

Virginia Fire Services Board

Friday, February 20, 2026
Virginia Beach Convention Center
1000 19th St, Virginia Beach, VA 2345
9:00 AM

MINUTES

A meeting of the Virginia Fire Services Board was held at the Virginia Beach Convention Center in Virginia Beach, Virginia. The meeting was called to order by Chairman 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
John Miller – Designee, Virginia State Forester
Billy Hanks – Local Fire Marshal
Carla Keesee – Virginia Chapter, International Association of Arson Investigators
Charles Sterne – General Public
Todd King – Virginia Association of Counties
Steven Sites – Virginia Municipal League
James Calvert – Industry (SARA Title III/OSHA)
Jess Rodzinka – Virginia Professional Fire Fighters
Gerry Maiatico – Virginia Fire Prevention Association
Kevin Duck – Insurance Industry

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

JM Snell II – Virginia Board of Housing and Community Development
Jerome Williams – Certified Fire Service Instructor
Walt Bailey – Virginia Fire Service Council

AGENCY MEMBERS PRESENT

Brad Creasy, Executive Director
Theresa Hunter, Chief Administrative Officer
Billy Hux, Chief State Fire Marshal
Michael Parris, Deputy Chief of Training and Operations
Spencer Willett, Government Affairs Manager
Greg Cavalli, Policy Analyst

GUESTS PRESENT

Jeff Flippo	Tim Estes Sr.	Lee Williams
Tm Tanner	Larry Gwaltney	Wayne Hoover
Andrw Milliken	Mike Moles	Robby Dawson

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CHANGES IN THE AGENDA

No reported changes to the agenda

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chris Eudailey and Steve Lesinski of the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association (VFCA) spoke on the classes being presented as part of the conference and the number of attendees. Chair Johnson thanked them for their work on making the conference a success.

Brian Sage of Lee County thanked the agency for the personal protective equipment (PPE) grant program as his department was a recipient. He noted the funding struggles of departments in Southwest Virginia. He mentioned how critical the agency's grant programs are to the operation of departments like his in that region. Chair Johnson asked what his department used the PPE grant money for, and Sage provided an explanation of the equipment his department obtained. Chair Johnson emphasized the need to tell the story of these departments and the challenges they face.

Larry Gwaltney from the Virginia State Firefighters Association (VSFA) stated that the VSFA will hold its conference August 6-8 in Wytheville, Virginia. He added that his organization does have a smaller grant program from Dominion Energy that will be open for applications soon. He also congratulated Executive Director Brad Creasy on his reappointment and Deputy Director Jamey Brads on his appointment.

Robbie Dawson with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) spoke on what NFPA will be doing this year. He also congratulated Chair Johnson on his work with both the VFSB and the Board of Housing and Community Development. The organization has a program called Don't Chance Safety that Dawson highlighted. This is directed to inform policymakers why safety standards exist. He noted that some board members have asked for copies of NFPA 1400 and he will work to provide those to the board.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Motion: Johnston **Second:** King

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Minutes approved

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REPORT FROM VDFP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Executive Director Brad Creasy first recognized former Deputy Director Nicholas Nanna for his contributions to the agency. He added that Governor Spanberger has appointed Chief Jamey Brads as Deputy Director, and that there is an appointee as the new Community Risk Reduction Coordinator. He noted that the Governor attended the Governor's Fire Service Awards earlier that week. The vacancy rate at the agency remains low, though there have been some departures and internal changes. Director Creasy spoke on the advancements in the computer-based testing programs and added that one of the agency's refurbished live fire training simulators is on site. State weekend at the National Fire Academy is scheduled for March 28 and 29. As of January 1, 2026, the agency totaled over 19,000 firefighters completing the electric vehicle fire training program.

Regarding legislation, Director Creasy stated that most of the bills the agency has followed have died, noting several bills that have crossed over. The agency is hopeful that a budget amendment will extend the Firefighter Personal Protective Equipment Grant Program. Creasy also discussed mandated fire reporting which will begin on July 1, 2026.

REPORT FROM THE FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL COMMITTEE

Committee Chair Steve Sites provided the report. He highlighted the report of Chief State Fire Marshal Billy Hux, who gave details on changes in fire marshal training. The NFPA 1031 and 1035 programs will be merged into a new standard to reduce the total number the NFPA offers. This will be the NFPA 1030 program. The next basic law enforcement academy will be in 2027. The committee discussed legislation affecting fire safety. Committee Chair Sites also provided an update on the 2024 code development cycle, which is coming to its conclusion at the May meeting of the Board of Housing and Community Development. He highlighted the single-exit stairway proposal, which has a consensus proposal that came out of a workgroup that included the fire service, which extends this provision to a 4th story. This is a compromise that the fire service may have to live with.

