



CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION BULLETIN

YOUR FIRE DISTRICT NEWS SOURCE

AUGUST 5TH, 2023

EDITOR - TOM RINALDI

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[Information to make you think and to learn from others!!](#)

THE CAPITAL CALENDAR:

WWW.AFDCA.ORG

August, No Meeting

Thursday September 14th, **General Membership Meeting** 7PM, All are invited or to zoom in

Thursday October 12th **General Membership/Nominations for Officers & Directors**

Thursday November 9th, 7:00pm **General Membership**, dinner served at 6PM/Elections

December, **No Meeting**

Saturday, January 6th **General Membership Breakfast Meeting** 9am, 2024 Organizational Meeting

[Printable Calendar with much more – See End of Bulletin](#)

CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOC. NEWS:

WWW.AFDCA.ORG

****Just When You Think All is Right With the World**

Terry Briscoe has resigned her position with CAFDA, not because she didn't like us; but it seems the person who took her position at Wilton Fire District has resigned their position as Administrator/Secretary and Terry was gracious enough to go back to Wilton to help them out. As a result, Tony Hill will pitch in as Secretary until we can find a qualified individual to take the position. We are looking for someone who has the time and skills to be a secretary for the Association and they will be hanging out with a great group of people. Contact Tony Hill if you are interested.

Tony Hill has resumed his position as Secretary/Treasurer and can be reached at : cafdatreasurer@gmail.com or caaofd@gmail.com , our mailing address is CAFDA PO Box 42, East Schodack, NY 12063

Long Way to Travel Zoom into the General Membership Meetings!

It's our desire that every member fire district have the opportunity to attend Capital Area meetings. We know we cover a large area, in 8 counties and beyond, and wish to give all of our members a chance to participate in the general membership meetings. You have a voice, and we would like to hear it. Join us at our next meeting either in person or via Zoom. The link will be sent via constant contact prior to each general membership meeting. Thank you for being a member and we hope you will join us.

CAFDA FALL WORKSHOP: Put it on your calendar

Saturday, November 4th, 2023 8:00 AM Fall Workshop Verdooy Fire Department

SUBJECTS TO BE COVERED:

Harassment Challenges – Discipline as a result of Harassment Charges

How to SHOP for insurance, What Coverage Should We Have?

Removal of Fire Company Members

Ask the experts: CPA, VFBL, Attorney, Insurance, Candle Stick Maker

**Training for Fire District Officials Being Held Locally by the Capital Area Fire Districts Association. Both Members and Non-Members are Welcome.-
Mark Your Calendars-Watch for Details to Follow**

****PESH vs. NFPA Seminar, Law vs. Standard See Flyer Last Page**

Presenter: Jennifer Puerner – NYS Department of Labor PESH Compliance Assistance Specialist
What you need to know. Join us at the DeCrescente Distributing Conference Center at 211 N. Main Street, Mechanicville (opposite the Price Chopper Plaza). FREE to all fire district officials and fire service officers.

- ❖ **Tuesday September 12th from 6PM to 9PM Limited to 100 attendees.**
- ❖ Register now with Secretary Hill at caaofd@gmail.com

****Fire District Secretary Training See Flyer Last Page**

Join Joyce Petkus as she navigates the duties and responsibilities of a Fire District Secretary...Commissioners invited who wish to better understand what duties and responsibilities Commissioners are ultimately responsible for. What you and your fire district Secretary needs to know to do their job correctly. Join us at the DeCrescente Distributing Conference Center at 211 N. Main Street, Mechanicville (opposite the Price Chopper Plaza).

- **Tuesday September 19th from 6PM to 9PM Limited to 100 attendees.**
- **COST: members \$10, non-members \$20 checks can be mailed to Tony Hill at Box 42, East Schodack, NY 12063, or pay at the door. Reserve a seat at caaofd@gmail.com**

LOCAL CAFDA Conference, Late April 2024, Location and details being developed, details to be released when they are available.

We want to thank the Clifton Park – Halfmoon Fire District for allowing us to use their facility for the Capital Area meetings.

The Capital Area has logo ware available, long and short sleeve polo shirts. Contact Secretary/Treasurer Tony Hill to purchase shirts.

IF NOTHING ELSE READ THE ARTICLES PRECEDED BY**

CAPITAL SHORTS:

- **Let's have some fun, A Day At The Races, Deadline to make reservations is Wednesday, August 9th.** Fire District Officials are invited to attend on **Friday August 11th**. Free Entry Ticket to the Track, \$10.00 Concession voucher, picnic lunch and beverages provided at the paddock picnic tables. (\$15.00 to park) You Must Email Secretary Hill if you wish to attend: caaofd@gmail.com.
Directions and more information will be emailed to each attendee.
- **Fire District Election Schedule and Budget Schedule on Last Page of Bulletin and is posted to our current website at afdca.org!**
- **Fleury Risk Management (497 Public Management Group VFBL Insurance)** is running a charity golf tournament this year for **Operation At-Ease** on **August 14th at the Edison Club in Rexford**. In case you aren't familiar with Operation At-Ease, they are located in Niskayuna and train shelter animals to assist veterans and first responders with PTSD and other lite tasks. 100% of the proceeds for the golf tournament will go to them. Below is a link to register, sponsor, or donate. We appreciate any assistance you can provide to bring attention to the event and Operation at Ease. **REGISTER HERE:** <https://fleury-risk-management-charity-golf-tournament-2023.perfectgolfevent.com/>
- **CAFDA is joining with Monroe County Fire District Officers Association to sponsor Fire District Secretary training on October 21st at the Ridge Road Fire District Headquarters.** Our own Joyce Petkus will be the instructor for this day long training.

STATE ASSOCIATION NEWS:

WWW.AFDNYS.ORG

State Fire Districts Announces a move back to a Fall Annual Meeting

Another change of venue, the Fall Conference for 2024 will be held at Turning Stone on a Sunday - Wednesday time frame October 20 – 23 in 2024.

LOCAL CAFDA TRAINING APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR ENTIRE BOARD/SECRETARY/TREASURER

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CAFDA Annual Fall Workshop

Mark your calendar for Saturday, **November 4th 2023 for the Capital Area Fall Leadership Workshop**, being held at the Verdooy Fire Station on Troy-Schenectady Road. Subjects to be covered are:

- Harassment in the Fire Service and Applying Discipline Correctly
- How to SHOP insurance for your fire district, do we have right coverage?
- Expert’s Panel, Attorneys, CPA, General Insurance, VFBL – What is your burning question?

The First CAFDA Conference Spring 2024

Coming in April of 2024 the CAFDA Conference, a local three-day conference chocked full of information for Fire District Commissioners, Secretary’s, Treasurers and Chiefs. A conference you can afford to attend locally at a destination location in the Capital Area. Watch for more Information as planning is developed.



Upcoming Coffee with Commissioners

Thursday, August 31st @ 7:00pm [Fire District Budget Process](#)

Saturday, September 23rd @9:00am [Current Trends and Concerns](#)

Click on Each Announced Date to Register

THE LATEST FROM ALBANY

The 2023 legislative session ended in early June, our friends in government didn’t do much for the fire service this session. The only bone we were thrown was the funding in the budget for infrastructure and to pay out stipends, otherwise they couldn’t even pass legislation on lithium ion batteries, although the bills were defective. Remember that bills introduced for the 2023 session will carry over to the 2024 session when it begins in January.

THE LATEST FROM WASHINGTON D.C.

Fire Service Groups Call On Senate To Restore Grants Funding

Bill Carey

The International Association of Fire Chiefs, the International Association of Fire Fighters, the National Volunteer Fire Council, the Congressional Fire Services Institute, the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation and the National Fire Protection Association released a joint statement on Thursday, **calling on Congress to restore \$22 million in proposed cuts to the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) programs.**

On July 27, the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee voted to report legislation **that would cut funding to these fire grants programs.** Specifically, the Fiscal Year 2024 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations bill would cut the programs each from \$360 million in FY2023 to \$338 million in FY2024.

The House version of the FY2024 DHS Appropriations bill would maintain funding for these programs at \$360 million in FY2024.

The joint statement reads, in part:

Our organizations call upon Congress to restore funding to these programs. Local fire and EMS departments face an increasing number of risks from which they must protect the public. Whether it be extreme heat, a spike in fentanyl overdoses, a pandemic, wildland fires, hazmat incidents, or fires caused by lithium-ion batteries – the local fire department is on scene to provide lifesaving aid. Meanwhile, in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, fire and EMS departments are facing personnel shortfalls due to early retirements and a lack of new recruits. In addition, the supply chain crisis has caused the cost of fire and EMS apparatus and equipment to escalate above the capabilities of many fire and EMS departments. The AFG and SAFER grant programs have been commended over the years as effective methods of helping local fire and EMS departments meet the needs and challenges of their communities.”

