

Virginia Fire Services Board

Administration, Policy, and Finance Committee

Wednesday, September 24, 2026

Amazement Square

27 9th Street, Lynchburg, VA 24504

1:00 PM

MINUTES

A meeting of the Administration, Policy and Finance Committee was held in Lynchburg, Virginia. The meeting was called to order by Chair Steven Sites, and a quorum was present.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Steven Sites, Committee Chair – Virginia Municipal League

James Calvert – Industry (SARA Title III/OSHA)

Todd Lupton – Virginia Fire Chiefs Association

John Miller – Designee, Virginia State Forester

Charles Sterne – General Public

Gerry Maiatico – Virginia Fire Prevention Association

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

Edward L. Senter Jr. – Virginia Fire Service Council

AGENCY MEMBERS PRESENT

Theresa Hunter, Chief Administrative Officer

Spencer Willett, Government Affairs Manager

Greg Cavalli, Policy Analyst

GUESTS PRESENT

Rhett Fleitz Andy Foley

David Hoback

CHANGES IN THE AGENDA

PUBLIC COMMENTS

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion: Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting (June 2026)

Motion: Calvert **Second:** Sterne

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Minutes approved

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REPORT FROM VDFP ADMINISTRATION

Theresa Hunter provided the committee with financial reports. She said that three localities forfeited their Aid to Localities (ATL) funds with 319 receiving ATL funds. Hunter provided an update on the budget and unobligated funds available. She provided an update on the grants management system, including that she met with the Virginia Information Technology Agency (VITA) and submitted all required paperwork, and the agency anticipated a purchase order by mid-October. Sites asked if a vendor had been selected. Hunter confirmed that the vendor selected was one that has a contract with the state already.

COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIR

Committee Chair Sites said this was his first meeting as committee chair. He appreciated the members' willingness to serve.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Lifetime Achievement Award Nomination

Committee Chair Sites said that in June, there were two nominees and that former Board member Bailey had concerns about the process and wanted to conduct research and provide feedback. Board Clerk Willett said that there had not been a nomination in ten years. Board Clerk Willett said Walt Bailey and Kevin Duck were assigned by the committee to look at nominations. They both recommended Chief Richard Mabie, from Warren County, to receive the award. Gerry Maiatico said he worked with Chief Mabie and reviewed Chief Mabie's career accomplishments. James Calvert suggested to table the nominations pending further due diligence on the nominees' backgrounds. He noted that the delay would give the new Board members an opportunity to become familiar with the selection process.

Motion: To table the nominations until the December 2026 meeting

Motion: Calvert **Second:** Miller

Discussion on the Motion: Charles Sterne asked what would be accomplished with this deferral. Calvert said the deferment would only be until the December meeting. He stated that the purpose would be to allow further discussion of the award and nominees' background and qualifications for the award. He stated this would also give new members time to submit nominations. Maiatico said that he believed this was done in the last meeting with the two members, Bailey and Duck, who reviewed the nominations in depth. He asked if there will be a committee being empaneled, or what other tangible action might be taken. Committee Chair Sites asked for confirmation that Calvert intended for the new Board

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members to be able to make additional nominations. Calvert affirmed, saying that a wider pool of nominees would help ensure that the nominees are the best possible candidates. Board Clerk Willett noted that the adopted requirements of the program require that nominations be brought forward by the June meeting and that there had already been an extension for nominations to the current meeting. He added that another deferment would further delay the schedule. Calvert asked for clarification on the rules for the approval process. Board Clerk Willett confirmed that the nominations are reviewed by the Committee and approved by the full Board. Calvert asked if there would be a division of submissions with volunteers being one category and career being another. Sites asked the Clerk if there were any guidelines that would shed light on this. Sites did not believe that this program is as well defined as the Governor's Fire Service Awards, and the body needs to define the program better in the future. Sites believed that the necessary work had been done by the assigned committee members already. Board Clerk Willett said the purpose, scope, nomination criteria, and the submission materials are defined by the committee by a vote. Clerk Willett said the two members were selected to review the nominations and recommended one, but that process is not set in policy. Board Clerk Willett said there could be policy changes, but that would have to come from the committee at the next meeting in December. Sterne said the Board had done its due diligence and recommended voting on the two nominees. Calvert asked Committee Chair Sites if it would be appropriate for both candidates nominated to receive a vote from the committee. Committee Chair Sites sought clarification from the Board Clerk. Board Clerk Willett noted that both candidates' materials were provided in the June packet and had they voted in June the Committee would've reviewed the nominees and voted for one of them to move forward. Calvert withdrew the motion.

