

Virginia Fire Services Board

Tuesday, December 2, 2025

Department of Fire Programs

1005 Technology Park Dr, Glen Allen, Va 23059

2:30 PM

MINUTES

A meeting of the Virginia Fire Services Board was held at the Department of Fire Programs in Glen Allen, Virginia. 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
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
Charles Sterne – General Public
Jerome Williams – Certified Fire Service Instructor
Walt Bailey – Virginia Fire Service Council
Todd King – Virginia Association of Counties
Steven Sites – Virginia Municipal League
James Calvert – Industry (SARA Title III/OSHA)
Jess Rodzinka – Virginia Professional Fire Fighters

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Gerry Maiatico – Virginia Fire Prevention Association

AGENCY MEMBERS PRESENT

Nicholas Nanna, Deputy Director
Jamey Brads, Chief of Training and Operations
Theresa Hunter, Chief Administrative Officer
Jay Davis, Assistant State Fire Marshal
Spencer Willett, Government Affairs Manager
Greg Cavalli, Policy Analyst

GUESTS PRESENT

William Wittenbrook	Amanda Kennedy	Maryam Turner
Amanda Britt	Lee Williams	Morgan Hyde
Andrew Steele		

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CHANGES IN THE AGENDA

William Wittenbrook from the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) is added as a speaker to make a presentation on the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). He represents the Department of Fire Programs (VD FP) and the Virginia Fire Services Board (VFSB) for OAG. The presentation covered information related to public meetings, FOIA, and communications between board members.

Walter Bailey asked if it is permissible for members to meet with other groups on fire service issues that are not specifically board business. Wittenbrook answered that it depends on if the information could potentially become public business that might come before the board. It is possible but unlikely in his opinion that items concerning the fire service would not potentially be VFSB business. He also cautioned that anything put in writing can be subject to FOIA. Spencer Willett mentioned that onboarding packet had the FOIA code included.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Lee Williams provided comment on Recommendation #3 from the Live Fire Training Policy Subcommittee Report related to five-year inspections. He provided information that structures in Southside Virginia have limited budgets, and he is concerned that eliminating funding for these inspections presents an unfunded mandate. Keith Johnson said eliminating the VD FP-provided inspections does not mean that the associated funding would not be provided. Williams added that his understanding is that the inspections typically cost \$15-21k. Others in the group indicated the costs are lower than that.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Motion: Bailey **Second:** Calvert

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Minutes approved.

REPORT FROM VD FP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Executive Director Creasy was not present. Deputy Director Nicholas Nanna provided the report. He stated that the staff is looking at the proposed increase in the Fire Programs Fund from 1% to 2% to provide answers to questions regarding what that increase would be directed towards. On the 12th of December he and the Director will meet regarding the transition to the incoming administration. The Director has asked to be reappointed, and the Deputy Director intends to

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stay as part of the transition, although he does not intend to remain for a full four-year term. He thanked the board for their support while serving as deputy director.

Chair Johnson moved to a report from the Chief of Training and Operations. The Board Clerk reminded the chairman that this was later in the agenda, but the report proceeded. The Education and Training Committee did not meet. Chair Johnson commented that the committee had not met at two meetings and indicated the need for a meeting in February.

Chief Jamey Brads spoke about closing division offices and realignment of the Training and Operations Branch. The purpose is to put the division chiefs out in the field and in local fire departments, not having stakeholders come into a division office. Administrative personnel were brought to agency headquarters in Glen Allen. David Jolly has moved to the Chief Safety Officer role and Marc Brade moved from Division 7 to Accreditation Manager.

Chief Brads also highlighted metrics on training provided in his written report.

REPORT FROM THE FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL COMMITTEE

Committee Chair Steve Sites provided a report from the committee meeting that occurred earlier on December 2, 2025. A representative of the State Fire Marshal provided updates on that office, including uniforms, meetings to discuss potential legislation for energy storage systems, revisions to the blasting certification program to shift to online testing, and Virginia Fire Marshal Academy training updates.

The State Fire Marshal's Office Report Assessing Options for Increasing Fees for Fire Inspections was approved by the committee, and a motion was made to recommend to the VFSB. A letter drafted by VDFP staff to be signed by both the director and the Chairman of VFSB with nonconsensus recommendations from the report was also recommended.

