevention and Control Committee
- Report from the Live Fire Training Structures (Burn Building) Committee
- Report from the Fire Education and Training Committee
- Report from the Administration, Policy and Finance Committee
- Comments From Chair of the Board
- Full Board Business
- Unfinished Business
- New Business
- Adjournment

Section 5.8 Order of Business – Annual Meeting. At the annual meeting the order of business shall be as follows:

- Pledge of Allegiance & Moment of Silence
- Roll Call
- Sign-in sheet for guests
- Changes in the agenda
- Public comments
- Consent Agenda
 - A. Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting
- Report From The VDFP Executive Director
- Report from the Fire Prevention and Control Committee
- Report from the Live Fire Training Structures (Burn Building) Committee
- Report from the Fire Education and Training Committee
- Report from the Administration, Policy and Finance Committee
- Comments From Chair of the Board
- Full Board Business
- Unfinished Business
- Election of Chairman Pro-Tem
- Report from the Nomination Committee
- Election of Officers
- New Business
 - A. Rules and Procedures Approval & Resigning
 - B. Request for Committee Assignments & Chairs
- Adjournment

Section 5.9 Conduct of Business in Meetings. All motions offered during meetings shall be repeated by the Clerk of the Virginia Fire Services Board.

Section 5.10 Voting. Each member of the Virginia Fire Services Board shall have the sole privilege of voting on all matters submitted to them at all regular, annual and special meetings. Each member shall cast one (1) vote at meetings where they are present. There shall be no proxy votes or votes by designees or substitutes.

Section 5.11 Presumption of Assent. A member of the Virginia Fire Services Board who is present at a meeting at which an action on any matter is taken shall be presumed to have assented to such

action. A dissent shall be entered into the minutes of the meeting or a written dissent to such action is filed with the Clerk before the meeting is adjourned.

Section 5.12 **Debate.** Members of the Virginia Fire Services Board shall confine debate to the merits of the pending question once it has been brought before the Board. Members shall address their remarks to the Chair.

Section 5.13 **Closed Meetings.** The Commonwealth of Virginia has a policy which states that the affairs of government shall be conducted in the open. Therefore, all meetings of the Virginia Fire Services Board will be open to the public, unless stated otherwise. As a public body, the Virginia Fire Services Board may hold meetings that are closed to the public, but only for the purposes specified in § [2.2-3711](#), (A) of the *Code of Virginia*. A step by step procedure to conduct a closed meeting is specified in § [2.2-3711](#) of the *Code*.

Article VI

Executive Committee

Section 6.1 **Members.** The Executive Committee of the Virginia Fire Services Board shall consist of the following members: the Chair, the Vice-Chair and the Chairs of the Standing Committees. The Chair may vote to resolve a tie vote. The Chair may appoint one additional Board member to the Executive Committee, as needed.

Section 6.2 **Authority.** The Executive Committee, during the interval between meetings of the Virginia Fire Services Board, shall have the authority to consider all policy matters that are deemed to require action where the Board has given no instructions or directions. The Executive Committee shall not have the authority to alter, amend nor repeal these Rules of Procedure. All actions taken by the Executive Committee shall be reported to the Virginia Fire Services Board at its next meeting.

Section 6.3 **Quorum.** A majority of the members of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum.

Section 6.4 **Order of Business.** At meetings of the Executive Committee the order of business shall be as follows:

- Call to Order
- Pledge of Allegiance & Moment of Silence
- Roll Call
- Sign-in Sheet for Guests
- Changes In Agenda
- Public Comment
- Consent Agenda
 - A. Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting
- Comments from Chair of the Board
- Unfinished business
- New business

Section 6.5 **Voting.** Each member of the Executive Committee shall have the sole privilege of voting on all matters submitted to them. Each member of the Committee shall cast one

(1) vote. There shall be no proxy votes or votes by designees or substitutes.

Section 6.6 **Presumption of Assent.** A member of the Executive Committee who is present at a meeting where a vote is taken on any matter is presumed to have assented to such action unless a dissent is entered into the minutes of the meeting or a written dissent is filed before the meeting is adjourned.

