



**DVFA EXECUTIVE MEETING**  
**Delaware State Fire School**  
**December 10, 2023**

The December 10, 2023 DVFA Executive meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM by President Ron O'Neal at the Delaware State Fire School complex in Dover.

Invocation offered by Pastor Bob Hudson

Pledge of Allegiance led by Past President Ted Walius

Roll Call of Officers:

All Officers, Directors and Office staff are present and/or accounted for.  
(12 in attendance, 2 Out-of-Town, 1 working)

**Report of Officers**

**President O'Neal: (copied and pasted from email report)**

I want to thank everyone for attending this morning. We all realize it's an extremely busy time in getting ready for the holidays, but I certainly appreciate everyone taking the time for their involvement with the business attended to here today.

It's been a very busy 3 months since the other Officers and I were sworn into office, and realistically it's hard to fathom how quickly time goes by, but I do feel as though we have made good progress on some of our agenda items so far.

As you know, this past Sunday, the DVFA, in conjunction with the Officers of the State Chief's Association, held a workshop on the proposed modifications to Regulation 709. I want to thank those who attended that workshop for the questions, comments and concerns posed during that event and especially the respectful manner in which doing so. I also want to thank the Regulation 709 Committee for their presentation and their continuing work on this living document. I want to remind everyone, whether you were in attendance last Sunday or not, that ALL comments must be submitted in writing to the Fire Prevention Commission during the open public comment period. Please do not send them to the DVFA Office, we will in turn have to forward them to the Commission. Also remember, this is not a Question & Answer process, this is only an opportunity to submit your comments on the Regulation 709 as proposed. We will make sure to send out notices once that public comment period opens, but it will be your responsibility to submit your comments during that time.

As you are aware, the DVFA has spent a good deal of time and funding, thanks to Mr. Dan Burris and his Committee, to create the permanent Memorial on the Green in Dover. But I don't feel as though we've done the best job we could to memorialize those whose names appear on that granite. Earlier this year, I formed the Fallen Firefighter Memorial Committee, made up of representatives from all three Counties, and tasked that Committee

with formalizing the wreath laying ceremonies in which we honor those who's names are added to the permanent Memorial. That Committee will be meeting today for the first time and will be reaching out to the families of Laura Madara, John Pridemore and any others identified, to put together such ceremonies. That Committee will also be tasked with documenting the process by which names are added to the Memorial. I want to thank Bill Tobin for Chairing that Committee and for getting the ball rolling on what I feel is an important way to honor those who have served the Delaware Fire Service.

I attended my first Delaware Emergency Management Services Oversight Committee meeting (DEMSOC) this past week and was happy to submit the name of Mr. Jay Myers for the open position of DVFA Ambulance Advisory to serve that Committee. I believe Mr. Myer's background and experience will lend itself well as an active participant in DEMSOC's operation. During this Committee meeting, as well as during the last KCVFA meeting, Chief Bundick brought to light the need to review not only the Medicaid reimbursement situation, but that of the Managed Care Operations (MCO's) as well. Executive Mgr. Jay Jones headed the issue of Medicaid reimbursement during the last Legislative session with some success, but both Medicaid and MCO reimbursement is going to be an extreme up-hill battle with little to no relief in sight. But it is on our agenda to address once the busy Legislative session begins again in January.

In response to an issue that was posed at the last Executive meeting, Treasurer Whitham has put together a 5-year Capital Expenditure Plan that has been reviewed and Approved by the DVFA Executive Committee and will be presented to the attendees here today. The Treasurer will have more detail during his report, but I wanted to thank Terry for his insight and work in putting this together and hope that it will give the body some background into the funding requirements as we move this organization forward.

Last but not least, I had the honor of attending the retirement party for Past State Fire Marshall Gover Ingle in November. I want to thank his wife Pam for putting together that event and for the invitation to attend and thank Grover again for his life of dedication to the Delaware Fire Service. I also had the honor to attend the swearing in ceremony for the new State Fire Marshall, Mr. John Rudd, whom I'm sure most of you have met by now. Fire Marshall Rudd, I along with the other DVFA Officers look forward to working with you in the coming year.

In conclusion, I want to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas, and a safe and Happy New Year.

