

WNCAFF Quarterly Meeting  
Crooked Creek Fire Department (Virtual)  
Hosted by McDowell County Firefighters' Association  
October 28, 2020

18:31 – President Piercy called the meeting to order thanking Chief Steven Lytle of the Crooked Creek Fire Department and the McDowell County Firefighters' Association for hosting this virtual zoom meeting of the WNCAFF.

**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

**18:44 - Treasurer's Reports**

Motion moved by Brian Buchanan seconded by Andy Webster to accept treasurer's report as presented. Motion Passed.

## Agency Reports as emailed to WNCAFF Secretary

### NCSFA

#### ➤ **Board Update**

- Our new officers were sworn in at conference, and Scott Rogers from Nash County is your new President.
- Steven Roberson is our newest Board member, representing the Piedmont.
- Past President Anthony Penland has rotated off the Board after serving 7 years.

#### ➤ **Certified Membership Roster**

- The certified membership rostering period starts December 1, and runs through January 15, 2021.
- Chiefs please make sure you get your roster certified and submitted during this period so your personnel that participate in the Fire & Rescue Pension fund get credit for their 36 hours of training during 2020.
- In addition, your relief funds Board of Trustees reports need to be completed during the same period. Once you complete and certify your roster, you will be automatically prompted to update and certify your Board of Trustees Report.

#### ➤ **Conference Update**

- Planning for the 2021 South Atlantic FIRE RESCUE Expo is well underway. It will be held Aug. 12-15, 2020 at the Raleigh Convention Center. SAFRE exhibitors can begin signing up for space around Nov. 1, 2020.
- We look forward to having the SAFRE conference after this year's conference was cancelled.

#### ➤ **Legislation**

- In early 2018 Past President Jeff Cash from Cherryville set up a meeting with Congressman Patrick McHenry to discuss the issue of non-profits being allowed to join LGERS and the need for federal intervention. The meeting was held in Hickory and attended by members of the NCSFA and NCAFC's Board and staff. The State law that had initially allowed non-profit career firefighters in LGERS was overturned in the early 2000's by an IRS opinion letter indicating it would change the status of LGERS, possibly causing it to be taxed differently. At that point the NC law was revoked. For the past two years we have worked closely with Congressman Holding's and Congressman McHenry's Office to get federal legislation introduced. One reason for the delay was trying to get a majority of the Ways and Means Committee to agree to the legislation. Also, when the House changed to Democratic in 2018, we had to realign our efforts. There were also issues with the draft legislation. We have been working with McHenry's and Holdings office hard for the last year, and a few weeks ago we received an indication from Holding's and McHenry's office they were ready to move forward with the introduction. The last week before introduction we worked hard to get the remaining members of the NC delegation to sign onto the Bill, and we convinced all but one.
- October 6th, 2020, the bill was introduced in the House of Representatives. HR 8538 now goes to the Ways and Means Committee, which we hope will include it in their major retirement package. This is the first and critical step to removing the Federal IRS restriction that prohibited NC from moving forward. If passed in Congress it will allow the NC General Assembly the opportunity to re-instate the law allowing participation. The final decision for participation will be getting legislation passed in NC, and the fire department itself agreeing to participate. **IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW THAT IF IT PASSES AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL, WE WILL STILL HAVE TO GET IT INTRODUCED NEXT YEAR AND PASSED AT THE STATE LEVEL.**

- In addition to those in North Carolina who fought for the Bill, assisting tremendously in getting us to this point was: Rich Sheedy, Congressman Holding's Office; Doug Nation, Congressman McHenry's office; Dave Finger, National Volunteer Fire Council; and Evan Davis, International Association of Fire Chiefs.
- Please call your Representatives and ask them to continue to push for passage of HR 8538.

➤ **Staying Active Legislatively and Capital Impact**

- Right now we have 722 active Advocates on Capital Impact. That means out of 50,000+ firefighters, just a little over 1%.
- We would prefer to have many more, but the system is designed to allow people to join, not force or bulk sign them.
- If you want to keep up with what's going on and be a part of promoting and getting good legislation passed, join up. At the very least it will give you weekly updates and contact information for all of your representatives.
- Log on to NCSFA, click on the Legislative Banner called Capital Impact, or look under the Legislative Flag. Provide your email, design your own password, and provide your home zip code. It allows for much more, but that is all that is required. It takes less than 3 minutes.

