



DVFA EXECUTIVE MEETING

Delaware State Fire School

June 8, 2025

The June 8, 2025 DVFA Executive meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM by President Tom DiCristofaro at the Delaware State Fire School complex in Dover.

Invocation offered by DVFA Chaplain Charlie Arnold

Pledge of Allegiance led by Fire Marshal John Rudd

Roll Call of Officers:

All Officers, Directors and Office staff are present and/or accounted for.
(11 in attendance, 1 excused, 1 absent)

Special Guests;

Joanna Hutchinson – Delaware Burn Camp – Video presentation

Ed Rush – Advocate for NFFF – Brief talk “Everyone Goes Home” program
Phone; 914-494-5971 web site; Fireheroes.org

Report of Officers

President Tom DiCristofaro: (copied and pasted from email report)

Topics of discussion for the Executive Meeting on Sunday, June 8th, 2025

Talked about the Fire Tax disbursement and how we got to where we are today. Thanked the committee who worked so hard, and includes State Representative Kim Williams and Senator Jack Walsh, along with the Insurance Commissioner’s office and the State Treasurer.

Touched on the Joint Sunset Committee in reference to background checks and certifications.

Along with Executive Manager Jay Jones, we have spent a good amount of time in Legislative Hall in the last few months. This would include numerous meetings with State Representatives and Senators, and also a little time with the Governor and Lt Governor.

The conference committee has been working extremely hard to make this year’s conference a huge success. We had a couple obstacles to overcome as far as facilities are concerned, but Elmer and his crew are working through them.

Advised about the situation with the part time administrative position and how it came about to eliminate the position. This was not a personal attack in any way against Warren Jones, but a business decision. We thank Warren for his years in the fire service and his time spent working with and for the DVFA.

Expressed my disappointment and disgust with the way that the Executive Director of the Fire Commission talked in reference to the entire DVFA and me personally and also the letter she wrote on State time and on the state email system questioning the integrity of FEMA Director AJ Schall without any facts that she talks about

1st Vice President Gerald Manley, Jr.:

- Very busy with Commission issues
- Met with Sunset Committee
- Discussed SB158 (CISM)

2nd Vice President Jim Arrington:

- Thanked Association for their continued support

Secretary Steele: (copied and pasted from email report)

- This has been a busy quarter for me, with the elimination/resignation of Warren Jones as the Administrative Assistant.
- Executive Manager Jay Jones, Treasurer Terry Whitham and Myself are sharing the work load that Warren did.
- My biggest task was trying to sifter through the “mass” e-mail list and get it manageable for my computer. Hopefully, I have been able to modify the list, so that everyone is getting e-mails from the office.
- If you did not receive the budget for today or the Sussex FACETS report that was sent out on Tuesday and Wednesday, let me know, so you can be added to the bulk e-mail list.
- I started out with 437 e-mail addresses and have cut it down to 399. Will continue to up-date the list and try to put addresses in a format for Fire Company Presidents, Fire Chief’s, Past Presidents, Current Officers and Ladies Auxiliary. This way I can do a “bulk blast” e-mail to everyone or just use particular addresses for certain information.
- Been working with Conference issues. Contacted the Rehoboth Beach Convention Center, in the absence of Warren, to see where we stand with them. Working with the Hyatt on our needs with them. Working with Jay to get registration forms ready for the web page.
- Trying to do all I can for this Association, while taking care of my wife. For those that don’t know, she has full body Parkinsons disease and now has have a mini stroke. Please keep her in your thoughts and prayers, as she fights an uphill battle.

Treasurer Whitham: (copied from email report)

- As of June 3rd, we have the following balances:
 - a. Checking - \$114,818.90
 - b. Money Market - \$217,875.39
 - c. Brinker Financial Account - \$276,840.80
- Attached is the Budget vs Actual expenses to date. As noted, financially we are in good shape as we get closing out the budget year. This is in part of FEMA catching up with what they owe us.
- The Finance & Budget committee met recently and prepared the FY 25-26 Operational budget. Chairman Burris will be making the presentation for adoption by this body. Kudos to the committee members in working with the numbers and again proposing a balanced budget for the coming year.

