



**DVFA EXECUTIVE MEETING**  
**Delaware State Fire School**  
**June 9, 2024**

The June 9, 2024 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 Ken Ryder

Roll Call of Officers:

All Officers, Directors and Office staff are present and/or accounted for.  
(12 in attendance, 2 excused)

**Report of Officers**

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

I want to thank everyone for taking the time out of your busy summer schedules to attend the meeting this morning.

It seems like it was a long time ago now but I also want to thank those who attended the Congressional Fire Services Institute Dinner in Washington back in late April. The numbers of those in attendance was down this year but we certainly appreciate those organizations who sent representatives, as well as those who were able to attend some of the seminars and discussions on Monday prior to the dinner.

One of the discussion topics at CFSI focused on the link between firefighting and cancer, and what we can do to help bring this issue to the forefront. The DVFA has been promoting this up and down the State but again I want to urge you, if you haven't done so already, to register and complete the National Firefighter Cancer Registry. The data collected in this survey will help researchers investigate the relationships between firefighting activities and different types of cancer. It takes less than 30 minutes to complete, but if it helps to identify and understand the hazards we all face, then it's well worth the time. You can find the web portal and register for the survey at [nfr.cdc.gov](http://nfr.cdc.gov).

Another focus of CFSI is the support of the AFG and SAFER federal grant programs, of which many in this room have been the recipients of. Those two programs are set to sunset on September 30th of this year. Federal Senate Bill 870 has passed both the Senate and the House in Washington as of May 8, and has now gone back to the Senate with a House amendment, which the Senate will have to approve before it goes to the President for approval. We are keeping an eye on that piece of Legislation.

I'm sure you've heard by now that the public comment period for the OSHA standard 1910.156 modifications has been pushed back another 30 days, to July 22, 2024. We are still looking for another 30-day extension onto that date as well. Members of the NVFA taskforce Bill Betts and Jay Jones are very much involved with the tracking of these changes and are keeping us up to date on the progress. Even though the comment period has been extended, we still urge everyone to complete the NVFC's survey which can be found at <https://ncsfa.com/take-the-nvfc-survey-on-oshas-proposed-emergency-response-standard>. Again, this survey takes approximately 10 minutes to complete but the more voices heard, the better off we will all be. The DVFA office has compiled a couple of "form" letters that your organizations can use to send to OSHA as well in opposition to their proposed changes. One of those form letters has spaces where you can plug in numbers for your particular organization, such as population, square miles, number of members, etc.

In addition, the NVFC is calling for a "Day of Action" on Wednesday, June 12th, with regards to the proposed OSHA standards. This will include a number of webinars and events hosted by the Council for members of the volunteer fire service to learn about the OSHA changes and how to go about formulating comments on how the changes would impact your organization. More information can be found on the NVFC website.

The Fallen Firefighter Memorial Committee has unfortunately run into some scheduling issues with their planned event to honor Laura Madara, originally scheduled for late April. The Committee is still exploring possible dates for that ceremony along with that for John Pridemore as well, to be held prior to Conference. It is still one of my goals to have a plan for the expansion of the memorial in Dover completed by the end of September.

Two special presentations made at Conference each year are the Youth Leadership Award and the Firefighter of the Year. I'm certain that all of us have individuals in our fire houses that go above and beyond and would be worthy of such honors.

So, I would challenge each President and Chief to submit names eligible for these awards prior to their respective deadlines. Information regarding the Youth Leadership Awards will be coming out this next week.

As it was pointed out in an email last week from Chief Haley, one of the next challenges to be faced by the fire service is around the use and effects of medical marijuana, especially in light of the recent changes in the laws by the State of Delaware. This is another issue where there is a wealth of information available, but I would like to task the Law & Legislative Committee with exploring and developing a boilerplate policy that could be used by companies throughout the State.

In closing, again I want to thank everyone for all you for the Fire Service. Whether you're an Auxiliary member, Paramedic, EMT, Firefighter, paid or volunteer, you are all here with one goal in mind and that's serving the public of Delaware, something we all need to keep in mind. We all realize it can be a daily struggle but you make it happen.....keep up the fight.

Again, thank you all for being here this morning and I wish everyone an early Happy Father's Day.

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

- Fire Insurance Tax – making sure and bringing everyone up to date with the process as we know it and the fact that they will be receiving an October check this year. But if HB371 gets passed and signed, starting in calendar year 2025, there will only be ONE payment, payable in late June or early July
- Will discuss a meeting with the State Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber's lobbyist spoke strongly against HB 371 and we were upset, as the DVFA is a member of the State Chamber, that the Chamber did not reach out to us prior to voicing strong opposition to the bill. The Chamber admitted they were given

bad information and put a retraction out saying the same. We look forward to working with the Chamber in the future.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Gerald Manley:**

- Everything covered in the 2 reports before me.
- Looking forward to seeing everyone at the Conference
- Looking forward to working with the Officers in the coming year.

