



Constitution & By-Laws

July 2019

Western North Carolina Association of Firefighters Constitution & By-Laws

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I. Name

This organization shall be known as the "Western North Carolina Association of Firefighters" and may be abbreviated hereafter as "WNCAFF".

II. Purpose

The purpose of the Association shall be as follows:

- To provide an avenue for the exchange of ideas on improving the level of fire protection services in Western North Carolina.
- To provide quality training programs for member departments and any others that may wish to participate.
- To act as a clearinghouse for information concerning legislation, technical data, and current items of interest to member fire departments.
- To serve as a forum for representation of the member fire departments to all law and policy-making bodies and their members.

III. Mission & Values

Mission Statement

Our mission is to promote a safer quality of life in Western North Carolina by supporting our membership's capability to provide effective public safety services.

Core Values

To accomplish our mission, we adhere to the essential core values of:

1. Service to the fire departments of Western North Carolina and the communities they protect.
2. Dedication to the fire service through enhancement of professional knowledge and skills.
3. Advocacy for the membership and its citizens.
4. Integrity to maintain and promote the highest ethical standards.

IV. Officers

The officers of this association shall consist of a President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and an immediate Past President. The Association Officers will hold their respective offices for one year or until their successors are selected and qualified by majority vote of members present at the October meeting. Each

officer shall have one vote on all questions and/or actions coming before the Executive Board.

V. Expectations and Responsibilities of The Officers

The various roles of the Officers of the WNCAFF require a passionate commitment to improve the fire service in Western North Carolina. The WNCAFF is the outlet which reaches the grass roots of the fire service in our region and provides a platform of feedback from the members to other agencies. The commitment from 2nd Vice President to Past President is a four year commitment which consists of 4 regular meetings per year, 4 board meetings per year, and other meetings which require some or all of the board to attend, such as NCSFA, NCAFC, NCEM, and county association meetings. Although it is not required that all board members attend all meetings, the success of the organization depends on the commitment of the Executive Officers.

a. President

1. Roles & Responsibilities: It shall be the duty of the President to preside over the meetings of the association, to appoint or establish committees, and represent the association at the annual meeting of the NCSFA, NCAFC, and/or other meetings where the WNCAFF needs to be represented. It shall be the duty of the President to perform such other duties as may be incident to his/her office or shall be required of him/her by the membership or the Executive Board. The Executive Board is authorized to provide stipends covering reasonable and job-related expenses incurred by the President and/or his designee while attending such meetings.

b. 1st Vice President

1. Roles & Responsibilities: It shall be the responsibility of the 1st Vice President to maintain communication with other associations to ensure that the WNCAFF is meeting the needs of other associations and that the other associations are aware of WNCAFF needs. The 1st Vice President is responsible for providing members with information and updates regarding all legislative issues which are affecting the fire service. The 1st Vice President will serve as an ex-officio of the Membership Committee.

It shall be the responsibility of the 1st Vice President to perform all the duties of the President in his/her absence and when so acting shall have all the powers of and be subject to all the restrictions upon the President. The 1st Vice President shall perform such other duties as the President or the Executive Board may require.

c. 2nd Vice President

1. Roles & Responsibilities: It shall be the responsibility of the 2nd Vice President to market the association through the sale of merchandise and other items at association meetings and/or other events. It shall be the responsibility of the 2nd Vice President to set the meeting locations for the association for the following year.