Vote: N/A

Action: Motion withdrawn

Motion: To approve Richard Mabie for the Lifetime Achievement Award

Motion: Sterne **Second:** Calvert

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: The nominee was approved

Maiatico requested to make an additional motion to establish a working group to re-evaluate and potentially redefine the nomination and selection criteria in the policy. Board Clerk Willett confirmed the motion is appropriate.

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Motion: To establish a working group to evaluate the policy, procedure, and process of the Lifetime Achievement Award

Motion: Maiatico **Second:** Calvert

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Approved

Maiatico and Calvert volunteered to serve on the working group.

B. Regional Fire Service Training Facilities Grant Extension

- i. **City of Roanoke** – Rhett Fleitz asked for a 3-month extension in writing but now believed a longer extension would be needed. The city requested a 6-month extension to allow time for the agency to purchase a semi-trailer to make it a mobile unit. Sterne motioned for a 6-month extension. Chair Sites suggested a year extension would be more prudent. Sterne adjusted his motion to extend the grant by 12 months.

Motion: To extend the City of Roanoke's grant for 12 months

Motion: Sterne **Second:** Williams

Discussion on the Motion: Calvert asked if the city reviewed the differences between mobile and stationary units. The city did investigate this. Chair Sites asked if the mobile unit will be on a trailer with wheels. The city said it will be mounted to a trailer with wheels so it could be moved.

Vote: Unanimous

Action: 12-month extension approved

- ii. **VDFP Training and Operations** – Marc Brade explained that the agency submitted a 12-month extension as the concrete slab for the training tower has put the agency behind schedule.

Motion: To extend VDFP Training and Operations' grant for 12 months

Motion: Calvert **Second:** Maiatico

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: 12-month extension approved

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C. Governor's Fire Service Awards Discussion

Board Clerk Willett said that a fire chief communicated to the agency that there should be an additional category for emergency dispatchers. The agency had concerns about extending the awards beyond what their intended purpose was. Staff did not recommend that it be created, as the Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) award system already offered that award type and the Department of Criminal Justice Services offered a similar award. Chair Sites highlighted the work done by dispatchers and asked the committee for comments on the subject. Willett said that they have received awards as part of the Outstanding Fire Department Response category, such as the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) award for the plane crash in Washington D.C. Stern asked for the list of the categories and the criteria for each. Willett said the information was found in the Governors Fire Service Award (GFSA) Manual, and he read the information from the manual for the committee. Sites said that if telecommunicators were housed within the fire department, there is criteria allowing their nomination within the GFSA. Willett said that the agency can be more diligent in asking nominators in the application if the award involved telecommunicators and he said that adding that clarifying question would not require action from the Board. Calvert said that he had not considered this subject before but, after hearing about it today, understands why they should be included in consideration for the awards. Sites agreed with the suggestion that a question be added to application asking if telecommunicators are included, and Willett acknowledged that the question will be added going forward and for the applications that had been submitted prior the agency will reach out to those departments for clarification.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Regional Fire Service Training Facilities Grant– City of Roanoke

The City of Roanoke requested a grant for both a small and large fire box for the department that also can be used by other regional partners. The city recently moved into a new training center but are still part of the regional training center which consists of the City of Roanoke, Roanoke County, and the City of Salem. The department's tools and facilities are available to other localities as well as the City of Roanoke. Sites asked about cost savings compared to building a dollhouse. The department said that savings are negligible, but this will allow the training to travel around to stations at times to burn.

