



CAPITAL SHORTS:

- There will be **NO BULLETIN ON NOVEMBER 22**, it is going to be a medically busy and stressful week for me, we will continue the following week. **HAVE A WONDERFUL AND PEACEFUL THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY.**
- **TO OUR VETERAN MEMBERS, THANK YOU FOR YOUR UNWAVERING DEDICATION TO SERVICE TO YOUR COMMUNITY AND COUNTRY.**
- The fire district election schedule are posted to the web site at www.CAFDA.net
- At the October meeting the attendees nominated the following for 2026; President Tom Rinaldi, Vice President Ellen Martin, Directors: Les Bonesteel, Joyce Petkus, Skip Smith, Art Hunsinger and Ed Woehrle. At the November

meeting the members present elected the 2026 Officers who are listed above.

- LODD and civilian fire death data are unavailable this week due to the continued disfunction in Washington!!

LEARN WITH CAFDA – OUR EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

WWW.CAFDA.NET

1. **NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING** *Saturday, January 3rd and will feature a breakfast buffet. Officer/Director installation will take place at this meeting. Please join us.*

ZOOM LINK FOR THE January MEETING: will be published at a later date.

2. **CAFDA IS HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE THE DATES FOR CONFERENCE '26 IN HISTORIC LAKE GEORGE,**
April 9th, 10th and 11th, 2026 plan on joining us.

3. **CAFDA will be offering two Fire Service Financial training 2 day sessions in 2026**

At Rombout Fire Department, Fishkill, Dutchess County on March 13th & 14th and at McNeil Insurance in Cortland, Cortland County at on March 27th & 28th. Training is provided by trainers from the Office of the State Comptroller. Continental Breakfast and Lunch will be included.

REGISTRATION IS OPEN FOR FINANCIAL TRAINING ON-LINE AT CAFDA.NET

4. **Commissioner Training will be held at 6 locations in 2026 including:** Averill Park February 7th, Verdoy February 21st, Clifton Park March 7th, Niagara Engine Co #6 in Schoharie March 21st, Berkshire Fire District, Gloversville March 28th and Warrensburg Fire District April 4th. The Day after the scheduled dates has been reserved as a snow day if necessary. Open to all newly elected commissioners and Chiefs. This training is required under Town Law Section 176-e. \$85 for members, \$95 for non-members includes continental breakfast and lunch.

REGISTRATION IS OPEN FOR COMMISSIONER TRAINING ON-LINE AT CAFDA.NET

All correspondence & Capital Area Fire Districts Association Mailing Address should be directed to:

CAFDA PO Box 242 East Schodack, NY 12063 or EMAIL: SECRETARY@CAFDA.NET

Financial issues should be addressed to: TREASURER@CAFDA.NET

WHEN YOU SEE ** IT'S A RECOMMENDED READ, TAKE THE TIME TO INFORM YOURSELF!!

THE LATEST FROM THE STATE CAPITAL

Several fire service-related bills are yet to be signed by the Governor

Are You PESH Prepared?

Fire Departments **must** keep a "Log and Summary of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses" even if the number is zero. They must post **the Summary page (OSHA Form 300A), as required by OSHA**, in the workplace on February 1. **They must keep the Summary posted for three months.** Forms are available at: <https://www.osha.gov/recordkeeping/forms>

THE LATEST FROM WASHINGTON

About CFSI

Whether you are a member of the fire and emergency services, a public safety coalition, or the fire service industry, the United States Congress is more aware of your concerns because of the Congressional Fire Services Institute (CFSI). Established in 1989 as a nonprofit, nonpartisan policy institute, CFSI is designed to educate members of Congress about the needs and challenges of our nation's fire and emergency services to help them understand how the federal government can support the needs of our local first responders.

About The NVFC

The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) is the leading nonprofit membership association representing the interests of the volunteer fire, EMS, and rescue services. The NVFC serves as the voice of the volunteer in the national arena and provides critical resources, programs, education, and advocacy for first responders across the nation.

Our Vision

The NVFC strengthens volunteer and combination fire and emergency medical services to advance excellence, ensure safer communities, and enhance the quality of life across America.

Our Mission

The NVFC unites and supports volunteer and combination fire and EMS organizations through education, advocacy, leadership development, and collaboration. Guided by professionalism and innovation, we provide the tools and resources needed to protect communities, advance responder health and safety, and prepare leaders for the future.

What We Do

The NVFC accomplishes its mission and provides meaningful support to fire and EMS organizations through a wide range of services and programs:

- [Representing](#) the interests of the volunteer fire, emergency medical, and rescue services at the U.S. Congress, federal agencies, and national standards setting committees
- Focusing on [health](#) and [safety](#)
- Helping departments recruit and retain [Fire Service](#) and [EMS/Rescue](#) personnel
- Providing [training](#) on topics that matter to you
- Assisting departments in establishing [support programs](#)
- Fostering the [next generation of firefighters](#)
- Offering an [array of programs](#) to support the volunteer emergency services

FIRE DISTRICT FINANCES

Local Government and School Accountability Contact Information:

Phone: (518) 474-4037; Email: localgov@osc.ny.gov

Address: Office of the State Comptroller, Division of Local Government and School Accountability

Defined Benefit LOSAP Plan or Defined Contribution LOSAP Plan – That is the Question

Bruce Linger

A Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP) is a plan that provides tax-deferred income benefits to active volunteer members of an emergency service organization, such as a fire, EMS, or rescue department. Essentially, this is a way a department can provide a retirement benefit to its members, which both rewards longtime volunteers as well as can serve as a recruitment and retention incentive. The longer a volunteer serves, the bigger their LOSAP benefit will be.

The tax-deferred income benefits for emergency services volunteers come from contributions made solely by the governing body of the municipality or fire district – also known as a plan sponsor – on behalf of those volunteers who meet the criteria of a plan created by that governing body.

Now for the hard question: Should the LOSAP plan sponsor choose a Defined Benefit Plan or Defined Contribution Plan? The real issue is sustainability.

A Defined Benefit LOSAP Plan is what it sounds like – it defines the benefit that will be received at the end of a working period. The risk of the benefit is the responsibility of the plan sponsor. The annual contribution to the LOSAP is typically based on multiple factors, including the promised benefit amount, how long the benefit will last, when the benefit will begin, years of bona-fide service, interest rates and investment performance, annual funding requirements, and sometimes more. All of this needs to be annually reviewed and determined by an actuary. This type of plan has been favored by participants in the past due to the “specified monthly benefit” concept. However, over recent years it has become increasingly difficult for the plan sponsors to maintain these plans because of rising costs and longevity of the participants.

Alternatively, with a Defined Contribution LOSAP Plan the plan sponsor makes an annual LOSAP contribution to the participant’s account. The participant is responsible for the investment choice and eventual outcome – this is where this risk has been shifted.

The challenge facing fire departments and other emergency service organizations is to obtain a balance between offering a retirement benefit and the ability to keep the funding available to sustain the retirement program in the long run. Each year the commissioners or LOSAP trustees receive a report on their LOSAP Defined Benefit Plans. The report entails a percentage-funding requirement and a projected shortfall and funding obligation to make the plan financially sound. The commissioners have a fiduciary and moral obligation to address any issues for all members of the plan. The main question is how to meet the obligation without taking too much investment risk (i.e., how the funds are invested) while maintaining the promised benefit. That said, there are emergency service organizations that are adequately funded and have the assets to meet the obligations.

The trend has been to move existing plans to the Defined Contribution model – which by all means is not a complete solution and has its own set risks. What the Defined Contribution Plan *does* do is control the annual funding requirement issue as there is an annual limit that is allowed for annual per participant funding (\$6,000), but now the potential investment return has been placed on the shoulders of the participants. This can be mitigated in most cases with simplified investment models based on the participant’s appetite for risk. But the risk is clearly on the participant.

In the end, decisions need to be made for the good of the whole and sustainability of the organization. Using dollar cost averaging does not ensure a profit and does not protect against loss in a declining market. Also,

using this investment method involves continuous investment in securities regardless of fluctuating price levels of securities. Therefore, an investor should consider his/her financial ability to continue purchasing through periods of low-price levels.

NYS OSC Audits of Fire Service Entities

SERVEN VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY – BOARD OVERSIGHT

BACKGROUND

The Company is a not-for-profit organization, incorporated in 1950, and is one of two companies affiliated with the District Fire Department, which provides fire protection and emergency services in portions of the Towns of Fayette and Waterloo in Seneca County.

The Company is composed of volunteer members and is governed by its adopted bylaws and the seven-member Board. The President is the Company's chief executive officer, and the Treasurer is the chief fiscal officer. The Treasurer is responsible for receiving, maintaining custody of, disbursing and accounting for the Company's financial assets and providing the Board and membership with monthly and annual reports. The Company's primary sources of revenue include District rent, hall rentals and fundraising proceeds.

The former Treasurer resigned/retired on January 1, 2020.

AUDIT OBJECTIVE

Determine whether the Serven Volunteer Fire Company, Inc. (Company) Board of Directors (Board) provided adequate oversight of Company operations to ensure financial activities were properly recorded and reported and resources were adequately safeguarded.

KEY FINDINGS

The Board did not ensure financial activities were properly recorded and reported and resources were adequately safeguarded, which increased the risk that errors or irregularities could occur and remain undetected and uncorrected.

THE BOARD DID NOT:

- Ensure that the bylaws were adequate or enforce their limited financial provisions,
- Establish supplemental financial policies or procedures,
- Conduct a thorough audit of bills, or
- Conduct an annual audit of the Treasurer's books and records.

THE TREASURER DID NOT:

- Solely receive and deposit all money as required and allowed a member to handle hall rental revenue.
- Properly record all financial transactions, or
- Prepare required annual reports.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The report includes 12 recommendations that, if implemented, will help improve the Board's oversight of financial operations.

The former Border City Fire District (District) Department Chief (Chief), who was also a Director of the Border City Hose Company (Hose Company), was arrested on charges of grand larceny for allegedly stealing from the Hose Company. In July 2024, the former Chief pleaded guilty to misapplication of property (an A misdemeanor) and was ordered to pay full restitution of \$18,772.53.

