THE BULLETIN

SEPTEMBER 5TH, 2026

The Voice of CAFDA since 2004
Editor, Tom Rinaldi – tom@rinaldi1.com since 2014
When you see **, highly recommended article

CAPITAL SHORT TAKES

- **The FDNY this week honored 36 heroes whose names will be added to the department's World Trade Center Memorial Wall following their deaths due to 9/11-related illnesses.**
- **BUDGET SCHEDULE** PAGE 4 also on CAFDA.net
- **ELECTION SCHEDULE** PAGE 9 also on CAFDA.net
- See: **Setting the Record Straight – Fire Service Organizations Express Concern Over Lack of Support for Nominal Compensation Initiative** at the end of the Bulletin.
- As firefighters and EMS members who responded to 9/11 get older, the FDNY is pushing for the federal government to add cardiovascular disease, cognitive decline, and other ailments to the list of covered 9/11 illnesses that could help survivors in the future.
- Stellar Industries is a 100% employee-owned manufacturer and upfitter of service vehicles, utility equipment, and trailers, and is proud to announce it has acquired Midwest Fire, a custom fire apparatus manufacturer headquartered in Luverne, Minnesota. Midwest has manufactured Brush Trucks, Pumpers, Tankers, Tanker-Pumpers, Quick-Attacks, Mini Pumpers and Type 3 trucks.
- Welcome to Siddons-Martin Emergency Group as a business partner, they have a wide range of services and companies providing products and services to the fire community go to siddons-martin.com

TRAINING OPPORTUNTIES:

From CAFDA

1. ***Join us at the NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING on Thursday September 10 features dinner for attendees. Please join us.***
   ZOOM LINK FOR THE SEPTEMBER MEETING at 7pm:
   https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89275151494?pwd=H9Wzo77bprmGQd5beFEjODUJxebjJC.1
2. ***Mark your calendar for the CAFDA Conference '27, Lake George NY, April 9-10-11, dinner/vendor show Friday April 10th Fort William Henry Carriage House. Sponsored Mixer the evening of Thursday April 9th at the Holiday Inn Resort, food, games, beverages. The response has grown each year and we are in the process of identifying the subjects for 2027.***
4. ***Mark your calendars now, CAFDA Fall Seminar, Saturday November 7th, at Guilderland Fire Department, 2303 Western Ave. (US Route 20), Guilderland, NY. The Education Committee has identified the subjects including the ever popular "Experts Panel".***
3. ***CAFDA Commissioner Training for 2027 will be held in Averill Park, Thomas Corners, Clifton Park, Schoharie and Warrensburg.***

CAFDA TRAINING AND EVENT DATES				
Day/Date	**Time**	**Type**	**Location**	**Notes**
FY 2026				
July, 2026	**NO MEETING, See next month's Day at the Races**			
Thursday, September 10, 2026	7:00 PM	**General Membership Mtg.**	Clifton Park	
Thursday, October 8, 2026	7:00 PM	**General Membership Mtg.**	Clifton Park	Officers/Director Nominations
Saturday, November 7, 2026	8:00 AM	**Annual Fall Workshop**	Guilderland FD	2303 Western Ave.
Thursday, November 12, 2026	7:00 PM	**General Membership Mtg.**	Clifton Park	Officer/Director Elections
DECEMBER 2026	**NO MEETING**			
FY 2027				
Saturday, January 2, 2027	9:00 AM	**General Membership Mtg.**	Clifton Park	Organizational/Morning Meeting
Thursday, April 8 - Saturday April 10, 2027		**CAFDA Conference '27**	Fort William Henry Conference Center	Lake George
Thursday, April 6 - Saturday April 8, 2028		**CAFDA Conference '28**	Fort William Henry Conference Center	

From Other Organizations

NYSAFC is Bringing Hands-On Training to Your Area!

Open enrollment is available for NYSAFC Regional Hands-On Training this fall. The eight-hour **Fire Behavior On the Inside** course is scheduled for **Albany** (November 14-15), Ontario County (November 7-8), and **Schenectady** (October 17-18) Counties.

THE THREE-HOUR **FLASHOVER** program is coming to **Albany** (September 26-27) Guilderland Fire Chief's Association, Ontario (October 10-11), **Schenectady** (October 17-18) East Glenville Fire District and Orange (November 21-22) Counties.

View the Calendar and Register...