Article VII Committees

Section 7.1. **Standing Committees.** There shall be four (4) standing committees of the Virginia Fire Services Board: The Committee on Administration, Policy and Finance; the Committee on Fire Education and Training; the Committee on Fire Prevention and Control and; the Live Structure Committee. No committee shall have the authority to amend, alter or repeal these Rules of Procedure, to appoint or remove any member of a committee or to amend, alter or repeal any resolution or motion of the Virginia Fire Services Board. Members of committees shall serve at the pleasure of the Chair of the Board. The Chair of the Board shall appoint the Chair and members of all committees, except that the Vice- Chair of the Board will be Chair of Administration, Policy and Finance.

Section 7.1.1 **The Committee on Administration, Policy and Finance.** This committee shall be responsible for providing information and make recommendations to the Board and the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security concerning legislation affecting fire prevention and protection, and fire services organizations in Virginia; approving the criteria for and disbursement of any grant funds received from the federal government and any agencies thereof and any other source and to disburse such funds in accordance therewith; and investigating alternative means of financial support for volunteer fire departments and advising jurisdictions regarding the implementation of such alternatives. The committee will also oversee the fire and EMS studies coordinator, who will ensure that technical assistance and advice to local fire departments, fire service organizations and local governments are carried out through Fire and Emergency Medical Services studies done in conjunction with the Agency. The committee will also establish policy on financial matters including but not limited to, Aid-To-Localities (ATL), grant funds, and special request of committees. The Chair of this committee will be the Vice Chair of the Board.

Section 7.1.2 **The Committee on Fire Education and Training.** The Chair of the Virginia Fire Services Board shall appoint a Chair to the Fire Education and Training Committee. The Committee on Fire Education and Training shall be responsible for providing information and making recommendations to the Virginia Fire Services Board related to the review and approval of a five-year (5) statewide plan for fire education and training; and advising the Agency on and adopting personnel standards for fire service personnel.

Section 7.1.3 **The Committee on Fire Prevention and Control.** The Chair of the Virginia Fire Services Board shall appoint a Chair to the Fire Prevention and Control Committee. The Committee on Fire Prevention and Control shall be responsible for providing information and making recommendations to the Virginia Fire Services Board and Agency to ensure the development and implementation of the Virginia Fire Prevention and Control plan; advising the Agency on the development a statewide plan for the collection, analysis and reporting of data related to fires in the Commonwealth; and evaluating all fire prevention and protection programs,

and make any recommendations deemed necessary to improve the level of fire prevention and protection in the Commonwealth.

Section 7.1.2 **The Committee on Live Structure.** The Chair of the Virginia Fire Services Board shall appoint a Chair to the Live Structure Committee. The Committee shall consist of six other members and must include at a minimum the following members: the Fire Education and Training Committee Chair (as currently appointed); the Board member representing the Insurance Industry; either a Virginia Association of Counties or a Virginia Municipal League member; and, either a Board of Housing & Community Development or a General Public member. The Committee shall be responsible for assisting the Administration, Policy and Finance Committee with the review and analysis of the Live Fire Training Structure Grant Program.

Section 7.2 **Special Committees.** The Chair of the Virginia Fire Services Board or the Chairman Pro-Tem shall appoint, as the need arises, special committees that go out of existence when relieved by the Chair or when their task is completed and a final report is submitted. The Nomination Committee is an example of such a committee.

Section 7.3 **Subcommittees.** The Chair of the Virginia Fire Services Board shall create subcommittees at the request of committee chairs as the need arises. No subcommittee shall have the authority to amend, alter or repeal these Rules of Procedure, to appoint or remove any member of a subcommittee or to amend, alter or repeal any resolution or motion of the Virginia Fire Services Board. The Chair of the Board shall appoint the Chair and members of the subcommittees. All subcommittee appointees shall serve at the pleasure of the Chair of the Board. Subcommittee members must be members of the Virginia Fire Services Board.