Fire service organizations are urging fire and EMS members to [contact their senators](#) to explain the importance of the AFG and SAFER grant programs for their fire department’s operations.

Proposed Legislation Seeks to Protect U.S. Firefighters from PFAS Exposure in Turnout Gear

Irvin Jackson

A bipartisan group of legislators have introduced a new bill in Congress, which seeks to support the development of new firefighter turnout gear to prevent unnecessary exposure to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), which have been linked to an increased risk of cancer and other ailments.

The new legislation was introduced on Thursday by a group of U.S. House representatives led by Debbie Dingell, of Michigan, as part of a continuing effort to reduce the risks firefighters face from exposure to the toxic “forever” chemicals.

According to a press release issued by Dingell on July 20, the “Protecting Firefighters and Advancing State-of-the-Art Alternatives Act” (known more simply as the PFAS Alternatives Act), **calls for the U.S. government to earmark \$100 million over the next four fiscal years for research into the development of improved firefighter turnout gear which eliminates or significantly lowers their exposure to PFAS chemicals.**

In addition, the bill calls for another \$2 million to be budgeted annually for guidance and training for firefighters on preventing cancer risks.

FIREFIGHTER TURNOUT GEAR CANCER CONCERNS

PFAS are commonly called “forever chemicals”, since they are known to persist in the environment and build up in the human body, causing a number of different types of cancer and diseases.

While most of the recent lawsuits and news coverage has focused on the high levels of PFAS chemicals in aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF), which is widely used during training and response exercises to combat fuel-based fires, there is also a cancer risk from PFAS in firefighting turnout gear.

In August 2022, the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) and the Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association issued a warning to firefighters, calling for them to reduce their PFAS exposure by limiting their use of turnout gear. The groups warned that firefighters will not be able to fully avoid the PFAS cancer risk until the chemicals are removed entirely from protective gear, but they called for the development and widespread availability of such gear. In the meantime, the group indicated that firefighters should limit the use of turnout gear to only emergency situations where it is required, and then suggested fire fighters remove it as soon as possible.

Manufacturers of PFAS chemicals and safety equipment now face thousands of firefighter cancer lawsuits, involving allegations that years of exposure to the chemicals caused testicular cancer, kidney cancer, pancreatic cancer, bladder cancer and other injuries. Although the manufacturers knew or should have known about the PFAS cancer risk, fire fighters allege they withheld important safety information and warnings for decades.

PFAS ALTERNATIVES ACT

The funding called for in the newly proposed legislation would be used to accelerate the development of turnout gear that does not include PFAS chemicals, through research and testing. It would also push for the development of ways to protect firefighters from other sources of PFAS exposure, such as inhalation.

In addition to the development of safer firefighter turnout gear, the legislation also calls for better ways to warn firefighters of PFAS exposure risks and establish better decontamination procedures. This would involve new guidance and training for firefighters on ways to reduce their PFAS exposure through the proper wearing, cleaning and maintenance of their turnout gear.

The legislation proposes working with the firefighting industry and will provide grants to those developing the next generation of firefighter turnout gear.

“Firefighters’ jobs are already dangerous enough without worrying about the long-term health risks of being exposed to dangerous PFAS in their turnout gear,” Dingell said in the press release. “The PFAS Alternatives Act will remove this unnecessary occupational hazard and help protect firefighters as they work every day to protect us.”

The IAFF has already endorsed the legislation.

FIRE FIGHTER PFAS EXPOSURE LAWSUITS

The legislation comes amid a growing number of claims brought throughout the federal court system against 3M Company, DuPont, Tyco Fire Products, Buckeye Fire Equipment Company, Kidde-Fenwal and other manufacturers of firefighting foam and protective equipment. The lawsuits are now centralized in the U.S. District Court for the District of South Carolina, as part of a federal MDL or multidistrict litigation, since they each raise common questions of fact and law.

In June 2023, 3M Company and other manufacturers agreed to pay over **\$12.5 billion to settle PFAS water contamination lawsuits** brought by local water suppliers. However, the companies continue to face individual injury lawsuits, and no individual claims have yet gone before a jury.

Earlier this year, Judge Gergel directed the parties to select a group of 28 representative personal injury claims for an **AAFF injury bellwether pool**, involving plaintiffs who say they were exposed to chemicals that contaminated drinking water.

These cases will include eight kidney cancer claims, eight testicular cancer claims, eight thyroid disease claims and four ulcerative colitis claims. In addition, they will be limited to individuals alleging they were exposed to contaminated water near Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado Springs Municipal Airport, the Willow Grove Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base and the Naval Air Warfare Center in Warminster.

The parties are expected to select the cases by July 28, and propose a joint list of selected or proposed cases to the court by August 11. However, the court has not yet outlined requirements for selecting individual firefighter cancer lawsuits for early bellwether trials.

THE ATTORNEY’S OFFICE

Vernon Township (PA) VFD Moves Closer to Fire Sale

Mike Crowley – the Medville Tribune

What happens in Pennsylvania when a VFD goes out of business.

The planned public auction of a defunct Meadville-area fire station and social club was halted Friday, but a sale is still planned as the liquidation of the Vernon Township Volunteer Fire Department took a major step forward.

President Judge John Spataro ordered a stay of the planned Sheriff's Sale of the department's Dunham Road station and Cussewago Road social club during a hearing in Crawford County Court of Common Pleas. The sale had been scheduled for Aug. 4.

No representatives of the fire department were present for the hearing. Vernon Township VFD owes more than \$350,000 in outstanding loan debt, interest and penalties related to its mortgage with Marquette Savings Bank, according to court filings, and owes additional sums to other creditors. The department was taken out of service late last year by Vernon Township supervisors.

Lawyer Brian Cagle was appointed at the Friday hearing as the liquidating receiver for the fire department. In that position, Cagle's job will be to "see to it that the creditors are fairly treated," Spataro said.

Cagle had previously been appointed as the receiver pending litigation and had begun documenting the equipment that remains at the fire station, assessing its value, contacting creditors, banks and realtors.

"The records are a mess," Cagle told the court. In many cases where there are records of expenses, he added, the relevant receipts are missing.

The stay on the Sheriff's Sale of the two properties will enable the hiring of a realtor and pursuit of a more advantageous sale, according to discussions at the hearing.

Fire equipment and other assets will be sold to help pay off debts as well, according to Cagle.

One fire truck secured by a Pennsylvania State Fire Commissioner loan has already been repossessed by another creditor, Cagle told the court. Another truck has been repossessed by the State Fire Commissioner. One vehicle remaining at the station could be worth \$50,000 to \$80,000, according to Cagle.

The sale of assets will go toward paying off the department's debts. Topping the list in terms of priority are two secured creditors, Marquette Savings Bank and CT Corporation System. Marquette was represented by a lawyer at the hearing. Cagle said multiple attempts to contact CT Corporation System had been unsuccessful.

"I just haven't been able to figure out who the secured party actually is," he told the court.

Proceeds from the sale of the real estate would go first to Marquette in order to pay the mortgage, interest and attorney fees associated with the mortgage.

As for the remaining fire equipment, Cagle said it would be offered for sale to other Crawford County departments, with Vernon Central Hose Company likely given first preference with regard to possible purchases.

If the assets exceed the department's debt, the excess would be distributed to another similar nonprofit organization. Cagle said Vernon Central Hose Company would be the likely first choice.

Spataro offered a note of caution regarding any potential windfall for the township's remaining fire department.

"We're some distance from that day," he said.

In the meantime, plans will be made to market the fire station and the social club and to sell remaining equipment. Cagle asked for an assurance the properties would remain secure before he provided keys to Marquette.

"I did change the locks after I found out a representative of Marquette allowed someone to drive the fire truck, which is not insured," Cagle said. The unnamed person also allegedly offered items for sale from the property.

"Marquette is not going to be selling anything or driving anything," said Eugene Sundberg of Marsh Schaaf LLP, the Erie-based firm that represented Marquette at the hearing.

Cagle told the court that one person has thus far been charged criminally in relation to the dissolution of Vernon Township VFD. Charges could follow on three or four additional people, he added.

Alyce M. Douglas, 52, of Meadville faces a felony charge of theft by unlawful taking. The charge was filed in December by Pennsylvania State Police Bureau of Criminal Investigation. Douglas waived her preliminary hearing before Magisterial District Judge Lincoln Zilhaver in April. She remains free on nonmonetary bail conditions. A hearing in the case is scheduled for Aug. 9 in Crawford County Court of Common Pleas.

Vernon Central Hose, which continues its operations and has taken over emergency service response for the entire township, is entirely independent from the defunct Vernon Township VFD.

Vernon Township Manager Rob Horvat, who attended the hearing, said the township is functioning well with just one fire station.