**NVFC**

- The NVFC held its fall meeting virtually during the first half of October. We were supposed to be in Wilmington, NC, but due to the pandemic we'll instead be in NC in the fall of 2022.
- A new platform for the NVFC Virtual Classroom launched over the summer. It is easy to use and features dozens of online courses and webinars on a variety of fire service topics. All courses are free to NVFC members. Check it out at [virtualclassroom.nvfc.org](https://virtualclassroom.nvfc.org).
- The NVFC has a monthly Train Strong webinar series that focuses on different topics impacting the fire and emergency services. The next one is November 5 and focuses on preparing your emergency service organization for an active shooter/hostile event response. You can find upcoming webinars and register from the NVFC's online calendar at [www.nvfc.org/events](https://www.nvfc.org/events). Past webinars can also be viewed in the NVFC Virtual Classroom.
- In June we released a Directory of Behavioral Health Professionals that lists local providers ready and equipped to help firefighters, EMS providers, and their families. This is an important resource to share in your department. The directory is updated monthly as new providers are added. Find it at [www.nvfc.org/help](https://www.nvfc.org/help).
- As part of the NVFC's SAFER grant, we conducted a research survey to identify institutional drivers that cause volunteers to leave and what can be done to positively impact retention. You can view this report on the NVFC web site. We'll now focus on developing resources based on this research to help departments with retention.
- It's been a challenging time for our nation's fire and EMS departments, and the NVFC has been actively working to provide resources and advocacy for the volunteer fire service during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, we were able to open up the Volunteer Firefighter Support Fund temporarily to volunteer responders financially impacted by COVID-19. \$150,000 was distributed to responders in need through that effort.
- The application period is open for the second round of FEMA's AFG COVID-19 Supplemental grants. Volunteer and combination departments can apply for a grant to fund PPE and other supplies to support COVID-19 response, including reimbursement for expenditures made earlier in 2020. You can find information and links on the NVFC web site.
- The NVFC fire service achievement awards were presented in local ceremonies this year due to the pandemic. Chair Steve Hirsch was able to talk with the recipients via Zoom. You can read all about this year's winners on the NVFC web site.

- As can be expected, we've had to reschedule our in-person Training Summit and Recruitment and Retention Experience events to 2021. We'll be releasing more information about these events in the coming months.
- As a reminder, membership in the NVFC is just \$18 and comes with a variety of benefits, including an AD&D policy, free Virtual Classroom training, and access to the Volunteer Voices member community. Learn more and join at [www.nvfc.org/join](http://www.nvfc.org/join).

## **NCFFF**

### ➤ **2020 LODD**

- Corbin Lee Rogers, Carthage FD, January 31, 2020
- Joe J Tucker, Throughfare FD, Wayne County, March 7, 2020
- James "Tank: Waters, Tryon FD, April 7, 2020
- Jason Dean, Clayton FD, September 22, 2020

### ➤ **NCFFF News**

- Due to the COVID restrictions that has been in place, the NCFFF was unable to hold the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual NC Fallen Firefighters Memorial in May of this year, nor were we able to hold it in August during the SAFRE Conference due to it being cancelled as well, the NCFFF is planning to hold a joint 2019/2020 Memorial Service in Nash Square at the Fallen Firefighters Memorial on Saturday May 1, 2021. 11 firefighters from 2019 will be honored and inducted into the memorial along with those lost in 2020.
- Since the COVID restrictions have been in place, which has prevented the NCFFF from attending Area fire schools as a vendor, cancellation of the North Carolina State Fair and many other fundraising abilities we were so accustomed to in the past, our donations and funds has been hit hard. Our merchandise store on our website, [www.ncfff.org](http://www.ncfff.org), has become our main source of funds along with the a few gracious donations we have received throughout the year. We encourage everyone to visit our store and check out our new memorial T Shirts and many other new items we have.
- Please feel free to contact any of the Western Directors or myself if the NCFFF can be of assistance to you and your department.

### ➤ **NCFFF Regional Directors**

- Dennis Matheny, Rutherford County (828) 287-6854.
- Bob Benfield, Alexander County (828) 217-1416.

### **18:45 - Old Business**

1. No Old Business brought forth to the association.

### **18:45 - New Business**

#### **1. Firefighter/Officer of the Year Nominations**

- Nominations for end of year awards are due by December 1, 2020. Nomination link is on the website.

#### **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.
- 2021 application period open. Application period will close on December 31, 2020.

#### **3. WNCAFF Officer Elections**

- **2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President:** Shane LaCount only nomination. Motion moved by Quentin Cash seconded by Earl Withers to accept Shane to the position of 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President by acclamation. Motion Passed.
- **Secretary:** Anthony Penland only nomination. Motion moved by Quentin Cash seconded by Curt Deaton to accept Anthony to the position of Secretary by acclamation. Motion Passed.
- **Mountains Regional Director:** Geoff Woolard only nomination. Motion moved by Curt Deaton seconded by Shaun Drum to accept Geoff to the position of Mountains Director by acclamation. Motion Passed.
- **Treasurer:** Dean Coward and Howard Beddingfield were the two nominations. Voting took place on line with the results electing Dean Coward to the position of Treasurer.

#### **4. WNCAFF Emergency Services Scholarship**

- The executive board voted to rename the WNCAFF Emergency Services Scholarship to the Dean Coward Emergency Services Scholarship.

#### **5. 2021 Meetings**

- Due to the pandemic and many of the meetings being canceled the executive board would like to ask that anyone who would like to host a meeting in 2021 please get in touch with Todd McMurray at [pvfd1288@yahoo.com](mailto:pvfd1288@yahoo.com).

Meeting adjourned at 18:59

Submitted: Secretary Anthony Penland