It shall be the responsibility of the 2nd Vice President to fulfill the duties of the 1st Vice President during his/her absences and the duty of the 2nd Vice President to perform all duties of the President in the absences of the President and the 1st Vice President. The 2nd Vice President shall perform such other duties as the President or the Executive Board may require.

d. Secretary

1. Roles & Responsibilities: It shall be the responsibility of the Secretary to maintain permanent records of all the proceedings of the association; to receive and answer all communications pertaining to the association; documenting and distributing all information from meetings or other necessary communications of the WNCAFF; to keep a roster of the names of the members of the association; to collect the membership dues and to pay the same over to the Treasurer, taking his/her receipt there from. The Secretary shall perform such other duties as the President or the Executive Board may require.

e. Treasurer

1. Roles & Responsibilities: It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive all monies collected by the Secretary and give a receipt for the same; to disburse money on debts of the association, and to make a full report of all monies received and disbursed at each regular meeting of the association. He/she shall collect all monies due the Association from all sources, keep a true and correct account of all monies received and disbursed. The Treasurer shall not disburse money for the association except upon receipt of proper invoice or by approval of the Executive Board. All monies belonging to the Association shall be deposited in a chartered FDIC-insured bank approved by the Executive Board, with the deposit being in the name of the Association. The Treasurer shall have the authority, with the approval of the Executive Board first attained, to engage assistance at any time the treasurer may deem necessary for the proper discharge of business of the Association. The Treasurer shall perform such other duties as the President or the Executive Board may require.

f. Past President

1. Roles & Responsibilities: It shall be the responsibility of the Past President to serve as an ex-officio on the Nominating Committee and perform all the duties of the 2nd Vice President in his/her absence. The Past President is responsible for assisting the President and the Executive Board with transitioning into the New Year. The Past President shall perform other duties as the President or the Executive Board may require.

g. Regional Directors

1. Roles & Responsibilities: It shall be the responsibility of the Regional Directors to represent the WNCAFF at county association meetings and increase the communications from the WNCAFF to the designate counties. The Regional Directors shall perform such other duties as the President or the Executive Board may require.

h. Ascension of Officers

The President for any given year shall be the individual who served as the 1st Vice President the preceding year. The 1st Vice President for any given year shall be the individual who served as the 2nd Vice President the preceding year. The immediate Past President for any given year shall be the individual who served as the President the preceding year. The positions of 2nd Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected by the membership from eligible candidates that are nominated from the floor or presented by the nominating committee at the October meeting, in accordance with Article XI section b.

i. Removal of an Officer

Any officer may be removed with or without cause by a majority vote of all members present at any meeting. An officer cannot be removed by the membership unless a notice of the meeting states that one of the purposes for the meeting is to remove the officer.

j. Vacancy of an Officer Position

If a vacancy occurs in an officer's position, the position will remain vacant until the next annual election of officers. The ascension of officers will occur by established protocols and the vacancy or vacancies will be filled by the election process.

VI. Regional Directors

Three regional directors shall be elected by the regional membership from eligible candidates that are nominated from the floor or presented by the nominating committee at the October meeting in accordance with Article XI section b. One director shall be elected each year for a three-year term depending on a rotation. The regional directors shall cover three regions which shall be named the Mountain Region, the Highland Region and the Foothill Region, and will cover counties as determined below:

The Highland Region Director shall be an at-large representative from one of the following counties: Buncombe, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, Swain, and Transylvania.

The Mountain Region Director shall be an at-large representative from one of the following counties: Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Caldwell, Iredell, McDowell, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey.

The Foothill Region Director shall be an at-large representative from one of the following counties: Burke, Cabarrus, Catawba, Cleveland, Gaston, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Polk, Rowan, Davie, and Rutherford.

a. Removal of a Regional Director

Any regional director can be removed with or without cause by a majority vote of all regional members, of said director, present at any meeting. A director cannot be removed by the regional membership unless a notice of the meeting states that one of the purposes for the meeting is to remove the director.

b. Vacancy of a Regional Director

If a vacancy occurs in a Regional Director's position, the position will remain vacant until such time until the members of that region can elect another representative.