“Vernon Central is more than capable of handling the work,” he said, “and they have been for more than nine months.” **Township supervisors took Vernon Township VFD out of service due to a lack of financial responsibility in October. The department had been removed from emergency service dispatches the previous month when its insurance policies lapsed due to lack of payment.**

As the hearing moved the dissolution process further along, Horvat said, “It’s making the best of a bad situation.”

For information only and not for the purpose of providing legal advice. The opinions expressed are the opinions of the individual author at the time the facts were presented and based on the law then applicable. The information contained in these opinions is not guaranteed to be up to date. The information provided is not legal advice. Since legal advice must be tailored to the specific circumstances of each case, and laws are constantly changing, nothing on this site should be used as a substitute for the advice of competent legal counsel. The authors assume no responsibility to any person who relies on information contained herein and disclaim all liability in respect to such information. You should not act upon information in this publication without seeking professional counsel from an attorney admitted to practice in your jurisdiction.

STEP INTO THE CHIEF'S OFFICE:

****Developing SOPs For Electric Vehicle Incidents**

Robert Rielage

Key factors fire departments should consider when developing procedures for EVs and other devices powered by lithium-ion batteries.

Electric vehicles (EVs) and other appliances powered by lithium-ion (li-ion) batteries are a growing concern for fire departments, not only across the United States but across the world. Since 2015, I have been following these issues here in the U.S. as well as in Europe and the Middle East, and I’ve been fortunate to present key findings at fire service conferences.

While I am not a scientist or engineer, I am a technician, tactician and, above all, an advocate for firefighter safety. This is why I advocate so strongly for departments to develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) for these incidents.

While great organizations such as the [UL’s Fire Safety Research Institute](#) and the NFPA are taking the lead in research and training, it has been difficult for many departments to translate that research into a practical SOP for their department. And with nearly 30,000 fire departments across the country, it would be impossible to develop a universal SOP that aligned with the unique needs of career, volunteer, rural and urban departments alike.

Nonetheless, there are some key components to consider when developing an SOP focused on EVs and other appliances powered by (li-ion) batteries. Take the ideas here and work them into an SOP for your department or county, then train, train train, so you are ready for your next (or first) EV fire.

LITHIUM-ION BATTERIES AND EVS

Li-ion batteries power a growing number of products in our lives, from computer notebooks to cell phones to power tools. But one of the fastest growing uses for these batteries is in EVs – not just electric cars but also electric scooters, bikes, motorcycles, wheelchairs as well as delivery and long-haul trucks.

Because of the number of li-ion batteries concentrated in EVs, the issue of fire control and extinguishment is highly concerning. ***Specifically, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Response Guide #147 describes lithium as containing flammable liquid electrolytes that can ignite at 302 degrees F, less than the ignition temperature for paper. Guide #125 further indicates that it generates hydrogen fluoride off-gas,*** which could be fatal. This means that firefighters need to wear positive pressure SCBA with full PPE, and that no responder should touch or walk through its debris field without these protections.

EV FIRES

EVs can have several hundred to several thousand individual li-ion batteries, each individual battery similar in size to an AA battery. The batteries are compacted into bundles of approximately 100 batteries. The issue: If one or more are physically damaged in a vehicle accident, overcharged, or defective when manufactured, the batteries can go into thermal runaway – a condition where the batteries overheat, producing a similar reaction in the other batteries within its bundle, ultimately starting a fire that spreads to other bundles within the vehicle.

EVs have two separate electrical systems: the 600-volt system that powers the drive train of the EV and a more standard 12-volt system that services the dash board instruments, air bags (SRS), lights, navigation and sound systems. For firefighter safety, both systems need to be de-energized, if possible, following a crash that does not involve a fire.

EV IDENTIFICATION

There is no universal emblem that identifies a vehicle as electric. The identity plate might be on the rear near a trunk or hatch lid, the front driver's side, or near the charging port that has a similar cover to that on the filling tank of a gasoline-powered vehicle. Hybrids, those that use li-ion batteries with a small gasoline engine, have a similar electric charging port.

Likewise, there is no universal location for the emergency disconnect for either the 600- or 12-volt systems. The best advice is to quickly find the driver or a passenger and confirm the vehicle is an EV and then look up that vehicle's Emergency Response Guide, whether on your phone or by requesting the dispatcher locate the ERG online and relay the information to you.

SOP SUGGESTIONS

When you are ready to develop a department SOP for EVs and other devices powered by li-ion batteries, consider including these directives:

- Wear full PPE and SCBA on *all* vehicle fires.
- Block traffic immediately – call for additional units to assist in blocking or add them automatically to any vehicle response on a highway.
- Require those not engaged in active firefighting to wear a high-visibility vest.
- Conduct an initial 360-degree size-up with a thermal imaging camera (TIC) to note any heat pattern or fire extension near the battery case – located either on the frame of the EV or on some models behind the back seat. Confirm the vehicle's power source (i.e., EV, CNG, Propane, gasoline).
- Set up an incident command system with at least an officer in charge and safety officer as additional eyes on the fire and traffic are needed safety factors.
- Determine your tactical priorities: fire, extrication, victim care.
- Approach the EV at a 45-degree angle until the vehicle is chocked/cribbed.
- Stabilize the vehicle with chocks or cribbing to avoid it moving. (EVs don't make much sound even when running.)
- Power down the EV from the information on that vehicle's ERG. Remember there are both the 600- and 12-volt systems that need to be de-energized.
- Understand your fire attack options, as [letting the vehicle burn is often the best option](#) or you risk the batteries constantly re-igniting. Extinguishment with water involves anywhere from 5,000 to 30,000 gallons of water, so securing a hydrant or several water tenders and dump tanks is essential. However, consider the potential of water contamination to nearby lakes or streams.
- Consider an EV incident as not only a potential fire, extrication and victim care emergency, but also a hazmat response.
- Have sufficient personnel and air management refill equipment on hand for crew rotation, traffic blocking and rehabilitation.
- Share information with the towing company that this is an EV with the possibility of re-ignition and the need to be separated by at least 50 feet from any other vehicles or combustibles, such as buildings.
- Perform gross decon needs at the scene, with all PPE needs later thoroughly decontaminated either in a washer/extractor or per the manufacturer's specifications before re-use.
- Consider having the PPE commercially cleaned and contact the vehicle's insurance carrier to agree to pay this expense. Borrow or rent clean PPE from the PPE manufacturer or another department in the interim.

PRODUCT OPTIONS

There are many devices, tactics and agents being marketed or advanced in the United States and Europe to handle EV incidents, some of which are expensive and/or inherently flawed. For example, one tactic is to immerse the vehicle in a container of salt water. However, as we saw after Hurricane Ian, the salt-water residue caused approximately 25 EVs, previously submerged in salt water by the storm, to ignite when they were moved weeks after the storm.

Before investing in any of these devices or tactics, wait for legitimate testing laboratories to confirm their legitimacy. In the meantime, check out Captain Patrick Durham's article "[Electric vehicle fires: Where the waiting game wins.](#)"

FIRE DISTRICT FINANCES.....ITS TAXPAYER'S MONEY!!

Central NY Fire Department Treasurer Stole \$850,000, but He'll Never Go to Jail

Marnie Eisenstadt- Syracuse.com

In 2018, the Hannibal Fire Company named a truck bay after its two longest-serving members: Jim Travis and George Parry Jr.

Parry, then 77, had been putting out fires in the rural community since he was a teen.

He'd been a volunteer for 60 years. For 50 of those of them, he was also the department's treasurer, handling an annual budget that grew to more than \$400,000 that **included taxpayer money**.

But at the same time the plaque honoring Parry's service was hung on the wall, he was quietly bilking the department out of hundreds of thousands of dollars, a state audit found.

A state comptroller's report released this week detailed how **Parry's unilateral control of the department's books, accounts and multimillion-dollar investments enabled him to steal at least \$850,000 between 2016 and 2022**. But because Parry controlled the department's money for decades, it's possible his theft went on for much longer.

It was a scheme that ended with a department devastated and one man dead.

Parry wrote himself 823 checks totaling \$451,537 over an eight-and-a-half-year period, the audit found. In just one year, 2019, Parry signed 123 checks to himself totaling more than \$90,000.

Parry also made hundreds of cash advances to himself using a secret fire department credit card. Between 2017 and May 2022, Parry used the credit card for 794 cash advances, averaging about \$400 each time, according to the report.

In one year, he made nearly 200 cash advances to himself totaling about \$82,660.

In all, Parry put a total of \$400,000 in charges on the fire department credit card, which he then paid off using the department's general fund and investment accounts.

Almost all of the money Parry took was in checks or cash payments to himself, so it's hard to know what he spent it on. Parry's thefts went on for years, according to the report. They even continued after the department elected a new treasurer in March 2022.

Then fire department officials discovered the credit card.

