

WNCAFF Quarterly Meeting  
Gaston College  
Hosted by Gaston County Firefighters' Association  
January 15, 2020

18:35 – President Lance called the meeting to order with 175 members representing 22 counties in attendance. President Lance gave thanks to the Gaston County Firefighters' Association and Gaston College for hosting the meeting. He introduced Vice President Matt Kanupp who welcomed the association to Gaston County and the town of Dallas.

Invocation was given by: Chaplain Gene Jones - Dallas Fire Department

Pledge of Allegiance: Josh Crisp - Director Fire Rescue Training, Gaston College

President Lance recognized our meal sponsors for the meeting: Atlantic Emergency Solutions and Local Government Federal Credit Union.

18:41 – Meeting was suspended for the meal.

19:09 – Meeting Reconvened.

19:09 – Awards Presentation: 2019 Annual Awards Presented To The Following:  
Career Company Officer of the Year: Chris Cash – Cherryville Fire Department  
Volunteer Company Officer of the Year: Robert Heussy – Union Road Fire Department  
Volunteer Chief Officer of the Year: Jerry Silver – Polkville Fire Department  
Volunteer Chief Officer of the Year: Craig Huffstetler – Union Road Fire Department

19:16 - President Lance gave a thank you to the association for the support given to him during his time as president. President Lance then turned the association over to the incoming President Brian Piercy.

President Lance was presented with an axe as a token of appreciation from the executive board and the association membership for his dedication and hard work as president.

**President Piercy recognized the 2020 WNCAFF Officers.**

- President Brian Piercy – Ashford North Cove Fire Department
- 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Todd McMurry – Shelby Fire Department
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Robert Griffin – Edneyville Fire Department
- Secretary Anthony Penland – Swannanoa Fire Department
- Treasurer Dean Coward – Saunook Fire Department
- Past President Trevor Lance – Skyland Fire Department
- Mountain Region Director Shane LaCount – Mooresville Fire Department
- Foothills Region Director – Earl Withers III – Dallas Fire Department
- Highlands Region Director – Bryan Buchanan – Center Pigeon Fire Department

**19:23 - Secretary's and Treasurer's Reports**

Motion moved by Joey Webb and seconded by Kevin Mundy to accept the secretary's report as mailed, emailed and/or posted to the website. Motion Passed.

Motion moved by Rick Livingston seconded by John Wilson to accept treasurer's report as presented. Motion Passed.

**NCSFA – Tim Bradley**

➤ **Roster Reporting Requirements**

- Rosters are due by January 15th. This includes the membership roster as well as the certification of firefighters.
- Last year we only had 7 departments not submitting rosters out of 1316, and around 30 not submitting BTR reports.

➤ **Relief Fund**

- Last year continued to be an extremely active year for relief fund usage and approval. In 2019 we handled 502 requests, or an average of 42 per month, for a total of \$2,469,764 not including the pre-approved SRP payments. The highest type of requests was Medical Financial Hardships, or destitution.
- I would remind everyone that it is critical for those at or near their maximum of \$2,500 per rostered firefighter to watch their balance closely. We still have fire departments submitting reports that are over their maximum. This will result in them not being able to receive their check at the end of the fiscal year from DOI.

➤ **Scholarships and Grants**

- Scholarships are now open on-line for 2020. There are 15 scholarships per region awarded each year. The scholarships include \$2,000 Associate's, \$8,000 Bachelor's and \$10,000 Master's Degree awards.
- We also have (8) \$500 training grants available per region. We hope it expands in the future. There were 3 from the Eastern, and one each from the Piedmont and Western.
- The electronic submission due date for the scholarship and grant applications is March 15, 2020.

➤ **Legislation**

- This year, 2020, will be the continuation of the 2019/2020 two-year session and is normally referred to as the Short Session. Bills that are eligible normally are those that involve appropriations, finance, or passed one of the two chambers in 2019. Of course, as always, the Legislature can amend the rules. There are several key items held over from last year that impact the fire service:
  - **Potential issues for the fire service this year include:**
    - Continuation of SAR Funding – Some funding was put in the DPS budget, but it is non-recurring funds.
    - Separation Allowance for Career Firefighters.
    - Continuing to add cancer benefits for LODD – Two additional cancers were added in the budget bill last year but has not gone into effect due to the veto.
    - Presumptive Cancer or Cancer Coverage for Firefighters.
    - Increased Arson Penalties for Certain Types of Arson – HB 606.
    - Recognizing PTS as a Workers Comp Illness – HB 622.
    - Building code issues that we would want to oppose.
    - Fireworks that we would want to oppose.
- Legislative Day has not been determined thus far.