2026 Seminar Series with Chief Mike Lombardo Resumes in September

https://www.nysfirechiefs.com/2026seminarseries

Chief Mike Lombardo (Buffalo Fire Department) will present "**Dangerous Spaces: Challenges and Tactics When Dealing with Garage and Basement Fires**" at 16 sites through November. Registration is $35 (NYSAFC members) and $50 (non-members) per person. Registration will be available at the door, but pre-registration is encouraged. Join NYSAFC in Chautauqua, Chemung, Cortland, Dutchess, Erie, **Fulton**, **Greene**, Monroe, Nassau, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, Otsego, **Rensselaer**, Rockland, and **Saratoga** Counties

LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

From Albany

Bill Introduced which establishes the volunteer and municipal ambulance services grant program

Senator Michelle Hinchey (D Kingston) has introduced a bill (S10689) in the NYS Senate establishing the Volunteer and municipal ambulance services grant program. 1. There is hereby established within the Department of Health, the volunteer and municipal ambulance services grant program. The grant program shall be administered by DOH for the purpose of awarding capital grants to support projects which sustain or

enhance the operation of volunteer and municipal ambulance services, including but not limited to acquisition or maintenance of buildings, equipment, technology, or vehicles. There isn't a companion bill introduced in the Assembly at this time. The bill has been referred to the Senate Rules Committee for consideration.
New York's rural emergency medical services (EMS) system is in crisis. It faces severe funding challenges from inadequate reimbursement rates and overreliance on strained municipal funding, staffing difficulties and declining volunteerism, and infrastructure and communications problems such as aging medical equipment and vehicles or poor cell phone and radio service.
The State's own Rural Ambulance Task Force, in its report released in Spring, 2026, characterized the rural EMS system as "teetering on the brink of collapse." Several approaches are needed to address the severe structural weaknesses of the current system, including but not limited to existing legislation related to reimbursement rates, defining EMS as an essential service, and other policy and funding changes.

- The New York State Legislature passed the volunteer firefighter tax credit, which would increase the annual credit from $200 to $800, and provides meaningful relief to the 80,000 volunteer firefighters who serve communities across New York, helping offset the rising costs of service, including fuel, training, and equipment. This is an important step forward in advancing FASNY's 14-Point Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment and Retention Plan and strengthening the future of New York's volunteer fire service, but we still need your support! The bill is currently awaiting delivery to Governor Hochul's desk; we are hopeful she will recognize its importance, and we're asking for your help. Contact Governor Hochul's office today, through FASNY's VoterVoice, and urge her to sign this essential bill! **Let the Governor Hear You through VoterVoice** at this link.

Waiting for the governor to call for the bills that were passed by both Chambers so that she can sign them into law. Technically she has until December 31st.

- Law passed and signed to require mandatory recycling program for e-scooters/e-bikes.
- The use of "Piggyback Purchasing" extended one more year until June 30, 2027.

S8832 KAVANAGH (D)	**A9504 GLICK (D)**	**1/2/126 PASSED SENATE 2/10/26 PASSED ASSEMBLY**	**THE PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER AMENDMENT IS TO FACILITATE THE INCLUSION OF E-BIKE AND E-SCOOTER BATTERIES IN THE RECHARGEABLE BATTERY RECYCLING PROGRAM AND TO PROMOTE CONSUMER SAFETY, CONVENIENCE, AND AWARENESS**	**2/13/26 SIGNED CHAPTER 87**
S10075 SOLAGES (D)	**A11162 ZELLLNER**	**6/2/26 PASSED SENATE 5/29/26 PASSED ASSEMBLY**	**EXTEND THE PROVISION OF THE COMPETITIVE BIDDING STATUTE [GENERAL MUNICIPAL LAW §103] WHICH PERMITS PIGGYBACK PURCHASING. THE STATUTE HAD A SUNSET PROVISION MEANING THAT IT WOULD EXPIRE ON JUNE 30, 2026. THE BILLS PROPOSE TO AMEND THE STATUTE TO EXTEND THE SUNSET PROVISION UNTIL JUNE 30, 2027**	**6/26/26 SIGNED CHAPTER 147**
S6368B SKOUFIS (D)	**A3126B LUNSFORD (D)**	**4/22/26 PASSED SENATE 3/30326 PASSED ASSEMBLY**	**AN ACT TO AMEND THE EXECUTIVE LAW, IN RELATION TO REQUIRING THAT WHEN A COMPLAINT IS MADE TO LOCAL CODE ENFORCEMENT OF A VIOLATION OF THE UNIFORM FIRE PREVENTION AND BUILDING CODE OR LOCAL BUILDING CODES WHICH RESULTS IN THE ISSUANCE OF A COMPLIANCE ORDER, THE COMPLAINANT SHALL ALSO BE PROVIDED A COPY OF SUCH ORDER**	**PENDING SIGNATURE**
S9502A MARTINEZ (D)	**A10885B STERN (D)**	**6/2/26 PASSED SENATE 6/1/26 PASSES ASSEMBLY**	***TO AUTHORIZE* LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO ADOPT A PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION FOR SURVIVING SPOUSES OF PAID FIREFIGHTERS WHO ARE KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY.**	**PENDING SIGNATURE** PENDING PASSAGE BY EACH LOCAL GOVERNMENT BY RESOLUTION
S7316 HINCHEY (D)	**A8008 LUNSFORD (D)**	**5/18/26 PASSED SENATE 6/1/26 PASSED ASSEMBLY**	**REQUIRES THE FORFEITURE OF BENEFITS TO BE PAID PURSUANT TO A SERVICE AWARDS PROGRAM TO VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS WHO HAVE BEEN CONVICTED OF FELONIES COMMITTED AGAINST A VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT, VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY, FIRE DISTRICT, OR FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT.**	**PENDING SIGNATURE**
S5614 ADDABBO (D)	**A3681A WOERNER (D)**	**6/2/26 PASSED SENATE 1/28/26 PASSED ASSEMBLY**	**AN ACT TO AMEND THE GENERAL MUNICIPAL LAW, IN RELATION TO REMOVING RESTRICTIONS ON THE**	**PENDING SIGNATURE**