READ THE COMPLETE AUDIT REPORT HERE:

<https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/local-government/audits/2025/pdf/serven-volunteer-fire-company-2024-97.pdf>

BORDER CITY FIRE DISTRICT – BOARD OVERSIGHT

BACKGROUND

The District provides fire protection and emergency services to portions of the Towns of Fayette and Waterloo in Seneca County. District fire trucks and equipment were housed at two fire stations within the District, which are owned by the Border City Hose Company and Serven Volunteer Fire Company. The elected five-member

Board is responsible for the general management and control of the District's financial operations and safeguarding its resources.

The Board-appointed Treasurer is the District's chief fiscal officer and responsible for receiving, disbursing and accounting for District funds and preparing monthly and annual financial reports. A Deputy Treasurer assisted the Treasurer with some of those duties. In March 2019, the Board replaced the former Treasurer with the current Treasurer who previously left the position in 2015. The Chief is responsible for overseeing all members of the two companies and use of the District's apparatus and equipment for the prevention or extinguishment of fires.

AUDIT OBJECTIVE

Determine whether the Border City Fire District (District) Board of Fire Commissioners (Board) provided adequate oversight of the District's financial operations.

KEY FINDINGS

The Board did not provide adequate oversight of the District's financial operations. As a result, the former District Fire Department Chief (Chief), who was also a Director of the Border City Hose Company (Company), entered into an unauthorized contract with a private corporation (Corporation) and kept an unauthorized bank account into which he inappropriately deposited and withdrew District money. In addition, the Board did not ensure all goods and services were procured in compliance with New York State General Municipal Law (GML), District policies or in the best interest of taxpayers.

The Board also did not:

- **Oversee the Chief.**
- Ensure the Treasurer received, accounted for and dispersed all District money.
- Annually audit the Treasurer's records and reports.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The report includes nine recommendations that, if implemented, will improve the District's Board oversight. The former Chief was arrested on charges of grand larceny for allegedly stealing from the Company. In July 2024, the former Chief pleaded guilty to misapplication of property (an A misdemeanor) and was ordered to pay full restitution of \$18,772.53.

READ THE FULL AUDIT REPORT HERE:

<https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/local-government/audits/2025/pdf/border-city-fire-district-2024-137.pdf>

BORDER CITY HOSE COMPANY – FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT

BACKGROUND

The Company is a not-for-profit organization incorporated in 1911 and is one of two companies affiliated with the District Fire Department. The Company provides fire protection and emergency services in portions of the Towns of Waterloo and Fayette in Seneca County.

The Company is composed of volunteer members and is governed by its articles of incorporation, adopted bylaws and member-elected officers. The officers of the Company include a President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and two Directors. The President is responsible for general supervision and administration of the Company. The Treasurer is responsible for the receipt, custody, disbursing of and accounting for all Company money and preparing financial reports. The Directors are responsible for examining bills presented for payment and reviewing the Treasurer's records on a quarterly basis. The Company's primary revenue sources are rent received from the District, hall rentals and fundraising proceeds.

AUDIT OBJECTIVE

Determine whether Border City Hose Company Inc. (Company) officers provided adequate oversight of Company operations to ensure financial activities were properly recorded and reported and that resources were adequately safeguarded.

KEY FINDINGS

Company officers did not provide oversight of Company financial operations by performing even the limited oversight responsibilities outlined in the Company's bylaws. *Instead, certain officers hindered the Treasurer's ability to perform his fiscal responsibilities by designating themselves as recipients and custodians of most Company money. As a result, Company money was not always properly accounted for, and a Director, who was*

also the Border City Fire District (District) Fire Department Chief (Director/Chief), inappropriately used Company funds for his personal benefit.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The report includes 13 recommendations that, if implemented, will improve the Company's financial management.

The former Director/Chief was arrested on charges of grand larceny for allegedly stealing from the Company. In July 2024, the former Director/Chief pleaded guilty to misapplication of property (an A misdemeanor) and was ordered to pay full restitution of \$18,772.53.

The Company reorganized as a social club in 2024; therefore, there was no official response to this audit.

READ THE FULL AUDIT REPORT HERE:

<https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/local-government/audits/2025/pdf/border-city-hose-company-2025-39.pdf>

HENDERSON FIRE DISTRICT – FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

AUDIT OBJECTIVE

Did the Henderson Fire District (District) Board of Commissioners (Board) adequately monitor financial activities and ensure the Treasurer maintained appropriate records and reports?

AUDIT PERIOD

January 1, 2023 – February 27, 2025

We extended the audit period to review the District's 2019 through 2024 Annual Financial Report (AFR) filings as of August 20, 2025.

UNDERSTANDING THE AUDIT AREA

Henderson is a town in Jefferson County, New York. To help ensure the District's financial resources are properly safeguarded, the Board should ensure accurate accounting records are maintained to capture all transactions and monitor financial activities by reviewing bank reconciliations and financial reports, auditing and approving claims prior to payment and conducting annual audits of the Treasurer's records and reports.

The District's five-member Board is responsible for the general management and control of the District's financial activities. The Treasurer serves as the District's chief fiscal officer and is responsible for receiving and disbursing District funds, maintaining accurate financial records and providing periodic financial reports to the Board.

As of December 31, 2023, the District had four bank accounts with combined cash balances totaling \$826,257.

The District's Board-adopted 2024 budget was \$358,332 and primarily funded by real property taxes.

AUDIT SUMMARY

The Board did not adequately monitor financial activities or ensure the Treasurer maintained appropriate records and reports. The Board's lack of monitoring the Treasurer's financial activities and conducting an annual audit of the Treasurer's financial records impacted the Board's ability to identify inaccurate accounting records and reports and address deficiencies sooner to ensure it receives reliable information to make informed decisions for the District. In addition, a lack of adequate oversight and monitoring increases the risk of incomplete and inaccurate records and that funds could be lost or misappropriated without detection.

We determined the following:

- The Treasurer did not prepare accurate and timely bank reconciliations for the general fund checking account (checking account). After learning of our audit, the Treasurer prepared bank reconciliations for the checking account from January 2023 through March 2024. The Treasurer identified transactions that were not recorded, including 11 journal entries totaling \$4,986 and four deposits totaling \$1,952, for electronic payroll withdrawals, payroll wages and payroll taxes. Additionally, the Treasurer did not reconcile the three interest-bearing savings and money market accounts (interest-bearing accounts). As of December 31, 2023, the District had \$170,684 (29 percent) more in these bank accounts than was reflected in the accounting records.
- The Treasurer's accounting records included various unrecorded transactions and recording errors. For example, 10 disbursements totaling \$21,925 were posted to incorrect accounts and five collections totaling \$6,115 were deposited in a District bank account between August 2024 and October 2024 but not recorded in the accounting records.

- The Treasurer did not provide the Board with a detailed listing of all funds received and disbursed during the month or balance sheet reports. Additionally, the Treasurer began providing budget-to-actual reports to the Board in March 2024. We determined that the reports provided to the Board included several inaccuracies. For example, the June 2024 budget-to-actual report included \$4,560 in project design expenditures, but the accounting records indicated that \$11,205 had been expended.
- The Treasurer did not file AFRs with the New York State Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) for 2019 through 2024. As of August 20, 2025, the outstanding AFRs were between 171 and 1,998 days late.
- The Board did not ensure that an annual audit of the Treasurer’s records was performed. The last audit of the Treasurer’s records was in 2019 when an external audit was last conducted.
- The Board did not ensure all claims were properly approved prior to payment and adequately supported. For example, 40 claims totaling \$41,749 were improperly paid prior to Board approval, including claims for boat repairs, various credit card purchases (e.g., office supplies and a printer), entry and truck bay doors, and fire pumper equipment.
- Community room rental cash collections and cash donations totaling \$1,062 were not remitted to the Treasurer for deposit or recorded in the Treasurer’s accounting records.

The report includes 28 recommendations that, if implemented, will improve the District’s financial operations. District officials agreed with our recommendations and have initiated or indicated they planned to initiate corrective action and their response is included in Appendix B.

THE COMPLETE AUDIT REPORT CAN BE REVIEWED HERE:

<https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/local-government/audits/2025/pdf/henderson-fire-district-2025-67.pdf>

STEP INTO THE CHIEF’S OFFICE

The Quiet Power Move That Sets Great Fire Officers Apart

Luigi Davoli

When thinking about effective leaders in high-performing, high-stress professions, we often picture someone who naturally commands respect and authority, and whose accomplishments inspire greatness from the lower ranks. Yet, authentic leadership does not manifest through accolades or the tallying of personal accomplishments. Instead, true leadership thrives in humility — in the belief that success has a thousand mothers. For these leaders, accomplishments belong to the team and not to the individual.

HUMILITY: THE FOUNDATION OF FIRE SERVICE LEADERSHIP

For some, the word “humble” evokes thoughts of someone who is timid, perhaps generally unwilling to take charge, but this idea could not be further from the truth. There is strength in humility, in being confident enough to admit that you don’t have all the answers. It’s the ability to acknowledge that, no matter how experienced or decorated you become, you will always depend on the team. Humble leaders do not see themselves as the great hero; they know success comes from the collective effort of the crew — on the fireground and beyond. Bottom line: The humble fire service officer seeks input, asks questions and admits their mistakes.

In their book, “[The Dichotomy of Leadership](#),” Jocko Willink and Leif Babin assert that “humility is essential to building strong relationships with others, both up and down the chain of command, as well as supporting teams outside the immediate chain of command.” In this way, humility builds trust, which leads to respect.

For example, a humble fire officer at the scene of a house fire would never assume their plan is flawless. They will listen to the reports from the crews that are situated in established tactical positions. The same type of thinking applies to a chief officer seeking to implement a new administrative strategy. Eliciting input from those closest to the problem will enable better performance and smoother implementation. By valuing input from all directions, the humble leader reinforces the idea the team is responsible for producing the successful outcome.

SUCCESS BELONGS TO THE TEAM

The fire service is structured by rank and title in a defined chain of command. At the same time, it’s a profession deeply rooted in teamwork. While structure and titles are important, trust and cohesion matter more. The

officer may be the one directing the operation; however, if the crew lacks confidence in the officer, those orders don't carry much weight.

Leadership is not about showcasing individual brilliance but about creating an environment where every person can succeed. In Frank Viscuso's book, "[Step Up and Lead](#)," he writes, "The success of an organization depends very much on a leader's ability to inspire." The humble leader recognizes the role is less about being in the spotlight and more about directing that light onto others; their role is to empower, guide and support the team to success.