➤ **Federal Legislation**

- \$355 million each for AFG and SAFER (up from \$350 million).
- \$46.8 million for USFA (up from \$44.18 million, but all of that increase is going to building improvements, so no additional funding for programs).
- \$18 million for the Volunteer Fire Assistance (Rural Fire Capacity) and \$82 million for State Fire Assistance (State Fire Capacity) grant programs (up from \$17 million and \$81 million, respectively).
- \$2.5 million for the National Firefighter Registry (up from \$1 million last year, but more importantly \$2.5 million is full funding).
- \$5 million for the SIREN grant program (SIREN was created a year ago but this is the first time it has been funded). In December 2018, Congress passed the SIREN Act, establishing a grant program at the Department of Health and Human Services for rural EMS agencies to help pay for equipment, training, and staffing. SIREN grants are capped at \$200,000 and there is a ten percent local matching requirement. Public and private, non-profit EMS agencies that serve rural areas are eligible to apply for SIREN funding.
- A one-year reinstatement of the Volunteer Responder Incentive Protection Act, exempting the first \$600 and any property tax benefits or stipends that a volunteer receives as a reward for their service from being subject to federal income taxation/reporting. The 2020 law provides an exclusion from taxable income for “qualified payments to volunteer firefighters or EMS personnel”. This is a maximum of \$600.00 per year, which was also an increase in the current legislation. The amount was previously capped at \$360.00 annually.
- There is also a tax bill that may be passed (I’m told it will be added to one of the appropriations bills) that includes a provision that will make it possible for small businesses to claim a tax benefit for retrofitting commercial structures with fire sprinklers. That had been intended as part of the 2017 tax reform/cut bill but there was a drafting error which this bill will fix.
- VRIPA (which is in the bill) and the language impacting fire sprinklers (which still needs to be added) are probably the most significant positive developments. On VRIPA it is only a one-year extension, but it permanently changes the code to increase the tax-free amount from \$360 to \$600 per year, and puts us in better position politically to get permanently extended next year.

➤ **Board Retreat**

- Last September the NCSFA Board held an annual retreat under the direction of President AC Rich to discuss future issues for the Association. The retreat was successful and the Board has been working hard to begin implementation of new issues, while maintaining and improving service offered from the past.

➤ **SAFRE Conference**

- This year’s dates for the SAFRE Conference are August 12-15th, 2020, with the hashtag #UnitedByPurpose. On-line registration will be available in the near future on our website. Course selections have already been made and I can tell you this year we will have some great classes. We’ll have more as the time grows closer, but please mark your calendar for that week.

- **Mid-Winter Summit**
  - We will be hosting a Summit for the 5th year this year at Mid-Winter, January 28, 2020 at 9:00. This will include the Board members from the NCSFA, NCAFC's, and the Boards from all three regional associations (Western, Eastern, and Piedmont). It will also include representatives from the Fire Marshal's Association and the PFFPNC. Legislation will be the central theme for this year's discussion, as well as any new program being provided by the Regions.
- **Historian Work**
  - Our Statistician, Dennis Pressley, has continued work under the new responsibility of Historian, as predicated by the bylaw change in 2018. Mike Legeros, from Raleigh, has begun formulating historical information. Some of this was displayed at the Annual Conference last year. Completing the history may be a multi-year project, but it is the NCSFA's hope we'll have a complete history of the Association, and the NC Fire Service in general.