			FREQUENCY CERTAIN AUTHORIZED ORGANIZATIONS MAY CONDUCT BINGO GAMES	
S4675 JACKSON (D)	A688 BUTTENSCHON (D)	5/6/26 PASSED SENATE 4/29/26 PASSED ASSEMBLY	AN ACT TO AMEND THE EXECUTIVE LAW, IN RELATION TO PROVIDING MINIMUM BASIC TRAINING RELATED TO HANDLING EMERGENCY SITUATIONS INVOLVING INDIVIDUALS WITH ANY PHYSICAL AND/OR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY TO ALL FIRE-FIGHTERS	PENDING SIGNATURE REQUIRES ADDITIONAL TRAINING
S6233A MARTINEZ (D)	A6790A MCMAHON	6/1/26 PASSED SENATE 5/14/26 PASSED ASSEMBLY	THIS BILL INCREASES THE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' AND AMBULANCE WORKERS' PERSONAL INCOME TAX CREDIT FROM $200 TO $800 FOR ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS AND FROM $400 TO $1600 FOR ELIGIBLE MARRIED JOINT FILERS. ALSO ALLOWS FIRST RESPONDERS TO TAKE THE PROPERTY TAX CREDIT ALSO.	PENDING SIGNATURE

From Washington

📌 House Passes Senate Stopgap Funding Bill. After returning from August recess on Monday, the House passed the Senate's Continuing Resolution (CR) on Tuesday by a vote of 370-48. The President signed the CR the next day. The CR maintains current funding levels through December 11, delays the OMB Proposed Rule that would drastically alter the federal grant-making process, and delays the lapse of Surface-Transportation programs. The CR should pause major funding fights until after the midterms elections, at which time, according to House Appropriations Chair Tom Cole, appropriators will begin "working really hard once we know who the players are on the other side" of the election.

📌 House Intel Committee Releases 9/11 Commission Review Report. While meeting in Shanksville, Pennsylvania at the Flight 93 National Memorial, the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence released a Committee Report on the implementation of the 9/11 Commission Report recommendations. The new report is borne out of a year-long review of these recommendations and aims to show what has been implemented well from the 9/11 Commission, as well as what still needs to be improved.

READ THE FULL REPORT HERE:

https://intelligence.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/HPSCI-Final-9.11-Report.pdf

📌 NIOSH Releases Two FFFIPP Reports. NIOSH recently released two Fire Fighter Fatality Investigation and Prevention Program (FFFIPP) Reports:

- 🚨 F2025-05 CA: Career Firefighter Paramedic Suffers Head Trauma after Physical Assault – California (Report Slides)
- 🚨 F2026-07 ME: Lumber Mill Silo Fire and Subsequent Explosion Kills Two Firefighters and Critically Injures Thirteen More – Maine (Report Slides)

From Federal DOL/OSHA

- **Keith Sonderling is the current Acting US Secretary of Labor, since Lori-Chaves-DeRemer resigned in April.**

FIRE DISTRICT FINANCIAL NEWS

*****FIRE DISTRICT BUDGET PROCESS SCHEDULE 2026 available on the CAFDA.NET website. CAFDA.net***

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

110 State Street, 12th Floor; Albany, NY 12236

NYS-OSC Fire Service Audits

HANCOCK RURAL FIRE DISTRICT, DELAWARE COUNTY – BOARD OVERSIGHT

Audit Objective

Did the Hancock Rural Fire District (District) Board of Fire Commissioners (Board) adequately oversee financial operations of the District by ensuring contracts were complete, adopting required policies, attending the required training and auditing the Treasurer's records annually?