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REPORT FROM THE LIVE FIRE TRAINING STRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Committee Chair James Calvert began by recognizing the efforts of agency staff. The committee received and approved an extension of the City of Roanoke's grant.

Motion: To approve the City of Roanoke Extension Request as recommended by committee

Motion: Calvert

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: 6-month extension approved

The committee also worked on revisions to the Live Fire Training Structure Grant Program Policy. There was a subcommittee that researched this topic extensively. On December 9, 2025, NFPA issued a new standard NFPA 1400, which combines the NFPA 1402 and 1403 standards. Due to this, Committee Chair Calvert stated that they will need to get copies of the new standard and have it reviewed by the committee prior to the next meeting. The committee is expected to meet sometime in April.

REPORT FROM THE FIRE EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

Committee Chair Jess Rodzinka provided a report. Deputy Director Brads presented a report on training, including recent training statistics, the prior day. He highlighted the new aircraft rescue firefighter trainer project and that VDFP is looking at hosting a trench safety summit. The agency also supported an East Coast Technical Rescue Conference in January with over 200 attendees.

REPORT FROM THE ADMINISTRATION, POLICY, AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Committee Chair Johnston provided a report. She spoke about Chief of Administration Theresa Hunter's report on Aid to Localities (ATL) grants. The committee will investigate why some localities are not filing to receive their ATL grants and work to ensure that localities are filing their paperwork in a timely manner to receive those funds. The committee reviewed the Mini-Grant Program awards, identifying the top scorers in different categories and recommending that the board approve. The committee received an update on electronic grants and staff believe that there will be a vendor approved in the future to process grant applications electronically. Outreach is ongoing with the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security to address fire service issues.

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Motion: To approve the Mini-Grant Program Award Recommendations

Motion: Johnston

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Award recommendations approved

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

Chair Johnson congratulated Director Creasy on his reappointment. He spoke on legislation, noting several bills seeking greater funding for the fire services, and his disappointment that these bills did not gain sufficient support. He stated his intentions to pursue these legislative goals again next year. Chair Johnson noted that Secretary Meador attended the VFCA meeting earlier this week, along with Deputy Director Dillon Taylor. Johnson reiterated that he and Vice Chair Johnston will meet with the Secretary soon. He also addressed fire code proposals, emphasizing the need to support proposals that improve fire safety and oppose those proposed changes that have a negative impact on safety.

BOARD BUSINESS

a. Unfinished Business

i. Report on Fees Assessed by the State Fire Marshal's Office

Johnson asked Director Creasy for an update on the State Fire Marshal's Fee Report. Director Creasy stated that, as the deadline had already passed, he asked for a meeting with Department of Housing and Community Development Interim Director Maggie Beal and a member of her policy staff to discuss possible solutions. In that meeting, an agreement was reached to revise the report. Sites asked for clarification on what was contained in the final paragraph that was struck. Greg Cavalli provided comments on the language that was removed, which was seen by some as being advocacy and not fact. Sites understood the argument but believes this should have been included as it was fact.

Motion: To approve the revised Report on Fees Assessed by the State Fire Marshal's Office

Motion: Calvert **Second:** Hanks

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Revised report approved

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ii. **Report from the VFSB Clerk**

Spencer Willett provided an update on travel reimbursement for the meeting. He also reminded the board that their interactions are bound by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and that information provided to members is public record. He also highlighted that Tracey Frame would be leaving the Government Affairs Division. He also spoke about the future meetings of the Fire Services Board which was included in the VFSB packet.

b. **New Business**

Chair Johnson spoke on seeing the effects of PPE grants on localities and the need to make these stories widely known.

i. **Town of Blackstone Advanced Payment Request**

The Town of Blackstone's request for advanced payment on their live fire structure grant was discussed. Johnson noted that this would represent a departure from standard procedure. Vice Chair Johnston asked if this would present any difficulty for VDFP. Chief of Administration Hunter replied that it would not.

Motion: To approve the Town of Blackstone Advanced Payment Request

Motion: Johnston **Second:** Rodzinka

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Request approved as recommended

Sites noted that the 23rd anniversary of the Station Nightclub fire and the changes that were prompted by that incident. Chair Johnson added that the recent fire at a nightclub in Switzerland highlights the importance of code provisions to ensure safety.

ADJOURNMENT

Clerk of the Committee
Spencer Willett

Minutes completed by Spencer Willett

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