After a successful response, it can be tempting to take the credit. After all, your decisions and strategies contributed to the incident's successful outcome. It's important to resist this urge. Instead, choose to demonstrate humility and acknowledge the team's efforts in achieving overall success.

Remember, no one can extinguish a fire alone. A well-coordinated fire attack on a burning building is the result of a well-coordinated effort by the team, from the well-placed ladder, the swiftly stretched hoseline, the safety officer providing feedback on ever-changing hazardous conditions and the incident commander quarterbacking the entire operation. Each piece is interdependent and crucial to the overall success of the incident. The IC may have provided direction, but the execution lies in the many, well-capable hands of the crews on scene.

Furthermore, it's not just about giving credit where it's due, although acknowledging the work of your crews boosts their morale and fosters a sense of ownership of their actions. Members will feel trusted and appreciated for their efforts and, as a result, will be repeatedly motivated to go the extra mile, not for approval but because they feel vital to the mission. The same applies when developing and implementing a strategy or program. The strategic vision may originate from one individual, but the collective is responsible for executing the strategy, identifying gaps and rolling it out to everyone.

A true fire service leader knows it's not about the title, medals or awards bestowed upon them; it's about the inspired legacy of development and trust they leave behind for those who remain to carry on.

The humble leader's refusal to claim personal credit will strengthen the entire organization.

LEADERS, SET THE HUMBLE EXAMPLE

Those at the top who exhibit humility in the fire service understand that their behavior sets the tone for the next generation of firefighters and fire service leaders. Officers are being closely monitored, particularly by junior members who are paying attention to how the officer speaks, their demeanor and how they handle success and failure. If the officer claims all achievements, it signals to the up-and-coming firefighters that self-promotion is acceptable. Conversely, when leaders consistently elevate the contributions of the team above their own, it teaches humility as a core value of the fire service.

Officers who make it a point to praise their crews after an incident are also promoting a culture of gratitude, such as a chief officer who gives credit to their team when receiving accolades from the commissioner, mayor or local city council. The fire department becomes an environment of support, respect and teamwork rather than self-promotion and ego.

BEWARE THE EGO MONSTER

In the book "[Extreme Ownership: How Navy SEALs Lead and Win](#)," also by Willink and Babin, they write, "When personal agendas become more important than the team and the overarching mission's success, performance suffers, and failure ensues."

Ego-driven leadership is especially dangerous in the fire service, both on the fireground and in the boardroom — a leader who views department accomplishments as their own overlooks and undervalues the contributions of the team. These kinds of leaders will eventually lose the trust of their team, erode morale and create a division in the department as wide as the Grand Canyon. Firefighters will eventually feel unappreciated or invisible, which could further fester into disengagement and resentment, creating a toxic work environment and the erosion of the department's culture. In high-risk situations, such as the fireground, even small cracks in trust can have life-or-death consequences.

Leaders who prioritize personal recognition are more likely to make decisions that serve their own reputation rather than the mission, leading to catastrophic consequences for the organization and for those caught in its wake. This is not leadership — it is recklessness that jeopardizes both the mission and the people entrusted to

carry it out. Humble leaders do not need or seek to prove themselves. They realize the job is not about *looking* good but about *doing* good. It's about leaving a legacy worth carrying forward.

A DAILY, EMBEDDED PRACTICE

Humility must be shown every day and throughout every aspect of the fire service, both on the fireground and back at the fire station.

When conflict arises, the humble leader seeks a resolution that does not cause further division. They realize they may not have all the answers or be the smartest person in the room on every topic. They will, however, seek and draw wisdom from those around them to find and solve concerns.

Additionally, humble leaders actively participate in training, showing that improvement is a lifelong endeavor, regardless of rank.

The humble leader also stays connected to the team, rolling up their sleeves to help wash the truck, grabbing a chair at the station kitchen table to share a meal, and showing genuine interest in the well-being of their team. Leadership, at its core, is about shared humanity.

These daily habits reinforce humility more powerfully than any formal leadership seminar could.

LEGACY: WHAT THE HUMBLE LEADER LEAVES BEHIND

The true measure of a leader is not what they accomplished over the course of their career, the number of awards they earned or the title they held, but rather how they left their agency. A leader who seeks to hoard all the recognition may leave behind more than just memories of an ego and destructiveness — they can leave behind a toxic work environment that demotivates and deflates members, stifling the long-term growth of the organization. On the flip side, when a humble fire service leader leaves, there is often a palpable void at the department, not because they have lost a star performer, but because the department has lost a servant who quietly sought to elevate the team. The greatest compliment a fire service leader can receive is not, “We could not have done it without you,” but rather, “We will continue doing it because of you.”

HOW HUMILITY SAVES LIVES

Humility is not a weakness; it is the foundation of effective leadership in the fire service. It enables leaders to set aside egos, lift the team and make decisions that focus on safety, trust and collective success. For the humble leader, every achievement stems from teamwork.

In a profession where lives depend on collaboration, humility ensures that leaders serve their crews and not themselves. The humble fire service leader may never seek recognition but will leave the fire service empowered and stronger. That is the greatest achievement of all.

STEP INTO THE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

When a petition for commissioner is complete does it have to be handed in by the person running for the position or can it be delivered by anyone?

Section 176 (7) of the Town Law only requires that either the letter or petition must be filed with the fire district secretary at least 20 days before the election , without indicating who must file the document.

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.

OUR CHANGING FIRE SERVICE –CHALLENGES & POSITIVE IDEAS. LEARNING FROM OTHERS

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

Iowa FFs Training on Emergency Vehicle Simulator

Johathan Miller

Firefighters with the Davenport Fire Department are training on an emergency vehicle training simulator on loan from the state of Iowa, [ourquadcities.com](https://www.ourquadcities.com) reported.

Fire apparatus drivers are put into real-world situations where they need to make a split-second decision, the report said. Through live repetition with the simulator, the hope is that better decisions will be made in the field.

The simulator can be set up for different weather conditions, like snow or rain to make the roads slick. It can produce daytime and nighttime scenarios. Vehicles and pedestrians can be put in intersections.

Davenport plans to put every firefighter in the department through the training for the month that they have the machine.

FIRE SERVICE CHALLENGES

Cornersville, TN, Fire Chief, All Members Quit

Susan Nicol

"I am tired of the constant struggle to provide the citizens of the Town of Cornersville with any form of adequate fire protection." Fire Chief Matt Fox wrote in his resignation letter.

"I am tired of the constant struggle to provide the citizens of the Town of Cornersville with any form of adequate fire protection."

That's what Cornersville Fire Chief Matt Fox wrote in a letter to town officials, announcing his resignation last week. But, he didn't leave alone. All the firefighters left with him.

"The amount of money I have spent out of my own pocket, the amount of time at my home doing administrative duties because we do not have an office space, and the amount of records I have stored at my home because of the lack of a secured space have taken a toll on myself and my family to the point where it is best we all step away," he wrote, according to WTVF.

County Commissioner Craig Blackwell said of the resignations: "These men and women risk their lives without pay. It's time we do more for them."

Since he took over in 2019, Fox said he's faced lack of support, limited resources and other burdens.

Another One Bites the Dust

Fire fully engulfs under-construction apartment complex in Utah

A large fire burned quickly through an apartment complex under construction in the Traverse Mountain Area of Lehi early Sunday. Flames from the fire could be seen for miles as it burned near Point of the Mountain on North Windscape Drive along Interstate 15. In total, three buildings in the "high-density" housing development were burned. They included two apartment buildings and a clubhouse.

James Wilson, the senior superintendent for Wood Partners' "Alta Vista" project, said there were going to be 304 apartments built. He said there is 24/7 security at the site and multiple cameras, and he's "at a loss" as to how it could have started.

"My security guard said he had just made a round around the building and there was absolutely nothing," Wilson said. "He got to the other end of the site, turned around and looked back, and he said he saw smoke and the flames starting." He added that there are no heat sources on the site. The buildings were at various stages of the framing process.

VERMONT WOMAN CHARGED FOR EMBEZZLING \$186,000 FROM VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

A Vermont woman who worked as the bookkeeper at the Tunbridge Volunteer Fire Department was arrested Wednesday for embezzling thousands of dollars from the department over a 10-year period.

The Vermont State Police say they started investigating Jacqueline Higgins in August. She had resigned as the department's bookkeeper earlier this year following an audit into its financial records.

The investigation and review of the department's records revealed \$186,000 had been taken between 1994 and 2025. Higgins was arrested and released with a citation to appear for arraignment in December.

[EDITOR'S NOLTE: THIS DEPARTMENT LISTS 15 MEMBERS INCLUDING OFFICERS!!]

RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT



Does your fire or EMS department need more volunteers? The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) is here to help! Use the FREE department portal from the NVFC's Make Me A Firefighter campaign to access tools and resources to help you find and keep volunteers.

Get started:

- Register for free at portal.nvfc.org.
- Post your volunteer opportunities so potential recruits can find and connect with your department at [MakeMeAFirefighter.org](https://www.makeamefirefighter.org).
- Customize recruitment materials with your department's details using the materials generator.
- Share your message with ready-to-use flyers, PSAs, social media content, and videos.
- Track your applicants and follow up with ease using the recruit tracking tool.

Plus, access additional resources to help with recruitment and retention, including:

- "What to Expect" Guide for the Families of New Recruits
- Volunteer Retention Research Report
- Volunteer Value Calculators
- Recruitment and Retention Guide
- Recruitment and Retention Online Training
- And Much More!

