

WNCAFF Quarterly Meeting
Zoom Virtual Meeting
April 21, 2021

18:30 – President McMurry called the April quarterly meeting, via Zoom Virtual, to order with 27 participants signed into the meeting.

Invocation was given by: Chief Jeff Cash.

Secretary's and Treasurer's Reports

Motion moved by Quentin Cash and seconded by Jeff Cash to accept the secretary's report as mailed, emailed and/or posted to the website. Motion Passed.

Motion moved by Jeff Cash seconded by Joey Webb to accept treasurer's report as presented. Motion Passed.

President McMurry recognized the 2021 WNCAFF Officers.

- President Todd McMurry – Polkville Fire Department
- 1st Vice President Robert Griffin – Edneyville Fire Department
- 2nd Vice President Shane LaCount – Mooresville Fire Department
- Secretary Anthony Penland – Swannanoa Fire Department
- Treasurer Dean Coward – Saunook Fire Department
- Past President Brian Piercy – PG Fire Department
- Foothills Region Director – Earl Withers III – Dallas Fire Department
- Highlands Region Director – Bryan Buchanan – Waynesville Fire Department
- Mountain Region Director – Geoff Woolard – Mooresville Fire Department

18:35 – Agency Reports

NCSFA – Tim Bradley

- **Roster and Relief Fund Board of Trustees Report (BTR)**
 - At the end of the reporting cycle for Certified Rosters and BTR's, January 15th 2021, only 15 fire departments out of 1279 failed to report their rosters, and we had 26 fire departments fail to get their BTR's reported. This was after a huge effort by NCSFA staff to email and call Chief's. Normally by the last day we have to have a major push to find the last 150 or so Chiefs.

- **Relief Fund Financial Requirements**
 - In 2014 the NC General Assembly established a minimum and maximum account balances for local Relief Funds. We have had several fire departments miss out on their annual distribution because they went over the maximum, which is \$2,500 per rostered member. Unless you have an approved Supplemental Retirement Program and Account, that \$2,500 per rostered member is a fixed number, and if you're over it by \$1 you will not get a check. Please make sure your local relief fund treasurer and Chairman are aware of this and keep an eye on the balance. Balances need to be below the maximum by June 30th unless you have an approved Supplemental Retirement Amount approved by NCSFA.

- **Scholarships and Grants**
 - In 2014 the NC General Assembly established a minimum and maximum account balances for local Relief Funds. We have had several fire departments miss out on their annual distribution because they went over the maximum, which is \$2,500 per rostered member. Unless you have an approved Supplemental Retirement Program and Account, that \$2,500 per rostered member is a fixed number, and if you're over it by \$1 you will not get a check. Please make sure your local relief fund treasurer and Chairman are aware of this and keep an eye on the balance. Balances need to be below the maximum by June 30th unless you have an approved Supplemental Retirement Amount approved by NCSFA.

- **Legislation**
 - The combined legislative committee of the NCSFA, NCAFC, and PFFPNC has been meeting and working on legislative initiatives for the current session. You can track all legislative actions by going to ncsfa.com and signing on to Capital Impact, or legislative tracking. You get weekly updates on legislative happenings, and give us the opportunity to let you know when help is needed on a particular bill. This is the strength of our legislative effort, the ability to keep everyone informed and working together, and to speak as one voice.
 - This year is the beginning of the 2021/2022 two-year session and is normally referred to as the Long Session. Everything resets and all Bills from previous years go away, and we start all over. Any Bills previously considered for the fire service will have to be re-introduced. This includes federal legislation as well since Congress began a new session this month.

- **Potential issues for the fire service this year include:**
 - **Cancer Coverage for Firefighters by Insurance Policy.** - This is our Number 1 Priority. Currently there is a bill introduced (SB 472) that would increase cancers included in the LODD list, and provide a \$25,000 trust for firefighters diagnosed with cancer to be used for medical expenses. The bill, however, does not include volunteers. Our understanding is this bill will be amended to include volunteers, and our hope is to get it amended to include the provisions of our cancer insurance bill that would also add approximately 16 cancers to the LODD Statutes. Our draft also provides up-front money upon diagnosis of cancer, and out of work pay for up to 36 months. We have suggested several funding options as well.
 - **Continuation of SAR Funding** – Some funding was put in the DPS budget last year, but it is non-recurring funds. We'll be seeking funding again this year.
 - **Increase Fire and Rescue Workers Pension and Modernize the Statutes.**
 - **Property Tax Exemptions for Volunteer Recruitment and Retention.**
 - **Separation Allowance for Career Firefighters.**
 - **Blue Lights eligible on Rear of Fire Apparatus.**
 - **Fireworks Legislation that we would want to oppose.**

➤ **Legislative Day**

- Thus far, Legislative Day has been scheduled for May 5th. How we gather will most likely depend upon current issues dealing with Covid-19, but information will be provided to attendees to discuss with their legislators. Security is strict at the Legislative Building and Legislative Office Building, so leave your pocket knives at home.