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Motion: To approve the grant request by the City of Roanoke

Motion: Calvert **Second:** Lupton

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Grant request approved

B. Prince Edward County Fire and EMS Study

Board Clerk Willett said that the report was in the packet and the presentation is scheduled for the following week.

Motion: Approval of the Prince Edward County Fire and EMS Study

Motion: Maiatico **Second:** Sterne

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Study report approved

C. Washington County Fire and EMS Study Request

Board Clerk Willett said Board Members Calvert and Maiatico have been assigned, and the study is scheduled for the following week.

Motion: Approval of the Washington County Fire and EMS Study Request

Motion: Stern **Second:** Miller

Discussion on the Motion: Chair Sites asked if it is routine for staff to reach out to Board members without the committee discussing beforehand. Willett said that typically the request comes before the committee to be approved before the agency schedules the study, but for this study the county asked that it be done prior to the December meeting. Willett stated that because of schedules with the committee he spoke with Chief Miller, the liaison for fire board studies, and Chair Johnston, to seek approval to schedule the study. He said this allowed the agency to provide advanced notification to the locality and schedule the study with enough time to complete the study and provide the report for the December Board meeting.

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Study request approved

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D. Firefighter Cancer Screening Grant Program Policy

Board Clerk Willett said that the adopted budget allocated funds for cancer screenings and that the policy was included in the Board packet. The policy was developed by a group of stakeholders and agency staff. Willett said that staff recommended the Board adopt the policy so funds can begin to be expended. Chair Sites asked about the criteria for the program. Willett said that the program is only for career personnel and that criteria cannot be altered by the Board. Localities must provide proof of the vendor's qualification to conduct the screening. He said the policy required that within 12 months of the screening the department must report the aggregate demographics of the screenings. Sites asked when the application period would be open. Willett said if approved today the application period would be opened immediately, but in the future that there would be two times when the applications would be open- once on July 1st and again January 1st. Sites asked if the program funding will be recurring from the General Assembly. Willett said that the expectation is that this funding will be recurring from the General Assembly but cannot say for certain until the next adopted budget. Sites asked about the agency's role in funding that program. Willett said that the funding will remain at two million per year and the position overseeing the funds is funded separately through the agency. Maiatico said he did not see any requirement to report cancer-positive screenings. Willett said the requirements for the policy are for the departments to report all the aggregate information including the number of referrals for additional cancer testing. Calvert asked if there is language that required positive results be reported to the National Firefighter Cancer Registry. Willett said the grant funding is only for the screening.

Motion: To approve the Firefighter Cancer Screening Grant Program Policy

Motion: Sterne **Second:** Maiatico

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Calvert abstained, remaining members approved

Action: The policy is recommended to the Board

E. Aid to Localities Grant Program Policy

Board Clerk Willett said that the Board had adopted the fire incident reporting requirements in the Aid to Localities Grant Program Policy several meetings ago. Since that adoption, the agency found a need for technical edits to specify that invoices related to the expenditures of departments funds should be submitted. He said this will verify that a locality is not providing funds to a department that is not reporting to the National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS), which is now a legal requirement in the Commonwealth.

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Motion: To adopt the revised Aid to Localities Grant Program Policy

Motion: Calvert **Second:** Lupton

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: The policy is recommended to the Board