GET STARTED NOW AT THIS LINK:

<https://tracking.police1.com/t/9495565/187515077/7816037/1/1006865/?b44ed14b=YmY5NWQ4NzktNW RmOC00MWJkLTkzMDctNzg0Y2VhZTNjMzYy&x=1ee5e8f9>

****Fire Up Your Future: High School Firefighter Training and Recruitment**

Cary Thompson

I was 32 years old when I became a career firefighter. My only regret about going into the fire service is that I did not start it sooner in my life. I love being a firefighter and want to share my love for the fire service to the next generation of firefighters. I want to give the cadets the passion for this career as early in their lives as possible. That led to the creation of the high school firefighting program almost 14 years ago. The firefighting program at the William D. Ford Technical Career Center, in Westland, Michigan, *equips students with the skills, experience, and certifications to step directly into the fire service upon graduation*. Originally, the firefighting program was a career exploration class and did not lead to certification. Along the way we added Wayne County Community College Downriver as our college partner, and the Allen Park Fire Department as our fire cadet partner. I used the last 14 years to hone my skill of teaching. I had taught adults, but I had never taught high school aged students. *Being a firefighting instructor for adults is very different than instructing young adults. You have to have patience—lots and lots of patience. You must let students make mistakes and learn from their mistakes. It is sometimes difficult to watch. You want to step up and help, but we know the best way for them to retain information is for them to do it themselves.*

THE FIRE SERVICE RECRUITMENT CRISIS

The fire service has always been built on longevity, stability and long-term commitment. But over the past 14 years, the number of applicants recruited to fire departments has sharply declined. Career fire departments used to have hundreds of applicants that they could choose from, and volunteer fire departments had plenty of community members to help out. Those numbers dwindled. Both career and volunteer fire departments have seen dramatic decreases in recruitment over the last decade. *The greatest asset of a fire department is its firefighters.* Fire departments are built on people, and people are getting harder to find than ever in the

fire service. Solving the fire department recruitment crisis means that we must reimagine the fire service while keeping the traditions alive by investing in the next generation.

The high school firefighter program offers a long-term solution. The program builds interest and competence early. It creates a pool of homegrown talent that's already connected to local departments. When the tones sound, the main thing that matters is the need for a firefighter to show up. This program provides the firefighters that our communities need.

The demand for highly trained firefighters continues to grow. Our high school program has become a key strategy in solving recruitment issues facing the fire service. It makes the fire service more representative of the community that it serves. The students that make it through this program are certified and competent. They want to be firefighters. Training firefighters in high school has the potential to alleviate new hire training delays and save departments tens of thousands annually in initial training expenses. *We are not just teaching the cadets about firefighting—we are making them firefighters.*

WHAT WE PASS ON

Teaching high school students to be firefighters at this early of a stage, allows fire departments to expand their recruitment efforts to engage more women and other people who have not been at the forefront of recruitment. This program helps to break down barriers of becoming a firefighter, especially to underserved areas. Underserved socioeconomic groups and underserved parts of our community's population are now able to take part. Our program helps to teach the traditions and history of the fire service, instilling them directly into the heart of new recruits. Additionally, we have more hours to train than traditional fire academies. *Young people learn differently than adults, and extra training time is invaluable. Our program will never replace traditional fire academies, but it is a great supplement.*

This program is designed to deliver Firefighter I & II certification that is aligned with NFPA 1001 standards and the Michigan Fire Fighter Training Council. It includes hazmat operations and EMT certification. Through an articulation agreement with the Wayne County Community College Downriver Campus, we offer 30 college credits (21 credits for Fire and nine credit hours for EMT) and some internships. At Wayne County Community College, our cadets train on actual apparatus—engines and ladder trucks—and other training props. We run the same daily drills as the fire academy. *The 30 hours of college credit gets the cadets halfway to an associate's degree before they graduate high school.* This program builds soft skills like work ethic, teamwork, leadership, analytical thinking skills, decision making, emotional intelligence, and resilience. It shows them the importance of showing up for work and taking ownership of their decisions and their everyday disposition in life. You can't teach that anywhere else.

GROWING THE PROGRAM

Our program incorporates more than just firefighting training. *This year we have added drone operations which will lead to the students' FAA 107 Unmanned Aircraft Systems Certificate.* Next year, we hope to add incident mapping as part of their curriculum. We have also included wildland firefighting modules, airport firefighting, ship firefighting, high-rise firefighting, and industrial firefighting. Additions include 911 Fire Dispatch and emergency medical technician training (EMT). The EMT program, which predated the firefighting program, takes place as a second year in their training. All the training leads to certification at the state or national levels.

The training would cost thousands of dollars for a fire department to send people to learn. The cost incurred are in the class costs, travel, overtime, or back fill—all cost benefits to the departments where they will eventually work. We are showing them how to lead, serve, and save lives. Most importantly, they learn all of these skills and become certified before getting their high school diploma. *They graduate from high school with nationally recognized certifications and career-ready skills.* They have the potential to walk across the graduation stage with a diploma and certifications in FAA 107 UAS Drone Pilot, 911 Emergency Dispatcher, Emergency Medical Technician, Firefighter I & II, Hazardous Materials Operations. They are ready to go to work and they are well trained. They are ready for their career. Who would not want them?

We have an annual vehicle extrication event to prevent students from drinking and driving. A brand-new Ford Motor Company vehicle, provided by Ford and Lark Logistics, is used for the demonstration. This one event has helped us recruit more potential firefighters into our program than anything else we have attempted. The students get to show off their skills at the end of the year to 500 or so of their fellow students.

They are proud of themselves, something that is relatable for other students who have not decided to go into the fire service yet. Some years it has been broadcasted on the local news; every positive story about the fire service helps all of us to recruit and retain the very best. I tell my students all of the time that there are many ways to make a living, but firefighting provides more job satisfaction than any other career. It's not just a paycheck. It's about purpose, belonging, and service.

THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE TRAINING

I have told you about all of the academic and career benefits of the training, but I have not told you about the personal stories. There are so many that I could not address all of them here, it would take too long.

One of my students was in the photography class and decided that he wanted to be a firefighter. He asked me which career he should choose. I told him that I was biased, but I conveyed to him all of the benefits of the job. I told him why choose; you can do both. I encouraged him to photograph his training, and he won a national award for some of his firefighting pictures.

Every year, Belfor Property Restoration has a 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony with the Detroit Tigers, and I am usually invited. When I get to walk out on that field with many of my past students that are now firefighters, I get a sense of pride in my heart that nothing else has compared to in this life. It is not about me, but about watching our students grow from children to the men and women that our local communities trust to protect them. I am always beaming with pride when they convey stories of how they have helped the communities and fellow firefighters. We have taught them not to be selfish and to always think of others before themselves, and that has resonated with them. I am the ripe old age of 60 and I will not see the shade of all of their futures, but somehow this brings me peace. The impact of their training will live on long after I am gone.

I stay involved in the students' lives as long as they want me to do so. Long after graduation, I have been the only man at baby showers. I have been to births and deaths of their loved ones. I vouched for them to get jobs. I have helped them learn about getting their first house. One of my favorite students let me pin his badge on him when he completed his probation and then asked me to be the officiant at his wedding. Of course, I agreed and became certified for that one wedding. It was something that I will never forget.

LIGHT FROM DARKNESS

It is not always sweetness and light. One of my students got out of school and joined a fire department. Before his probationary year was complete, he was burned in a house fire. His chief called to let me know, and I went often to the burn center. I would just pray for him in the waiting room—he did not even know that I was there. One day, they let me in to see him. I was taken aback with all the bandages and the care that he was receiving. I could just picture him coming into my class the first time when he was 15 years old, and him telling me that he wanted to be a firefighter. I am not ashamed to say that I had to fight back tears. I tried to keep things light and make him smile. He told me one of the greatest things that I have ever heard as an instructor. He said that, during the fire, he could hear my voice telling him that he was going to be okay, even when he did not think it would be okay. He eventually got out of the burn unit and was able to return to work. One of the proudest moments of my life was pinning his badge on him as he completed his probationary year.

ONE SOLUTION FOR RECRUITMENT ISSUES

With programs such as this, there are many benefits—for the students, the instructors, and the departments that will hire these recruits. It is one possible solution to try if you are facing recruitment issues. A firefighter whom I used to work with had a saying, although I'm not sure if it originated with him. Dan Phillips would always say, "All wins and no whammies." That means all good and no bad—a fitting way to sum up the effects of a high school firefighter education program.

FIREFIGHTER HEALTH & SAFETY; PROTECTING OUR OWN

DATA SUBMISSION IS ON HOLD DUE TO THE FEDERAL GOVT. SHUT DOWN!!

68

LINE OF DUTY FIREFIGHTER DEATHS FOR 2025

In 2024 we experienced 64 LODDs reported nationally.!

Overall, 2024 was one of the safest years on record for U.S. firefighters with 64 on-duty deaths recorded, down from 74 in 2023 and reflecting a steady decline in annual fatalities in recent decades since a high of 174 in 1978. (The trend calculations don't include the 340 firefighters who died in the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.)

DOES'NT HAVE TO BE A FATALITY-JUST A DIBILITATING INJURY, YOU JUST NEVER KNOW!

- Veteran FDNY firefighter Patrick Brady, age 42 died of a heart attack while battling an all-hands 5 alarm apartment building blaze in Brooklyn.
- A longtime flight paramedic, Allan Williams was killed and two other crew members were injured when their medevac helicopter crashed Saturday in Wilson County, Tennessee.

FIRE APPARATUS ACCIDENTS FOR THE WEEK

- A rescue operation at the Texas City Dike turned tragic Sunday afternoon leaving one youth dead, another and six firefighters injured. As Texas City firefighters were pulling the two juveniles into their boat, it was blown into rocks and flipped, KHOU reported. One of the youths died at a local hospital while the other and four firefighters remained hospitalized as of Monday morning. Strong winds and rough water created dangerous conditions made the rescue effort difficult.
- Goochland County (VA) Fire-Rescue pumper was struck from behind by a passenger car while it was blocking an earlier accident scene Saturday, Nov. 8, 2025, the department said in a Facebook post. The driver of the passenger car was seriously injured and transferred to a trauma center, the report said. No fire personnel were injured. The engine has sustained serious damage and is out of service, currently replaced by Engine 681 at Manakin Company 1.

FIRE APPARATUS

Portable Ladder Storage on Pumpers

Rick Mosher

Because the fire service mission is ever evolving, the fire apparatus that we operate have changed and grown as our role has expanded. Sometimes, changes in size and maneuverability don't align with response district streets and parking lots. I believe that smaller, simpler apparatus often are the key to a more efficient and effective fireground and emergency scene. Curbside portable ladder storage on the classic high-side/low-side pumper body can be beneficial to a department's capability to respond and to return to service quickly, effectively and safely.

Note: It's important to remember when building a fire apparatus that there always is a cause and effect. One modification can result in a cascade of changes throughout the rest of the vehicle.

CAUSE AND EFFECT

Pumper bodies remained relatively unchanged until the late 1980s, when some began to include specification of hydraulic ladder racks. In most cases, this offered two additional high-side compartments or two tall rescue body compartments, with one high-side or a half high-side, depending on the ladder rack mounting configuration. This allowed for a full-width hosebed, and the body height remained lower than or even with the cab in most cases, to allow for an acceptable travel height.