For the record, since the Conference in September, I have attended 30 events, traveled 1994 miles, for a total of 94 hours.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Vice President DiCristofaro: (copied and pasted from email report)**

#### **Topics for discussion:**

Update on the Fire Insurance Tax and where we stand with the Insurance Commissioner. Personally, I don't have a warm and fuzzy feeling that they are going to have the fix in place by the time we get our May allotment. We've had many talks, both face to face and via zoom, and many emails back and forth and I think PP Ray Stevens would agree that we truly aren't sure where we stand. I realize that may be a lame excuse, but you have an agency that collects mega millions of dollars from Insurance Companies that self-report and there is zero auditing done, that is frustrating.

Will be speaking and asking questions on the DVFA R & R Grant and the distribution and awarding of sub grants. Don't believe the committee nor the DVFA is being kept in the loop as far as awards and balances in accounts.

Probably touch on the financial reviews that have started statewide and the fact that we, as officers, need to urge member companies to get involved in the review. Nobody is better than the Company to paint the picture that your respective companies will be facing, financially, then yourselves. Don't only look at where you are today, but look five or ten years down the road when staffing will be even more extinct.

Will ask Chairman Marvel about the possibility of office space at the Dover Fire School complex. I know the Commission has spoken on this and some Commissioners have reservations, but need to find out if there is a possibility or do we need to move on.

Gave an up-date of the FACETS audit that has started in New Castle. Christiana and Aetna are pretty much done, will start in alphabetical order next and do 3 companies at a time. Please be ready for them, so this process moves along smoothly.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Gerald Manley: (copied and pasted from email report)**

Included is my report as 2<sup>nd</sup> VP of DVFA

Kent County Ladies Meeting September 19, 2023, 42 Miles Traveled

Meeting with Governor Oct 12, 2023, 76 Miles Traveled

CFSI Fundraiser Event, Washington DC, Oct 12, 2023, 196 Miles Traveled

Kent County Fire Police police meeting, Nov 21, 2023, Felton Fire Company, 38 Miles Traveled

Sussex County Volunteer Fire Fighters Association Meeting, Oct 24, 2023, Indian River Fire Company, 106 Miles Traveled.

New Castle County Chiefs Meeting, Nov 2, 2023, Port Penn Fire Company, 30 Miles Traveled

Kent County Vol Firefighters Meeting, Nov 15, 2023, Little Creek Fire Co, 24 Miles Traveled

**Secretary Steele: (copied and pasted from email report)**

- Planning to meet with Ashlee and Hannah at the Hyatt in late January to start the process of putting things in place for the 2024 Conference. Limited contact with them thus far, since they are wrapping up their events for 2023.
- Hopefully, the 2024 Conference agenda will be presented later today. There has been quite a lot of time put into this document to make it work.
- We are “penciled” in at the Westin and the Chase Center for the week of September 15<sup>th</sup> for Conference 2025.
- We will be reaching out to Bally’s Dover Casino Resort in the first quarter of 2024 to see what they can offer us for the 2026 Conference.
- My travel report is attached and will become a part of the today’s minutes.  
18 events, 1,128 miles and 68 hours in service.
- My wife and I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. STAY SAFE!!!

**Treasurer Whitham: (copied from email report)**

As of the end of November, we show the following balances:

Checking - \$110,613.88

Money Market - \$215,934.00

Crawford Financial Account - \$244,876.49 (as of the end of October)

Attached is a Budget vs Actual report from July until the end of November. This will give you an idea on how expenses are in comparison to the budget.

The financial review and our non-profit tax filing have been completed by Bumpers & Company. It will be reviewed by the F&B committee at a future meeting.

Also attached is a five-year Capitol Project Spending Plan. We worked on addressing future projects along with anticipated expenses of Association funds. After a lot of discussion, the plan was adopted by the Executive Board of Directors on November 30<sup>th</sup>

May everyone have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Please be safe.

***Motion by Guy Hudson and second by Ray Stevens to accept the Officer reports and spread them upon the minutes. Motion carried***

**Executive Manager Jay Jones: (copied and pasted from email report)**

- CFSI April 24 -25
- FDIC room block is ready April 15-20
- Met with the Governor. We spent a lot of time talking about the insurance distribution.
- He is open to one time money for the next few years while the study is going on amongst the counties. He was also favorable toward additional moneys add it to the Revolving Loan Fund.
- Things that he was against, increasing the tax Deductions and an increase in the death benefit.
- Medicaid, we have to educate a lot of the Legislature on the scale the Medicaid is paid. We received an increase and we appreciate that. But it's not as significant as they may think.
- We must remember that the governor was against any increase in Medicaid billing for the fire service. This was a win and a step in the right direction but it was a baby step not a huge step.
- I'll be working with the Law and Legislative committee and the officers on moving our agenda forward in Leg Hall starting in January.