Audit Period

January 1, 2024 – November 14, 2025

Understanding the Audit Area

A board of fire commissioners is responsible for overseeing the District's financial operations. Effective oversight safeguards district assets, supports informed decision making, helps maintain public trust, ensures compliance with legal requirements and prevents mismanagement, waste and fraud.

A board should ensure contracts are complete and accurately reflect all agreed upon terms before approval to protect a district's interests and promote transparency. A board should also adopt and periodically review required policies, such as procurement, investment and code of ethics to establish clear expectations, ensure compliance with applicable laws and provide guidance for financial operations.

Commissioners should complete required training to understand their fiscal responsibilities and strengthen their ability to oversee a district's financial activities. In addition, a board should annually audit the treasurer's records to verify that financial transactions are accurate, funds are properly accounted for and financial activities comply with applicable laws and board policies. Collectively, these governance practices strengthen internal controls, reduce the risk of errors, waste, fraud and abuse and help ensure a district's financial operations are conducted with integrity and accountability.

The District has an annual contract with the Village for fire protection services and costs related to maintaining the firehouse. In 2025, the contract totaled $148,906 of the District's total budgeted appropriations of $209,080.

Audit Summary

The Board did not provide adequate oversight of the District's financial operations. As a result:

- *contracts were incomplete*
- *required policies were not adopted*
- ***Commissioners did not complete required fiscal oversight training***
- *the Board did not annually audit the Treasurer's records.*

These deficiencies reduced transparency and accountability and increased the risk of errors, waste, fraud and noncompliance with applicable laws.

Specifically, the **Board did not**:

- Ensure annual contracts included all agreed-upon financial terms or conduct a public hearing before approving and amending the fire protection contract, as required by New York State (NYS) Town Law (Town Law) Section 176.
- Develop and adopt required policies, including a procurement, investment and code of ethics policies, as required by NYS General Municipal Law (GML).
- Ensure all Commissioners completed required fiscal oversight training, as required by Town Law Section 176-e.
- Ensure the Treasurer submitted her records to the Board, in accordance with Town Law Section 177.

The audit report includes eight recommendations that, if implemented, will strengthen the Board's oversight of the District's financial operations by improving governance, enhancing compliance with statutory requirements, increasing transparency and accountability and reducing the risk of financial mismanagement.

READ THE COMPLETE REPORT HERE:

https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/local-government/audits/2026/pdf/hancock-rural-fire-district-2026-29.pdf

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SPRINGFIELD FIRE DISTRICT, OTSEGO COUNTY – BOARD OVERSIGHT

Audit Objective

Did the Springfield Fire District (District) Board of Fire Commissioners (Board) provide adequate oversight of the Treasurer's accounting records and financial reports?

Audit Period

January 1, 2024 – February 19, 2026.

We extended the audit period back to February 1, 2023 to review Commissioners' training certifications and forward to June 23, 2026 to review the status of Annual Financial Report (AFR) filings.

Understanding the Audit Area

The Board is responsible for overseeing the Treasurer's accounting records and financial reports to ensure the District's financial information is complete, accurate and reliable. Effective oversight helps safeguard public funds, supports informed financial decision making, ensures compliance with applicable laws and reporting requirements and promotes accountability, transparency and public trust. It also provides independent assurances that financial transactions are properly recorded, assets are safeguarded and errors, irregularities, mismanagement, waste or fraud are identified and addressed in a timely manner.

The District's budgeted appropriations for the 2024 and 2025 fiscal years were $119,500 and $182,629, respectively.

Audit Summary

The Board did not provide adequate oversight of the Treasurer's accounting records and financial reports or ensure that all required AFRs were filed. As a result, the Board lacked assurance that the District's accounting records and financial reports were accurate, financial operations were properly monitored and statutory reporting requirements were met. In addition, when AFRs are not filed, the Board, taxpayers, the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) and other interested parties are prevented from obtaining timely and reliable information to assess the District's financial condition.

Specifically, the **Board did not**:

- *Ensure the accuracy of the Treasurer's financial records and reports.*
- *Conduct an annual audit of the Treasurer's records.*
- *Ensure all Commissioners completed the mandatory fiscal oversight training in a timely manner.*
- *Ensure that the Treasurer filed the District's AFRs from 2021 through 2025, which remained unfiled at the end of our audit period.*

This report includes seven recommendations that, if implemented, will improve the Board's oversight of the Treasurer's accounting records and financial reports, improve accountability and transparency, enhance compliance with statutory requirements and provide the Board with more reliable financial information for decision making.

READ THE COMPLETE REPORT HERE:

https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/local-government/audits/2026/pdf/springfield-fire-district-2026-43.pdf

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NORTH BROOKFIELD VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT, MADISON COUNTY – INVESTMENTS

Audit Objective

Did North Brookfield Volunteer Fire Department (Department) officials establish written policies and procedures for investing Department funds?

