

WNCAFF Quarterly Meeting
Zoom Virtual Meeting
January 27, 2021

18:31 – President Piercy called the January quarterly meeting, via Zoom Virtual, to order with 48 participants signed into the meeting.

Invocation was given by: Treasurer Dean Coward.

Secretary's and Treasurer's Reports

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

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

19:35 - President Piercy gave a thank you to the association for the support given to him during his time as president. President Piercy then turned the association over to the incoming President Todd McMurry.

President McMurry recognized the 2021 WNCAFF Officers.

- President Todd McMurry – Shelby 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

19:26– Agency Reports

NCSFA – Ed Brinson

➤ Roster Reporting Requirements

- Rosters were due by January 15th. This includes the Board of Trustees Report, membership roster, as well as the certification of firefighters. We only had 22 departments not submitting rosters out of 1316 last year, and around 35 not submitting BTR reports.

➤ Relief Fund

- Last year continued to be an extremely active year for relief fund usage and approval. We handled 471 requests for a total of \$2,002,770 not including the pre-approved SRP payments. The highest types of requests were 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 2021. 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.

➤ Legislation

- 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 of 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.
- The joint Legislative Committee, which includes representation from the NC State Firefighters' Association, NC Association of Fire Chiefs, and the Professional Firefighters and Paramedics of NC, have been meeting since late 2020 on issues to be considered.

○ Potential issues for the fire service this year include:

- Cancer Coverage for Firefighters Possibly by Insurance Policy
- 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
- Blue Lights eligible on Rear of Fire Apparatus
- Funding for PTSD Programs
- Benefits for Recruitment and Retention of Volunteers
- Fireworks Legislation that we would want to oppose

➤ Federal Legislation

- Continue to Pursue Changes to IRS Regulations that could allow non-profit career firefighters in LGERS.

- **Legislative Day**
 - Legislative Day tentatively set for May 5, 2021. It will most likely depend upon current issues dealing with Covid-19.
- **Board Retreat**
 - Last November the NCSFA Board held an annual retreat under the direction of President Scott Rogers 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.
- **Volunteer Responders Incentive Protection Act (VIPRA) Passes**
 - For the past several years we have worked along with the National Volunteer Fire Council to urge Congress to pass VIPRA making it a permanent tax incentive for volunteers. In December of 2020 they did just that.
- **Joint NCSFA/NCAFC Meeting**
 - The Boards of the NCSFA and NCAFC held a joint Board meeting in December to discuss issues and ideas. The two Boards work well together and continue to collaborate on issues affecting our membership.
- **SAFRE Conference**
 - This year's dates for the SAFRE Conference are August 12-15th, 2021. It is currently scheduled as a full conference, and our hopes and plans are we can hold it without variation. On-line registration will be available in the near future on our web-site. 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.
- **Summit at Mid-Winter**
 - We plan on hosting a Summit for the 5th year this year at Mid-Winter when it occurs in May (possible May 18th). 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. More will be provided as we get nearer to the date.
- **NCSFA Historian Work**
 - Our Statistician, Dennis Pressley, has continued work under the new responsibility of Historian, as predicated by the bylaw change in 2018. Mike Legaros, 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 – Wesley Hutchinson

- **2021 Mid-Winter Conference**
 - May 18-21, 2021.
 - Embassy Suites – Concord NC.
 - Registration Open on Website.

- **Fire Prevention School**
 - Has been canceled for this year.
 - Hope to offer some of the classes from Fire Prevention School at the Mid-Winter Conference.

- **Chief's Breakfast At SAFRE**
 - Still planning on having the annual chief's breakfast at the SAFRE Conference.

NVFC – Jeff Cash

- New NVFC Strategic Plan on website at www.nvfc.org.0

OSFM

NCFFF – Rick Wood

- **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.

➤ **NCFFF News**

- Due to the COVID restrictions that are still in place, the NCFFF was not able to hold the 15th Annual NC Fallen Firefighters Memorial in May 2020, nor were we able to hold it in August during the SAFRE Conference due to it being cancelled as well.
- The NCFFF is planning, (HOPEFULLY) 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 13 firefighters in 2020. Depending on any restrictions still in place as May approaches, will determine the size of the event we can have, or even have a service in May. Currently the City of Raleigh has any and all gatherings and events locked down until March 31, 2021.
- Since the COVID restrictions have been in place, it has prevented the NCFFF from attending fire schools across the state 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. The NCFFF lost \$60-70,000 in sales in 2020. Our merchandise store on our website, 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 or you have any questions regarding the NCFFF.

19:10 - Old Business

1. No Old Business brought forth to the association.

19:10 - New Business

- 1. 2021 NCSFA Conference and SAFRE Grant**

- PG Fire Department – McDowell County

- 2. Firefighter/Officer and Fire Chief of the Year Awards**

- End of the Year Awards Application Period has been extended until March 1, 2021.
- Awards will be given out at the first in person meeting of the WNCAFF.

- 3. Next Meeting**

- April 21, 2021
- Gaston County
- Location TBD

Meeting adjourned at 19:10

Submitted: Secretary Anthony Penland