### **NCAFC – Joey Webb/Davie Summey**

- **2020 Mid-Winter Conference**
  - Record Numbers again this year.
  - **Free Expo**
    - Thursday & Friday. We have had many inquires of departments bringing their Truck & Facilities Committee Members to the Free Expo to meet with vendors.
  - **LODD and Cancer Summits**
    - The purpose of the LODD Summit is to gathers those who assist with a NC Fire Service LODD an opportunity to discuss LODD matters outside a response.
    - The purpose of the Cancer Summit is to have a round table discussion with those agencies and associations who serve the NC Fire Service in Cancer related matters.
  - **Bylaws Amendment Vote**
    - There will be a By Laws Amendment vote to take place on Thursday during the conference and you all should have received a notice by US Mail and also email regarding the vote.
- **Member Appreciation Package**
  - The board hopes everyone who is a member received your appreciation packet before Christmas as a way of showing the Boards appreciation for your membership to the Association.
- **Volunteer Workforce Solutions**
  - The board is proud to announce due to the effectiveness of the Volunteer Recruitment Grant under the leadership of Chief Tracy Mosley, NCAFC has been awarded a follow up grant to continue the Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment efforts in NC.
  - NCAFC Volunteer Recruitment PSA has been nominated for four (4) Emmy Awards for the National Award Ceremonies which will be held in Nashville Tenn. in February. Chief Mosley will be there to receive the award. THANK YOU, Chief Mosley, for ALL you hard work!!!!!!
- **61<sup>st</sup> Annual Fire Prevention School**
  - Registration is now open.

- **NC Specialty License Plate**
  - To looking for time sensitive news about it next week.
- **New NCAFC Office Phone Number**
  - 1-888-50-CHIEF (2-4433)

### **NVFC – Quentin Cash**

- The NVFC has over 15,000 members in North Carolina, more than any other state. We are excited to announce that we have streamlined NVFC membership to one individual membership level. This means all members get every membership benefit for the low rate of \$18 a year. Department leaders should consider purchasing memberships for their personnel to expand the benefits they get. NVFC member benefits include an AD&D policy, free training in the Virtual Classroom, access to the Volunteer Voices member community, and much more. You can see the full list of benefits and join at [www.nvfc.org/join](http://www.nvfc.org/join).
- The nomination period is now open for the NVFC's annual fire service achievement awards. Submit your nominations by February 7 for the Lifetime Achievement Award, Health and Wellness Leadership Award, Junior Firefighter of the Year Award, and Junior Firefighter Program of the Year Award. The criteria and nomination forms are at [www.nvfc.org/awards](http://www.nvfc.org/awards).
- The NVFC is holding its next Training Summit in Orlando, FL, on June 26-27, 2020. This conference features classroom sessions on critical fire service issues, including health, safety, staffing, leadership, and more. Travel stipends are available to eligible NVFC members to help with the cost of attending, and applications are being accepted on a rolling basis. The first stipend deadline is February 1 and the next one will be March 1. Registration for the Training Summit will be open by next week. Learn more at [www.nvfc.org/summit](http://www.nvfc.org/summit).
- The NVFC is also hosting the inaugural Recruitment & Retention Experience in Cleveland, OH, on September 25-26. This interactive conference will feature educational sessions, speakers, and idea exchange relating to volunteer emergency service staffing issues. Pre-registration is now open so you can reserve your spot and stay updated as event information is released. In addition, the call for presentations is open through February 1 for qualified instructors or speakers who would like to present at the event. More information is available at [www.nvfc.org/experience](http://www.nvfc.org/experience).
- The NVFC has launched a monthly Train Strong webinar series that focuses on different topics impacting the fire and emergency services. The next one is January 29 at 2pm on Preventing Monetary Theft in Your Fire/EMS Department. There will be two webinars in February, one on practical cancer risk reduction solutions for volunteer departments, and the other on insurance coverage options for firefighters. You can find upcoming webinars and register from the NVFC's online calendar at [www.nvfc.org/events](http://www.nvfc.org/events). NVFC members can also view past webinars on the Members-Only section of the web site.
- The NVFC has also partnered with the IAFC-VCOS to host a series of Surviving the Job webinars highlighting cancer risk reduction practices. Information on these webinars is also available on the NVFC calendar at [www.nvfc.org/events](http://www.nvfc.org/events). The first one is on February 18 and will highlight exposure documentation.
- We've had some legislative victories over the past month. The Volunteer Responder Incentive Protection Act was restored for the 2020 tax year, exempting property tax benefits and up to \$600 of additional incentives that volunteers receive as a reward for their service from being subject to federal income tax reporting. In addition, there was an increase in funding this year for AFG and SAFER as well as the U.S. Fire Administration.
- The MSA Globe Gear Giveaway application period will open in February. Through this program, MSA and DuPont will provide 13 volunteer fire departments in the U.S. and