The department president and the chief confronted Parry. He admitted he was using the card for his own benefit, according to the audit. He was suspended and the chief asked the state comptroller's office to investigate.

The department was in the process of getting years of financial records from Parry's home when he died May 26, 2022. *Earlier that day, Parry went to the Sterling Nature Center. He sat down on a bench, and he shot himself in the head with a handgun, according to a report from the Cayuga County Sheriff's Office.*

People at the park that day heard the gunshot and went searching.

Parry was single and is survived by two grown sons. He began his career as a teacher. He then found his way into car sales, working at several dealerships until he retired from Fred Raynor Ford in Fulton, his obituary said.

His obituary lists his loves as simple: "He loved the outdoors, hunting, NASCAR, and giving his time and energy to the Hannibal Volunteer Fire Department."

The obituary credits him with always making sure the Hannibal firefighters had the best of everything — gear, trucks and equipment. The fire department was "his work and his home."

Records show Parry had some financial troubles in 2006, when he filed for bankruptcy.

Parry was not the only one to blame for his theft. The audit also faulted the fire department for its complete lack of oversight over finances.

It's a failure that has been repeated countless times across New York fire departments for decades: a trusted figure takes department money in the absence of any review.

The Hannibal fire department allowed Parry to have total control over the finances, according to the audit. The leadership did not ask for any written financial reports. Parry gave reports verbally.

While the comptroller's audit looked back through eight years of records, it's possible Parry had been taking money for decades.

He kept all of the department's financial records at his home and was the only one who had access to them. An accountant — who, like Parry, was not named in the report — had been paid by the department to review the financials and prepare documents.

But the accountant told the comptroller's office that he had known Parry for 30 years and he trusted him.

“Therefore (he) did not apply the same level of professional scrutiny as he did with his other clients,” the audit reads. The accountant only reviewed bank statements and the manual checkbook register, where Parry wrote down that he paid vendors when he was actually paying himself.

The fire department was also required to have an independent financial audit every year because its budget is over \$400,000, but it never did so, according to the audit.

Members of the Hannibal Fire Company declined to comment, referring Syracuse.com to a statement prepared by their attorney, Brad Pinsky.

“The fire company recognizes the serious nature of the comptroller’s findings and was as shocked as you are in this discovery,” the statement reads. The department said that while it takes responsibility, it also was a victim.

“Unfortunately, that trust also was misplaced and that process failed,” the statement reads.

The department said it now has several layers of checks and balances for its finances. It has hired a new accounting firm to maintain computerized financial records and file its annual IRS forms.

It’s likely no one will ever know much Parry took from the department because he handled its money for more than 50 years with such little oversight.

The fire department is now working to rebuild the community’s trust. It depends on the public for all of its money.

There are fire protection contracts from the towns it serves and then there are all the fundraisers it does, from chicken barbecues to the department’s annual field days next month.

“We also invite the public to become involved in our financial monitoring processes if you so desire,” the department said in its statement. “We assure you that this will never happen again.”

In his obituary, Parry’s family asked that his friends honor his memory this way: with a donation to the Hannibal Fire Department.

OUR CHANGING FIRE SERVICE –CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES!

OPPORTUNITIES:

West Sand Lake Fire Department Teams Up To Build Beds For Kids

VIDEO: Local firefighters put down their gear and picked up different kind of equipment to build beds for children in need. The West Sand Lake Fire Department teamed up with national nonprofit, Sleep in Heavenly Peace, to build 20 beds for children. The group is made up of volunteers, with chapters in different states. Their mission is to give all children a safe, comfortable place to sleep. They say too many little boys and girls end up on couches or floors, and that can affect their happiness and health.

New York To Boost Emergency Communications For Counties

Nick Reisman-Spectrum News

New York state is sending \$20 million in grant money to **eligible counties** in order to strengthen emergency communications systems, Gov. Kathy Hochul on Friday said.

The money is being made available through a targeted grant program, which provides reimbursements. State officials want to improve land mobile radio interoperability for public safety agencies as well as in bordering states.

"In an emergency, every second counts," Hochul said. "This grant funding will help ensure our communities across the state have the modern communication tools they need to act quickly and effectively to protect New Yorkers and save lives."

More broadly, the state has sought to increase emergency responses at the local level, with added funding in the budget approved in May. **That money includes \$105 million to upgrade the State Emergency Operations Center as well as capital grants for volunteer fire departments for construction, renovation and the purchasing of equipment. An additional \$10 million has been set aside for stipends for volunteer firefighters who finish foundational training. (Stipends)**

New York is also spending \$20 million for a "Next Generation" 911 network.

"Communications are the backbone of emergency response and this funding will improve our public safety equipment across the board," New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services Commissioner Jackie Bray said. **"Counties can apply for this funding to enhance their existing communications systems."**

CHALLENGES:

Vermont Fire Station In Danger, Town Seeks Alternative Building

VIDEO: Right now, the town of Cabot's fire station is at risk of falling into the Winooski River, impacting both the **volunteer** fire department and ambulance service. "It's been a little chaotic, but we've been staying in front of it," said Chief Dean Deasy, about what the department and town have experienced since flooding on July 10. **The town's volunteer first responders have been working almost non-stop since the first flood hit on the afternoon of July 10.** "We almost went around the clock from that point forward," said Deasy. "Presently, right now, I have over 146 hours dealing just with storm issues on that, and a lot of my members have well over 100 hours that they've put into this."

Johanna Thibault owns Harry's Hardware and her husband is also a volunteer firefighter. She said the department had to help rescue her during the floods. "I don't know what we would've done without them, I really don't," said Thibault. Now the department is facing a new challenge as the fire station is vulnerable to erosion and has been deemed unsafe to be inside.

Cracks can be seen in the foundation of the building, as the embankment behind the fire station has experienced landslides into the Winooski River over the past three weeks.

"We've reached out to the Emergency Management Center and we've requested a temporary building," said Deasy. "I'm gearing up now, with my other officers, that we are going to be set up for at least a 24-month run within that structure." But until that happens, the town has moved all equipment and vehicles to other, temporary sites.

One site is the town garage, which is about three miles away, and can cause challenges when it comes to response times. "There has been in motion now, for the past couple of years, there's been a new fire station in the works," said Thibault. "They've been trying to get the town to rally and really help get behind supporting that. They were hoping to go that way, they just didn't think they'd have to be forced that way."

The Cabot selectboard has also been working with the department trying to figure out the next steps forward. "We're also working with FEMA and other state entities to secure funding should the town approve a larger facility, which we have a footprint down the road to build on," said Mike Hogan, selectboard chair. Cabot's selectboard will meet again on Aug. 1 and plans to discuss next steps for the fire station, aimed at giving some help to the fire department after all of the help they've given this community.

Volunteer Firefighters Sue Clifton Park For Tax Benefits

A group of volunteer firefighters in Clifton Park is suing the town assessor to receive residential tax credits. It was respectful but quick. Monday afternoon, Art Hunsinger, on behalf of Clifton Park's volunteer firefighters, served Walter Smead, the town's assessor.

"The law is very confusing, it definitely needs some clarification, there's different interpretations of it, so if this gets it in front of a judge," Smead explained.

Let's break down the moving parts.

There are four taxes for which a 10 percent credit can be applied to volunteer firefighters if approved by municipalities:

- school district
- fire district
- town
- county

There are two main players involved in this disagreement:

- A group of Clifton Park volunteer firefighters, represented by Art Hunsinger
- Walter Smead, Clifton Park's Town Assessor

Assessor Smead says his interpretation of the law is that firefighters don't qualify for any of the tax credits if they live in a fire district different from the one they volunteer in.

"It's all about jurisdiction of the fire company, and in order to be eligible you have to live in the fire district" he told us.

Art Hunsinger says as long as the firefighters live in Clifton Park, they should receive the residential tax benefits. "Mr. Smead is interpreting the law to say you have to live in the fire district that you serve in order to get the exemption, that is not what the law says" said Hunsinger. Town supervisor Phil Barrett says while the volunteer firefighters may not qualify for the fire district tax credit, they should receive school and county tax credits. "If we had my druthers they would be receiving the exemption and we wouldn't be in this position" Barrett said. Hunsinger explained these tax credits are needed to attract people to serve as unpaid first responders. "This is a thank you for what you do, since you don't get paid," Hunsinger said. " And it's also recruitment tool for us we can say to people who own their houses who may be on the board of volunteers here's a little something that you get if you become a volunteer" he added. The matter will be brought to court and that court date is still pending.

[Hyundai, Kia Recall Nearly 92,000 Vehicles, Tell Owners to Park Outside Due to Fire Risk](#)

Hyundai and Kia are telling the owners of nearly 92,000 vehicles in the U.S. to park them outside because an electronic controller in an oil pump can overheat and cause fires. The affiliated Korean automakers are recalling the vehicles and also are telling owners to park them away from structures until repairs are made. The recalls cover [certain 2023 and 2024 Hyundai Palisades](#), as well some 2023 Tucson, Sonata, Elantra and Kona vehicles. [Affected Kias](#) include the 2023 Soul and Sportage as well as some 2023 and 2024 Seltos vehicles.

