

Virginia Fire Services Board

Full Board Meeting

Friday, June 6, 2025

VDFP Headquarters

1005 Technology Park Dr., Glen Allen, Va 23059

3:30PM

MINUTES

A meeting of the Virginia Fire Services Board was held at the Department of Fire Programs Headquarters. The meeting was called to order by Chair Keith Johnson and a quorum was present.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Keith Johnson, Chairman – Virginia Fire Chiefs Association
Abbey Johnston, Vice Chairman – Virginia State Firefighters Association
James Calvert – Industry (SARA Title III/OSHA)
John Miller – Designee, Virginia State Forester
JM Snell II – Virginia Board of Housing and Community Development
Billy Hanks – Local Fire Marshal
Kevin Duck – Insurance Industry
Carla Keesee – Virginia Chapter, International Assoc. of Arson Investigators
Jess Rodzinka – Virginia Professional Fire Fighters
Bettie Reeves Nobles – General Public

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Jerome Williams – Certified Fire Service Instructor
Ernie Little – Virginia Fire Prevention Association
Walt Bailey – Virginia Fire Service Council
Donald Hart – Virginia Association of Counties
Steven Sites – Virginia Municipal League

AGENCY MEMBERS PRESENT

Brad Creasy, Executive Director
Nicholas Nanna, Deputy Director
Theresa Hunter, Chief Administrative Officer
Jamey Brads, Chief of Training and Operations
Tom Berry, Assistant Chief, Virginia Fire Marshal Academy
Spencer Willett, Government Affairs Manager

GUESTS PRESENT

Lee Williams Larry Gwaltney

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CHANGES IN THE AGENDA

No reported changes in the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Larry Gwaltney spoke on behalf of the Virginia State Firefighters Association. He stated that they had changed their conference format. An abbreviated conference is occurring in Farmville on August 14, 15, and 16. He spoke about courses being offered at the conference. He further spoke about going from one conference to multiple regional training sessions.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Motion: Calvert **Second:** Johnston

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Minutes approved.

REPORT FROM VDFP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Executive Director Creasy reported on behalf of the agency. He recognized Greg Cavalli as a new member of the team. He also stated that the Chief Safety Officer is overseeing physicals on behalf of the adjunct instructors. In one case, a physical caught a significant health issue for the adjunct instructor. He thanked Members of the Board for attending the Governor's Fire Service Awards and mentioned the Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service the next day and invited all who were interested in attending. He will be attending the Southwest Virginia Firefighters Conference in the near future.

Johnson thanked the VDFP team for their hard work on the memorial service and for the Governor's Fire Service Awards. Johnson asked if they had filled the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security role. Creasy reported no announcement had been made but that some organizations had recommended Deputy Secretary Sonny Daniels to be Acting Secretary.

REPORT FROM THE FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL COMMITTEE

The committee did not meet. No report was provided.

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REPORT FROM THE LIVE FIRE TRAINING STRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Committee Chair James Calvert presented a report on the committee which met the morning of June 6th.

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

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Approved

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

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Approved

Motion: To reconsider the previous motion for the Town of Blackstone and amend the amount to \$148,588

Discussion on the Motion: None

Motion: Johnston **Second:** Hanks

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Prior motion reconsidered and amended amount approved

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.

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Approved, Chair of the Live Fire Training Structure Committee shall create a workgroup

Calvert recommended a series of members be on the workgroup. Board Clerk Spencer Willett recommended the group only have two members and include other subject matter experts from the public instead. Calvert stated he would look at membership of the group.

Johnson spoke that any outgoing Board members could serve on it, such as Bettie Reeves Nobles. Members need to look at any new National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards for clarity.

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Chair Calvert also discussed a motion to expand the Live Fire Training Structure Policy to all live fire training as opposed to just Firefighter I and II. The Board discussed this matter, including possible benefits and potential issues with the expansion. Jamey Brads stated that current language would limit the standard to NFPA 1001, which would not allow for expanded uses for the funds.

Motion: To reject the motion of the Live Fire Training Structure Committee related to changes to the Live Fire Training Structure Policy.

Motion: Johnson **Second:** Reeves Nobles

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Motion rejected.