- Having access to the M&T accounts online has been a great success. Tracking deposits has been so much easier and timely.
- The safer grant reimbursements are starting to get better. As noted, they have caught up with what they owed us from the previous budget year.

Motion by Gut Hudson and second by Kevin Hovis to accept the Officer reports and spread them upon the minutes. Motion carried

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

Due to a scheduling conflict with prior church commitments, I apologize for my absence. This meeting typically does not conflict with my schedule; however, due to this year's calendar, it did. I express my gratitude to the president for granting me leave to fulfill my obligations. My legislative report, which follows, summarizes current activities. Given the volume of activity, I have endeavored to provide a concise summary, anticipating the president will elaborate on certain aspects.

SS1 for SB21 Townsend. Passed and signed by the Governor.

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 8 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO THE GENERAL CORPORATION LAW.

SB28-SA1 Brown, on ready list in Senate.

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 18 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO FUNERAL EXPENSES FOR CERTAIN VOLUNTEERS WITH FIRE OR AMBULANCE COMPANIES. Changes wording in the code.

SB 29-SA1 Brown, assigned to Finance Committee.

An Act to amend Title 18 of the Delaware Code relating to funeral expenses for certain volunteers with fire or ambulance companies; increases benefit from \$7,000 to \$10,000.

SB 46, Mantzovinos, passed the Senate and awaits a House floor vote. An act to amend Title 21 of the Delaware Code relating to autonomous vehicles.

HB82-HA1: Carson, assigned to Appropriation Committee.

An act to amend Title 18 and Title 29 of the Delaware Code relating to death benefits; changes wording and increases benefits (\$7,000-\$8,000).

HB63 Wilson-Anton, ready list for the House

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 16 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO FIREWORKS.

HB 124 Williams, passed the House and was assigned to the Senate Health & Social Services Committee.

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 16 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO STATE FIRE MARSHAL FEES.

HB 133 Snyder-Hall, awaiting House vote.

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 11 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO FINES, FEES, RESTITUTION, AND OTHER COURT-RELATED MONETARY OBLIGATIONS.

HA 2 Clarifies that toll, red-light, and speed-camera violations are not eligible for hardship waivers or modifications.

SB 158 Pinkney, assigned to the Senate Judiciary Committee, will be heard on June 11th at 2 p.m.

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 10 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO COMMISSIONERS OF THE DELAWARE STATE FIRE COMMISSION (CISM).

HB 139: Bush, Awaiting House Vote

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 18 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO LINE-OF-DUTY DEATH HEARINGS

This would eliminate unnecessary LODD hearings.

HB 199 Wilson-Anton, House Economic Development/Banking/Insurance & Commerce Committee. An act to amend Title 18 of the Delaware Code relating to distributions to fire companies and departments. We are looking into its origin and purpose.

HB202 Wilson-Anton, House Public Safety & Homeland Security Committee

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 21 REGARDING CIVIL PENALTIES FOR SPEEDING, adding a \$10 assessment to other traffic violations.

We are keeping an eye out for potential legislation that may be drafted by trial lawyers. This legislation, which could involve insurance and cost the fire service a lot of additional money if we serve alcohol within our hall rentals, has been seen in other states and was very costly. We are staying vigilant and on top of the matter should a bill ever come to fruition.

We are still working on a draft bill for federal background checks. This draft is the third from the Joint Sunset Committee. The DVFA challenged all three drafts and requested to be part of the process. We will review the next version before deciding whether to support it hoping we have a seat at the table.

We are approaching legislators to draft a bill allowing fire police to have red flashing lights, in addition to their blue flashing lights, on the rear of their light bars to comply with state law. We are waiting on a support letter from the Police Chief's Council to move forward. We will most likely not have an update until 2026.

President DiCristofaro, Chief Mike Edwards, and I had a productive meeting with the Governor. The next DFAC report will come out on Monday the 16th, and we will have a better understanding of the state's funding and budget. We will see the Bond Bill and Grant-in-Aid bill the last full week of June.

Keep in mind this is the 1st Session of the General Assembly. So, what is not completed by June 30th can carry over into the next session in 2026.

FEDERAL

OHSa updates are on hold to allow the volunteer and union firefighters to provide additional input before moving forward. Eric Haley, Aaron Moore, and I will be serving on red ribbon panels during this process.

