

# **Virginia Fire Services Board**

Fire Education and Training Committee

Thursday, September 19, 2024

First Responder Virginia Conference

1000 19th St, Virginia Beach, VA 23451

1:30PM – MR5CD

## **MINUTES**

A regular meeting of the Education and Training Committee was held at the Virginia Beach Convention Center in Virginia Beach, Virginia. 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)

Abbey Johnston – Virginia State Firefighter’s Association

Kevin Duck – Insurance Industry

Jerome Williams – Certified Fire Service Instructor

Jess Rodzinka – Virginia Professional Fire Fighters

Ernie Little – Virginia Fire Prevention Association

### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT**

Walt Bailey – Virginia Fire Services Council

Donald Hart – Virginia Association of Counties

### **AGENCY MEMBERS PRESENT**

Nicholas Nanna, Deputy Director

Jamey Brads, Chief of Training and Operations

Spencer Willett, Government Affairs Manager

### **GUESTS PRESENT**

Matthew Clark

### **CHANGES IN THE AGENDA**

No changes to the agenda.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No public comment provided.

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## **CONSENT AGENDA**

**Motion:** To approve the minutes of the previous meeting (February and June 2024)

**Motion:** Johnston **Second:** Rodzinka

**Discussion on the Motion:** None

**Vote:** Unanimous

**Action:** Minutes approved.

## **REPORT FROM THE VDFP CHIEF OF TRAINING**

Chief Jamey Brads presented to the committee based on his written report to the board.

James Calvert asked if the agency still had the support of the aviation community related to aircraft rescue fire fighter (ARFF) training. Calvert was under the impression airports had to receive this training. Brads explained the training prop used for this program required replacement and that it was purchased by the Department of Aviation (DOA) with a federal grant. That funding stream no longer exists. Calvert further clarified if the training was required. Brads stated that the agency needs the equipment to provide the training, even if it is required.

Calvert asked to be added to the adjunct newsletter.

## **COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIR**

Calvert commended the division chiefs for their work representing the agency and the Virginia Fire Services Board. He commended retired Division Chief 6 Dennis Price specifically. Calvert stated he heard good things about the instructor symposiums being hosted regionally.

Calvert is concerned over the age of the ARFF training prop. Calvert stated airports will lose status if training cannot occur due to a lack of resources. Brads stated the current memorandum of understanding (MOU) is being revised between VDFP and DOA. The agencies are separating operations and the acquisition of the unit into two MOUs. Brads stated some airports are sending people out of state for training. Calvert stated he wanted VDFP and the board to ensure they are doing all they can for the program.

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## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **a. EV Fire Training Update**

Calvert commended the program, but stated his concern that some demographics have difficulty accessing the electronic format. Calvert questioned if classes could be held in person instead of each person doing it individually via the online system. Jess Rodzinka supported a roster format as an option. Brads stated that staff would be needed to enter each individual roster for tracking according to the legislation. Calvert asked if fire departments could do this, which Brads stated the system does not allow. Brads explained how difficult it is to track firefighters who are required to be trained. The capability and capacity do not exist currently to allow an in-person class.

Willett, acting outside his capacity as Committee Clerk, advised that VDFP cannot state for certain how many firefighters are in Virginia because there is no definition. VRS could enforce this requirement and deny benefits if a firefighter did not meet the training requirement found in the code. Since this is the first mandated fire training, the enforcement is still not completely understood. Brads stated that the most asked question is what the agency will do if an individual does not complete the training. VDFP has no way of tracking this since what defines a firefighter related to training varies by locality.

Rodzinka asked if there were 46,000 users in Cornerstone or 46,000 considered firefighters. Brad stated that was the number of active users in the system.

### **b. North Carolina Modular Firefighter I Program**

Calvert stated Walt Bailey brought this item to the committee but was not in attendance. Brads explained the background on this program in North Carolina and how the state tests after each chapter. These are not accredited tests. Brads stated that North Carolina can also cross standard years and the student can take the class over a longer period. It is tied to chapter due to being part of the community college system. The students are still required to take an accredited test in the program. VDFP is reexamining its module program to look at improvements.

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**c. Dept. of Fire Programs Testing and Certification Status**

Calvert stated that in early 2025 there are expected changes as Brads outlined in his report.

**d. OSHA Emergency Response Proposed Standard**

Calvert spoke about his work and VDFP's work addressing the proposed standard. VDFP provided a letter to OSHA on the standard. The comment period closed in July and an informal public hearing is being held in Washington DC on November 2, 2024. He stated anyone could testify but they must request to do so in writing. This standard is a significant change in how the fire services does business. This could have a large impact on volunteer departments.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Five Year Statewide Fire Training Plan**

Calvert stated this plan is a required function of the board. The current plan has ten goals, which Calvert would like to see edited and improved upon. Calvert stated the committee would review the revised plan in December. Willett implored the committee to send edits to him before the December meeting.

**b. Accredited Hazardous Materials Technician Program**

The Department of Emergency Management and VDFP are working on this program. Some Virginia departments are leaving Virginia to receive training. Calvert states that VDEM should provide information on what gives the agency sole authority over the technician program. Calvert mentioned that former Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Bob Mosier wanted to improve on hazardous materials capabilities after the Palestine, Ohio derailment.

**c. Charlie Singleton Training Award**

Calvert stated that the board voted on this, but it was lost in staff changes and other issues. Calvert explained that each division chief would recommend one career and one volunteer instructor for consideration for the Governor's Excellence in Fire Service Training.

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Willett highlighted that VDFP is looking at the creation of an Adjunct of the Year Award. Willett asked if this would be in the spirit of the Singleton Award. Willett is concerned that there would be a transparency issue if all division chiefs submit nominations with the possibility of also sitting on the awards approval process. Johnston spoke of her support for the motion if it is in the spirit of Singleton, but she yielded to the members who knew him. Calvert stated it was approved, but the administration at the time did not support it. He stated that the committee would hold off considering the award.

**d. Virginia State Weekend at the National Fire Academy**

Calvert highlighted the state weekend and that VDFP funds this opportunity excluding travel. Calvert believes Virginia should have the highest attendance numbers among the states. He stated it was scheduled for March 29th and 30th of 2025.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Clerk of the Committee  
Spencer R. Willett