[Long Island Fire Departments Owed Thousands For Critical Equipment Upgrades From State](#)

Rich Barrabi

Some of Long Island's fire departments are owed thousands of dollars for critical equipment upgrades. Great River Fire District's new pumper truck was purchased but not paid for -- at least not by those who said they'd foot the bill. Great River is just one of nearly a dozen Long Island fire districts that were promised hundreds of thousands of dollars for critical equipment upgrades in 2019 and have still not received those funds. One by one, they shared their stories with us.

Bill Theis of the Long Island Firefighters legislative committee says the grants were approved by Democratic Senator Monica Martinez in 2019. However, after she lost her re-election bid in 2020 -- the money was never allocated by the Democrat controlled state Senate.

Patchogue Commissioner Steve Saper says his district purchased a new rescue boat -- ***based on the promise*** that it would receive \$500,000 from the state. Since that hasn't happened, the district was forced to raise taxes.

In Great River, treasurer Deidra Renwick says the district had to raise taxes nearly 8% after it never received a \$365,000 grant. Renwick even showed News 12 the letter that promised the money to the district from Senator Martinez in 2019. News 12 reached out to Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart Cousins' office for an explanation.

A spokesperson blames Senate Republicans for the delay, saying in part, "Unfortunately, the new Republican representatives failed to fight for this funding." ***But the current senator representing many of the fire districts, Republican Dean Murray, showed us this letter he wrote to Stewart Cousins in March, calling on her to "take the necessary steps to release this funding." (Editor's Note: someone did a bad job of covering her ass!)***

In talking to all of the fire officials, they've made it clear to News 12 that their goal is to maintain the commitment that they've made to their communities, that public safety will be paramount. Now they're calling on Albany to keep its promises as well.

Senator Martinez has since returned to the Senate representing a neighboring district and fire department advocates say she did help them secure a meeting next week **with** Sen. Stewart Cousins.

TRAINING FOR YOUR MEMBERS AND OFFICERS: PASS IT FORWARD!!

[NYSAFC 2023 Seminar Series, "Truck Skills Beyond the Textbooks"](#)

Early in our firefighting orientation, we're taught basic skills and tactics from textbooks. In addition, we'll drill and be tested on many of these skills at fire academy buildings to attain our firefighting certifications. It's a good process, but our learning shouldn't stop there because we haven't been exposed to many of the situations we'll encounter at fires and emergencies. Plus, the buildings in the academy aren't conducive to allowing us to

operate with tools to open the walls and ceilings, pull suspended ceilings, remove baseboard and window trim, or even cut open tongue and groove sheathed roofs. This [interactive lecture](#) strives to go beyond textbook learning and bring alive street skills, tips, and tactics of truck work in: portable ladders, overhaul, forcible entry, roof ventilation, tool use, and more.

Registration (per person):

\$35 – NYS AFC members

\$50 – non-members

Pre-registration encouraged.

- Albany Co. October/23/23,
- Fulton Co. September/7/23,
- Saratoga Co. October/24/23

REGISTER AT THIS LINK: <https://www.nysfirechiefs.com/2023seminarseries>

Bring NYS AFC Training to Your Area

Fire departments and county agencies or associations that are interested in hosting classroom-based programs or Regional Hands-On Training are invited to submit host request forms. The forms outline the specific host responsibilities and logistical considerations for each NYS AFC program. Sites are now being considered for programs in 2024.



What You Need to Know About Class B Firefighting Foam: ESIP WEBINAR SERIES

New York State recently passed legislation that dives deeper into what you can and can't do with Class B Firefighting Foam. Let us help you figure out the best way to handle Class B firefighting foam and the dos and don'ts if you have it on hand.

Tuesday, August 8th at 7:00PM

VFIS[®] University Provides a Wealth of Training Opportunities UPDATED FOR 2023 **VFIS TRAINING AND RESOURCE CATALOG 2023**

<https://afdca.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/2023-ETC-Resource-Catalog-VFIS.pdf>

VFIS UNIVERSITY – USERS GUIDE

<https://afdca.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/VFIS-University-User-Guide-3.pdf>

VFIS TRAINING OFFICER USERS GUIDE

<https://afdca.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/VFISU-Training-Officer-User-Guide.pdf>

VFIS RESPONDER HELP FLYER

<https://afdca.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/2023-VFIS-Responder-Help-Flyer.pdf>

THE SAFETY OFFICER – TAKING CARE OF OUR MEMBERS!

IN 2023 WE HAVE SADLY EXPERIENCED 46 FIRE FIGHTER LODD'S

*According to FirefighterCloseCalls.com**

In 2022 we experienced 101 LODDs reported nationally.!

You Just Never Know!

- A release from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police said Saturday a 25-year-old contract firefighter from Ontario was working the massive wildfire on Friday in a remote area of British Columbia when his heavy-duty ATV rolled over a steep drop on a gravel road.

- Three firefighters were injured in a crash which rolled the engine in Newark NJ, and damaged a car at an intersection outside the Prudential Center.
- a Hampshire Fire Protection pumper rolled over while returning to the firehouse from a call. Three firefighters and a firefighter intern were injured in the crash. They were taken to Sherman Hospital in Elgin to be treated for minor injuries, according to a fire official.
- Firefighter Evan Brown, Honey Grove, Texas volunteer firefighter has succumbed to injuries he received earlier in July from a crash while responding to an emergency call. Brown and Firefighter Bryson Braley were responding to an accident just before 10:00 p.m. on July 9 when the crash occurred. He had been ejected from his pickup and suffered serious injuries. Firefighter Braley escaped with minor injuries.
- Fire Chief Brian Murray at age 53, of Salem, New Hampshire, died Sunday in the Pittsburg, New Hampshire, area. He leaves behind a wife and daughter, the cause of death remains under investigation.

****ATF Releases Fire Analysis Report From Md. LODD**

Bill Carey-Fire Rescue 1

The ATF fire modeling research focused on the role of corrugated stainless-steel gas tubing in the death of Howard County Firefighter Nathan Flynn.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) Baltimore Field Division released a technical report and video from its investigation into the line-of-duty death of Howard County, Maryland, Firefighter Nathan Flynn on July 23, 2018.

ATF personnel used engineering analysis methods, including field fire testing, large-scale laboratory fire testing, advanced computer fire modeling and electronic data sources, to help identify the origin and cause of the fire, the route of fire spread throughout the structure, and the events that led to Flynn's mayday and death.

The report indicated that the fire involved corrugated stainless-steel tubing (CSST) that ran through the crawl space beneath the living room. A lightning strike energized the propane distribution system, causing the CSST in the crawl space to arc to a nearby grounded object. This resulted in a small hole forming in the CSST gas line, which allowed propane gas to leak from the hole and also likely ignited the escaping gas at the same time.

Residents called 911 approximately 30 minutes after the lightning strike when they noticed smoke in their living room. One hour after the lightning strike, Firefighter Flynn called a mayday after he fell through the living room floor into the burning crawl space below. A similar sequence of events resulted in the death of Captain Joshua Laird in Ijamsville, Maryland, three years later. ATF also provided technical assistance at that Ijamsville LODD fire scene and concluded that lightning-induced failure of CSST resulted in a basement fire, floor collapse and the subsequent death of Captain Laird.

The report emphasizes that no single root cause event led to Firefighter Flynn's death. Five conclusions were developed from the fire development analysis:

1. An extremely large volume of the residence allowed for a well-developed fire, despite light smoke showing on the exterior;
2. An elevated fire located in the basement crawl space created atypical smoke-filling conditions in the basement;
3. A ventilation flow path existed from the basement door (inlet), through the hole in the crawl space and out the first-floor mud room door (outlet). This flow path created untenable conditions on the first floor during the mayday;
4. When a lightning strike is suspected, ceiling space in the basement should be opened up to rule out a concealed fire due to multiple parallel CSST lines routed through interstitial spaces; and
5. The similar findings from this LODD and an earlier one also caused by lightning-induced failure of CSST in the basement point to multiple fact-based similarities and highlight the importance of the conclusions in this report.

Following his death, the department formed an Internal Safety Review Board to investigate the incident. A year later, the released report states ***Flynn should not have been allowed in the area and revealed that his mayday calls were being transmitted on a channel that was not being monitored.***

According to the report, "the most critical decision during the 7005 Woodscape Drive incident that led to Flynn's death was the tactical choice for crews to enter a structure above a fire."

No Local Government Fire Service Audits this week.

LIVING WITH NEW GREEN TECHNOLOGY - - HOT TOPIC!