Audit Period

January 1, 2024 – March 24, 2026

We extended the audit period back to July 1, 2008 to review the Department's investment records.

Understanding the Audit Area

Fire department officials should establish written investment policies and procedures to ensure department funds are invested safely and prudently and are readily available to meet operational needs. Effective cash management and investment policies and procedures help promote accountability, transparency and sound stewardship of department resources.

As of December 31, 2025, the Department had approximately $58,000 in cash and cash equivalents, of which approximately $39,000 was invested in certificates of deposits that are Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation insured.

Audit Summary

Department officials did not adopt a written investment policy or establish procedures to govern the investment of Department funds or provide a framework to help ensure funds were invested safely and prudently and that the Department's resources were not exposed to unnecessary financial risk.

During the audit period, the Department invested $77,200 with a local tax preparer/insurance agent who issued promissory notes that promised an 8 percent annual return. Without written investment policies and

procedures, officials lacked formal guidance for evaluating investment risks and determining whether the investment was appropriate for the Department. T***he individual whom the Department invested their funds with subsequently filed for bankruptcy in April 2023 and was convicted of operating a Ponzi scheme involving more than $50 million. Although the Department recovered $6,442 through the bankruptcy proceedings, it lost $45,758 of its principal investment and never received a return on the investment.***

This report includes two recommendations that, if implemented, will strengthen the Department's investment practices and help safeguard its financial resources.

READ THE COMPLETE REPORT HERE:

https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/local-government/audits/2026/pdf/north-brookfield-volunteer-fire-department-2026-57.pdf

THE FIRE CHIEF'S OFFICE

Leading the Four Types of People in a Fire Department

Colby Rich

Key Takeaways

- By learning about crewmembers, fire department officers can identify them as one of four types—committed and competent, committed and incompetent, uncommitted and competent, or uncommitted and incompetent—to know how to effectively lead and motivate those people so that they meet—and exceed—the organization's standard.
- Type 3 fire department members often are more difficult to deal with than the other three types of department personnel. They're proficient in the skills that they need to perform the job, but their attitude is poor, even to the point that it spreads to others. Often, giving these people a voice to be heard is the first step to winning them back.
- Type 4 fire department members can't do the job and don't care that they can't. These people are a danger to themselves, the rest of the crew and citizens. Difficult conversations are the first step in attempting to revitazlize these people. Maybe these people need a wake-up call. Maybe they need to retire. In any case, they can't stay as they are.

I've been a full-time firefighter for 15 years, but I also have served as a pastor for more than 20 years. One of my pastor friends once told me that "you can't lead a congregation that you don't know." His words ring just as true for me as a station officer as they do for my ministry.

It's impossible to effectively lead people when you don't invest time and resources in those relationships. Sometimes, getting to know our people helps us to see how blessed we are to have them on our side. At other times, getting to know them forces us to see how much work that we have to do. Either way, building relationships is the only way to really evaluate where our people are, their strengths and weaknesses, and how to communicate with and lead them in the most productive way. Undoubtedly, this process begins with identifying the people in our organization, so we can better determine how to lead them.

FOUR TYPES OF FIRE SERVICE PEOPLE

As I look at the people with whom I've served in churches and fire departments over the years, four distinct types of people become evident. I believe that we can link people in our organizations to each one of these categories and that understanding into which category they fall can help us to lead them to bigger and better things. The four types are:

- Type 1: Committed and Competent.
- Type 2: Committed and Incompetent.
- Type 3: Uncommitted and Competent.
- Type 4: Uncommitted and Incompetent.

Type 1 people are committed to the profession and the organization. They're self-motivated and trustworthy. They're effective in performing tasks that are given to them. We want all of our people to be in this group. I believe that everyone can get to this point, but we know that not all of our people fit into this category.

Type 2 people are committed to the career and the organization, but they aren't trained properly to do the job to the standards of the organization. When I think of Type 2 people, I think of rookies. They're committed to

getting better but need training. With a little time and effort, these people can gain competency and move to Type 1.

Type 3 people can do the job effectively, but they often have a negative attitude that can bring down the morale of the entire crew/organization. No leader wants to deal with negativity, but the real danger with these people is that, because they lack the commitment to the profession and the organization, they easily can slip into the fourth group.

Many, if not most of us, have Type 4 people in our organization. They can't do the job effectively, but more importantly, they don't care. These people are retired-in-place, which can happen just as easily after three years of service as it can after three decades. Somewhere along the way, these people forgot the mission.

Take a minute and think about people who are in your crew or organization. Where do they fit? The goal is upward movement to Type 1. Here are a few tips to help your people to get there.