VII. Executive Board

a. Make up of Executive Board

There shall be an Executive Board consisting of the Executive Officers and three regional directors.

b. Meetings of Executive Board

The Executive Board shall meet at such time and place as they deem necessary, on a call of the President or a majority of said Executive Board.

c. Duties of Executive Board

It shall be the duty of the Executive Board to transact all business meetings of the association in the intervening times between meetings of the association and to advise the Treasurer in the management of all funds of the association. At all meetings of the Executive Board, a majority shall constitute a quorum. All business and transactions taken must be with the approval of a majority of the entire Executive Board. It shall also be the duty of the Executive Board to have the books of the Treasurer reviewed annually at the close of each fiscal year by a committee approved by the Executive Board. A report of this review shall be made to members of the association no later than the summer meeting. In addition, a review shall be performed immediately after a change in Treasurer. The Executive Board reserves the right to secure bonds sufficient to cover the association's assets at the expense of the association for all parties authorized to handle funds for the association. Further, it shall be the responsibility of the Executive Board to authorize an officer other than the Treasurer to perform the duties of the Treasurer in his absence.

VIII. Membership

Membership into the association may be obtained by any rated Fire Department and fire marshal's office located in and operating in the Western District defined by the State Firefighters' Association. The Western District includes the following counties: Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Cabarrus, Caldwell, Catawba, Cherokee, Clay, Cleveland, Davie, Gaston, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Iredell, Jackson, Lincoln, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mecklenburg, Mitchell, Polk, Rowan, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey. Fire Departments in the Western District counties, which are current on their dues and are in good standing with the association all subject to all rights, privileges, and benefits of the association.

a. Constitutes a Member

The Association shall be open for two types of membership; regular and lifetime.

Regular Membership: Regular membership shall be open to all fire departments and fire marshal offices within the area covered by the Association. Regular members (fire department or fire marshal office) shall have the right to one vote on all issues brought

before the Association as long as it retains its membership. This membership covers all members of that department and entitles each fire department member full privileges in the Association.

Lifetime Membership: This membership will be granted to all Past Presidents of the Western North Carolina Association of Firefighters. Other individuals of a fire department or fire marshal's office that is a regular member of the WNCFAFF may be afforded the distinction of Lifetime Membership. Lifetime Membership will generally be designated upon retirement or when recommended by the board. The distinction of Lifetime Membership must be approved by the Executive Board and voted on by the membership. Lifetime members shall pay no dues and will not be eligible to serve on the WNCFAFF Executive Board.

Membership Assets: No member shall be entitled to share in the distribution of the Association's assets upon the dissolution of the Association.

b. Application for Membership

Application for membership is granted to eligible fire departments and fire marshal offices who are members of the North Carolina State Firefighters' Association. Other eligible applicants, who are not members of the North Carolina State Firefighters' Association, desiring membership in this association shall make application to the Secretary, and at the same time, shall remit the prescribed membership dues. Any department having trouble with dues may make request to the association for special consideration. Eligible applicants shall become members of the association.

c. Voting Rights

Each agency constituting a regular member of the Western North Carolina Association of Firefighters is entitled to one vote at any general meeting of the association on all issues brought before the membership. No one individual may cast more than one vote on any item at a meeting.

d. Membership Benefits

The Executive Board shall define and distribute all of the membership benefits eligible to all members annually.

e. Fees and Dues

Dues for membership are provided for members, who are also members of the North Carolina State Firefighters' Association, through funding provided from the NCSFA membership dues. Members who do not maintain membership with the NCSFA will have their annual dues set by the Executive Board with the approval of the members. If for any reason the funding for membership dues provided by the NCSFA should cease, annual

dues will be set by the Executive Board with the approval of the members. The annual dues shall be payable on the first day of January of each year. All members who fail to comply with this provision by March 31 of each year shall be considered delinquent. Delinquent members of the association shall forfeit their voting rights.

A regular member shall remain in good standing in the Association only so long as it pays its financial obligations, complies with this Constitution and By Laws, and remains in good standing with the City, Town, County, or Community which it serves. All members of the Association shall be required to pay fees as set by the membership.