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

16 events, 1,655 miles, 120.5 hours

- All contracts for food and beverage at the Hyatt Dewey have been sent to the Chef for approval and final pricing. Will work with Treasurer Stevens on the budget, once the final numbers are in
- Hotel rooms are sold out at the Hyatt Dewey and the Gold Leaf. Call for any cancellations or last-minute openings. Still have rooms available at the Beach House, Hotel Dewey, and the Coast in Rehoboth
- New staff at the Hyatt. Trying to get them up to speed at to what we need. Hope to have final floor plans within the next 2 weeks for review and hope to have BEO's by mid-July

Hope everyone has a safe and happy summer!!!! Stay cool.

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

- As of May 30<sup>th</sup>, we have the following balances:
  - a. Checking - \$51,375.32
  - b. Money Market - \$167,145.19
  - c. Brinker Financial Account - \$264,507.21
- We had a Finance & Budget committee meeting this past Wednesday. Chairman Burris will be presenting the FY24-25 Operational budgets. Thanks to the committee.
- I moved \$6,814.77 from the money market account to checking. This covers the office move expenses, increased rent, and the legislative fire caucus expenses.
- I met with M&T bank and have set up an online account for direct access to our accounts. We are ready for companies to start setting up the EFT process.
- The safer grant reimbursements are not very timely for certain submissions. They owe us a considerable amount for the NFPA physicals. They are making Warren jimp through hoops with the verification process.

***Motion by Steven "Redman" Maichle and second by Guy Hudson to accept the Officer reports and spread them upon the minutes. Motion carried***

**Executive Manager Jay Jones:**

- 480 bills still pending for this session
- Tuesday, HB127 should be voted on in the Senate. House already passed it
- Wednesday, HB436 and HB371 should be voted on
- Requested additional monies for fire service

## Committee Reports

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

1. Fire Fatalities
  - a. June 1<sup>st</sup> Bridgeville. 2 fatalities under investigation
  - b. June 8<sup>th</sup> Millville. 1 fatality under investigation
2. DNREC open burning prohibited May 1<sup>st</sup> through September 30<sup>th</sup>
3. Sparklers and ground-based fireworks may be purchased by anyone 18 years or older between June 4<sup>th</sup> and July 4<sup>th</sup> , may only be used on July 4<sup>th</sup>
4. Delmarva Power advise that regrettably they are not able to participate in the smoke detector give-away this year.
5. Several staff positions open and in the process of being filled or will be advertised on July 1<sup>st</sup>

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

- The first statewide Firefighter 1 & 2 class graduated 62 out of 70 students
- Our EMT first time pass rate is up so far this year from around 50% to around 70%
- We have asked for an additional Administrative Assistant and a pole building in New Castle in the state budget and we should know something by the end of the month
- We are ready to sign the contract on the foam replacement project and we will have a public event on July 11 to do so and we plan to schedule fire companies to come in starting in August
- We have applied for a design waiver to the state for our Dover burn building so that we can put bid packages out
- The school has taken delivery of two rescue boats to be used for training
- Mike Lowe will be retiring on June 30 with 26 years of service. Round of applause

### State Fire Prevention Commission – Ron Marvel:

- Approved 710
- Matching fire prevention funds have been approved and sent out
- Next commission meeting will be June 11
- Congratulations to the students that just completed the first Firefighter 1 & 2 class

### Conference Report – Jay Jones:

- Check the web page for Conference up-dates and registration forms

### Finance Committee – Dan Burris:

- FY25' budget will be voted on under new business

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

- Since last meeting, we finalized the matching funds request and was turned over to the Fire Commission for approval and pay out.
- Went over the changes to the 2024 poster and essay packets and they will be going to print soon

### Out of State coordinator – Steve Austin:

- Maryland Firemen's Convention is the week of June 17<sup>th</sup>
- CVVFA Convention is August 1,2,3
- Virginia Firefighter's Convention is the same week as the DVFA Conference
- Pennsylvania Firefighter's Convention is September 13,14

**Revolving Loan – Ron O’Neal: (notes from Ray Stevens)**

- 1. Last meeting was March 20<sup>th</sup> in Dover
- 2. No loans were made due to the lack of available funds
- 3. Total loans since the program started;
 

New Castle companies	28 loans for \$6,210,135
Kent Companies	29 loans for \$5,852,587
Sussex companies	24 loans <u>for \$7,841,484</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$19,904.206 Million</b>
- 4. Nine loans are pending, waiting on payments back into the fund.
- 5. Working to obtain another \$5 Million in funding
- 6. Next meeting is June 18<sup>th</sup>

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

15 Past Presidents and 1 President Emeritus

**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.

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

- Next State Chief’s meeting will be the Expo on June 27 at Sta. 26, Townsend Fire Co.
- Expo and food from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm. Meeting to follow
- Will be conducting 8 cardio-kinetic physicals in each County

**State Fire Police:** 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Paige Seppanen

- Everything is set for the Conference.
- Fire Police will park at the Convention Center on Tuesday night and use the Jolly Trolley to transport back and forth from the Convention Center to the Hyatt, due to limited parking at the Hyatt.