Section 7.4 **Conduct of Business in Committees.** The quorum for a committee meeting shall be a majority of the members of the committee. Meeting of Special Committees shall be conducted in one session. The regular rules of parliamentary procedure shall apply except where special instructions have been given. Motions to close or limit debate shall not be allowed. When a substantive matter is being considered the Chair of a committee may hold a public hearing. All motions or resolutions offered during a subcommittee meeting shall be presented in verbal form with the voting member's last name being announced by the individual or the Chair at the time of introduction. Only committee members shall have the right to debate and deliberate on resolutions or motions. Committee members shall have the sole privilege of voting on all matters submitted to them. Each member shall cast one (1) vote at meetings where they are present. There shall be no proxy votes or votes by designees or substitutes. Per *Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised*, Committee Chairs may only vote to break a tie or when voting is conducted through ballot. A committee report shall be an official statement providing information, offering a resolution or recommending the adoption of a motion.

Section 7.4.1 **Conduct of Business in Subcommittees.** The quorum for a subcommittee meeting shall be 5 members of the subcommittee. The regular rules of parliamentary procedure shall apply except where special instructions have been given. Motions to close or limit debate shall not be allowed. When a substantive matter is being considered the Chair of a subcommittee may hold a public hearing. All motions or resolutions offered during a subcommittee meeting shall be presented in verbal form with the voting member's last name being announced by the individual or the Chair at the time of introduction. Only subcommittee members shall have the right to debate and deliberate on resolutions or motions. Subcommittee members shall have the sole privilege of voting on all matters submitted to them. Each member shall cast one (1) vote at meetings where they are

present. There shall be no proxy votes or votes by designees or substitutes. Per *Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised*, Subcommittee Chairs may only vote to break a tie or when voting is conducted through ballot. A subcommittee report shall be an official statement providing information, offering a resolution or recommending the adoption of a motion.

Section 7.5 Order of Business in Committee Meetings. At Committee meetings the order of business shall be as follows:

- Call to Order
- Pledge of Allegiance & Moment of Silence
- Roll Call
- Sign-in sheet for guests
- Changes in the agenda
- Public Comments
- Consent Agenda
 - A. Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting
- Report from the Virginia Department of Fire Programs' committee liaison
- Comments from the Committee Chair
- Report from (Subcommittee Chair, where appropriate)
- Unfinished Business
- New Business
- Adjournment

Section 7.5.1 Order of Business in Subcommittee Meetings. At Subcommittee meetings the order of business shall be as follows:

- Call to Order
- Pledge of Allegiance & Moment of Silence
- Roll Call
- Sign-in sheet for guests
- Changes in the agenda
- Public comments
- Comments from the Subcommittee Chair
- Unfinished Business
- New Business
- Adjournment

**Article VIII Parliamentary
Authority**

Section 8.1 Purpose. The purpose for parliamentary authority shall be to provide for the orderly conduct of business by the Virginia Fire Services Board.

Section 8.2 Application. At all meetings of the Virginia Fire Services Board and at all committee and subcommittee meetings parliamentary procedure shall apply. Parliamentary procedure requires treatment of one matter at a time, extending courtesy and fairness to all members of the Virginia Fire Services Board and letting the majority rule while guaranteeing the right of the minority.

Section 8.3 **Parliamentary Authority.** The parliamentary authority for the Virginia Fire Services Board shall be the rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*. The parliamentary authority shall be the governing authority in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these Rules of Procedure and any special rules of order the Virginia Fire Services Board may adopt.

Section 8.4 **Parliamentarian.** The Chair of the Virginia Fire Services Board or the Chair of any Committee may appoint a Parliamentarian when appropriate during any meeting. The Parliamentarian shall advise the Chair on all questions of parliamentary procedure.

Section 8.5 **Special Rules.** All formal actions, i.e. motions, will be effective upon their passage by the Full Board, unless otherwise noted. (Per Board motion on February 24, 2012)

Article IX

Conflict of Interest

Section 9.1 **Conflict of Interest Defined.** A conflict of interest shall be defined as the competition between the personal economic interests of an individual member of the Virginia Fire Services Board and the economic interest of the Virginia Fire Services Board as defined by the *Code of Virginia*, § [2.2-3100](#) – [2.2-3131](#). A conflict may exist when financial or other material gains are derived as a result of a direct or indirect relationship.