After Lyme Solar Farm Fire, Gov. Hochul Announces Creation Of New Safety Group

By News 7 Staff [*With Editor's notes*]

Less than 24 hours after fire erupted [*in the Energy Storage System (ESS) or Li-Ion Storage Cells*] at the solar farm in the town of Lyme, Governor Kathy Hochul announced the creation of a new safety group.

It's called the Inter-Agency Fire Safety Working Group and its job is to ensure the safety and security of energy storage systems across the state. [*Security? Is she suggesting that there is a security issue?*] [*Don't local code officials inspect these facilities?*]

Hochul cited fires at the solar farm in Jefferson County as well as similar blazes that happened at facilities in Orange and Suffolk counties this summer.

The governor said state agencies will begin immediate inspections of energy storage sites, and the Working Group will help prevent fires and ensure emergency responders have the necessary training and information to prepare and deploy resources in the event of a fire.

"Following multiple fire safety incidents across New York, I've directed State agencies to immediately form the Inter-Agency Fire Safety Working Group to mobilize the personnel and resources necessary to keep New Yorkers safe," Hochul said in a news release. [*Evidentially, the fires are a surprise and an embarrassment for her new green energy platform being thrust upon the residents of the state.*]"The Working Group will collaborate with first responders and local leaders to identify best practices, address potential risks to public safety, and ensure energy storage sites across New York are safe and effective."

The New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services' Office of Fire Prevention and Control (OFPC) staff and the Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) Emergency Response Unit responded to the solar farm fire on Thursday and supported emergency response partners with performing *precautionary air monitoring tests* in the surrounding area of the fire.

Hochul said OFPC is deploying additional personnel to the scene on Friday to assist local fire officials in their investigation into what initially caused the fire. The Division's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and DEC continue to monitor the situation and are prepared to provide additional support on the ground in Jefferson County.

The governor also said the Working Group will thoroughly investigate the recent energy storage fires in New York and will conduct a comprehensive fire safety review, including emergency response analysis, of energy storage projects that experienced thermal runaway events across New York.

Findings will include a list of recommendations for stationary energy storage equipment and installations.

The Working Group would review energy storage system operations and operators as they: examine the condition of their batteries to verify operation within design parameters; remedy any deficiencies identified; verify operation of on-site fire suppression; and confirm fire suppression plans with local fire departments, among other best practices. [*Won't they need someone who has not only a background in ESS but an electrical engineer with an expertise in ESS construction and installation?*]

4-Day-Long N.Y. Solar Farm Fire Contained

Jonathon Wheeler – Watertown Daily Times

Volunteer firefighters in Chaumont have contained the fire at the Convergent Energy and Power site and will stand a fire watch as the investigation begins.

Fire crews have officially halted water operations at the site of the solar farm fire at 11 a.m. Sunday. Officials say water operations were stopped as the *battery storage blaze* was contained and they continue to check the area to ensure the air quality remains normal.

Chaumont Fire Chief William Lipczynski said they *will remain on scene as a fire watch, and they are continuing to watch the area.*

The investigation into what caused the blaze will be done by Convergent Energy and Power, owners of the battery storage units, officials said, [EDITOR'S NOTE: the fox watching the hen house scenario] with the state Department of Environmental Conservation looking at the environmental impact.

"Our goal is to de-escalate this as reasonably as we are able, we stopped flowing water but we kept resources available to flow water if something changed," said Niel D. Rivenburgh, deputy director for Jefferson County Fire and Emergency Services. "***We'll hopefully continue to de-escalate this down to just a couple of guys in a pickup truck with binoculars*** to continue to watch downrage and make sure nothing changes until all of the heat's gone."

Once the heat is gone, the investigation will commence.

At this point, Rivenburgh said they didn't know whether or not there was any water contamination.

Lyme Town Supervisor Terry Countryman said officials will continue to look at air and water quality.

"All of the agencies that are involved with that are doing that as we speak," he said.

Countryman said that it will be determined whether or not there was contamination "as soon as we can."

State officials are part of the investigation and Countryman said "it will be investigated on the highest of levels."

On Friday, Countryman said there were no immediate health or safety concerns, there were zero toxic byproducts in the air, and there was no indication of groundwater contamination or runoff contamination posing health risks.

Countryman said there needs to be education on lithium, a component of the battery storage units, and how it is used in society.

"It's in your back pocket, it's in your car, it's everywhere," he said. "We need to learn how to fight it best, and how we're going to bring it into our communities."

No injuries were reported in the firefighting efforts.

Lipczynski said this is the first time he's seen something like this.

"This is definitely a first for me, and I'm hoping, the last," he said.

Rivenburgh said there is an opportunity from this event for first-responders to learn from the incident as solar farms have begun popping up throughout the county.

"There's been an incredible opportunity to learn from this incident," he said. "That's one of the reasons that we engaged, not just to let Chaumont stand down after their first 36 hours, but because if we get other chiefs and operators in here we are able to give them the tidbits of information to keep them safe when something happens in their solar projects."

Rivenburgh said that he suspects the cause and origin of the fire will lead to a design and safety review, which he said he believes was Gov. Kathleen C. Hochul's intent creating a new interagency fire safety working group aimed at ensuring the safety and security of energy storage systems across the state following fire incidents in Jefferson, Orange and Suffolk counties this summer.

"Following multiple fire safety incidents across New York, I've directed State agencies to immediately form the Inter-Agency Fire Safety Working Group to mobilize the personnel and resources necessary to keep New Yorkers safe," Hochul said in a statement. "The Working Group will collaborate with first responders and local leaders to identify best practices, address potential risks to public safety, and ensure energy storage sites across New York are safe and effective."

"Locally, it has definitely turned the attention to the need for some training for our local fire departments because when you roll up here and you have odd circumstances, it's incredibly difficult to make split-second decisions," Rivenburgh said. "Every time there's a bad something, there's lessons to be learned out of it, and that certainly is the case for this."

Lipczynski thanked the community for their help.

"We would like to thank our community and the residents of Town of Lyme, Chaumont, and surrounding communities that have chipped in to help us with whatever it be, from food, to water, A-Z, we greatly appreciate everything and we appreciate you guys working with us and being understanding that we are trying to work as hard as we can to get this mitigated and get everyone's life back to normal," he said.

A news release from the town of Lyme says VOLUNTEER units will remain on site throughout the cause and origin investigation process and that company representatives have been on site since Thursday to work with local officials to help mitigate and identify any potential risks to health and safety of responders, the community, and the environment. The release goes on to state that they will remain committed through the equipment and environmental post-incident mitigation.



Family, Including 10-Day-Old Baby, Escapes Lithium-Ion Battery Fire In Bronx Apartment

A family, including a 10-day old baby, escaped their burning apartment in the Belmont section of the Bronx after officials said their e-bike caught fire early this morning. CBS New York's Shosh Bedrosian went back inside the apartment to see the damage the bike caused. The fire broke out around 6 a.m. on East 187th Street at Southern Boulevard and Prospect Avenue. Residents woke up and watched the plume of thick smoke pour out of the basement apartment. "I was outside sweeping around 6 o'clock and I heard a cracking noise and suddenly I saw smoke," the building's superintendent said. **Fire officials said it's another case of a lithium-ion battery from an e-bike causing the fire to erupt.** "My nephew smelled the smoke and he said that he was dreaming about fire, and when he woke up, there was a fire," said a family member who showed up to help.

BUILDING & FIRE CODE ISSUES – WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT TO YOU? WEEKLY FIRE FATALITY DATA AS REPORTED BY THE MEDIA

Home builders and realtors already “drive” legislation with a history of disregard for life safety and a disgusting misinformation campaign about the cost of residential fire sprinklers, deaths are an awfully expensive price to pay to save money. Stop the carnage, install residential sprinklers. Residential sprinklers are a component of the plumbing system, with approximately 1 head per room. The purpose of residential sprinklers is to allow time for the occupants to escape. Residential sprinklers are designed for quick response and only one at the most two heads may be triggered. With residential sprinklers present, the civilian death rate is 89% LOWER. Residential sprinklers will assist responding firefighters to do their jobs and save firefighters lives also, especially since everyone is short staffed!!
CHIEFS NEED TO SPEAK UP: This fire would not have been as bad if there were residential sprinklers!!

HOME FIRE FATALITIES REPORTED BY THE MEDIA FROM THE US FIRE ADMINISTRATION	
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings in NYS	51+1 = 52
Last fire death 8/2 Bronx, Bronx Co	
Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS	100+3 = 103
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally	798 + 18 = 816
Top 3 States with the greatest 1&2 Family Deaths	1 NY = 52
	2 PA = 50
	3 OH = 45
There has been a total of 1331 civilian home fire fatalities in 2023	
There were a total of 2251 residential fire fatalities reported in 2022 in the US media.	
Both the states of Maryland and California require sprinklers in residential dwellings	

In 2022 in New York State 77 residents perished in fires in 1 & 2 family occupancies.