IX. Amendments

a. Process of Amendments

The Association shall have the power to alter, amend, repeal, or otherwise revise the Constitution and By-Laws by a majority vote of the regular voting members of the Association present provided the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing at a previous meeting of the Executive Board and notice made to the membership a minimum of 15 days prior to the regular meeting. A two-thirds vote of the members present shall be necessary for the adoption of any alteration, amendment or revision.

X. Committees

a. Standing Committees

Standing committees of the association shall consist of no fewer than three members each. No member shall serve more than three consecutive years. These committees and the duties of each shall be:

1. Nominating Committee: To prepare a proposed slate of officers for each year and to present nominations for one or more persons for Directors to the North Carolina State Firefighters' Association and North Carolina Association of Fire Chiefs in years when an advisor is selected from the Western Region.
2. Awards Committee: The Awards Committee shall provide designation of annual firefighter (to include company officer) and chief of the year awards. The awards committee chairman shall be appointed by the President and committee members are appointed by the committee chair.

b. Appointment of Committees

1. Nominating Committee: Shall be appointed by the President consisting of the immediate Past President and three additional Past Presidents.
2. Ad Hoc: As the need may arise, the President and/or the Executive Board may convene a committee for special purposes as needed for association business.

XI. Rules of Order

a. Rules of Order

Parliamentary matters not governed by the Constitution or by these By-Laws shall be governed by such rules of order as the President shall deem appropriate. The President shall notify the membership of the particular rules of order being utilized (e.g. Robert's Rules)

XII. Meetings

a. Time and Date of Meetings

At least four meetings per year are to be held, one in each of the months of January, April, July, and October, unless otherwise directed by the Executive Board. The actual dates of the meetings shall be determined by the Executive Board, with notification to the members at least 30 days in advance of the meeting. Generally the meetings will be held on the third Wednesday of each previously stated month unless changed and advertised by the Executive Board.

b. Requirements of Meetings

January

Installation of Officers for WNCAFF

Awards – including Chief (Career & Volunteer), FF of the Year to include company officers (Career & Volunteer), (recognize the awards committee)

Award the NCSFA Annual Conference & SAFRE Expo grant.

April

Announce Scholarships opening

Appoint Nominating Committee

Elect Directors to NCSFA and NCAFC every three years

July

President announces nominating committee for officers

Award Scholarships

October

Election of WNCAFF Officers

Election of one regional director per year

Annual Report

Announce grant opening for NCSFA Annual Conference & SAFRE Expo.

XIII. Election of Officers

a. Meeting

Election of officers shall be held at the October meetings with those elected to assume office the first day of January of the following year.

b. Process

Any officer of the Association shall be no less than twenty-one years of age, and shall be a member in good standing of the North Carolina State Firefighters' Association and Western North Carolina Association of Firefighters. The President shall appoint a nominating committee for officers at the April meeting and they shall report at the July meeting. Nominations may come from the floor at the July meeting where nominations will be closed and voted on at the October meeting where the Committee will report the final slate of candidates.

XIV. NCSFA Director

a. Selection

In accordance with Article IV, Section 4.3 of the North Carolina State Firefighters' Association bylaws the WNCAFF shall conduct an election every three years on behalf of the NCSFA for the purpose of electing a Western Director from the North Carolina State Firefighters' Association Western Membership District. This Regional Director shall serve a three (3) year term or until such Regional Director's death, resignation, removal, or disqualification. The election of Regional Director shall occur after January 1st of the year in which the election is required, but no later than June 30 of any year in which an election of Regional Director is required. Each fire department and fire marshal's office shall be entitled to one (1) vote in the regional election.

The WNCAFF shall verify that the nominees for election of Regional Director are (I) members of the North Carolina State Firefighters' Association, (II) are members of the WNCAFF, (III) in the Western Membership District, and (IV) served at least 10 consecutive years with either a fire department recognized by the NC Department of Insurance or as a County Fire Marshal.

