

Virginia Fire Services Board

Fire Prevention and Control Committee

Thursday, March 27, 2025

Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting

9:30AM

MINUTES

A rescheduled meeting of the Fire Prevention and Control Committee was held virtually on Microsoft Teams. The meeting was called to order by Committee Chair Steven Sites and a quorum was present.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Steven Sites, Committee Chair – Virginia Municipal League
Keith Johnson – Virginia Fire Chief's Association
Ernie Little – Virginia Fire Prevention Association
Billy Hanks – Local Fire Marshal
John Miller – Virginia State Forester
Carla Keesee – Virginia Chapter of the International Assoc. of Arson Investigators

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

JM Snell II – Virginia Board of Housing and Community Development

AGENCY MEMBERS PRESENT

Nicholas Nanna, Deputy Director
Billy Hux, State Fire Marshal
Theresa Hunter, Chief Administrative Officer
Will Merritt, Marketing and Communications Manager
Spencer Willett, Government Affairs Manager
Deshaun Steele, Grants Analyst

GUESTS PRESENT

Larry Gwaltney Andrew Milliken

CHANGES IN THE AGENDA

No reported changes to the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comment provided.

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CONSENT AGENDA

Motion: Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting (September 2024)

Motion: Johnson **Second:** Miller

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Minutes approved.

REPORT FROM THE VIRGINIA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

State Fire Marshal Billy Hux presented. Hux stated that the State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO) has been working on a uniform policy to include class A uniforms. They are also working on fire watch procedures for state owned property. The goal is that ImageTrend would provide a database that local fire marshals will be able to access for fire watches. The beta testing should be done in about two months. Depending on final budget discussions with the General Assembly, SFMO will be adding two new positions. There will also be some reorganization within the office. Currently, there is a 14-week basic law enforcement (BLE) academy for fire marshals occurring. Historically, this has been 12 weeks, but the additional two weeks came out of the Title 27 Work Group which discussed aligning fire marshal training with other law enforcement requirements. Hux mentioned the various programs being offered and that longtime instructor Mike Perdue would be stepping back into his role of teaching instead of coordinating courses. Hux discussed Chief Tom Berry being a part of the BLE program and Board Member Carla Keese mentioned that she had taught there, and it was a good group and program. Keese mentioned it would be beneficial to have an onsite facilitator the whole duration of the programs, so the students had someone consistent to reach out to. Hux agreed.

CODES AND STANDARDS WORKGROUP UPDATES

Workgroup Chair Andrew Milliken spoke about the Department of Housing and Community Development Single Staircase Advisory Group, which completed its report in November and recommended having any code changes follow the 2024 code development process. The report also highlighted a proposed International Code Council (ICC) change. This would limit the single exit stair concept to only four stories and require enhanced fire protection features. Milliken mentioned that at their March 10th meeting, the Board of Housing and Community Development (BHCD) authorized the beginning of the 2024 code development cycle. He also noted that the online Code Development Platform (CDP) is scheduled to open April 1st for stakeholders to submit code changes. At the March 10th meeting, the BHCD voted to allow collaboration from stakeholders for emergency regulations regarding a concern with new language for the scope of NFPA 13 R systems as identified by the Technical Review Board.

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Milliken mentioned that the Codes and Standards Workgroup will meet on April 24th and will be meeting more frequently as part of the 2024 code development cycle. Keith Johnson asked Milliken to explain to the group the R3 issue. Milliken mentioned that R3 usually refers to single family dwellings but could also refer to townhomes and the problem occurs when they exceed three levels. Some even have commercial businesses occupying the 1st floor. Johnson agreed and mentioned that the BHCD can approve changes outside of the code cycle. John Miller asked when these requirements would come out and Milliken stated that it probably will not be until 2027 due to the various phases that any changes would have to go through.

COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIR

Chair Sites thanked everyone for their time and participation. He noted that while the focus of the committee is on the Codes and Standards Workgroup that he would also like to work more with the Community Risk Reduction (CRR) section at Fire Programs to bring in ideas and concepts.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

No unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Codes and Standards Workgroup Chair, Approval for VDFP to Expend Funds

Motion: To recommend edits to the Rules of Procedure for the agency to expend funds from the budget of the Virginia Fire Services Board to provide lodging and per diem for the Chair of the Codes and Standards Workgroup for meetings requiring their attendance.

Motion: Johnson **Second:** Little

Discussion on the Motion: Board Clerk Spencer Willett explained the reason for the vote, which included allowing the Codes and Standards Workgroup Chair to have lodging paid for by the agency when making a report to the Board.

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Recommended to the Board

ADJOURNMENT

Clerk of the Committee
Spencer Willett

Minutes completed by Tracey Frame

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Documents related to this meeting of the Virginia Fire Services Board may be requested by contacting the Government Affairs Division by emailing PolicyOffice@vdfp.virginia.gov