TYPE 1

Type 1 individuals need encouragement and opportunity. If you want to have a great organization, commitment and competence must be the minimum standard, or the baseline. When everyone who you hire knows that this is the expectation, you can change the culture over time.

Give your Type 1 people responsibility and learn to trust them. As they start to take more ownership, they will begin to lift up those who are around them.

I have a firefighter on my crew who loves training. He's interested in attending several specialized training courses. Our department tries to accommodate these types of trainings, but staffing and budget resources don't make this possible always. This easily can frustrate eager firefighters. As a station officer, though, I can help to fill that gap. We can learn skills on our own and train on them together at the station. I might even task the firefighter with researching ways to accomplish this training. We can develop an entry-level class for others who are in our department. There are many ways to provide encouragement and opportunity.

TYPE 2

Type 2 individuals need training and reinforcement. They are passionate but need direction. Make sure that, as their leader, you set the standard that you want them to live up to. As they grow in competence, give them positive feedback and encourage them to continue moving forward. Pair them with others who meet the standard to let them see how it's done.

If at all possible, don't put your Type 2 people in a position in which they're mentored by someone who doesn't meet the standard. This breeds more firefighters who don't meet the standards.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we hired several rookies. Their academy was completed entirely online. Because of distance-learning accommodations during that time, many didn't have any in-person skills training. Although some saw this as a problem, our crew used it as an opportunity. We got to work with a clean slate. These firefighters had no bad habits, and with patience and training, many became valuable parts of the team. Several of them now serve as field training officers. They were passionate, and we provided direction.

TYPE 3

Type 3 people often are more difficult to deal with than the other types. It's difficult to correct them, because they're proficient in the skills that they need to perform the job, but their attitude often is like a poison: The more that it spreads, the more others become disillusioned with the organization or even with the job itself.

These people must be challenged. As leaders, we should be willing to come alongside and encourage them.

We must know our people. Often, the things that create bitterness in their life have nothing to do with the fire service. We bring our marriage problems, family stresses and trauma with us to the firehouse. When we don't have an outlet, these things can spew out almost uncontrollably.

Find out why these people no longer are committed to the job that they once loved. The reasons might surprise you. Give them a voice and let them be heard. Often, that's the first step to winning them back.

One of my friends is an officer at a neighboring department. He had a firefighter who was a very knowledgeable firefighter/paramedic but was disillusioned with the department and administration. My friend pulled him aside. He started with crediting the firefighter/paramedic's knowledge and service thus far but then told him that he developed a reputation as a disgruntled employee who no one really wanted to work with.

This is key: Every employee brings something good to the table. You must give a positive attribute for every negative one that you bring up.
The firefighter/paramedic acknowledged that he had a poor attitude. Later, he thanked his officer for being open and honest with him, even crediting this one conversation as the primary reason that he remained in the fire service.

TYPE 4

Type 4 people are the worst of the worst. They can't do the job, and they don't care. In the fire service, these people are a danger to themselves, to the rest of the crew and to the citizens who they swore to protect.
Unfortunately, difficult conversations are the first step in attempting to revitalize these people. Most of us don't like to have these talks, but they are a vital part of leadership. Maybe these people need a wake-up call. Maybe they need to retire. Whatever the case might be, they can't stay as they are.
When I first promoted to station officer, I had a crew member who didn't want to make calls, work out or do many of the other requirements of the job. In his mind, those things were for the younger members. I sat down with him and explained my expectations. I expected our crew to be the one that the command staff always could count on to get the job done. I told him that he had the experience and knowledge to help us become that crew, but I needed his help in setting an example for those younger members. I explained that I can't hold them accountable to a standard that he and I don't meet.
Over the next few months, he changed. Others in the department took note. He started to live up to the standard that I set. It was a difficult conversation but one of the most worthwhile ones of my career.

KNOW YOUR PEOPLE

As a leader, knowing how to effectively lead and motivate our people starts with knowing them. Identifying where they are helps us to determine where they need to go. Building relationships isn't always easy, but it is always the right way.
Identify where your people are, let them know when they don't meet the standard, and then serve them by helping them to exceed it. This is one of the most fundamental jobs of an officer.

THE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Fire District Election Schedule for 2026 available on the CAFDA.net website.
CAFDA.net

Click on this PDF to see notes from DOL related to Prevailing Wage Rates for Construction, Article 8

POSITIVE OUTCOMES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FIRE SERVICE

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

- A new law in New Jersey provides more flexibility for fire departments to purchase and lease fire apparatus and some emergency equipment. Specifically, the new law extends the timeframe for fire districts to lease or service new fire engines, apparatus, and certain equipment for up to 20 years, instead of five years. The law also extends the timeframe to finance capital projects from three years to 10 years.

- The city of Pittsburgh will get eight new pumpers and five aerials thanks to a $55m donation from Highmark Health and University of Pittsburgh Medical Center.