Safer and AFG grants are starting to be paid out again.

The National Fire Academy will reopen this month.

Later this week, we will meet with Senator Coons to discuss AFG and SAFER grant programs that need more funding, setting customer standards for lithium-ion batteries, federal tax credits, and the Honoring Our Fallen Heroes Act.

Agency & Committee Reports

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

1. 2025 Delaware Fatal Fires
 - a. 4 fire deaths to date.
2. Staffing Update
 - a. Fire Protection Specialist Bo Crumpton hired @ NCC Division
 - b. Working through the hiring process to fill vacant Fire Inspector I @ NCC Division.
3. United States Fire Administration Fire-NERIS
 - a. National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS) to replace DFIRS.
 - i. Duane Fox continues to offer training to fire departments.
 - ii. NERIS to be implemented in September 2025
 - iii. DFIRS will no longer be active on or around January 2026.
4. Staff attended the Rodney Marvel dedication at DSFS on 03/16/2025.
5. Two House Bills in play- HB 63 (fireworks wholesale and retail sale licensing and permits) and HB 124 (fee increases)
6. Requested one Fire Protection Specialist III position, one Deputy Fire Marshal I position, and two Fire Protection Specialist I positions at the Joint Finance Committee meeting on 03/31/2025.
7. Attended the National Fallen Firefighter Memorial service on 05/04/2025 at Emmitsburg, MD.
8. Attended Law Enforcement memorials in NCC and Dover on 05/07/2025.
9. Deputy Fire Marshals in Dewey Beach at the request of Dewey Beach Police Department on 5/24/2025.
10. Chief Deputy John Galaska and I presented a fire safety overview to approximately 150 staff, managers and owners of bars and restaurants in Sussex County on 6/12/2025; this was sponsored by the Delaware Restaurant Association and the Division of Alcohol & Tobacco Enforcement.

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

The Dover structural burn prop is scheduled to be installed in June of 2026.

The Sussex prop should be installed a few months before that and the New Castle in the fall of 2026.

We have 38 students in the summer Firefighter 1 & 2 class. Twelve from Wilmington and 26 volunteers (largest summer group of volunteers yet).

The spring EMT classes did not do as well as the classes in 2025, but still better than years before. Both summer classes are overfilled and we also did one for Wilmington FD.

We are upgrading the A/V equipment in classrooms 1, 2, 3, & 4 as well as our hallway monitor system.

The upgrades done to the flammable liquid and gas props have been completed. This project was paid for by the IMTT refinery out of Bayonne, NJ. They also donated a fire truck to us.

The National Fire Academy has reopened and our Delaware weekend has been rescheduled for 10/10-10/12 this year.

The spring Firefighter 1 & 2 class graduates next Saturday at 10 am at Cheswold firehouse.

The Fire Officer 1 class beginning on 9/3 and the Fire Officer 2 class starting on 7/2 still have openings.

The Junior Fire Academy begins on 6/23 and has a few spots left.

We will be introducing a new class called "Support Firefighter" that will enable students under 16 to get some training and potentially a national certification.

State Fire Prevention Commission – Vice Chairman Bill Kelly: (discussed)

- Thanked Tucker for his report regarding training opportunities at the school
- Processed the \$75,000 fire prevention matching funds
- Recertified over 1,000 EMT's
- Discussed residential sprinklers
- Presented a proclamation to Middletown for their sprinkler ordinance
- Thank you for all that you do
- Discussed Sunset recommendations

Question was raised as to who was running the Commission; the 7 Commissioners or the Executive Director?? Big discussion followed.

Revolving Loan - Tom DiCristofaro:

- Next meeting is June 18th

Scholarship – Ron O'Neal:

- Thanks to everyone for their donations
- Received 17 applications; 3 were rejected
- 14 applications processed, each worth \$2,000
- 8 from New Castle, 2 from Sussex and 4 from Kent

Sprinkler Committee – Paul Eichler:

- Discussed sprinklers
- Thanked Middletown for their sprinkler ordinance
- Reported on housing codes for sprinklers

Out of State coordinator – Steve Austin:

- Maryland Firemen's Convention is the week of June 17th
- CVVFA Convention is August 1,2,3 in New Port, PA
- W.VA Convention is July 7,8,9 in Charlestown, WV
- Virginia Firefighter's Convention is August 14-16 in center of State this year
- Pennsylvania Firefighter's Convention is September 18,19

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

- The committee met and we discussed the changes to the 2025 program.
- The 2024 matching funds have been distributed from the Commission office.

