

Virginia Fire Services Board

Fire Prevention and Control Committee

Thursday, February 19, 2026

Virginia Beach Convention Center

1000 19th St, Virginia Beach, VA 23451

3:00 PM

MINUTES

A meeting of the Fire Prevention and Control Committee was held at the Virginia Beach Convention Center in Virginia Beach, Virginia. 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
Billy Hanks – Local Fire Marshal
John Miller, designee – Virginia State Forester
JM Snell II – Virginia Board of Housing and Community Development
Todd King – Virginia Association of Counties
Gerry Maiatico – Virginia Fire Prevention Association
Carla Keese – Virginia Chapter of the International Assoc. of Arson Investigators

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

AGENCY MEMBERS PRESENT

Billy Hux, State Fire Marshal
Greg Cavalli, Policy Analyst

GUESTS PRESENT

Glenn Dean Matthew Clark
Thomas Tanner Robby Dawson

CHANGES IN THE AGENDA

No reported changes to the agenda

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comment

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CONSENT AGENDA

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

Motion: King **Second:** Keesee

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Minutes approved

REPORT FROM THE VIRGINIA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Chief State Fire Marshal Billy Hux provided his report to the committee. He informed the committee that Jay Davis has left the agency to take a position at the Department of Corrections. With that departure, the State Fire Marshal's Office (SMFO) is reorganizing available resources to best serve the needs of its stakeholders as well as the agency. Chief Deputy Fire Marshal Rusty Chase is on short-term disability for surgery.

The SFMO is working on an issue with George Mason University and Arlington County regarding property which the state has acquired that previously fell under the jurisdiction of Arlington County. SFMO is working in conjunction with Arlington's building official as well as the university's building official as the property's use is changing

The last meeting of the Board of Housing and Community Development's (BHCD) Statewide Fire Prevention Code Sub-workgroup was held last week. The meeting reviewed non-consensus code change proposals in the 2024 code development cycle. Chief Hux and Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFFP) Policy Analyst Greg Cavalli met with the Department of Housing and Community Development's Jeff Brown to discuss the agency's three code change proposals and solicit feedback from him regarding ways to improve the chances of getting at least one of those code proposals through BHCD.

SFMO is preparing to participate in a legislatively mandated workgroup which will discuss creating a model ordinance for localities regulating energy storage systems, which is one of the provisions of House Bill 895. This workgroup will include several other state agencies.

Regarding the Virginia Fire Marshal Academy (VFMA), Chief Hux stated that they have offered 40 hours of continuing education to support local fire marshals. There have been difficulties to date with the new National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1030 standard for inspector training. The first class under this new standard was to start in Suffolk but, due to weather conditions, had to be postponed until April 6, 2026. VFMA continues to work with Fairfax

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County on their NFPA 1030 offering, which mirrors the VFMA program. He told the committee that there have been seven retirements from VFMA's law enforcement instructor cadre. There were two law enforcement academies last year, which was taxing to the program. VFMA is now in the process of revamping its program this year, as there will not be a law enforcement academy in 2026. He noted that demand for this academy was low with two academies being run in 2025, which was a first for VFMA. VFMA is evaluating locations for the next law enforcement academy, which will be held from February 15 to May 21 in 2027.

The schedule has been finalized for NFPA 1030 and 1033 courses for this year. As stated earlier, there will be an NFPA 1030 course in Suffolk beginning April 6 and concluding on April 17; June 8 through June 19 in Lynchburg; August 17 to August 28 in Hanover County at the Public Safety Training Center; and November 30 to December 11 in Prince William County. NFPA 1033 courses will be held in Roanoke on March 9 through March 27; Charlottesville on April 27 through May 15; Fairfax County on September 14 through October 2; and Suffolk on October 26 through November 13.

The review of the environmental investigations program is nearly completed. The new program will include three standalone classes, to consist of an inspections class, an investigations class, and an evidence collection day.