Happy holidays

**Administrative Assistant Warren Jones:**

- Excused (Out of Town)

**Committee Reports**

**Advisory to DSFM – John Rudd: (copied and pasted from email report)**

1. 2023 Delaware Fatal Fire Review
  - a. 14 fire deaths in 2023; 18 in 2022
2. Staffing Update
  - a. Fire Protection Specialist IV/Chief Technical Services Duane T. Fox, Jr.
  - b. Deputy Fire Marshal V/Assistant State Fire Marshal pending
  - c. NCC Office-Pending interviews for
    - i. Deputy Fire Marshal I
    - ii. Fire Protection Specialist I
    - iii. Admin I
  - d. Kent/Sussex Office: Rob Wyatt retirement as of November 30, 2023
  - e. Sussex Office: Admin I positions (2) being filled
3. USFA National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS)
4. Public Outreach

**Advisory to DSFS – Tucker Dempsey: (copied and pasted from email report)**

- We had our public hearing on the FY25 budget. We are asking for another Administrative Specialist, additional funding for SCBA, and a building in New Castle.
- Deputy Director Ingram and I have rearranged some staff responsibilities due to new staff coming on board.
- Deputy Director Ingram and I are also working on the new burn building in Dover.
- I am carefully tracking completion rates for classes. The last Basic class had a 70% first-time completion rate. I'll be following the new class very closely.
- I have been working with Del Tech on a Fire Science degree program and they should be releasing their survey soon to determine market demand.
- We are close to wrapping up the foam replacement project. It will go to bid soon and then we will notify Fire Chiefs on the schedule for the replacement and tank cleaning.

**State Fire Prevention Commission – Ron Marvel: (topics discussed)**

- Waivers for seat belt sensors in the back of ambulances
- Ambulance renewals are coming due
- Touched on 709/710 regulations
- Commission now has a service dog available
- Thanked Grover for his dedication as the State Fire Marshal and welcomed John Rudd on board
- New Commission building construction should start after the first of the year
- Review the Legislature Sunset report

**Apparatus Standards – Willard Betts: (copied and pasted from Executive Manager report)**

- Please see Bill Betts if you have any questions on your boats if they are able to receive funding through the G&A process. The DVFA office always request an inventory list each year and that is what the State of Delaware goes by for distribution, if you do not send in a list, in the past, we use the list from the year before for your department. So, please get those list in time When we request them in 2024.

**Conference Report – Jay Jones: (copied and pasted from email report)**

- The conference committee has been working very hard to complete an agenda that is functional and convenient for the membership.
- The conference is Monday through Thursday 9/16-9/19.
- The Hyatt place, Gold Leaf and the Beach House are the hotels the DVFA has blocked rooms in. If you have any issues with the rooms, contact me or Elmer.
- We are aware about the parking meters discussion in Dewey Beach to be extended our contact with the Hyatt on top of this.
- If you have any questions or concerns, please address them to any of the conference Chairs.
- We will keep you posted when we start to add documents to the website about conference.

**Life Safety – Guy Hudson: (copied from hand written notes)**

- Judged the poster and essays this morning with 11 members present
- The awards program will be Jan. 7, 2024 in Cheswold starting at 2:00 pm
- Matching funds request have started coming in and are due back to me by Jan. 31, 2024. Would prefer to get them by mail, but will take them by email and I will send an email back that I got it
- Have a fire safe Christmas and a Happy and blessed New Year

**Revolving Loan – Ron O’Neal:**

- Next meeting will be Dec. 20<sup>th</sup>

**Web Page & Technology – Terry Whitham:**

- Waiting on a price from First Arriving to convert out web site over to them. Work in progress.

**Recognized of Past Presidents and President Emeritus in attendance - 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Tom DiCristofaro**

14 Past Presidents and 1 President Emeritus

**Recognized current Fire Company Presidents and Fire Chief’s:**        Counted 24 in attendance

**Affiliated Organizations/Agency Representatives**

**Ladies Auxiliary:** President Stacy Northam-Smith

- Introduced the LADVFA officers, LADVFA Past Presidents and the County Officers that were in attendance today.
- Thanks for the invitation for today’s meeting
- Happy Holidays to each and everyone

**State Fire Chief’s:** President Andy Jones

- Next meeting will be January 25 at Sta. 8 Aetna
- Will be a by-law change proposed to add an Assistant Treasurer to their Office list

**State Fire Police:** William Delledonne (absent)

- Jeff Dennison; thanks for the recognition

**DVFA Foundation:** Chairman Lynn Rogers

- Held their last meeting on Oct. 17<sup>th</sup> at Willis Chevy.
- Foundation was fortunate to have received a \$3,500.00 donation from Cigars Sessions, Inc. a business located in Middletown who wanted to contribute to the scholarship account.
- We are again fortunate enough to have received a grant through the Mid-Del charitable foundation for \$5,000.00. That foundation received 44 applications requesting funds for this year.