Section 9.2 **Disclosure.** Members of the Virginia Fire Services Board shall disclose any possible conflict of interest to the Board. When a possible conflict is relevant to a matter requiring action, the interested member shall provide all appropriate information. When there is doubt as to whether a conflict of interest exists, the matter shall be resolved by a vote of the Board, excluding the member concerned with the possible conflict of interest. Any member disclosing a possible conflict of interest may be counted in determining the presence of a quorum.

Section 9.3 **Absence from Discussion.** A member reporting a possible personal conflict of interest shall absent themselves from the discussion of the conflict of interest.

Section 9.4 **Abstinance from vote.** The member determined to have a personal conflict of interest shall abstain from any vote on the conflict of interest matter. The member shall be counted as present in determining a quorum. The minutes of the meeting shall reflect that the member abstaining during any vote on a possible conflict of interest.

Article X

Changes to the Rules of Procedure

Section 10.1 **Amendment.** These Rules of Procedure may be amended, altered, repealed or replaced at any meeting of the Virginia Fire Services Board by an affirmative vote of a majority of the members present provided that amendment or alteration has been submitted in writing at the previous meeting and notice of such a proposed action is included in the call of the meeting.

Section 10.2 **Technical Corrections.** The Clerk of the Virginia Fire Services Board is authorized to correct article and section designations, punctuation and cross-references and to make such other technical and conforming changes as may be necessary to reflect the intent of the Virginia Fire Services Board in connection with any amendments to these Rules of Procedure, with review

and approval of the Chair of the Board.

Section 10.3 **Review.** The Administration, Policy and Finance Committee and the Clerk of the Virginia Fire Services Board will review these Rules of Procedure prior to the annual meeting. A report and recommendations of this review will be made to the full Board at the annual meeting.

Article XI

Subject Matter Experts to the Board

Section 11.1 **Subject Matter Experts.** The Chair of the Virginia Fire Services Board or Chair Pro-Tem should call for subject matter experts to advise the board as the need arises. These subject matter experts should serve an advisory role to the board and should be selected by the chair with approval of the board. These advisors are not members of the board and have no power to vote or amend any component of the board or act on behalf of the board.

Section 11.2 **Workgroups.** The Chair of the Virginia Fire Services Board or the Chairman Pro-Tem shall create, as the need arises, workgroups of subject matter experts that go out of existence when relieved by the Chair or when their task is completed and a final report is submitted. No workgroup shall have the authority to amend, alter or repeal these Rules of Procedure, to appoint or remove any member of a workgroup or to amend, alter or repeal any resolution or motion of the Virginia Fire Services Board. The Chair of the Board shall appoint the Chair and members of the workgroup. All appointees shall serve at the pleasure of the Chair of the Board. Appointees are not members of the Virginia Fire Services Board but offer expertise to the board when making decisions.

Section 11.2.1 **The Codes and Standards Workgroup.** The Chair of the Virginia Fire Services Board shall appoint a Chair to the Codes and Standards Workgroup. The workgroup shall consist of at least six other members, including the following: the Fire Prevention and Control Committee Chair (as currently appointed); a representative of the Virginia Fire Prevention Association; the Virginia State Fire Marshal; a representative of the Virginia Fire Marshal Academy; and two members-at-large, to be appointed by the Chair of the Board. The workgroup shall be responsible for assisting the Fire Prevention and Control Committee with the review and analysis of the Statewide Fire Prevention Code, as well as the Uniformed Statewide Building Code and all other relevant fire and life safety codes.

Rules of Procedure Certification

The undersigned as the Chair of the Virginia Fire Services Board certifies that as such is authorized to execute this certificate and that the foregoing Rules of Procedure consisting of 10 pages including this page constitute the Rules of Procedure of the Virginia Fire Services Board duly adopted on the 23rd day of February 2024



Chair, Virginia Fire Services Board

6/11/24

Date