Finance Committee – Dan Burris:

- FY26' budget will be voted on under new business

Recognized of Past Presidents and President Emeritus in attendance - 1st Vice President Gerald Manley

8 Past Presidents and 2 President Emeritus

Affiliated Organizations**Ladies Auxiliary:** President Mickey Decino

- Introduced the LADVFA officers, LADVFA Past Presidents and the County Officers that were in attendance today.

State Fire Chief's: President Mike Edwards

- Next State Chief's meeting will be the Expo on June 26 at Sta. 50, Harrington Fire Co.
- Expo and food from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm. Meeting at 6:30 pm
- Conference training agenda is complete. Lots of classes
- Submit letters for various awards for this year

State Fire Police: President Paige Seppanen

- Quarterly meeting coming up
- Ready for the Conference

DVFA Foundation: Chairman Lynn Rogers

- Had their meeting on April 30th. Re-appointed officers
- Next meeting will be November 5th at Willis Chevy in Smyrna

National Vol. Fire Council: Delegate Ron O'Neal

- Next meeting will be in Salt Lake City

Communications:

The following communications were received and were summarized by Secretary Steele

- Letter from Houston Fire Co. and Five Points Fire Co. up-dating Delegates/Alternates
- Copy of the notes from the DVFA Executive Officers Zoom meeting, regarding the approval of the FY26' budget, with the 3 recommendations of the Finance & Budget committee. (March 30, 2025)
- Copy of a letter that President DiCristofaro sent to Warren Jones, regarding doing away with the Administrative Assistant position when the FY25' ends on June 30, 2025, per recommendations of the Finance & Budget committee (April 14, 2025)
- Letter from Bridgeville Fire Company endorsing Jim Arrington for the office of DVFA 1st Vice President (April 22, 2025)
- Letter from Laurel Fire Department supporting Elmer B. Steele for the office of DVFA Secretary (April 22, 2025)
- Letter from Christiana Fire Co. nominating Brian Reeder for the office of DVFA 2nd Vice President (April 22, 2025)
- Letter from Christiana Fire Co. nominating Richard J. Perillo for the office of DVFA Director from New Castle County (April 22, 2025)

- Letter from Sussex County Firefighter's Association supporting Jim Arrington for the office of DVFA President (April 23, 2025)
- Letter from Sussex County Firefighter's Association supporting Elmer Steele for the office of DVFA Secretary (April 23, 2025)
- Letter from Citizen's Hose Fire Co. supporting Gerald Manley, Jr. for the position of DVFA President
- Letter from Dover Fire Dept. supporting Terry Whitham for the office of DVFA Treasurer
- Letter from New Castle County Firefighter's Association supporting Brian Reeder for the position of DVFA 2nd Vice President
- Copy of a letter from Kent County Firefighter's Association, of the letter that they sent to the State Fire Prevention Commission regarding actions and comments made at the Joint Sunset Committee meeting.
- Letter from New Castle County Firefighter's Association supporting Rich Perillo for the position of DVFA New Castle Director
- Letter from Elsmere Fire Co., updating a change in their leadership
- Letter from Sussex County Firefighter's Association, reference to the 4 questions on the proposed Fire Commission investigators
- Letter from Kent County Firefighter's Association supporting Gerald Manley, Jr. for the office of DVFA President

Motion by Brian Reeder second by Ray Stevens to accept communications and spread them upon the minutes
Motion carried

OLD BUSINESS

NONE

NEW BUSINESS

- Finance & Budget committee Chairman Dan Burris presented the FY26' budget with 3 recommendations:
 - Eliminate the position of Administrative Assistant as it is known today
 - Leave monies in the upcoming FY26 budget for a "Temp" if and when needed
 - Raise the salary of the Executive Manager to \$48k annually

Motion by Mark Harris and second by Ed Welch to accept the FY 26' budget, with the 3 recommendations as printed and presented.