The President shall identify the nominating committee at the October meeting and they shall report on possible nominees at the January meeting. Nominations may come from the floor at the January meeting where nominations will be closed and an election of the nominees will take place at the April meeting. The WNCAFF is not permitted to add any additional requirements for eligibility to serve as a Regional Director of the NCSFA

Executive Board.

b. Removal of a NCSFA Director

The Regional Director may be removed from office at any time with or without cause, at a meeting, by a vote of member departments and fire marshal offices located in the Western Membership District whenever the number of votes cast in favor of removal of the Regional Director exceeds the number of votes cast against such removal. The Regional Director may not be removed by the delegates at the meeting unless the notice of the meeting states that one of the purposes of the meeting is removal of the Regional Director. If the Regional Director is so removed, a new Regional Director may be elected at the same meeting.

XV. NCAFC Director

a. Requirement

To be eligible to serve as a director of the NCAFC, the member must be an active member of the WNCAFF participating regularly in meetings of the Association for the past two years. The member must be in good standings with the WNCAFF, his/her department and/or NCAFC. The WNCAFF director of the NCAFC serves the WNCAFF for the three years that they function as a director until which time they are approved as an officer of the NCAFC. During the time as director the WNCAFF board may recommend replacing the director if the candidate is unable to fulfill their obligation to the respective board or the WNCAFF.

b. Selection

Every third year as required by the North Carolina Association of Fire Chiefs (NCAFC), the regular members present at the April meeting of the Association shall elect a representative to serve as the Western Director on the NCAFC board. The President shall identify the nominating committee at the October meeting and they shall report at the January meeting. Nominations may come from the floor at the January meeting where nominations will be closed and voted on at the April meeting where the Committee will report the final slate of candidates. Upon resignation, removal, and or death of the representative, the Western Association will elect a representative to fill the remaining term. The President or his/her designee shall fill the vacated position until such time as an election can be held.

XVI. Awards Program

The Western North Carolina Association of Firefighters Awards Program is designed to honor particularly meritorious service and conduct performed by members of the Association, individuals or entities interested in and contributing to the protection of life

and property against fire, or any person who has rendered conspicuous service to this Association. The President will appoint a committee chair with a minimum of two

association members. Nominations can be made by any member of the Association, or by the Executive Board, and should be submitted to the awards committee by November 17 of the year in which the recognized act occurred. To be eligible for any award, the conduct must be in keeping with sound judgment and reflect honorably upon the Western North Carolina Association of Firefighters. Nominations must be submitted to the Executive Director within forty-five (45) days of the January for the year in which the recognized act occurred.

Any award given will be recognized, whether in attendance or not, by the President or designee at the January meeting.

Award Descriptions:

- A. **Special Service Award** - Acts of exceptional performance or a high degree of professionalism are merits for which this award may be given. It may also be awarded for outstanding service benefiting the Association and/or its membership.

- B. **Annual Recognition Program** - The Awards Committee shall provide designation of annual firefighter (to include company officer) and chief officer of the year distinction from the recommendation of nominations. Each category for annual distinction will include both a volunteer member and career member. In the event no nominations or recommendations are provided for either distinction, no award is required. The Awards Committee shall also designate other awards to individuals or departments as determined necessary by the WNCAFF and nominated or recommended by the Board or membership. The Awards Committee is also requested to assist in forwarding all necessary paperwork to the NCSFA and NCAFC for consideration of their yearly awards.

XVII. Scholarship and Grant Program

a. Eligibility

To be eligible for a WNCAFF Scholarship the applicant must be a member of a, or an immediate family member of a member whose, fire department is a member of the WNCAFF in good standing.

b. WNCAFF Scholarships

The WNCAFF scholarships will be selected by the Executive Board from all eligible applicants for the scholarship year and the recipients will be announced at the July meeting. The scholarships are divided into three categories.