As the vista roof, or now commonly called the raised-roof, cab entered the market, manufacturers began to match body height to cab height. In most cases, the hydraulic ladder rack travel height exceeded 10 feet, and drop-down height exceeded five feet. Because the removal of ladders can be made more complex when districts lack curbed streets, a member must remove ladders while standing in an open drainage culvert or on the sloped surface of an open drainage culvert. Furthermore, when parked automobiles are involved, the ladder rack might not be capable of being lowered fully. This caused some departments to specify street-side ladder racks, although this can be complicated by traffic or other obstacles.

In the 2000s, manufacturers began to offer a flat, through-the-tank portable ladder storage area. The increase in body height because of the raised-roof cab allowed this. However, the effect of this change required tank

manufacturers to create a ladder tunnel through the tank. Although still allowing for a full-width hosebed, the hosebed vertical storage height was reduced, and the hosebed vertical access height often was raised more than six feet.

As this option gained popularity, it was offered in a beam portable ladder storage option. This has become very popular with most departments. It can allow for a lower ground-to-hosebed access, with additional vertical height of hose storage. The access height can vary from 4 feet, 6 inches to 5 feet, 7 inches.

Two effects result from this option. The first is a reduced-width hosebed of 57½ inches or an uneven hosebed. The second is portable ladder intrusion into the pump house. Storing portable ladders flat or beam can require a larger pump house or less-than-desirable plumbing and valve configurations. This also can hamper fireground pump problem-solving and pump maintenance, and removal of ladders can be made more complex when another apparatus parks directly behind the ladder storage.

RETURN TO CURBSIDE ACCESS

As the engine company culture renaissance continues, departments are returning to a traditional high-side/low-side body configuration with curbside portable ladders. This permits a low ground-to-hosebed access and a full-width hosebed of 68 inches. This also can allow for multiple bulk beds of fire hose or preconnected hoselines.

Many departments also are returning to a flat-roof cab, to allow a reduction in overall travel and body height while gaining valuable scrub of the deck-mounted turret. A curbside ladder option allows for ladders to be removed at five feet. The height can vary depending on manufacturer when choosing triple wheel well torpedo tubes that commonly are used to store spare SCBA bottles. This height can vary depending on equipment storage on the deck that's below the ladders.

Any time that this body option is specified, the department should request that the ladders be mounted on adjustable channels, so ladder deployment height can be adjusted. Ladder removal is made easy with the member, in most cases, standing on level ground even in areas where no curbs exist. The portable ladders also can be removed when parked cars are close to the fire.

Some might argue that the loss of compartment space limits storage of ALS and BLS equipment, ground monitors, and other equipment. That isn't true. In fact, compartments even can be included to accommodate future needs.

SECONDS COUNT

When specifying a high-side/low-side body with curbside portable ladders, departments should conduct a thorough needs assessment. This should consider ladder deployment, hosebed storage, hose deployment, ladder access body height and response district.

Departments should work with the manufacturer to explore body and mounting options and shouldn't hesitate to ask for additional measurements on the overall drawing of the apparatus. Departments also should ask for a separate drawing of the ladder-mounting configuration. This provides the ability to see exactly where the ladder will be mounted and whether any overhang or overlap will occur.

Seconds—even milliseconds—count in the fire service. Rapid deployment of portable ground ladders should be an urgent priority when fire apparatus are specified. The lives of citizens and company members depend on it.

FIRE STATIONS

I got nothing this week!

THE CHANGING FIRE SERVICE

Cambridge (MA) FD Running Electric Hazmat Truck

Al Petrillo

The Cambridge (MA) Fire Department is running what it believes to be the first electric fire apparatus in service in the New England states area—a Rosenbauer electric hazardous materials truck.

Dan Lopez, fleet supervisor for Cambridge Fire, says the department had urban search and rescue (USAR) grant money available through the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services but needed to use the funds within

a short time period. “We searched for a stock truck because we had to use the money fast,” Lopez says. “We found a demo EV truck from Rosenbauer through Specialty Vehicles Inc. that had everything the Cambridge city council and citizens wanted in an EV vehicle, so it became the first Rosenbauer apparatus in our fleet.”

Joe Bevilacqua, fire apparatus sales representative at Specialty Vehicles, who sold the truck to Cambridge, says the hazmat truck is built on an all-electric International two-door eMV cab and chassis with a Rosenbauer 14-foot FX walk-around rescue body, plus a 5-foot walk-in behind the cab for a total body length of 19 feet. Bevilacqua notes that the hazmat truck has a 217-inch wheelbase, an overall length of 29 feet 9 inches, an overall height of 9 feet 11 inches, and a gross vehicle weight rating of 33,000 pounds.

He points out that the rig’s 210-kW lithium ion phosphate battery has a 608-volt operating system, a battery thermal management system (BTMS) that uses standard red coolant, three levels of regenerative braking, a peak power of 342-horsepower (hp) at 1,737-pound-feet of torque, and an estimated range of 135 miles on a full battery charge.

Cambridge had some modifications made to the demo truck before delivery, such as adding a command post area with an electronic research library, and handrail and perimeter lighting changes. “There’s access to the command post module from both sides of the truck but with no access to the body,” he notes, “and we added a work station for two people on the back wall that includes travel seating for them.”

Lopez adds that the hazmat truck’s body has seven external body compartments and four coffin compartments on top. “It’s a rescue body set up as a hazmat response truck, so it carries equipment like Level A and Level B hazmat entry suits; self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA); decontamination equipment; thermal imaging equipment; radiation meters; sampling meters for gaseous, liquid, and solid products; containment equipment, such as booms, absorbent materials, drums, patches, plugs, and diking materials; and hand tools like non-sparking wrenches, mallets, shovels, brooms, and brushes,” he says.

Lopez notes that the rig has an 80-amp Level 2 charger onboard and an 11.5-kW Kubota generator with a 15-gallon fuel cell. “The Level 2 charger can be plugged into an external power source,” he says, or it can be plugged into the EV battery and charge the battery off of the generator.”

Bevilacqua says that lighting on the Cambridge hazmat truck includes a Whelen Freedom IV LED lightbar, Whelen LED emergency and scene lighting, LED compartment lighting, and a Command Light roof-mounted LED light tower.

From Many, One: Surry County, N.C. Merges 17 Fire Districts

Ryan Kelly, mtairynews.com

Change was in the air on Monday evening when the Surry County Board of Commissioners unanimously approved a resolution to establish a countywide fire protection service district, marking a significant change to emergency services in the county.

The new district, which will take effect with the start of the new fiscal year on July 1, consolidates 17 existing rural fire protection districts into a single countywide system covering all of Surry County except the city of Mount Airy and the town of Elkin. The towns of Dobson and Pilot Mountain have passed resolutions to join the new district.

“First responders are the fabric that holds a community together,” said Commissioner Melissa Hiatt. “This process allows us to be able to provide the service equally to citizens and more equitably to the departments.” The decision follows a comprehensive study commissioned by the board in recent years to evaluate the county’s fire service delivery and funding structure. The study, presented to commissioners in February, identified significant disparities in funding.

Under the current system, each of the 17 fire districts operates independently with separate tax rates, all capped at 15 cents per \$100 of property valuation. However, the tax base varies dramatically between districts, creating substantial funding inequities.

It’s a tale of haves and have nots according to County Manager Chris Knopf. “Some agencies have great financial resources, while most do not. The current state of volunteerism and response are such that it requires the dispatch of multiple departments to assure personnel respond to calls for service.”

Many things will look the same, there will still be local fire houses serving their communities. What will look very different is the way in which the new countywide tax rate will be distributed.

Under the new model, revenue will be distributed to individual fire departments based on a formula considering factors such as size of each response district, population and ISO rating.

During the public hearing, Mike Callaway, deputy chief and treasurer of the State Road Fire Department, offered comments that acknowledged both the need for change and the anxiety many in the fire service community feel about losing local control.

"There's a rich history here in Surry County for volunteer fire departments," he told commissioners, noting that the 1957 Flat Rock School fire prompted North Carolina legislation that created the framework for rural volunteer fire departments.

"There's a tremendous amount of pride and ownership in a fire department," he said. "Even today, the children and the grandchildren and the ghosts of those people that went before us roam the halls and affect our decisions."

While acknowledging the current system "appears to be non-workable," Callaway expressed concerns about transitioning to a new model, citing cautionary tales from neighboring counties. He presented four recommendations: establishing a fire commission with representation from the Fire Chiefs Council, providing opportunities for departments to review and comment on proposed contracts, ensuring transparency throughout the process and treating fire departments as partners rather than subordinates.

"We want to go into this transition as partners with you guys," Callaway said.

Board members responded with appreciation for Callaway's constructive approach and pledged open communication throughout the implementation process.

"This is, there's always a level of uncertainty around big changes, and these are big changes," said Commissioner Eddie Harris. *"However, as a board of county commissioners, it's incumbent upon us to try to adequately fund the fire departments and make sure that you folks have what you need, and that the citizens have adequate fire protection."*

Commissioner Van Tucker praised the work of the Fire Service Committee, particularly Commissioners Harris and Hiatt, who spent extensive time studying the issue.

In September, commissioners approved creating a seven-member Fire and Rescue Commission with three fire service members, four civilian members and five ex-officio non-voting members. The commission will oversee revenue distribution and make funding recommendations.

The consolidation addresses a problem that has grown increasingly pronounced. *Multiple departments must respond to single incidents just to ensure adequate staffing, forcing departments to use their limited tax funds to cover calls outside their districts.*

"In the system that we have been using, it's harder to get people to each house, because as we've said, in some departments, four or five departments have to show up to get enough people there," Commissioner Hiatt explained.

The new system aims to ensure that when a 911 call comes in, adequate resources can respond regardless of which district the emergency occurs in, while providing more stable and equitable funding for all fire departments.

****FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT AFFECTED BY COSTLY HOUSING**

Peter Sloniewsky

In recent years, both recruitment and retention of new firefighters have declined. According to the Firefighters' Association of the State of New York, membership has declined by about 40,000 firefighters across the state over the last 20 years. In Suffolk County, fire departments like Setauket and Hauppauge are feeling the squeeze, but not necessarily from lack of interest. Rather, *the high cost of living makes it less plausible for volunteer firefighters to stick around.* Both Setauket Fire Department Chief Charles Regulinski and Hauppauge Fire District Corresponding Secretary Louis Marcus said recruitment had been steady but still underwhelming.