JM Snell suggested the matter not be addressed today with the long-term implications and asked what the urgency was. Brads spoke on where the aircraft rescue firefighting (ARFF) program is currently and the memorandum with Department of Aviation. Every airport that brings in commercial flights must have firefighters with certain training. VDFP also provides training to other smaller airports. The current unit needs to be replaced in the next 18-20 months prior to failing and VDFP could lose the capacity to provide the training. Brads suggested there was urgency to provide this training. The language needs revised so that a presentation for the replacement prop can be proposed at the next Board meeting in September. Brads also recommended the Board may want to consider other programs to fund in the future, such as electric vehicle (EV) fire training props.

Reeves Nobles suggested that ARFF training simply be added with the relevant NFPA standards. Calvert stated he was looking at specialized training. Reeves Nobles questioned what specialized training was approved by the board. Snell stated simpler is better and suggested deleting Firefighter I and II.

Brads stated that the verbiage does not need to be deleted. Live fire standards could possibly be used instead which would keep the language more generic.

Johnson stated this would remain an action item for the next meeting after further review by the Live Fire Training Structure Committee.

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

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Approved

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

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Approved

REPORT FROM THE FIRE EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

Committee Chair Jess Rodzinka spoke about the report from Chief Jamey Brads. Some highlights included staff realignments, partnering with the Technical Rescue Association (TRA) to deliver Rescue Challenge 2025 in Rockingham County, working on online testing and reaccreditation, purchasing two new tractors to deliver assets around the Commonwealth, that over 11,000 firefighters have completed the online Lithium-Ion Battery training with almost 400 still in the process.

REPORT FROM THE ADMINISTRATION, POLICY, AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Board Vice Chair Abbey Johnston spoke about the Governor's Fire Service Awards and presented Keith Johnson with a pin for receiving Fire Chief of the Year.

Motion: To approve the Governor's Fire Service Awards Manual

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Approved

Motion: To approve the Halifax County Fire and EMS Study Request

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Approved

Motion: To approve the Fire and EMS Study Manual

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Approved

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Motion: To approve Firefighter PPE and Equipment Grant Policy

Discussion on the Motion: Johnston clarified that priority would be given to localities on the Fiscal Stress Index list.

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Approved

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

Chair Johnson spoke about the Memorial Service. He further discussed that it was incumbent on the Board to spread the news on the PPE grant.

He announced the Fire and EMS Stakeholders Legislative Summit would be held earlier than the previous year and be on July 30th.

BOARD BUSINESS

a. Unfinished Business

i. Election of the Chair Pro-Tem

Chair Johnson called on the Board Clerk to announce the election for Chair and Vice Chairman.

Motion: To elect Bettie Reeves Nobles as Chair Pro-Tem

Motion: Johnson **Second:** Keese

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Approved

ii. Report from the Nomination Committee

No nomination committee was selected. The Board Clerk read the nominations submitted prior to the meeting for Chairman and Vice Chairman.

iii. Election of Officers

James Calvert declined Chairman. Abbey Johnston also declined her nomination for Chairman. The remaining candidate was Keith Johnson.

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Motion: To elect Keith Johnson as Chairman

Motion: Johnston **Second:** Keese

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Keith Johnson elected as Chairman

James Calvert declined Vice Chairman. The remaining candidate was Abbey Johnston.

Motion: To elect Abbey Johnston as Vice Chairman

Motion: Duck **Second:** Keese

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Abbey Johnston elected as Vice Chairman

iv. Report from the VFSB Clerk

Board Clerk Willett reported on travel reimbursements and other administrative business before the board. The next meeting will be in September in Harrisonburg, VA.

b. New Business

i. Readoption of the Virtual Meeting Policy

Motion: To approve the readoption of the Virtual Meeting Policy

Motion: Calvert **Second:** Miller

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Approved

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ii. Rules and Procedure Approval & Resigning

Motion: To approve the Virginia Fire Services Board Rules of Procedure

Motion: Calvert **Second:** Johnston

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Approved

iii. Request for Committee Assignments & Chairs

Johnson mentioned that communication would go out via email requesting assignments instead of making selections in the meeting.

v. Presentation of Service Awards

Johnson presented Bettie Reeves Nobles with a service plaque for serving on the VFSB. Ernie Little will also be receiving a plaque at the September meeting since he could not attend the June meeting. Johnson mentioned that the September meeting will be held at the Hotel Madison in Harrisonburg from September 23-25, 2025.

Calvert recommended Sonny Daniels to serve as Acting Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security. Willett advised this was not in line with the authority of the VFSB.

Johnston asked the Board to help bring awareness to the grant opportunity and provide support to the localities.

John Miller offered the support of the local forestry personnel.

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 section by emailing PolicyOffice@vdfp.virginia.gov