1. WNCAFF regular member
2. Emergency Services field of study
3. All other applications

Firefighters applying for a scholarship within the emergency services field of study are eligible for both categories 1 and 2, but may only receive one scholarship.

A minimum of three WNCAFF Scholarships will be awarded annually.

c. Gene Gladdin Scholarship

The Gene Gladdin scholarship will be selected by the Gene Gladdin family based on criteria set forth by the family and obtained through the application process. The Gene Gladdin scholarship will be chosen from all applicants of the WNCAFF scholarships prior to the selection of the WNCAFF scholarships. The Gene Gladdin scholarship designee shall be ineligible for the WNCAFF scholarships. A minimum of one Gene Gladdin Scholarship will be awarded annually.

d. NCSFA Annual Conference SAFRE Expo Conference

To provide two \$1,500.00 sponsorships to member departments of the Western North Carolina Association of Firefighters (WNCAFF) that wishes to send representation to the South Atlantic Fire Rescue Expo and joint annual conferences of the North Carolina State Firefighters' Association and the North Carolina Association of Fire Chiefs. It is the intent of the WNCAFF to offer this opportunity to someone who has not attended the conference in the past. However, the scholarship will be awarded to a member department to choose the attendee. {Departments awarded the Scholarship are only eligible every 2 years}.

e. Additional/Discretionary Scholarships

The Executive Board may at their discretion and with approval by the membership, increase the number of scholarships for the present year based on the financial status of the Association.

XVIII. Compensation and Expenses

a. Reimbursement to WNCAFF Executive Board Members

The Executive Board shall receive no compensation for their services. However, with approval of the Executive Board, any Board member rendering service to the Association may be reimbursed for expenses.

b. Reimbursement of persons representing WNCAFF

The members of the Association shall receive no compensation for their services. However, with approval of the Board, any member of the association rendering service to the Association may be reimbursed for expenses.

XIX. Financial Decisions

a. Discretion of Executive Board

The Executive Board shall have the ability to make financial decisions within maintaining the normal operating business of the Association. The Executive Board may make recommendations to the membership for financial decisions in excess of \$1,000 which are in the normal operations of the Association. The Executive Board shall bring any request to the membership which originate outside the Association and are not regular business of the Association.

b. Membership Decision

The membership may elect to financially support any purchase or request brought before the Association which follows the mission of the Association. All request brought to the Association by the Executive Board which are normal operations or regular business of the Association may be approved up to one thousand dollars. Any amount of expenditure in excess of one thousand dollars which is normal operations or regular business of the Association must be identified and addressed at the current meeting and tabled for a vote at the following meeting. All request brought to the Association from outside normal operations or regular business may be approved up to five hundred dollars at a single meeting, any amount over five hundred dollars from outside normal operations or regular business must be identified and addressed at the current meeting and tabled for a vote at the following meeting. Approval of decisions of the membership requires a ~~two-thirds~~ majority vote of regular members present.

XX. WNCAFF Property

All property, books, and records in the hands of any member of the association are and shall remain the property of the Western North Carolina Association of Firefighters.

XVIV By-Laws Revision/Version

Date of Last By-Laws Revision: October 2012
Date Presented to Membership: October 2012
Date Approved by Membership: January 2013
Description of Revision: Total revision of all areas
Version 11.4

Date of Last By-Laws Revision: January 2017
By-Laws Posted on website and mailed to membership: March 2017
Date Approved by Membership: April 2017
Description of Revision: Technical corrections in some areas, brought by-laws in compliance with NCSFA, total revisions in other areas.
Version 11.5

Date of Last By-Laws Revision: April 2019
By-Laws Posted on website and mailed to membership: June 2019
Date Approved by Membership: July 17, 2019
Description of Revision: Moved SAFRE Grant announcement to October, moved awarding of SAFRE Grant to January. Placed a description of the grant in the by-laws.
Version 11.6