"Recruitment for us has become a challenge over the last ten years or so," Marcus wrote to TBR. "It is becoming harder to recruit individuals who are raising a family and trying to make ends meet."

Even when volunteers are recruited, training is not only time- and cost-intensive but also does not always lead to retention.

"The training that new members receive from our department is provided weekly over the first year of service," Regulinski wrote. "If a new member leaves during this first year, we don't see a return on our time investment."

"Training and equipping a new firefighter is an expensive process," Marcus added. "It is always a loss for the department when we lose an active member, especially the younger ones."

In that, both departments cite housing affordability as the top obstacle to long-term volunteer service as costs have risen across Long Island.

"As long as our younger firefighters are living with their parents, we have a good retention record," Marcus wrote. "But once they move out, the cost of living makes it difficult."

"Especially in our fire district, a 'starter house' for a family can be more than \$600,000," Regulinski wrote. "Most younger members are forced to move away."

Both departments also acknowledge programs like the Length of Service Award Program, a deferred compensation plan for volunteer emergency service personnel designed to reward and retain volunteers by providing them with a supplemental retirement benefit based on their years of service. They also recognize the importance of local tax breaks and property tax credits for recruitment and retention.

"While very helpful, it does not change the fact that this area is so expensive," Marcus wrote.

Both firefighters do not view new proposals as enough to be effective. These include a county resolution to reserve 10% of workforce housing for volunteers.

"Most younger members are not thinking about retirement," Regulinski wrote. "They need money now to pay for food and housing. A system that allows fire districts to pay members a modest amount per call would help younger members with the financial stress they have now."

With that said, fire departments have stayed together through a real sense of civic service.

"There is a real pride among most of us at being able to serve the community," Marcus wrote. "There is nothing like the satisfaction of helping victims of a fire or an auto accident or saving the life of a heart attack victim."

"Most individuals that join the fire service are looking for a challenge and to learn new skills," Regulinski added. "They also have a strong sense of community and a desire to help others, even putting those needs before their own."

However, without affordable housing or stronger retention incentives, communities risk losing a vital public safety backbone despite that sense of civic duty.

BUILDING CODE ISSUES AND REPORTED FIRE FATALITIES

The New ICC Code-NYS Edition will go into effect on December 31st 2025. The effect of the updated NYS Energy Code on residential occupancies is profound and will drive the cost of homes up extensively.

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: Our fire problem would not be as bad if there were residential sprinklers!!

DATA SUBMISSION IS ON HOLD DUE TO THE FEDERAL GOVT. SHUT DOWN!!

HOME FIRE FATALITIES REPORTED BY THE MEDIA FROM THE US FIRE ADMINISTRATION FOR 2025	
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings in NYS	53
Last fire death 8/9/25 Eaton, Madison Co., Female 69	
Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS	88
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally	733

Top 3 States with the greatest 1&2 Family Deaths	#1 PA/60
	#2 NY/53
	#3 IL /43
Civilian home fire fatalities in 2025: 1480 2046 civilian home fire fatalities in 2024	
Week 36 of 2025, fire has claimed on an average 41 lives PER WEEK.	
Both the states of Maryland and California as well as Wash. DC require sprinklers in 1&2 family dwellings. According to realtors and builders only old homes burn, so sprinklers are not needed in new homes: so when does a new home become an old home?	

GREEN TECHNOLOGY & THE FIRE SERVICE

Houston FD Takes 'Green' Ambulances Off The Street After Repeated Problems

The Houston Fire Department's environmentally friendly ambulances have experienced repeated mechanical failures that have taken units out of service and affected response capability, according to internal documents reviewed by [KPRC 2](#).

An August email from the HFD district chief of resource management detailed multiple recurring issues forcing ambulances off the streets. Fire Chief Thomas Muñoz acknowledged the problem, calling it "a huge concern."

An internal memo said recurring mechanical issues are "reducing fleet readiness and response capacity." The units were approved under former mayor Sylvester Turner as part of a push for greener ambulances. In October 2022, the City Council unanimously authorized a \$5.9 million purchase of 21 Frazer cab-and-chassis ambulances with modular bodies.

City records show the ambulances were equipped with a system to power electronics without idling the engine, part of the city's effort to reduce emissions and promote cleaner air.

Mayor John Whitmire and firefighters' union President Marty Lancton said they were unaware of the ambulance reliability issues until they were shown the internal email. Crews now report charging problems, including insufficient time at stations and a lack of proper ports. Chief Muñoz said the units must be plugged in to maintain onboard systems, but high call volumes often prevent the one-to-two-hour charging windows needed.

KPRC 2 shared the internal HFD email with Frazer, and a company spokesperson responded: "Regarding your inquiry, it is our understanding the units referenced have been serviced and have returned to service. We continue to take the Houston Fire Department's readiness concerns seriously and we have always acted with urgency alongside HFD and our component suppliers."

Muñoz said the environmentally friendly units cost about \$40,000 more than traditional ambulances and acknowledged he does not know if any failed during an emergency. He added that the city does not plan to buy this type of ambulance going forward.

Fire Sparked by Lithium-Ion Battery Put Out Quickly in NY High School Shop

Greta Stuckey-syracuse.com

A small fire sparked by a lithium-ion battery was quickly put out Wednesday night in the woodshop at Charles W. Baker High School.

Firefighters went to the school around 5 p.m. after reports of a fire in the woodshop, according to Onondaga County 911 Center dispatches and a message from Superintendent Joseph DeBarbieri.

The North West Fire District put out the fire in less than 10 minutes. No students were in the classroom at the time and no one was injured, DeBarbieri said.

The fire started when a lithium-ion battery for a power drill caught fire while on a charger, DeBarbieri said.

The fire was contained to the drill charger and didn't spread.

All after-school activities went on as scheduled, he said.

Fire Department Responds to MA Wind Turbine Blade Collapse

Lance Reynolds

A blade that fell from a 300-foot-tall turbine and into a Massachusetts cranberry bog has sparked critics of wind energy to renew their call for the state Legislature to back away from its net-zero by 2050 mandate.

The Plymouth *Massachusetts is becoming familiar with turbine failures, with Friday's blade collapse in Plymouth following a similar incident off the shores of Nantucket in the summer of 2024.*

Fire Department says it responded to a call from a "concerned neighbor" who noticed one of the three blades on a nearby wind turbine "suddenly missing," around 2 p.m. Friday. Firefighters found the roughly 75- to 100-foot long blade hundreds of feet away from the base of the turbine, "resting in an open cranberry bog area."

Firefighters determined that no additional hazards were present, and the turbine's maintenance company also responded to the scene to conduct inspections and determine the failure's cause.

The state Department of Environmental Protection told the Herald on Saturday that the agency was coordinating with the Plymouth Fire Department and local officials to "review the incident and ensure necessary cleanup is completed."

"We were fortunate that this turbine is located out in the middle of the cranberry bogs and not in a residential area," Plymouth Fire Chief Neil Foley said in a statement. "Thankfully, no one was hurt, and the turbine automatically shut itself down as designed."

The Bay State is a national leader in wind, particularly offshore, to meet its goals for clean energy and demand for electricity. Gov. Maura Healey has emphasized that the region needs this power.

State lawmakers are looking to reduce carbon emissions by at least 80% by 2050, when Massachusetts is required to hit net zero.

The governor's office referred the Herald to the state DEP and the town of Plymouth for further comment on how officials are responding to Friday's blade collapse. It added that the turbine was constructed before the Healey administration.

Plymouth nearly a decade ago approved four wind turbines just over the town line, bordering Bourne, on the "Keith Mann" cranberry bog, the Cape Cod Times reported in March 2017. The machines' "large blades" prompted "stories of deafening noise, unexplained headaches, and restless nights from neighbors" after they started spinning in the summer of 2016, the outlet reported.

The Fiscal Alliance watchdog group has warned that residents and businesses can "expect electricity rates to double, along with rolling blackouts," if the state reaches net zero by 2050.

Paul Diego Craney, the group's executive director, is calling for a repeal of that mandate and for Attorney General Andrea Campbell to hold wind companies accountable for their failures.

"The images of the broken blade lying in a cranberry bog, with oil leaking out of its gearbox, and fiberglass pieces littering the cranberry bog," Craney told the Herald on Saturday, "are a reminder of what our future will look like under the NetZero mandate."

The blade collapse in Plymouth is the latest mishap in the perilous Massachusetts wind energy industry.

A federal judge last week greenlighted the Trump administration to reconsider a major federal permit that was granted to a Massachusetts offshore wind farm days before the president's inauguration.

Developer SouthCoast Wind responded, saying it's assessing the decision and next steps, including the pursuit of legal remedies. SouthCoast Wind is a project planned for federal waters about 23 miles south of Nantucket, with as many as 141 turbines to power about 840,000 homes in Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

President Trump has attacked the offshore wind industry as "ugly" and unreliable compared to fossil fuels such as coal and natural gas.

New Bedford resident Elijah DeSousa, who founded the Citizens Against Eversource advocacy group, is demanding that the state Legislature reconsider its pursuit of clean energy. He is pointing to the Plymouth blade collapse as yet another example of a "broken promise."

DeSousa's group is working to gather enough signatures for three questions that aim to reform the energy sector on the 2026 ballot.

"We're told 'clean energy' is progress," DeSousa told the Herald on Saturday, "but when turbine blades crash into our land, leak toxic fluids, and leave the people paying the cost, it becomes clear: the legislature's

revenue decoupling system rewards corporations, punishes ratepayers, and hides behind slogans and false mantras instead of accountability.”

The Plymouth turbine failure prompted critics to reflect on a wind turbine blade that tore apart on the Vineyard Wind project in July 2024, littering Nantucket’s beaches and waters with foam, fiberglass and other debris.

Nantucket officials reached a \$10.5 million settlement this past July with GE Vernova, the company that manufactured the wind turbine blade that failed on the project.

Healey has said that the company behind the project needs to do “everything it can to address what the town has articulated” in a litany of demands it issued over the summer.

All three Republican gubernatorial candidates — Brian Shortsleeve, Mike Kennealy and Mike Minogue — told the Herald on Saturday that alternatives to green energy must be prioritized instead of going forward with an unpredictable form of energy, which they say has resulted in skyrocketing utility costs.