Motion carried

- President DiCristofaro turned the meeting over to 1st Vice President Manley so he could address an issue as President of the Claymont Fire Co.
 - Tom read parts of the letter that he sent to the Commission expressing his disgust and anger toward the DVFA and himself, based on the comments made by the Executive Director of the Commission at the Joint Sunset Committee meeting.
 - 1st Vice President Manley played a voice call from that meeting, showing the Executive Directors comments to the committee.
 - Tom also read parts of a second letter from the Commission Executive Director regarding comments that she made towards DEMA Director AJ Schall.
 - A lengthy discussion took place on the issues, comments and the position of the Commission.

Motion by Brian Reynolds and second by Mark Harris that letters be sent to Request the termination and or resignation of Sherry Lambertson from the fire commission and a letter of apology to the DVFA and AJ Schall. Motion carried. (note; motion was copied and pasted from Brian's email)

Letters to be sent to; Governor, Lt. Governor, Joint Sunset committee, Fire Commissioners and to Sherry Lambertson

- Much, much, much more discussion took place regarding the Commission and the fire service.
Motion by Richard J. Perillo and second by Mark Harris that a second letter be sent expressing that the DVFA has lost confidence in the State Fire Prevention Commission. This communication constitutes a formal vote of NO CONFIDENCE.
Motion carried by a unanimous vote. (note; motion was scribed from Richard's email)
Letters to be sent to; Governor, Lt. Governor, Joint Sunset committee, Fire Commissioners and to Sherry Lambertson
- Robbie Murray reported on the Paramedic accident that happened on Friday

NOMINATION OF OFFICERS

President - Gerald Manley, Jr., Citizen's Hose Fire Co. (letter received)
Nominated by Bruce C. Ennis and second by Jim Woznicki

1st Vice President - Jim Arrington., Bridgeville Fire Co. (letter received)
Nominated by Bruce Harman and second by Guy Hudson

2nd Vice President - Brian Reeder, Delaware City Fire Co. (letter received)
Nominated by Keith Simpkins and second by Richard J. Perillo

Secretary - Elmer Steele, Laurel Fire Dept. (letter received)
Nominated by Jeff Hill and second by Mike Lowe

Treasurer - Terry Whitham, Dover Fire Dept. (letter received)
Nominated by Paul Eichler and second by Jim Woznicki

New Castle Director - Richard J. Perillo, Christiana Fire Co. (letter received)
Nominated by Keith Simpkins and second by Brian Reeder

Motions and seconds were made after each office to close the nomination. All motions were **carried**
 The election and installation will take place at the Annual Conference in September.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

1:52 PM Delaware Volunteer Firefighter's Association
 06/03/25 Expenses by Vendor Summary
 March 1 through June 3, 2025

	<u>Mar 1 – June 3, 25</u>
AT&T Mobility	393.09
Canon	587.74
Claymont Fire Company	300.00
Cumberland Valley VFA	160.00
DVFA Foundation	6,000.00
First Arriving, LLC	20,000.00
Goldfein & Joseph, P.C.	437.50
Jor-Lin Tour & Charter	1,784.00

M&T	12,731.88
Maryland State Fireman's Association	7,857.00
McGinnis Partners	2,700.00
Seaford Historical Society	500.00
Steve Austin	<u>173.11</u>

TOTAL 53,624.32

Motion by Ed Welch and second by Steven "Redman" Maichle to pay the bills as presented.

Motion carried

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION

- Gerald Manley, Jr. said that we need to stay unified
- Richard J. Perillo stated that we need to be prepared to make a response when you want someone fired or removed from an office or position
- Deb Watson thanked everyone for the cards and prayers. Glad to be back
- Terry Whitham asked everyone to keep Charlie Stevenson in your prayers
- Tom DiCristofaro said to make sure you return your paddles to the box out front

Benediction was given by DVFA Chaplain Charlie Arnold

ADJOURNMENT

It was regularly moved by Walt Reynolds and second by Guy Hudson that the June 8th Executive meeting be adjourned. **Motion carried.** The meeting was adjourned at 12:25 PM

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, June 8, 2025.

Attest: Jay Jones
Executive Manager

Tom DiCristofaro
President