

Virginia Fire Services Board

Live Fire Training Structure Committee

Friday, June 6, 2025

VDFP Headquarters

1005 Technology Park Dr., Glen Allen, VA 23059

2:15PM

MINUTES

A meeting of the Live Fire Training Structure Committee was held at the Department of Fire Programs Headquarters. 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)

Billy Hanks – Local Fire Marshal

JM Snell II – Virginia Board of Housing and Community Development

Bettie Reeves Nobles – General Public

Jess Rodzinka – Virginia Professional Fire Fighters

Carla Keesee – Virginia Chapter, International Assoc. of Arson Investigators

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

Jerome Williams – Certified Fire Service Instructor

AGENCY MEMBERS PRESENT

Nicholas Nanna, Deputy Director

Theresa Hunter, Chief Administrative Officer

Jamey Brads, Chief of Training and Operations

Spencer Willett, Government Affairs Manager

GUESTS PRESENT

Larry Gwaltney

Lee Williams

Ben Ruppert

Mike Matthews

CHANGES IN THE AGENDA

Committee Chair James Calvert added the Live Fire Training Structure Policy to Unfinished Business

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Calvert limited public comment to four minutes per speaker outside of scheduled presentations. No public comment was provided.

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CONSENT AGENDA

Motion: Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting (March 2025)

Motion: Miller **Second:** Rodzinka

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Minutes approved.

COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIR

Committee Chair Calvert thanked the agency for their work on the program and commended staff for their hard work. He also highlighted that some members of the board would be rotating off and thanked them for their service to the committee.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. City of Hopewell Extension Request

Chief Ben Ruppert presented on their project, including delays related to the project. He stated the locality held back their project pending issues that occurred with the Goochland project. Since this has been remedied, the locality is moving forward. The locality has also had delays related to stormwater management, which will allow the site plan to be completed. This will allow the locality to issue the request for proposals (RFP). The city is requesting a year-long extension.

Calvert asked if any extensions had been granted before. Theresa Hunter answered no extension had been granted.

Calvert asked if the committee had any opposition to considering agenda items as a block. Bettie Reeves Nobles stated she agreed with considering the items as a block.

Motion: To approve a year long extension for the City of Hopewell

Motion: Reeves Nobles **Second:** Keesee

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Extension from the City of Hopewell recommended to the Full Board

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b. Town of Blackstone Renovation Request

Lee Williams spoke on behalf of the request. He made a presentation provided to the board prior to the meeting.

JM Snell II asked who Walsh Construction was in relation to the project. Williams stated this was a former contractor for VDFP and that the 2025 review was done by The Structures Group (TSG). Theresa Hunter stated Walsh was a subcontractor of another vendor being used by VDFP.

Calvert asked who the authority for the structure was. Williams answered the Town of Blackstone. Nottoway has signed a memorandum with the town to bring the facility up to standards. Williams stated the town has legal responsibility. Calvert asked when the annual inspections were completed. Williams stated annual inspections had not been completed. He further explained the issues related to the management of the structure in prior years. Calvert asked if the issues in 2015 that were also in 2025 were issues that came up again, or the same issues that had not been addressed. Calvert further asked about thermal damage and asked for assurance that the locality would follow VDFP policy. Calvert questioned the 15-foot concrete pad around the building. Mike Matthews from TSG stated this was in the prototype model for the program. Calvert spoke about Line Item 26 related to thermal protection and quoted National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1402. Matthews stated these thermal protections are where heated gas may affect the building.

Hunter asked clarifying questions related to the request for funds. Williams provided this information.

Johnson asked if contractors had been selected for the thermal lining. Williams stated that SRG provided grants for the thermal lining.

Snell stated the request amount in March, which was closer to \$170,000. Snell asked about matching funding. Hunter stated the hardship request is due to the fact that their building is larger than the prototypes that are usually funded.

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Reeves Nobles asked for the total amount which was \$382,531. Blackstone has \$20,000 already set aside.

Motion: To approve \$158,588 for the Town of Blackstone.

Motion: Snell **Second:** Hanks

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Approval recommended to the Full Board.

c. Update on Loudoun County's 5-Year Assessment

Keith Johnson spoke on Loudoun's live fire training structure. He stated that a contractor, Glover, would not complete the work since he disagreed with TSG. Johnson stated he received a letter from VDFP stating he could not complete training after a certain date if the building was not brought up to the standard. He stated he cannot get a contractor to perform the work and that VDFP policy requires the changes, tying his hands. Johnson stated Chesterfield County is having a similar issue. Johnson suggested the establishment of a workgroup to review these issues.

Calvert suggested a technical committee or workgroup. Willett spoke about the creation of new workgroups and the committee needed to recommend the group to the Full Board. Calvert mentioned the workgroup could meet virtually.

JM Snell spoke in favor of the workgroup. He suggested this be done with the utmost urgency.

Motion: To recommend the Chair of the VFSB create a technical review workgroup to examine the issues brought about by Johnson related to thermal lining.

Motion: Snell **Second:** Hanks

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: **Committee** recommends the Chair of the VFSB create a technical review workgroup.

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d. Live Fire Training Structure Policy

Calvert read components of the policy to the committee. Calvert desired to change the policy to expand from Firefighter I and II training to all live fire training, specifically highlighting electric vehicle fire training.

Snell spoke about the policy being too specific. He supported broadening the language.

Motion: To expand the Live Fire Training Structure Policy to all live fire training.

Motion: Snell Nobles **Second:** Hanks

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Approval recommended to the Full Board.

Board Clerk Willett asked for clarification on what specifically would be changed and recommended that a motion not take place on any edits as it was not presented to the Board ahead of time for consideration. Calvert stated the language would be expanded from Firefighter I and II only.

NEW BUSINESS

a. City of Suffolk Extension Request

Chief Steve Henkle presented on behalf of the request. The city requests a one-year extension.

Motion: To approve the City of Suffolk for a one-year extension

Motion: Reeves Nobles **Second:** Keesee

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Approval recommended to the Full Board.

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b. VDFP Training and Operations Renovation Extension Request

Jamey Brads presented on behalf of the request and felt fairly confident it would be completed within the year.

Motion: To approve VDFP Training and Operations for a one-year extension

Motion: Hanks **Second:** Reeves Nobles

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Approval recommended to the Full Board.

c. Building Design Related to Cancer Prevention

Calvert stated he had a design packet that he would like to present to the committee in the near future related to this topic.

ADJOURNMENT

Clerk of the Committee

Spencer Willett

Minutes completed by Tracey Frame

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