

Virginia Fire Services Board

Fire Education and Training Committee

Thursday, March 27, 2025

Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting

8:30AM

MINUTES

A rescheduled meeting of the Fire Education and Training Committee was held virtually on Microsoft Teams. The meeting was called to order by Interim Committee Chair James Calvert and a quorum was present with ex officio member Keith Johnson.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Keith Johnson – Virginia Fire Chief’s Association, ex officio
Abbey Johnston – Virginia State Firefighters Association
James Calvert, Interim Chair – Industry (SARA Title III/OSHA)
Kevin Duck – Insurance Industry
Ernie Little – Virginia Fire Prevention Association
Jerome Williams – Certified Fire Service Instructor

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

Jess Rodzinka, Committee Chair – Virginia Professional Fire Fighters
Walt Bailey – Virginia Fire Service Council
Donald Hart – Virginia Association of Counties

AGENCY MEMBERS PRESENT

Nicholas Nanna, Deputy Director
Jamey Brads, Chief of Training and Operations
Theresa Hunter, Chief Administrative Officer
Will Merritt, Marketing and Communications Manager
Spencer Willett, Government Affairs Manager

GUESTS PRESENT

Andrew Milliken Larry Gwaltney

CHANGES IN THE AGENDA

No reported changes in the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comment provided.

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CONSENT AGENDA

Motion: Approval of the minutes of the previous meetings (December 2024)

Motion: Little **Second:** Johnston

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Minutes approved.

REPORT FROM THE VDFP CHIEF OF TRAINING

Chief Jamey Brads spoke about the branch realignment and that all full-time positions within the branch are filled. The branch supported the Commonwealth during multiple activations during 2024 and early 2025, including Hurricane Helene and Winter Storm Blair. Assistance was also provided to North Carolina during the flooding. Under Special Operations, the agency delivered six regional rescue weeks and participated in rescue challenges, structural collapse schools, etc. All reaccreditation documents and testing procedures for Special Operations were finalized. The branch worked with VDFP Logistics on upgrades to its training trailers and assisted with a locality on the completion of the Tower Rescue Site at the Bedford Training Center.

Chief Riddleberger has been recertified as Paramedic, is serving on the Board for the International Association of Water Rescue Professionals (IAWRP) and participating on committees for the National Fire Protection Association. The Special Operations Division is set to deliver seven Rescue Weeks and four Regional Schools. Special Operations will assist in the coordination and delivery of Miracle on the Hudson Drill for the Search and Rescue Forum, Trench Safety Summit, Rescue Challenge 2025, and Fairfax County TROT School 2025. Additionally, they will continue to work with the structural collapse school (SCS) and provide SCS Scholarships for VA students: 10 for Structural Collapse Specialist and adding two new positions for Squad Leader. A memorandum of understanding with the Department of Aviation is being finalized. The branch is also working to upgrade the mobile aircraft rescue firefighting trainer and will revise Rope Operations/Technician and Passenger Vehicle on Cornerstone OnDemand. The division will also be collaborating on the Tower Rescue Site at the Prince William Training Center. As of today, 9,568 firefighters throughout the Commonwealth have successfully completed the Lithium-Ion Battery training and 1,000 firefighters are currently in the process of completing the training.

As the branch continues to develop and launch new courses, VDFP is working to create a standardized marketing approach to ensure localities are informed. The Learning Development

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Division continues to manage the agency's internship program. In 2024, VDFP hosted eight interns from various colleges and universities. In support of strategic realignment, Learning Development has been reassigned three regional division staff that now serve as Learning Development Specialists to help streamline operations, improve quality assurance, enhance customer service and ensure accountability. The division is supporting the online testing pilots and rollout while the Accreditation and Certification Division is preparing for re-accreditation. With its 2024 success, VDFP will continue to offer instructor symposiums and train the trainers at regional schools. The Accreditation & Certification Division has fully transitioned to scheduling testing throughout the Commonwealth. This has allowed the branch to standardize how testing, retesting, and communication about testing is being provided. The agency has begun the pilot testing of the new online testing platform. The contract vendor is converting the current test banks into the proper format so they can be loaded into the system. The branch is increasing the accreditation levels from the current 26 programs to more than 50 by December 2025 and expect to have online testing fully implemented by the end of the year. In 2024, 25,964 students attended training, and 190,782 instructional hours were delivered. The full report includes additional data.

Chair Calvert asked Chief Brads about the updates for ICS 300 and 400. Brads mentioned that they are continuing to partner with other agencies such as the Department of Emergency Management who can also help deliver the programs. The branch is also trying to deliver a new program very soon that will be about a day and a half of training that will focus on the newest versions of the program, and testing will be based on that information, as well as past information. Chair Calvert also mentioned the newest threats related to electric vehicles.

COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIR

Chair Calvert mentioned that he would support seeing something implemented to ensure those being deployed during emergencies by the agency are covered in case something should happen. He also noted that he was very disappointed that State Weekend at the National Fire Academy (NFA) was cancelled as it is an excellent program. Brads mentioned in reference to the National Fire Academy that his Executive Administrative Assistant, Charlotte Green, was appointed to assist regionally with NFA courses. Brads said he is very hopeful it will be back up and running again in the future.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Virginia Five-Year Fire Education and Training Plan (Final Copy)

Board Clerk Spencer Willett mentioned the hard work that the VDFP Marketing and Communications section put into making the plan look very professional. Willett also

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noted that copies could be ordered for the training offices and for the Board if they desired.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business was noted so Chair Calvert opened the floor for any final thoughts. Chief Brads discussed online testing and how the agency is looking at regional test sites for areas that may not have Wi-Fi capability. Online testing should be fully completed by the end of the year.

ADJOURNMENT

Clerk of the Committee
Spencer Willett

Minutes completed by
Tracey Frame

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