“Residents of Massachusetts are seeing the real-world environmental fallout associated with wind energy once again contaminating our natural resources,” MassGOP Chairwoman Amy Carnevale said, adding that she “urges the Healey administration to refocus on more reliable and affordable sources of energy for our residents.”

STUFF FOR YOUR OFFICERS AND MEMBERS!



Reading the Smoke, ESIP WEBINAR SERIES

An important way to keep yourself and your crew safe on the fire ground is having the ability to read the smoke to help understand the behavior of the fire. We will dive into how understanding what we see can make us safe and effective.

Wednesday November 19th at 7:00PM

REGISTER FOR THIS WEBINAR AT THIS LINK:

<https://mcneilandcompany.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=03596f243a9d922954ebaf15e&id=1f7c2dfd7a&e=781e9a2c81>

Bridging the Gap

Guest Speaker Jeremy Donch, founder of National Fire Radio

Preserving Tradition and Culture One Generation at a Time

The seminar, “Bridging the Gap,” focuses on preserving tradition and culture within the fire service from generation to generation.

Sponsored by Arvin Hart Fire Company

Wednesday December 10th, 6:30PM Stillwater High School Auditorium, 1068 Hudson Ave, Stillwater, New York 12170

This event is open to all fire departments within the New York Capital District with pre-registration.

RSVP: Agencies wishing to attend may reserve seats by contacting Assistant Chief Sean Ritter via phone/text at (518) 429-0278 or e-mail at sritter2819@gmail.com.

Duties & Deadlines is Back!

Join Us on November 18th 7:00 pm

We heard you and we're back! Join us for Duties & Deadlines, **training for Fire District Secretaries**. Gina Marrone, Amy Speech & Donna Marano will host a live webinar on Meeting Minutes and Annual Cancer Reporting. This is an interactive webinar so bring your questions and suggestions for future Duties & Deadlines. Join us on **Tuesday, November 18th beginning at 7:00 pm**. It's easy to join us, just click the registration button below to get the Zoom link.

REGISTER AT THIS LINK:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_B1jhRXX5RcCcy19cqxyknw#/registration

Attend an NVFC Training Near You!

The NVFC hosts in-person trainings at locations across the country on topics including hazardous materials response, electric vehicle response, leadership, fire service culture, and much more. View upcoming courses [here](#). Don't see a training near you? Consider hosting a training at your department or regional event. View a listing of available courses and request a training [here](#).



NATIONAL VOLUNTEER FIRE COUNCIL – TRAINING TIMES – COURSES/WEBINARS/EVENTS

LINK TO THE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM: https://virtualclassroom.nvfc.org/featured_courses

NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

Gansevoort Fire Department Breakfast

The fire company thanks you for your support!! Breakfast will be served starting at 8AM on **Sunday November 16th**

Clifton Park Fire Department Breakfast

See you **Sunday December 7th**. Thank you for your support!

GENERAL INTEREST

The 2026 Budget Calendar and the 2025 Election Schedule are posted to our Website at CAFDA.net

****The Firehouse Mirror: What Dysfunction Reflects About Our Leadership**

Jamie Jent

We don't need another slogan. We need a reckoning.

Across the country, fire departments are struggling, but not because of call volume, recruitment challenges, or budget constraints. Those are symptoms. The real issue runs deeper. It's a crisis of leadership.

The signs are everywhere. Morale is in free fall. Firefighters are disengaged, frustrated, and increasingly vocal about the disconnect between the values painted on station walls and the behaviors tolerated in leadership offices. And yet, in response to these growing frustrations, we often see the same recycled fixes: another wellness initiative, another slogan, another committee.

What we don't see is change.

This article marks the beginning of a direct, unapologetic conversation, a conversation about why fire service leadership must evolve and how we start holding ourselves accountable. Not performative accountability.

Not optics. Real, measurable, cultural accountability.

And that begins with facing some uncomfortable truths.

While reading this don't smugly think it applies only to either career or volunteer departments!

THE LOYALTY ILLUSION: WHEN BROTHERHOOD BECOMES A COVER

The fire service prides itself on loyalty and brotherhood. But what happens when those values are weaponized?

In many departments, personal ambition hides behind the language of teamwork. Firefighters talk about loyalty, but that loyalty is often selective and reserved only for those who play the political game. When

leadership becomes more about protecting each other's positions than protecting the people doing the work, trust erodes fast.

I've seen firefighters who used every excuse in the book to avoid responsibility suddenly become "model officers" the moment a promotion was within reach. I've seen leaders who once fought for fairness become the enforcers of favoritism. The moment their badge changed color, so did their memory of what they used to stand for.

Let's call it what it is: betrayal.

It's not just personal. It's cultural. Because when those kinds of leaders rise through the ranks, they send a clear message to everyone else: integrity doesn't matter. The game does.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE SMOKESCREEN: PAPERWORK OVER PEOPLE

Ask firefighters what frustrates them the most, and you'll hear versions of the same answer: "We've lost sight of what actually matters."

We didn't take this job to file reports or chase performance metrics. Yet more and more, that's where leadership focuses its energy. Firefighters are expected to document every task, justify every moment, and chase productivity metrics designed to look good in budget meetings, but do little to improve operational readiness or mental wellness.

Meanwhile, meaningful, practical training gets cut, equipment sits unrepaired, and the leadership mantra becomes, "We're doing more with less."

No, we're not. We're doing fewer of the right things and more of the wrong ones, and it's burning people out. When the focus shifts from mission to measurement, from readiness to optics, firefighters disengage. And once that disengagement takes root, morale crumbles fast.

We need to stop pretending that leadership can be proven with PowerPoints and performance dashboards. Leadership is proven in action, in presence, and in the trust of the people you serve.

THE PROMOTION PROBLEM: WHY OUR 'TEAMWORK' CULTURE IS FAILING

We preach teamwork from day one. We wear it on T-shirts. We celebrate it at award ceremonies.

Then we turn around and use promotional systems that destroy it.

Fire departments across the country continue to rely on promotional processes that reward test-taking, popularity, and political alignment over operational competence and leadership character. Firefighters are forced to compete against each other, memorizing obscure facts, rehearsing canned answers, and walking on eggshells to avoid offending those who may one day score their interviews.

This isn't building leaders. It's building resentment.

If we want to align our promotional systems with the values we claim to uphold, we need to stop pretending that competition and collaboration are the same thing. They're not.

A true leadership pipeline would include:

- Seniority-based eligibility.
- Department-specific standard operating procedures, rules, and policies.
- Certification-based requirements tied to actual operations.
- Leadership assessments based on trust, respect, and operational impact, not favoritism or flashcards.

As Kowalski (2019) explains, promotional systems that rely heavily on subjective interviews, political alignment, and weak leadership modeling create structural dysfunction in departments, undermining both trust and long-term cultural health. Until this changes, we'll keep promoting people who are good at playing the game and losing the ones who were good at the job.

ACCOUNTABILITY: NOT A BUZZWORD, A BASELINE

We love to talk about accountability in the fire service. But when it's time to apply it to officers, chiefs, or administrators, it suddenly becomes complicated.

That's not accountability. That's optics.

Accountability doesn't mean punishing firefighters for small mistakes while disregarding leadership failures.

It means holding everyone, from the probie to the fire chief, to the same standard.

That's not insubordination. That's professional responsibility.

You don't earn respect by putting your name on a memo. You earn it by showing that the rules apply to you, too. When leaders fail to model that, the entire system suffers. Trust dies, culture collapses, and retention becomes a revolving door of wasted potential.

It's time to make accountability visible, consistent, and enforceable, especially at the top.

THE LEADERSHIP MASK: WHEN CHIEFS CREATE SHIELDS INSTEAD OF STANDARDS

In some departments, fire chiefs don't just fail to lead—they actively build systems to protect themselves from scrutiny. They create new officer positions not to improve operations but to surround themselves with people who will carry out their agenda without question.

Call it what it is: an insulation strategy.

The goal? Appear neutral, maintain plausible deniability, and offload the dirty work onto others. When discipline is handed down, it's from "the admin." When bad policies are enforced, it's "out of their hands." And when firefighters speak up, the retaliation comes from just far enough down the chain to avoid fingerprints.

This isn't leadership. It's political maneuvering. It creates a command culture where speaking the truth becomes a liability, and going along with dysfunction becomes the safest career move.

We cannot allow that to become the model for fire service leadership. Officers should be selected based on integrity, not compliance. When chiefs use promotions as a shield instead of a standard, the result is a culture where ethical leadership is stifled and not supported.

FIGHTING FOR THE FIRE SERVICE: WHEN STANDING UP BECOMES THE ONLY OPTION

Let's be honest: most firefighters don't want a fight. We want to do the job, support our crews, and go home proud of the work we did.

But sometimes, the only way to protect the job is to push back.

I've seen firefighters transferred for raising legitimate safety concerns, union officers punished for doing their jobs, and chiefs enforcing policies that they once fought against to stay in the good graces of city hall.

It's exhausting. And it's demoralizing.

But that doesn't mean we give up. It means we stop waiting for permission to lead. If your department has a broken culture, fix it. If your leadership punishes the truth, tell it louder. And if your fire chief is more worried about protecting himself or herself than protecting firefighters, build a case, build alliances, and start demanding change.

Tools like Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) accreditation can support this effort. When applied correctly, the CFAI standards emphasize leadership integrity, strategic accountability, and cultural performance, not just operational metrics (Center for Public Safety Excellence [CPSE], 2023). These frameworks can become powerful tools for change, but only if departments are willing to use them for more than optics.

THE FIREHOUSE REVOLUTION DOESN'T START WITH A MEMO—IT STARTS WITH YOU

Culture is shaped by what we tolerate. Leadership is defined by what we defend. And the future of the fire service depends on whether we're willing to confront the dysfunction we've accepted for too long.

- If you're reading this and thinking, "That's just how it is," ask yourself why.
- Why do we continue to promote people who betray the values we teach in the academy?
- Why do we tolerate policies that protect leaders while punishing firefighters?
- Why do we allow lousy leadership to drive out good firefighters?
- The answer is simple: because we haven't stopped it yet.
- But we can.
- It starts with calling things what they are.
- It starts with refusing to protect dysfunction.
- It starts with demanding accountability from the top down.
- And it starts with remembering why we took this job in the first place.
- We are not here to maintain titles.
- We are here to protect each other.
- Let's act like it.