- A driver accused of intentionally driving through a crash scene and hitting a firefighter Thursday in southeast Bloomington, Illinois, was arrested and charged with aggravated battery, reckless driving and leaving the scene of a personal injury crash. The firefighter suffered minor injuries and was treated at the scene by fellow firefighters.

FIRE SERVICE CHALLENGES

- The Danielson, Connecticut Fire Department is standing down because it does not have enough gear to keep firefighters safe, officials say. The stand-down began last week, and officials are in contact with mutual aid agencies to ensure the borough is covered in case of emergencies. Officials pointed the finger at the Danielson Borough Council, saying the gear issue has not been addressed by the government body. Officials said the Fire Department has 32 active members, including 19 interior firefighters and 4 trainees, but only eight sets of gear are usable and none of it properly fits.

SATISTICS FOR THE FIRE SER1VICE

FIREFIGHTER HEALTH AND SAFETY – PROTECTING OUR OWN

FIREFIGHTER FATALITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

60

In 2025 we experienced 78 LODDs reported nationally.!

- **Data from US Fire Administration on LODD:** https://apps.usfa.fema.gov/firefighter-fatalities/
- **Information on FF injuries and deaths from the Secret List:** https://www.firefighterclosecalls.com/
- **Information of Fire Apparatus MVCs:** https://www.emergencyvehicleresponse.com/

Apparatus Accidents in the News:

- Two Samburg VFD volunteers firefighters are recovering after their fire truck overturned while responding to a field fire in Obion County, Tennessee. Both firefighters were treated and released, the tanker was totaled.
- Willowfork, Texas Fire Department firefighters responded on August 25, 2026, to a request for assistance at the Ross Fire in Palo Pinto County, Texas, joining other emergency crews in efforts to protect lives, homes, and property threatened by wildfire. A truck pulling a large trailer lost control of the trailer and crossed into the path of the Willowfork tender striking the apparatus head-on. The fire apparatus sustained major damage in the collision, and firefighters were treated for their injuries.
- a China Grove, North Carolina Fire engine was involved in a crash on Interstate 85 while assisted the Bostian Heights Fire Department, officials said. A car ran into the back of the fire engine, causing "significant damage. No firefighters were hurt. The engine had been strategically positioned as a protective barrier, and it did exactly what it was intended to do — shield and protect the people working ahead of it.

Firefighter Deaths, Injuries, in the News

- A federal wildlife officer died while helping evacuate residents in the Railroad South Fire in Oklahoma. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife Officer David Taylor, 38, of Scio, OR, was going door to door alongside local emergency crews helping families get to safety.
- .

THE BUILDING AND FIRE CODE ISSUES – WEEKLY REPORT ON FIRE FATALITIES

- **Home Fire Fatalities in the News**: https://apps.usfa.fema.gov/civilian-fatalities/

Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings in NYS	55
8/28/26 Sparrow Bush, Male 67	
Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS	107
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally	807
Top 3 States with the greatest 1&2 Family Deaths	#1 PA 61
	#2 NY 55

	#3 OH 45
Civilian home fire fatalities in 2026: 1257 = 34.9 weekly	
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 my question to you is; when does a new home become an old home?	

RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT

***A Message From FASNY Leadership Concerning Nominal Compensation

The Truth About the Status of Nominal Compensation Legislation for Volunteer Firefighters in New York
FASNY Response to the August 18, 2026 NYSAFC Statement

The Firefighters Association of the State of New York (FASNY) is compelled to respond to the recent statement issued by the New York State Association of Fire Chiefs (NYSAFC), in conjunction with the Association of Fire Districts of the State of New York (AFDSNY), and the County Fire Coordinators' Association of the State of New York regarding nominal compensation legislation. While NYSAFC is entitled to its own opinions, it is not entitled to invent its own facts to support such opinions. Among its many falsehoods, the NYSAFC statement mischaracterizes both FASNY's role in the legislative process and the benefits contained within the bill now advancing in both houses of the New York State Legislature.

We encourage you to review the article in the July-August 2026 issue of *The Volunteer Firefighter magazine.* Apparently, it is this article which prompted the public statement from NYSAFC and its so-called "coalition" cohorts. The article about the proposed legislation published in *The Volunteer Firefighter* was accurate when published and remains true today. It contains a straight-forward and detailed description of the benefits that volunteer firefighters in this State will realize when the legislation is passed. How that article became the basis for NYSAFC's vitriol and feigned outrage remains a mystery.