[News from Building Standards and Codes](#)

It appears that DOS Codes will be seeking to approve the 2024 family of building codes in December of 2024 with minimum NYS modifications. This doesn't explain what will happen with residential sprinklers since they have been in the code since 200 and lobbying from the builders and realtors has persuaded NYS to remove the requirement. BUT, the fact that NYS is #1 in one/two family occupancy deaths in the nation has gotten the attention of some of our friends in government.

[City Official Pressured to Rescind Honolulu \(HI\) Condo Fire Sprinkler Law](#)

Dan Nakaso, The Honolulu Star-Advertiser

Condominium associations are lobbying Honolulu City Council Chair Tommy Waters to repeal a law that requires high-rise condos to install costly fire sprinkler systems, prompting Waters to seek input from the Waikiki Neighborhood Board. The mandate can cost condos millions of dollars, resulting in thousands of dollars in assessments for owners of individual units, and has triggered debates about fire safety versus finances, particularly for older residents living on fixed incomes. **Stricter rules, including the installation of fire sprinklers, were prompted by the July 2017 fire at the Marco Polo condominium that killed four people and caused more than \$107 million in damage. Marco Polo owners later voted to retrofit the 35-story building.**

"There is an ordinance requiring that your building have sprinklers," Waters told the Waikiki Neighborhood Board at its July 11 meeting. "There are still a lot of buildings without sprinklers. You can get around the sprinkler laws if you have a building and life safety evaluation.

"These things are very, very expensive. People can't pass them. AOA (association of apartment owners) lobbyists have asked me to repeal that law. So I want to hear from the residents themselves on whether or not they want it repealed. That's a big deal."

Waters did not respond to Honolulu Star-Advertiser requests for further comment. He previously referred to the complex and costly issues facing condos and individual owners in a 2022 email to the Star-Advertiser.

"The fire sprinkler requirements have proven to be very costly and, in some cases, unaffordable for residents in older buildings," he wrote. "Safety is of utmost importance, and we need to determine how to ensure safer buildings at affordable prices. This is why I am committed to working with stakeholders like the Honolulu Fire Department and the Hawai'i Council of Associations of Apartment Owners to determine the best path forward. All options are on the table, and my hope is that we can find a workable solution."

The Honolulu Fire Department said in a statement Wednesday, "The HFD understands the Life Safety Evaluation is costly. We also know the cost of a life is immeasurable and it is the HFD's mission to continuously advocate for fire safety systems that can prevent the loss of life and property."

"Fire sprinklers help save lives because they are the first line of defense against fires. When fire sprinklers are present, fires are kept to the room of origin 97% of the time. Homes with fire sprinklers result in an 81% lower death rate than in homes without them. Sprinklers reduce the heat, flames, and smoke produced in a fire and sprinklers allow people with more time to escape. ***Fire sprinklers buy time, and time can be the difference between life and death.***"

Other than getting government financial support, options for condo owners appear limited, said Melissa Filek, a real estate broker who owns five condo units and serves on the Waikiki Neighborhood Board and the board of directors of the Waikiki Grand Hotel and is secretary of the board of directors at the Crescent Park Waikiki condo.

Two of her condos are in buildings without sprinklers and the residents are trying to figure out how to proceed and how much it will cost them.

It's nearly impossible to pass a fire and life safety evaluation without a sprinkler system—and nearly as expensive to make other changes to avoid installing sprinklers, Filek said.

"You get a score based on what you have and don't have," she said. "It's virtually impossible to pass without fire sprinklers and it's a lot of money just for the inspection. I don't know anybody that's been able to opt out of it."

Asked what she'll do if the owners vote to install sprinklers—which Filek said could run from \$1 million to \$6 million—she said she'll have to consider the cost of her own assessments.

"I'm on the fence to be honest," she said.

Speaking as a real estate broker, Filek said potential condo buyers would want the assessment paid off since mortgage rates remain high and the options to buy something else that already includes fire sprinklers are sparse.

Finances are even more dire for older condo owners in Hawaii, which has a rapidly growing population of residents age 65 and older, many of whom are on a fixed income, said Jeff Merz, who works as an urban planner and also serves on the Waikiki Neighborhood Board.

Merz lives in The Windsor Waikiki condominium building, which had sprinklers installed 20 years ago.

At the age of 57, Merz said that paying for an assessment today would be difficult, "and I'm working full time and it would be a strain for me."

"That said, everyone agrees that if we can increase safety that's a good thing," he said.

Rolf Nordahl, board president of the 10-story, 178-unit Waikiki Grand Hotel, also was board president when the 63-year-old building installed sprinklers in 1986 at a cost of just under \$1 million.

Although it qualifies as a hotel, 15 units are owner-occupied, like the one owned by Nordahl, 78. The rest are used as vacation rentals.

There were subsequent kitchen fires in two units that were extinguished by sprinklers.

The first caused sprinklers to gush with 100 gallons of water a minute (how about 16gpm!!) that quickly poured down the stairwell and flooded the lobby four stories below. The second caused less water damage because the staff had learned how to turn off water to individual floors.

"I've lived here 38 years and we've had two fires," Nordahl said. "In both cases the water was considerably more trouble than the fire." ***[the dumb ass, that's because the fire didn't grow, it was extinguished!!!, what an ignorant statement]*** Just installing the sprinklers proved a challenge.

"It was quite a disturbance," Nordahl said.

And a handful of unit owners did not respond to requests for permission to enter to install overhead sprinklers, Nordahl said.

"So we actually had to break in with police and install the sprinklers," he said.

The project was so controversial that once the sprinklers were in place, Nordahl said, "the following year the owners organized and threw me out and threw out the whole board. ... The challenge today remains the great expense of retrofitting."

[Help The Code Council Pass The Pro Codes Act](#)

Help the Code Council pass the Pro Codes Act with outreach to some key Members of Congress The development of top-quality safety codes is being undermined by court decisions that have enabled for-profit companies to sell unpermitted and erroneous copies of these codes. To ensure code developers like the International Code Council can continue to invest in the future, ICC's Government Relations staff will soon seek assistance from Chapters, ICC members and key stake holders to support the Protecting and Enhancing Public Access to Codes Act, or Pro Codes Act. This bill, which has received bipartisan support, ensures America's standards developing organizations (SDOs) that make their codes viewable for free online retain the copyright for codes that governments use by incorporating them by reference into law. If passed, this legislation will help to preserve the cost-effective, public-private partnership through which the private sector develops up-to-date safety codes that are vetted and utilized by public officials for the American people. These vitally important copyright protections have been challenged in recent years by for-profit companies selling unpermitted and erroneous copies of codes and standards carefully developed by various SDOs. Thank you in advance for your help!

INTERESTING INDUSTRY NEWS

[MES Announces Expansion of Fire Apparatus Division and Strategic Partnership with HME Ahrens-Fox](#)

Municipal Emergency Services, Inc. (MES) announces the significant expansion of its Fire Apparatus Division, underscoring our commitment to delivering solutions to fire departments across the nation. In addition to our existing

Fire Apparatus offerings, MES has formalized a Sales Representative Agreement with leading fire apparatus manufacturer, HME Ahrens-Fox. This strategic partnership paves the way for the exclusive distribution of two custom pumper products via MES's extensive and highly-skilled sales network.

In response to the escalating demand for reliable fire apparatus, MES has preemptively secured production slots beginning in 2024. This move guarantees a steady stream of rapid delivery apparatus to fire departments seeking timely replacement pumpers. This initiative is designed to mitigate the protracted lead times that have become the industry norm, providing expedited and efficient solutions to fire departments nationwide.

In order to spearhead this expansion, MES introduces Bill Doebler (former KME Sales Rep) in the role of Senior Vice President of Apparatus. Bringing with him over three decades of notable experience in leadership positions within several fire apparatus manufacturing companies, Doebler's expertise will allow for the rapid expansion of MES's Apparatus business. In addition, Bill has a rich history in firefighting, serving as a volunteer firefighter for 20 years in upstate New York and reaching the position of Assistant Fire Chief. His knowledge and insight will be critical for driving MES's apparatus business growth and meeting the needs of fire departments nationwide.

THE LIGHTER SIDE!

I grew up with Bob Hope, Steve Jobs, and Johnny Cash. Now there's no jobs, no cash, and no hope. Please don't let anything happen to Kevin Bacon.

