

# **Virginia Fire Services Board**

Fire Education and Training Committee

Wednesday, December 4, 2024

Blacksburg Fire Station #3

407 Hubbard Street, Blacksburg, Va 24060

3:00 PM

## **MINUTES**

A regular meeting of the Education and Training Committee was held at Blacksburg Fire Station #3 in Blacksburg, Virginia. The meeting was called to order by Acting Committee Chair Walt Bailey and a quorum was present. Committee Chair Jess Rodzinka was unable to attend.

### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT**

Abbey Johnston – Virginia State Firefighter’s Association  
Kevin Duck – Insurance Industry  
Walt Bailey, Acting Committee Chair – Virginia Fire Services Council  
Donald Hart – Virginia Association of Counties  
Keith Johnson, ex officio – Virginia Fire Chief’s Association

### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT**

Jerome Williams – Certified Fire Service Instructor  
Jess Rodzinka, Committee Chair – Virginia Professional Fire Fighters  
Ernie Little – Virginia Fire Prevention Association  
James Calvert – Industry (SARA Title III/OSHA)

### **AGENCY MEMBERS PRESENT**

Nicholas Nanna, Deputy Director  
Jamey Brads, Chief of Training and Operations  
Spencer Willett, Government Affairs Manager

### **GUESTS PRESENT**

Mike Yingling

### **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 (September 2024)

**Motion:** Hart, **Second:** Johnson

**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.

This included updates on branch realignment which has taken one year and in the final stages.

Some divisional staff were reallocated to the Learning Development Division and the

Accreditation and Certification Division to centralize processes to ensure the branch was doing

things consistently and concisely across the Commonwealth. He also provided updates on the

Special Operations Division, including fall Rescue Week at the Virginia Public Safety Training

Center during the first week in November. The Special Operations Division also supported the

Structural Collapse Specialist School in Virginia Beach and VDFP sponsored 10 students

through a scholarship. VDFP is looking to provide two additional scholarships for leadership

roles in search and rescue for next year. The mobile burn trailer (MBT) contract has been

awarded. There is a 90–120-day turnaround once the company receives the trailers. The fleet of

support apparatus is continuing to be updated and upgraded to continue to provide training across

the Commonwealth. The Electric Vehicle (EV) and Lithium-Ion Battery Training has had 7800

firefighters complete the training successfully as of Mid-November and around 650 are currently

in the process. The team that helped create that program are looking at what the next phase of

that will be beyond the requirements passed by legislation. Learning Development is working

with the Accreditation Division so that when a student takes a test the certificate will be

uploaded to that student's profile in lieu of mailing them out unless a student requests a paper

certificate. This is set to start happening in January in phases. The Accreditation Division is also

looking at getting reaccredited at over 47 levels which are in review. Additional levels will also

be looked at. The retesting plan is being finalized and will no longer occur at the Division offices

but rather at the localities within each Division. Online testing software has been procured and

has been tested. Students will use a key code to sign in on a VDFP iPad and testing will still be

monitored by someone assigned. Additional test results will be presented at the February

meeting. There have been a few vacancies, but the branch is currently working to fill those

positions including the Division 3 Chief which transferred over to the Virginia Fire Marshal

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Academy. Chief Brads also spoke on some statistics surrounding withdrawals. There has been a decrease in withdrawals as new means of communication are being utilized. The year-to-date withdrawals are around 5,365 with 1,576 being withdrawals happening within 24 hours of the class occurring.

## **COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIR**

Bailey spoke about a meeting he attended in a role with the Virginia Association of Counties related to power needs. Power companies are increasing the use of wind turbines and solar, as well as battery storage facilities. Bailey questioned if there was any training for these storage facilities. Johnson stated his locality has energy storage systems that have similar problems. Bailey stated emerging technology needs to be addressed. Brads stated that the EV training addressed some of this, not just vehicle batteries, but any Lithium-Ion batteries. The advisory group for the EV training is continuing to meet to discuss these ideas. Bailey desired to remain informed on the issue.

Bailey spoke about AI and the dangers of the technology through a personal story.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **a. Virginia Five-Year Strategic Training Plan**

Bailey thanked the committee that put together the Virginia Five-Year Strategic Plan and opened the floor for discussion. Spencer Willett spoke on the name of the plan which does not align with the code. With Chief Brads and Chair Jess Rodzinka's approval, the name should be changed to the Virginia Five-Year Fire Education and Training Plan.

**Motion:** To approve the Virginia Five-Year Fire Education and Training Plan

**Motion:** Johnson, **Second:** Johnston

**Discussion on the Motion:** None

**Vote:** Unanimous

**Action:** Plan approved, provided to VFSB

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Johnson provided feedback on the EV training. He stated he felt the amount of clicking required took away from the training and took longer than needed. Brads stated that the agency wanted to ensure people completed it per the mandate from the General Assembly.

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## **ADJOURNMENT**

Clerk of the Committee

Spencer R. Willett

*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](mailto:PolicyOffice@vdfp.virginia.gov)*