F. Mini-Grant Program Funding and Policy

Theresa Hunter said Mini Grant funding is at \$699,000 and the Board must decide the funding priorities so the the application can be released. Chair Sites asked if she was asking for additional funds. Hunter said that the NERIS grant application total requests were \$800,000 but only \$250,000 was allocated. She stated that last year the Mini-Grant funding was \$1,000,000, but \$225,000 was pulled for the Fire Incident Reporting Grant. Sites asked if there is a proposal to close the gap. Hunter said that the total fluctuates year-to-year based off interest collected from the fire funds and that there is no way to request additional funds. Willett said that it is in the committee's purview to decide of the \$699,000 that's available for the Mini-Grant program whether funds will be set aside for fire incident reporting. Sites asked if this was how the program usually works. Willett confirmed that in the previous year the Committee and the Board made the decision to move funds out of the Mini-Grant program and allocate it to the Fire Incident Reporting Grant and then set the priorities for the Mini-Grant program with the remaining funds. Sites asked if the movement of funds was helpful. Hunter said that the agency recently received the results of the grant application period and that would be discussed during the next agenda item. Todd Lupton asked if the 2025 the Fire Incident Reporting Grant funding came from the interest, like the Mini-Grant program. Hunter said that it did. Sterne said NERIS reporting is a requirement for so many things that, at some point, there needs to be more money to support reporting. Sites agreed. He asked if the \$225,000 could be increased to \$250,000. John Miller asked if it should be a percentage rather than a flat dollar amount per year that could be reevaluated each year. Lupton asked for clarity about the amount of funding for the Mini-Grant program and asked where the \$250,000 came from and if it was from the same source. Hunter confirmed the funding is from the same source and if the Board pulled that same amount from the Mini-Grant this year it would reduce the Mini-Grant program funding. Lupton said that this is more evidence of the need for dedicated funding for the fire service and that since NERIS is now a legal requirement for a department to receive ATL funding, he believes there is a need to put more funding into it. Sterne suggested splitting the Mini-Grant fund in half with half earmarked for NERIS and half marked for the Mini-Grant program. Sites asked if there were

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any restrictions on the Mini-Grant program. Willett added that there are no volunteer or career restrictions on these grants and that the grant priorities change each year based on the direction of the Board. Lupton asked if priority could be set for the Mini-Grant to fund NERIS reporting. Abbey Johnston suggested that it would be more difficult to do that rather than simply moving the money from the Mini-Grant to the Fire Incident Reporting Grant. Hunter said that the ask so far for this year for the Fire Incident Reporting Grant is \$813,818. She said that if the agency were to add the Mini-Grant total to the NERIS Grant, plus the existing funds, it would cover all the requests for the the Fire Incident Reporting Grant and leave additional funds. Johnston suggested reallocating the funding from the Mini-Grant to the Fire Incident Reporting Grant. Willett suggested moving the full Mini-Grant funding to the Fire Incident Reporting Grant. Willett said that current applicants under the Fire Incident Reporting Grant would have to reapply under the Mini-Grant program if the Board made it a priority under the program. Willett suggested approving the policy, moving the entire \$699,000 to the Fire Incident Reporting Grant and reassessing priorities in December for the remaining funds. Sites asked for clarification concerning if would funds have to move back for the Mini-Grant program if the Board moved all the funds today. Willett said that the Board would not have to move the funds back. Calvert asked what the applicants were asking for. Hunter said that the list of applicants and what was requested is part of the board packet. Calvert said he will review the packet. Willett said that the Virginia Fire Incident Reporting System (VFIRS) program only funded computers, but the Fire Incident Reporting Grant that the Board adopted fund other costs beyond just a computer for reporting. Hunter said that each applicant chooses from a list of priorities for funding and the Committee reviews each application based on the list of priorities to receive funding.

Motion: Approval of the Mini-Grant Program Policy and moving \$699,000 to the Fire Incident Reporting Grant

Motion: Sterne **Second:** Lupton

Discussion on the Motion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Action: The policy and funding is recommended to the Board

Sites asked for volunteers to review the applications. Sterne asked what the timeline for this is. Hunter said that the timeline is at the discretion of the committee. Sterne said he would volunteer. Lupton said he will be the other reviewer. Johnston said that the award can be reduced if the locality lists something that is not on the list of priorities on the applications.

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G. Recognition of Past Members- Keith Johnson

Keith Johnson was not present and will be recognized at a later date.

ADJOURNMENT

Clerk of the Committee

Spencer Willett

Minutes completed by Joseph Crosby

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