OFFICERS OF THE CAPITAL AREA ASSOCIATION OF FIRE DISTRICTS

2023 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President: Tom Rinaldi, Commissioner Stillwater/Saratoga

1st VP: John Meehan, Commissioner West Crescent/Saratoga

2nd VP: Art Hunsinger, Commissioner Clifton Park Halfmoon/Saratoga

Board of Directors: Les Bonesteel Commissioner Burnt Hills/Saratoga, Tom Wood Commissioner Northumberland/Saratoga, Joyce Petkus Treasurer Greenfield/Saratoga, Ed Woehrle Commissioner Niskayuna #1/Schenectady and Mike Podolec Commissioner West Glenville/Schenectady

Secretary: Vacancy

Treasurer: Tony Hill

Sargent at Arms: Tom Wood

Chaplain: Fred Richards

Legal Council: Greg Serio

The Capital Area Association represents fire district officials from the fire districts in Albany, Schenectady, Rensselaer, Warren, Washington, Saratoga, Fulton and Montgomery Counties

Fire District Officials include Commissioners, Treasurers, and Deputy Treasurers

Secretaries and Chiefs are also invited to participate!

The Capital Area Association wants to take this opportunity to thank all the Fire Districts who continue to support the local Capital Area Association as members for 2023.

Please advise your secretaries that all correspondence go to the Capital Area Association Mailing Address at:

AFDCA PO Box 242 East Schodack, NY 12063

[EMAIL TREASURER: CFDATREASURER@GMAIL.COM](mailto:CFDATREASURER@GMAIL.COM)

[518-407-5020](tel:518-407-5020)

FIRE DISTRICT RESOURCES - -THE BACK PAGE - - FOR YOU TO FOLLOW UP!

What are the duties and responsibilities of a Commissioner?

The Answer is posted on our web site at www.AFDCA.org

Vital Statistics on the State Association Regions – the break out is on our web site.

CAPITAL AREA BUSINESS PARTNER'S

PLEASE SUPPORT THOSE WHO SUPPORT US!!

Business Partner Applications Available At: WWW.AFDCA.ORG

[Welcome Back all of our Business Partners for 2023](#)

We invite our business partners to submit educational information to be included in this Bulletin for district commissioners and chief officers

Write me at tom@rinaldi1.com

Please Support Those Who Support Us!!

If you have information on new products you wish to showcase or is educational and informative for fire districts, please submit it and we will use it in this Bulletin under the appropriate heading.

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Jack Clark, Fire District Attorney
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 Alan W. Clink, CPA aclink@mmb-co.com
 Heather R. Lewis, CPA hlewis@mmb-co.com

The Capital Bulletin is reaching well over 400+ fire district members and now other members of the fire service on a regular basis. Since the Capital Area Association covers an area the size of Connecticut it is difficult to meet in person to exchange information and ideas.

This is a service of the Capital Area Association through the effort of Tom Rinaldi who can be reached at tom@rinaldi1.com for comments or content contributions are always welcome.

You Can Become a Member of the Capital Area Association!

The Capital Area Association has voted to amend its By-laws to allow both individual and regional or county Fire District Associations to join. The updated By-laws are posted to the AFDCA.org website.

Individual membership fee will be \$50 annually, fire district association fees will be \$300 annually.

Download THE APPLICATION HERE: <https://afdca.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/2022-Application.doc>

Benefits of membership include meeting attendance, receiving the Bulletin, access to legal advice

MEMBERSHIP IN THE CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION (CAFDA)

Would you like to join Capital Area Fire Districts Association along with 75 members in 8 counties? Individuals, fire district associations, fire protection districts and Village departments are all eligible for membership.

Annual dues (January 1st to December 31st) shall be as follows and shall be based on the annual budget of the Fire District/Organization;

\$0 to \$200,000: \$50

\$200,001 to \$400,000: \$100

\$400,001 to \$600,000: \$200

\$600,001 plus: \$300

Individuals \$50.00 and Other Associations \$300 annually.

Business Partners: \$100.00 annual member fee

CAFDA UPCOMING TRAINING AND MEETING CALENDAR NEXT PAGE



The following calendar, while tentative, provides our members and participants some insight into the planned activities to be provided locally to our membership and other fire district participants for '23, '24 and '25. We hope you will join us on this journey to provide reasonably priced, quality training in a local setting for your convenience.



For General Membership meetings food is served 1 hour prior to the start time of the meeting, usually 6pm.

Capital Area Meetings/Seminars/Trainings/Conference Dates (Subject to Change & Updated 7/14/2023)				
Day/Date	Time	Type	Location	Notes
2023				
AUGUST				
NO MEETING				
Friday, August 11, 2023	TBD	Membership Activity	Saratoga Race Course	NYRA Day at the Races!
Tuesday, September 12, 2023	6:00 PM	PESH vs. NFPA Seminar	DeCrescente	Mechanicville
Thursday, September 14, 2023	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	
Tuesday, September 19, 2023	6:00 PM	Secretary Training	DeCrescente	Mechanicville
Thursday, October 12, 2023	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	Officers/Director Nominations
Saturday, November 4, 2023	8:00 AM	Fall Workshop	Verdoy FD	
Thursday, November 9, 2023	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	Officer/Director Elections
DECEMBER				
NO MEETING				
2024				
Saturday, January 6, 2024	9:00 AM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	Organizational/Morning Meeting
Saturday, February 3, 2024	8:00 AM	Commissioner Training	Averill Park	Snowdate - Sunday, February 4, 2024
Thursday, February 8, 2024	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	
Thursday, February 29, 2024	8:00 AM	It's Not YOUR Money!	Halfmoon Fire District	
Friday, March 1, 2024	8:00 AM	Financial Trng. w/OSC		
Saturday, March 2, 2024	8:00 AM	Commissioner Training	Halfmoon FD	Snowdate - Sunday, March 3, 2024
Thursday, March 7, 2024	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	
Saturday, March 9, 2024	6:00 PM	Officer Installation	TBD	
Saturday, March 23, 2024	8:00 AM	Commissioner Training	Berkshire FD	Snowdate - Sunday, March 24, 2024
Saturday, April 6, 2024	8:00 AM	Commissioner Training	Warrensburg FD	Snowdate - Sunday, April 7, 2024
Thursday, May 9, 2024	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	
Thursday, June 6, 2024	7:00 PM	Board of Directors Meeting	Clifton Park	
JULY				
NO MEETING				
AUGUST				
NO MEETING				
Thursday, September 12, 2024	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	
Thursday, October 10, 2024	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	Officers/Director Nominations
Thursday, November 7, 2024	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	Officer/Director Elections
Saturday, November 9, 2024	8:00 AM	Fall Workshop	TBD	
DECEMBER				
NO MEETING				
2025				
Saturday, January 4, 2025	9:00 AM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	Organizational/Morning Meeting

[CLICK ON PDF TO OPEN FIRE DISTRICT BUDGET SCHEDULE](#)

There was previous difficulty in opening this document, it should be corrected.

Click on this link, or go to our website at afdca.org

<https://afdca.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Fire-District-Budget-Schedule.pdf>

[CLICK ON PDF TO OPEN FIRE DISTRICT ELECTION SCHEDULE](#)

There was previous difficulty in opening this document, it should be corrected.

Click on this link, or go to our website at afdca.org

<https://afdca.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Fire-District-Elections-Schedule-2023.pdf>

Also Both are Available on the legacy CAFDA Web Site at:

<https://afdca.org/fire-district-budget-schedule-and-fire-district-election-schedule/>

Capital Area Fire Districts Association

CAFDA

Presents

PESH vs NFPA Myth vs Fact



Date: Tuesday, September 12 th

Time: 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Location:

**DeCrescente Distributing Co.
211 North Main Street
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Speaker: Jennifer Puerner

NYS Public Employees
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- What Training is required?
- What standards apply?
- What needs to be done annually, or not?
- What mandates are actually real?
- What records do we need to keep and for how long?
- How long is turn out gear good for?
- Bailout system requirements
- And everything else that sometimes become the rules



POLICIES
COMPLIANCE
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RULES
LAW
REGULATIONS
REQUIREMENTS
STANDARDS

CAFDA Training Seminar for **Fire District Secretaries**

Whether you are a seasoned Fire District Secretary or new to the job, there is something for everyone in this seminar. Join Joyce as she takes you through the life of the Fire District Secretary, and let's share information, ideas, tips and tricks on how to make our jobs easier.

This class is not just for Fire District Secretaries...Commissioners are also encourage to attend to get a better understanding of the duties and responsibilities of your secretaries!

Date: Tuesday, September 19th

Time: 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Location: DeCrescente Distributing Ctr.
211 N. Main Street
Mechanicville NY
(across from Price Chopper)

Presenter: Joyce Petkus, Director,
Capital Area Fire Districts Association,
District Administrator, Secretary, and
Treasurer Greenfield Fire District,
Saratoga County.

Fee: CAFDA Members \$10

Non Members \$20

Please make checks payable to
CAFDA
PO Box 424
East Schodack, NY 12063

Limited Seating: reserve your seat by
emailing us at CAAOFD@gmail.com
Reserve by **September 12, 2023**

**Capital Area
Fire Districts
Association**