**DVFA Foundation:** Chairman Lynn Rogers

- Had their recent meeting
- Due to some extra money, they plan to increase the amount of the scholarships for this year

**National Vol. Fire Council:** Delegate Bill Betts

- The main goal of the NVFC at the present time is combatting the newly proposed OSHA 1910.156 standard due to its extreme cost and time required to meet the 22 NFPA standards that will be incorporated into this regulation.
- Steve Austin of Delaware was presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award of the NVFC at the spring meeting held in Arlington, VA.

**Del-Mar-Va Association:** President Jay Jones

- Next meeting will be August 4<sup>th</sup> at Sta. 75, Ellendale

**Communications:**

The following communications were received and were summarized by Secretary Steele

- Letter from Citizen’s Hose Fire Co. and Seaford Fire Dept. changing Delegates/Alternates

- Letter from Laurel Fire Dept. supporting Elmer B. Steele for the office of DVFA Secretary
- Letter from Roxana Fire Co. supporting Guy Hudson for the office of DVFA Director from Sussex County
- Letter from Kent County Volunteer Firefighter’s Association supporting Gerald L. Manley, Jr. for the office of DVFA 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President
- Letter from Sussex County Firefighter’s Association supporting Elmer Steele for the office of DVFA Secretary
- Letter from Sussex County Firefighter’s Association supporting Guy Hudson for the office of DVFA Director from Sussex County
- Letter from Dover Fire Dept. supporting Terry Whitham for the office of DVFA Treasurer
- Letter from Delaware Department of Justice regarding the denial of early parole for Joseph Taye
- Letter from Claymont Fire Co. supporting Tom DiCristofaro for the office of DVFA President
- Letter from Citizen’s Hose Fire Co. supporting Gerald Manley, Jr. for the position of DVFA 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

***Motion by Mark Harris second by Guy Hudson to accept communications and spread upon the minutes***  
**Motion carried**

**OLD BUSINESS**

- Mike Edwards raised the question again, regarding “active member status” There are approximately 3,400 members within the State. A State wide standard needs to be established defining “active member” After much discussion, President O’Neal decided to appoint a committee to look into this issue and report back to the membership. Mike Edwards will chair this committee.
- Mike Perrone raised the question again, regarding getting information from the DVFA. We are getting mandates and standards forced on us and we are not able to get copies of these. Another big discussion took place on this issue. How do we get copies of NFPA and OSHA standards and regulations. This is copy write material and is not available for us to copy, print or re-distribute. You can review and read most of the information, but can not print-off. The DVFA will touch base with the Fire Marshalls office, the Fire School and the Fire Commission to see if they can shed any light on this issue,

**NEW BUSINESS**

- *Motion by Ray Stevens and second by Jim Woznicki to accept the FY 25’ budget as printed.*  
**Motion carried**

**PAYMENT OF BILLS**

Treasurer Whitham highlighted the bills to be paid.

9:29 AM  
 06/06/24

Delaware Volunteer Firefighter’s Association  
 Expenses by Vendor Summary  
 March through May 2024

---

	<u>Mar – May 24</u>
AT&T Mobility	201.92
Bumpers & Company	300.00
Canon	581.61

Chief Technologies, LLC	1,152.00
Comcast	272.64
Congressional Fire Services Institute	22,120.00
Cumberland Valley VFA	100.00
DE State Chamber of Commerce	515.00
Elmer Steele	310.50
First Arriving, LLC	81,875.00
First Due Care	7,740.00
Georgetown Fire Company	5,953.84
Guy Hudson	2,300.00
M&T	21,475.74
McGinnis Partners	2,700.00
Michael Lowe	23.09
Mill Creek Fire Company	7,000.00
Norman "Jay" Jones	823.99
Ron O'Neal	310.50
Steve Austin	<u>71.43</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>155,827.26</b>

***Motion by Brian Reeder and second by Steven "Redman" Maichle to pay the bills as presented.  
Motion carried***

**NOMINATION OF OFFICERS**

- President - Tom DiCristofaro, Claymont Fire Co. (letter received)  
*Nominated by Mark Harris and second by Eric Haley*
- 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President - Gerald Manley, Jr., Citizen's Hose Fire Co. (letter received)  
*Nominated by Jim Woznicki and second by Bruce Ennis*
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President - James Arrington, Bridgeville Fire Co. (letter received)  
*Nominated by Ted Walius and second by Ray Stevens*
- Secretary - Elmer Steele, Laurel Fire Dept. (letter received)  
*Nominated by Mike Lowe and second by Jeff Hill*
- Treasurer - Terry Whitham, Dover Fire Dept. (letter received)  
*Nominated by Jim Woznicki and second by Paul Eichler*
- Sussex Director - Guy Hudson, Roxana Fire Co. (letter received)  
*Nominated by Wayne Bennett and second by Jim Watson*

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.

**GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION**

- Deb Lawhead will be retiring on July 31<sup>st</sup>. Her replacement will be Marcia Lundy
- Mike Lowe will be retiring on June 30<sup>th</sup>

Benediction was given by Jay Jones

**ADJOURNMENT**

It was regularly moved by Jim Woznicki and second by Guy Hudson that the June 9<sup>th</sup> Executive meeting be adjourned. **Motion carried.** The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 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, June 9, 2024.

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

**Ron O'Neal**  
**President**