Motion: To adopt the State Fire Marshal's Office Report Assessing Options for Increasing Fees for Fire Inspections as submitted

Motion: Sites

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Report adopted, copy to be transmitted to the Board of Housing and Community Development

Sites provided a report from the Codes and Standards Workgroup.

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Motion: VDFP staff draft a letter presenting the nonconsensus recommendations discussed during the drafting of the State Fire Marshal's Office Report Assessing Options for Increasing Fees for Fire Inspections

Motion: Johnson

Discussion on the Motion: Deputy Director Nanna suggested both the Executive Director and the Chairman of the Board sign the letter.

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Staff directed to draft a letter for transmittal with the report.

REPORT FROM THE LIVE FIRE TRAINING STRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Committee Chair James Calvert spoke on a report from the Live Fire Training Policy Subcommittee, which will be acted on at the February meeting. The committee took action related to two requests for extension and one for a cost increase for their live fire projects.

Motion: To grant the City of Richmond an extension of two years

Motion: Calvert

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Extension approved for two years

Motion: To grant Fluvanna County an extension of twelve months

Motion: Calvert

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Extension approved for twelve months

Motion: To grant the Town of Blackstone renovation cost increase request as presented

Motion: Calvert

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Funds approved.

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Motion: To dissolve the Live Fire Training Policy Subcommittee and cancel the December 3rd meeting

Motion: Calvert **Second:** Bailey

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Live Fire Training Policy Subcommittee dissolved, and meeting canceled

Regarding the recommendations from the Live Fire Structures Subcommittee, Bailey stated that several other jurisdictions have contacted him regarding concerns about eliminating the VDFP-provided 5-year inspections due to funding pressures. He recommended the VFSB not place an unfunded mandate on localities and that the process of receiving funds should be simple.

Johnson stated that the recommendations are being tabled until the February meeting, which could create a gap related to five-year inspections that are scheduled. Bailey moved that five-year inspections be paused. Theresa Hunter added that the five-year inspections are all complete and thus a motion is not needed to pause these inspections. No second was made on the motion.

REPORT FROM THE FIRE EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

No report from the committee.

REPORT FROM THE ADMINISTRATION, POLICY, AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Committee Chair Johnston provided an overview of the items that came out of the committee including four action items below:

Motion: To adopt the Aid to Localities Grant Program Policy as presented

Motion: Johnston

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Policy adopted, to be implemented on July 1, 2026

Motion: To approve funding for the Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) Grant Awards as presented

Motion: Johnston

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Funding approved for the grants as presented

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Motion: To ask VDFP staff to review costs associated with an electronic grant application process

Motion: Johnston

Discussion on the Motion: Johnson provided that no timeframe was required of staff

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Staff to research costs associated with electronic grant applications

Motion: To amend the Aid-to-Localities (ATL) reporting form to include contact information from all fire departments within the locality's jurisdiction

Motion: Johnston

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Staff to amend the ATL reporting form

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

Chair Johnson thanked the members for all their work over the past year, stating that it has been one of the busiest years he's seen in his time on the Board. The next meeting will be at the Fire-Rescue Conference in February, June in Glen Allen, September in Bedford, and hopes that December will be virtual. The legislative season begins soon and many of the members will be involved. He reminded the group that only he and Vice Chair Johnston can speak on behalf of the Board. He mentioned the Lifetime Achievement Award, noting that there has not been an addition since 2018 and would like to see new nominations next year. Jerome Williams and Jess Rodzinka volunteered to be on the scoring group for the Governor's Fire Service Awards and Johnson asked for two more members. James Calvert recused himself. John Miller and Carla Keese offered to be on the scoring group.

BOARD BUSINESS

a. Unfinished Business

i. Report from the VFSB Clerk

Spencer Willett mentioned the commissions and pins provided to the Board. He also provided numbers on the Governor's Fire Service Awards, pointing out that only five nominations for Firefighter of the Year were received statewide. He cautioned the group that speaking for the Board means speaking for the Governor, especially given that there will be a changeover in that office this coming year.

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b. New Business

i. Letter to Governor Glenn Youngkin Regarding Firefighter PPE

Bailey wanted to make sure that the Board is weighing in on funding for the fire service. In the past year, the Chair and Vice Chair met with the Governor and Bailey recommends the Chair and Vice Chair continue to advocate for fire/EMS issues.

Calvert reminded the group of State Weekend at the National Fire Academy. Chief Brads clarified the state was still funding this event and the event will be held in March in conjunction with Delaware and Connecticut.

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