Canada each with 4 sets of turnout gear and 4 helmets. Applicants have to be NVFC members, but MSA provides memberships for the first 500 applicants to help them meet this requirement. Since the program launched, over \$1 million in gear has been given away through the program.

- There have been a lot of great discussions going on through the NVFC's Volunteer Voices member community. If you haven't logged in yet, I encourage you to do so. It is a great way to connect with responders from across the nation.
- The NVFC has partnered with the Red Cross to encourage local fire departments to host a blood drive. This is a great way to engage your members in a positive and uplifting activity that will boost morale and build camaraderie. You'll also build goodwill in the community and perhaps connect with potential fire department volunteers. Learn more about how to host a blood drive at <https://rcblood.org/nvfc>.

### **OSFM – Brian Taylor**

#### ➤ **Firefighter Requalification**

- Training being conducted through the end of June.
- The schedule and registration are on our website.

#### ➤ **Driver Operator/Haz Mat/Instructor Requalification**

- Training will be online and will be available April 1.
- IF you are qualified in one of these subjects you will be sent an email.
- Be sure that your email is up to date in the OSFM 24 portal.

#### ➤ **NFIRS/Fire Bridge Class**

- Thursday January 30, 2020.
- At Mid-Winter Conference.

#### ➤ **2019 NFIRS Data**

- Staff working on finalization.
- Make sure that all your reports have been submitted.

#### ➤ **Cancer Seminar**

- March 5, 2020.
- Wake County Training Center.
- The registration is on our website under Breaking News.

#### ➤ **National Community Risk Reduction Week**

- Jan 20<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup>.
- Commissioner will be doing a daily video.

#### ➤ **Smoke Alarm Saturday**

- June 6, 2020.

#### ➤ **Smoke Alarm Grant**

- Now open please go to website to apply.

### **NCFFF – Bob Benfield**

- **Annual Memorial Service**
  - May 2, 2020.
  - NCFFF Memorial Site, Downtown Raleigh
  
- **Mid-Winter Conference**
  - Will have a booth at Mid-Winter.

### **NCEM – Eric Wiseman**

- **Hurricane Dorian**
  - Recovery continues for Hurricane Dorian. If you deployed on a State Mission during Hurricane Dorian and have submitted reimbursement packages and not heard anything please contact your local EM or the Western Branch Office. Reimbursements are still being processed for Dorian
  
- **Upcoming Training and Exercises**
  - **Training**
    - All Hazard Incident Management Team Academy  
January 20-24, 2020 – Central Branch
    - Western Branch training week June 14-19, 2020
    - Buncombe County Training Facility
    - Multiple position specific classes in Western Branch and Statewide
    - See TERMS for other training opportunities.
  - **Exercises**
    - State Search and Rescue Exercise March 5-9 Eastern Branch
    - North Carolina Catawba River Exercise – Burke County  
March 30- April 3, 2020.

### **19:52 - Old Business**

1. No Old Business brought forth to the association.

### **19:52 - New Business**

1. **Several Candidates For Public Office In Attendance Addressed The Membership**
  - Pearl Burris-Floyd running for the Commissioner of Labor
  - Kelly Hasting running for North Carolina House (District 10)
  - Wayne King running of US Congress (District 11)
  
2. **SAFRE Grant**
  - Two \$1,500 grants are awarded to member departments to attend the joint annual conference of the NCSFA/NCAFC and the South Atlantic Fire Rescue Expo.
  - 2020 SAFRE Recipients
    - Burningtown Iotla Fire and Rescue (Macon County)
    - Hugh's Pond Fire Department (Gaston County)
  
3. **Next Meeting**
  - April 15, 2020
  - Grace Lutheran Church  
3020 Grace Church Road  
Salisbury, NC 28147