LAUGH OUT LOUD!!

My wife will be coming home later today. I haven't cleaned or done any of the dishes. Now she'll see that I can't live without her. I'm romantic like that!!

CLASSIFIED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Plotterkill Fire District Seeks Treasurer

The Plotterkill Fire District is seeking a **part-time treasurer** to oversee the financial operations of the fire district in compliance with New York State laws and regulations.

Responsibilities include:

- Receive and disperse monies as authorized
- Maintain financial records, including spreadsheet for monthly expenses, Quickbooks, vouchers, and fuel usage
- Assist in preparation of annual budget
- Reconcile bank statements
- File required financial reports with the Office of the State Comptroller and other agencies
- Process payroll quarterly and prepare and distribute W-2 forms at year-end
- Review and sort incoming District mail and maintain and monitor District's email box
- Attend monthly Board of Fire Commissioners meetings to present financial updates.

Qualifications:

- Prior experience in Fire District or municipal finance preferred.
- Proficiency in accounting software and Microsoft Office
- Strong organization skills and attention to detail.
- Ability to work independently and meet deadlines.

Compensation:

- Annual salary of \$3,000, paid quarterly

Interested candidates should submit a resume and cover letter to Tonya Hall, the District Secretary at thallfd8@gmail.com.

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The Capital Area Association represents any fire district that wishes to join CAFDA. Fire District Officials include Commissioners, Treasurers, and Deputy Treasurers. Secretaries and Chiefs are also invited to participate!

Please advise your secretaries that all correspondence should be mailed to:

CAFDA PO Box 242 East Schodack, NY 12063

[EMAIL TREASURER: TREASURER@CAFDA.NET](mailto:TREASURER@CAFDA.NET)

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.

CAPITAL AREA BUSINESS PARTNER'S

Business Partner Applications Available At: WWW.CAFDA.NET

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

We want to thank all of our Business Partners for renewing their partnership for 2025. You are invited to our monthly membership meeting and to any of our social events..

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*The Weekly Capital Bulletin is reaching well over **700+** subscribed fire district members and now other members of the fire service on a regular basis.*

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

BECOME A MEMBER OF CAFDA!

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 CAFDA.NET website.

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

Download THE APPLICATION available on the home page at CAFDA.NET

MEMBERSHIP IN THE CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION (CAFDA)

Would you like to join Capital Area Fire Districts Association along with 100 members in 14 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 or Other County or Regional Associations \$300 annually.

Business Partners: \$100.00 annual member fee

If You, Your Fire District or Department is not a Member of CAFDA You Can be?

Individuals can be members of CAFDA. The annual membership fee is \$50, which will provide you access to this Bulletin, attendance at meetings and social gatherings. Provides networking with other fire district officials and a source of the constant barrage of information related to today's fire service.

FOR A MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR A BUSINESS PARTNER APPLICATION GO TO THE FOLLOWING LINK:

<https://cafda.net/membership-info/>

FOR MORE REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Website

www.CAFDA.net

OSHA INFORMATION SUPPLEMENT

PROVIDED AS A SERVICE FROM THE CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICT'S
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NEWEST INFORMATION ALWAYS AT THE TOP WITH RED ARROW

According to Tim Hannigan:

There was an update in early September on the Federal Register indicating that OSHA continues to review the record and matters on the docket. There is no end date on that process at this time, OSHA inserted a generic "November 2025" date as a timeframe to continue to review comments on the record. *That was pre-shutdown, so that timeframe is likely further out now.* The Proposed Rule as was initially published back in December 2023 by OSHA remains the only version of the rule at this time.

By Dave Denniston NVFC OSHA 1910.156 Taskforce Chair

The NVFC continues to meet with the IAFC and (The IAFC has pulled out of the meetings) IAFF as we wait for next steps from the Department of Labor and OSHA. There have been significant changes in leadership at these organizations. We are under the belief that they continue to digest the large volume of information and feedback offered during the process and are modifying the proposed standard into something that is much more agreeable. The proposed standard as written does not work for anyone, volunteer, combination, or career departments. All three organizations agree significant changes are needed from the proposal. *We anticipate that they will craft a new standard that is technically and economically feasible using what is*

referred to as logical outgrowth from the process. The representatives from the IAFC, NVFC, and IAFF all agree that the best of all worlds would be to remove the NFPA standards by reference, bring a lot of the regulations back to the control of the home state and authority having jurisdiction, and make logical requirements that will help protect our first responders. We continue to monitor progress and are ready to pursue the next steps if the process does not yield a document that we can all live with. *We have also voiced our opposition to a pure exemption of volunteer firefighters as we feel that the move would be counterproductive and further divide the two major factions of our emergency services.* We have long fought for parity in items such as presumptive heart, cancer coverage, workers compensation benefits, equal representation, and firefighter safety. To simply exempt the volunteer fire service would be a huge disservice to these initiatives and leave combination departments in an extremely awkward, if not unmanageable situation. It would also be extremely difficult for municipalities to manage with two different sets of rules.

The three organizations are also hard at work building resources to support emergency services organizations moving forward. These resources include training, sample emergency action plans, risk management plans, community assessment forms, sample policies, and advocacy materials. The right tools will aid everything from a small rural volunteer department with a \$50K budget all the way up to the large municipal all-career city department, and everything in-between. We are very excited by the working relationship being built by these national organizations and all involved in the process feel we are seeing ground-breaking results. If you have any questions or concerns about the process, we encourage you to reach out and get involved in the discussions. I can be reached at 607-423-1636 or ddenniston@afdsny.org. By working together, we can help build a fire service that will serve us well for years to come.

IT IS TIME TO MOVE FORWARD WITH A WORKABLE OSHA 1910.156 REVISION

Dave Denniston, 1st VP AFDSNY

As the process to update OSHA 1910.156 continues, it is important that we understand where we have been, and options for the process moving forward. Since the proposed rule was published for review 18 months ago, there has been a significant amount of input and feedback from stakeholders addressing possible concerns about the economic and technical feasibility of the proposal. Stakeholders from across the country participated in the process and offered suggestions. One of the early possible solutions suggested was to simply exempt volunteers, and other parties, from the proposed rule as written. The mindset was that if it didn't affect "us" it was not our problem. While this concept appeared to be a quick solution, it fell short of addressing the true needs or problems.

The real issue at hand is that the proposed rule as written had challenges for everyone and you would be hard pressed to find any department, career, combination, or volunteer, that could meet the intent of the standard. The proposed standard also took a one-size-fits-all approach. We know that the emergency service agencies across this country are very different. They have different resources, different exposures, different concerns, and different levels of risk. It is true that emergencies, fires, and hazards are the same regardless of the type of responder. What is different is the likeliness that a particular event will occur in any jurisdiction. Local jurisdictions must be required, and empowered, to address significant risk, and the needs of a community, at a local and state level with just enough federal oversight to give it teeth and ensure safety for all of our responders. The bottom line is that the current 1910.156 is outdated and needs significant revision to address the needs and safety concerns of today's first responders. The proposed standard, as written, went too far in trying to address these needs. What we need is a middle ground solution that is designed to relieve significant risk and does so at a level that is economically and technically feasible for local communities, organizations, and the municipalities that govern and fund them.

Some are asking why simply exempting the volunteers is not in the best interest of volunteers across the country. First, by exempting the volunteers, we are failing to address the growing concerns and exposures facing this group of responders. Second, the largest growth area for most of our local fire departments is a move toward combination and career departments. How would it be possible to have one set of rules apply to part of an organization and not the other? Does it make sense to have volunteer responders face one set of

rules, while career responders on the same truck follow another? Are we not all responding to the same emergencies with the same exposures? The approach of exempting volunteers would add both confusion and resentment moving forward. The third part of the issue is that the standard, as written, is just as problematic for the communities that have career departments as it is for those that only have volunteers. We need a standard that brings us all together, not one that drives us further apart.

So, what do the solutions look like? Where should OSHA and the Department of Labor go from here? After pouring through the thousands of comments brought forth during the process, an opportunity is right in front of us. There were a multitude of comments throughout the process that carried common themes. By using logical outgrowth of the process, OSHA now has the opportunity to massage the rule into one that we all can live with, and provide the level of safety they are tasked to provide the workers of this country.

It is now in OSHA's hands to finalize the rule as proposed, make logical changes, scrap it, or go back to the drawing board. During the process, OSHA continuously asked for proposed solutions, and many excellent solutions were entered into the record from those that participated. We would suggest that OSHA and the Department of Labor use the extensive input from the process to make necessary changes to the document and work to finalize the rule. A rule that meets the intent of reducing significant risk in a manner that is reasonable and responsible for our first responders and communities.

Using logical outgrowth, OSHA now has the opportunity to remove the incorporated NFPA standards. Many of the participants and the NFPA itself asked for this to be done in their comments. The incorporation of those standards brought many of the pain points organizations were concerned about. The NFPA standards instead should be used as a tool for compliance, not a weapon of enforcement. By removing the incorporation of dozens of NFPA standards, the rule would also become far less confusing and economically infeasible. The next step is to transfer as much of the obligation of providing safety down to the local jurisdiction and state levels as possible. These are the people that know the nuances of the local responders and hazards in any given area. This, too, was supported by the comments throughout the process. The third opportunity is rather than exempting anyone, to build a baseline standard that applies and protects everyone, and then increase the requirements where the data shows increased exposure and risks. All of these changes are supported by the logical outgrowth requirements and would alleviate most of the pain points addressed by the participants of the process.

Regardless of the solution, we would be remiss if we failed to realize there will be opposition to any action taken moving forward. We also need to realize that any solution, or even no solution at all, will have pain points for some that it will affect. It has often been said that firefighters hate two things, change and the way things currently are. Hopefully, we realize that we are at a historic time, with an amazing opportunity to get this right. This process has been fair and offered plenty of opportunities for those interested in participating to make their opinions and feelings known. It is time to move the ball over the goal line and continue to work together for the betterment of emergency services in this country.

I encourage you to speak to your local elected officials. Let them know there is a workable solution right in front of us, and ask them to encourage the Department of Labor and OSHA to continue this opportunity and finalize a reasonable OSHA 1910.156 that applies to all fire departments, regardless of the composition of their staff.