Chief Hux said that the evolution of the NFPA 1031 standard to NFPA 1030 did not consist of major changes to the material but rather how the class is delivered. Testing will now occur on day six, and the final four days will be focused on instruction that is specific to Virginia.

Sites asked Chief Hux to explain the new NFPA 1030 standard. Hux said NFPA 1031 and NFPA 1035 were merged into one, new reference standard. VFMA is evaluating if there is the option to take only the first five days without the Virginia-specific section.

Gerry Maiatico asked if there is any change to the texts used in the courses. Chief Hux said 5th edition has been completed and in process of being distributed. The expectation is that the 5th edition will be offered on Amazon. It has major revisions from the 4th edition.

CODES AND STANDARDS WORKGROUP UPDATES

Workgroup Chair Andrew Milliken provided an update on code development. The BHCD meeting will be on May 11. The board is expected to vote on the proposed changes. Codes and Standards met earlier in the month to finalize recommendations to present to Board Chair Keith

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Johnson. Workgroup Chair Milliken outlined some of the non-consensus proposals. No subsequent meetings of Codes and Standards Workgroup are scheduled.

Johnson thanked Workgroup Chair Milliken for his work. For the benefit of the committee, Johnson asked for more information on the non-consensus single-exit stair proposal. Milliken replied that, at the beginning of the 2024 cycle, BHCD put together a single exit stair advisory group. Out of those discussions, there were several components discussed. The advisory group met several times to work with proponents of those proposals to reach consensus. The consensus proposal was to extend the code allowance to four stories, with the addition of fire protection elements. This proposal was similar in nature to NFPA standards. At the last session, one proposal was submitted which was not heard by the group. This late proposal allows single exit stairways on buildings up to six stories. He added that he provided testimony for the technical and functional reasons why this proposal did not work.

JM Snell asked if the four-story proposal remains the consensus. Workgroup Chair Milliken said that it is.

COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIR

Chair Sites echoed Johnson's thanks to Andrew Milliken and the Codes and Standards Workgroup. He then asked John Miller if he would provide an update for the Department of Forestry (DOF).

Miller said the main issue from DOF that is connected to the Virginia Fire Services Board is the dry hydrant program. DOF currently takes applications on a yearly basis so that installations and repairs are done on an ongoing basis throughout the year. He estimated that the department annually installs around 22 dry hydrants and repairs four to six, with repairs getting priority over new installation. Miller said that he would like to see the dry hydrant budget increased to \$150,000 if Aid to Localities funding was increased. The DOF does not take any administrative fee from the program. All funds are used for installation and repairs. Miller added that the agency has a new State Forester, Terry Lasher.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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NEW BUSINESS

a. Updates from the Virginia General Assembly

Chair Sites highlighted bills he found pertinent to the committee. House Bill 350 exempts fire marshals from jury duty. The bill passed the House of Delegates and moved on to the Senate. The *Code of Virginia* currently lists ten categories of people who are exempted from jury duty. This bill would add fire marshals as the eleventh. House Bill 735 would direct the Board of Housing and Community Development to review the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code (SFPC) and consider amending it to allow temporary tents used for agritourism to remain in place for up to 12 months. House Bill 1315 would add fire marshals to the definition of law enforcement officer in ten different sections of the code. This bill was continued to 2027, as the committee asked for more clarity on what its purpose is. Senate Bill 87 would require automated external defibrillators (AEDs) at sporting events, which Chair Sites found interesting as the question is sometimes raised whether the building code requires AEDs. This bill has passed the Senate and now is in the House. He mentioned that there is a senate version of the agritourism bill, Senate Bill 132. The final bill he discussed was House Bill 1509 which would establish a process for localities to petition the State Building Code Technical Review Board for single project exemptions. This bill was continued to 2027.

b. Updates on the Code Development Process

Chair Sites said that the update from Workgroup Chair Milliken covered this sufficiently.

ADJOURNMENT

Clerk of the Committee

Greg Cavalli

Minutes completed by Greg Cavalli

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