➤ **Federal Legislation**

- CFSI has been cancelled this year for meeting in person, but will be held virtually. We continue to pursue changes to IRS Regulations that could allow non-profit career firefighters in LGERS. The NC Congressional delegation is currently trying to get the Ways and Means Committee to re-introduce the Retirement Bill (Brady Act) from 2020 that included our wording.

➤ **SAFRE Conference**

- After having to cancel due to Covid-19 issues, the SAFRE conference is currently scheduled for Raleigh this year the week of Aug 11th – 15th. On-line registrations will be available on our web-site. Course selections have been made and we have some great classes. The vendor floor is close to being sold out, so we expect a big expo, and just to make sure everyone knows the vendor floor will be free to all this year, walk-ins or conference attendees. We'll have more as the time grows closer, but please mark your calendar for that week.
- For clarification, the issues surrounding Covid-19 could still impact how we conduct conference. For example, masks and social distancing still may be an issue. Our conference is held in a municipal facility so we have to abide by Governmental Mandates. The Board has indicated that by June 1st we will have more complete information on what restrictions may be in place.

NCAFC – Joey Webb

- **2021 Mid-Winter Conference**
 - May 18-21, 2021.
 - Embassy Suites – Concord NC.
 - Registration Open on Website and has been extended to April 23, 2021.
 - Will be following CDC guidelines.
 - Banquet will be held on Friday night May 20, 2021.
 - Schedule has been adjusted so that more time can be spent with the vendors.

- **NC Fire Officer License Plate**
 - NCAFC has met the requirements for an official NC License Plate. The license plate has been sent to the General Assembly for approval. Please contact your representative asking that they support the NC Fire Officer License Plate.

- **Executive Development Program**
 - Will be held at Kernersville Fire Department.
 - Week One: September 20 – 24, 2021.
 - Week Two: October 25 – 29, 2021.
 - Registration: Late May Early June. Class does fill up fast.

NVFC – Jeff Cash

- NVFC conducting spring meeting. Report will be given at the July meeting.
- Chief Cash requested a moment of silence to honor the memory of NVFC CEO Heather Scheffter who passed away recently.

OSFM – Terry Young

- **Volunteer Fire Officer ISO Training Credit**
 - NC Fire and Rescue Certification Board approved any person who successfully completes the Fire Officer I certification should receive NCOSFM Volunteer Fire Officer training credit.
 - Three years certified firefighter and Instructor Level I are not required to gain the training credit.
 - This gives Fire Departments the availability to train their volunteer fire officers to a NFPA 1021 based program, while receiving credit toward ISO credit.

- **Fire Grants**
 - Application period for OSFM Fire Grants opening May 17, 2021.

NCFFF – Rick Wood

- **Memorial Service**
 - August 28, 2021.
 - Nash Square, Raleigh NC.
 - Will be honoring the 2019 and 2020 LODD.

- **NC-LODD's for 2020 Western Region**
 - Terry Lee Gentry – Buncombe County Fire Marshal's Office - 7/7/2019.
 - Alan James Austin – Belmont FD/Charlotte FD - 12/08/2019.
 - Joseph W Autrey, - Icard Fire & Rescue - 4/26/2013.

- **NC-LODD's for 2019 Western Region**
 - Karen Shuart- Asheville Fire Department - 1/31/2019.
 - Claud Messer- Jonathan Creek Vol. Fire Department - 9/20/2019.
 - George W. House, Sr. - Asheville FD - 8/18/1964.
 - Robert Pendergraft, -Salisbury - 12/17/1909.

18:50 - Old Business

1. **2020 Awards**
 - The end of year awards will be presented at our first in person meeting of 2021.

2. **WNCAFF Scholarships**
 - Application period now open.
 - Applications will be received until May 31, 2021.
 - Applications must be submitted via the website at www.wncaff.com.

18:55 - New Business

1. **NCAFC Volunteer Workforce Solutions Tuition Reimbursement Program**
 - VWS was awarded a SAFER Grant for Recruitment and Retention.
 - VWS will award 6 tuition reimbursement grants to cover the cost of tuition for two classes.
 - Reimbursement is limited to \$1,200 per class not to exceed \$2,400 dollars total.
 - All information, including the application will be posted to the WNCAFF website at www.wncaff.com.

2. **Next Meeting**
 - July 21, 2021
 - Newdale Volunteer Fire Department
98 Riverwalk Drive
Burnsville, NC 28714

Meeting adjourned at 19:05
Submitted: Secretary Anthony Penland