**Mutual Relief – Dan Burris:**

- New carrier this year VFIS
- New forms are being printed

**National Vol. Fire Council:** Delegate Bill Betts (copied from written notes)

- Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from NVFC
- Fall Conference was held in Cooperstown, NY. 40 States and 65 Directors were present
- Thanks to the 39 new members that signed-up during the DVFA Conference. Total membership 30,951
- Working with FEMA to simplify grant application process
- As usual, lots of training webinars and opportunities

**Del-Mar-Va Association:** 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Jay Jones

- Next meeting is February 4th in Parksley. Virginia all welcome.
- Challenge coins are still available, see Elmer.

**Communications:**

The following communications were received and were summarized by Secretary Steele

- Letter from the Dept. of Justice acknowledging receipt of our letter regarding the parole of Joseph Taye
- Letter from Kent County Firefighter’s Assoc. asking the DVFA to interact with the Medicaid/MCO reimbursement to get more funding for the ambulance services that we provide to medical facilities.

***Motion by Russell Hooper second by Johnny Hopkins to accept communications and spread upon the minutes***  
**Motion carried**

**OLD BUSINESS**

NONE

**NEW BUSINESS**

- Requested that the 2023-2024 DVFA committee list be sent out to all delegates and alternates. Too hard to find anything on the web page.
- Make sure that your Mutual Relief paperwork is up to date.
- *Motion by Mike Edwards and second by Chris Riale to have the DVFA table officers gather information only for the purpose of removing “Volunteer” from the DVFA name. Voice vote was too close to call, so President O’Neal requested a show of hands. Motion was defeated by a hand vote of 14 yes and 32 no per the parliamentary vote count*

**PAYMENT OF BILLS**

Treasurer Whitham highlighted the bills to be paid.

10:14 AM Delaware Volunteer Firefighter’s Association  
 12/07/23 Expenses by Vendor Summary  
 September through November 2023

---

	<u>Sep – Nov 23</u>
AT&T Mobility	149.53
Bobola Farms	153.00
Bumpers & Company	7,700.00
Canon	761.61
Comcast	672.82
Dolly Ingram	2,055.00
Elmer Steele	2,500.00
First Arriving LLC	48,300.00
Gerald Manley	2,000.00
IMPACT Technology Group, Inc	301.62
M&T	5,788.90
NFPA	175.00
Pivot Occupational Health	3,723.00
Pratt Insurance	4,968.00
Ray Stevens	1,500.00
Ron O’Neal	3,500.00
Steve Austin	66.96

Ted Walius	283.47
Terry M. Whitham	2,500.00
Tom DiCristofaro	2,000.00
Willard Betts	<u>32.20</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>89,131.11</b>

***Motion by Richard T. Perillo and second by Steven “Redman” Maichle to pay the bills as presented.  
Motion carried***

**GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President DiCristofaro discussed the purchase of smoke detectors. Plan to purchase 555 cases of 6 each. Will do a PR at Lowe’s in Wilmington when they are picked up. Break down would be 222 cases for New Castle, 166 cases for Kent County and 166 cases for Sussex County.
- Past President Perillo applauded the officers for the smoke detectors purchased.
- Officers have their name stamps today for surf permits.

**ADJOURNMENT**

It was regularly moved by Richard T. Perillo and seconded by Gerald Manley that the December Executive meeting be adjourned. **Motion carried.** Executive Manager Jay Jones offered the Benediction  
The meeting was adjourned at 11:07 AM

**Respectfully submitted,**  
*Elmer B. Steele*  
**Elmer B. Steele**  
**Secretary**

I hereby attest that this a true copy of the proceedings of the Delaware Volunteer Firefighter’s Association Executive Meeting held on Sunday, December 10, 2023.

**Attest: Jay Jones**  
**Executive Manager**

**Ron O’Neal**  
**President**