While the article in *The Volunteer Firefighter* gave credit to the aforementioned fire service organizations for our collective work on this initiative, the acknowledgement and accolades for collaboration went unappreciated. Some members of "the coalition" apparently took exception and chose to express their maligned thoughts publicly, rather than expressing them directly to FASNY leadership. The NYSAFC statement is both disappointing and disingenuous. Their claim for the need to present a "united front" for the fire service contained in the same statement that launches false and slanderous allegations against FASNY is a breathtaking example of their hypocrisy. Apparently, in their minds the unifying concepts of communication, collaboration, and cooperation are on a one-way street that runs only in the direction they are headed.

The most unfortunate part of the NYSAFC statement is that it fumbled away an opportunity to share the most important message to the reader, which is that the nominal compensation legislation that was endorsed by FASNY is now farther along in the legislative process than we have ever been with nominal compensation legislation, with identical bills sponsored in both the State Senate and State Assembly.

The Original Bill Promoted By The "Coalition" Was Never Going to Pass as Written

At a meeting on April 16, 2026 with legislative sponsors and every fire service organization— including FASNY — at the table, we were all told by legislative leadership that the original Assembly bill (A.10630) as introduced and as promoted by the coalition, was never going to pass as written. That bill required the authorizing local government "to fund the program" entirely on its own, with no opportunity for state assistance of any kind. It offered no payment option other than an arbitrary cash per-call or on-call stipend for interior firefighters, it did not include a state income tax exemption for the volunteers who received it, and it omitted any measure of oversight to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse. In addition, the original bill was only introduced in the Assembly and there was no companion bill being sponsored in the Senate.

The Big Lie

The NYSAFC statement attributes the original bill's inevitable failure as being a result of FASNY "asking for funding with only days left in the session". That claim ignores the truth, which is that representatives from all statewide fire service organizations were told on April 16, 2026 that the original bill would not pass as written. The shortcomings contained within the original bill itself caused it to be withdrawn. The fact that the original bill would have left smaller and financially constrained departments unable to compete with affluent ones —

one of the gross inequities FASNY identified from the outset – was only one of a host of problems with the original bill.

The Current Bill Advancing Is a Stronger, Better Bill

Unlike the prior version, the current bill is sponsored in both houses of the Legislature — as Senate Bill S.10597 (Senator Monica Martinez) and its Assembly companion, A.10630-A (Assemblywoman Michaelle Solages), the chairs, respectively, of each house's Local Government Committee. Assemblywoman Solages sponsored the original bill, and then modified her bill in May 2026 to substitute it with the much-improved version of A.10630-A that is pending. **The current Senate and Assembly bills are substantively identical, reflecting genuine, coordinated support behind the legislation now moving forward.** We appreciate the diligence and thoughtfulness that Senator Martinez and Assemblywoman Solages have demonstrated throughout their work on this bill.

It should not be lost upon the reader that the bill described and lamented in the NYSAFC statement does not exist. Rather, it was withdrawn and replaced in full by its sponsor to the current, improved version.

The current bill gives departments a wider range of compensation options that the original bill did not have. It expressly defines a "nominal fee" to include "a stipend, fee, gift card or gift certificate, gratuity, or other qualifying item of monetary value," so departments of every size can structure a program that fits their budget and their members' needs.

The current bill exempts these nominal fees "from payroll and income taxation under New York State law", in that it excludes the benefit from being included in a volunteer's income for New York State tax purposes. This was not in the original bill referenced by NYSAFC.

The current bill creates the State funding mechanism the original bill lacked entirely: the Volunteer Fire Service Nominal Compensation Assistance Fund, initially authorized at $15 million and prioritized for departments with demonstrated need and lower revenues under $400,000 annually. Where the original bill would have made every department pay for its own program out of local funds alone, the current bill ensures that a volunteer's ability to receive nominal compensation does not depend on the wealth of the community he or she serves.

Advocating for a Workable Program Is Progress, Not Opposition

FASNY has consistently supported the implementation of an effective, comprehensive, and thoughtful program for nominal compensation as a tool for both recruitment and retention. FASNY opposed endorsing a proposal that lacked responsible oversight and reporting responsibilities, failed to authorize a broad range of benefits including gift cards and other types of compensation, lacked income tax protections, and would have let departments in affluent communities outbid their neighboring working-class departments for the same volunteers, with no state-funding mechanism to level that playing field.

Each of the improvements now in the bill — sponsorship in both houses of the Legislature, the broader range of payment options, the State income tax exemption for recipients, and the State funding piece — are provisions the original bill did not contain and are exactly the safeguards that FASNY – and to our understanding, the other fire service organizations – identified as important to make this legislation work for every fire department in New York, not just those in the wealthy communities that can afford it. There is still more work to be done on the current version of the bill to further refine it and enhance it for New York's volunteer fire service.

FASNY remains committed to working with the Legislature and with every bona fide regional and statewide fire service organization to see this bill enacted as part of a broader recruitment and retention strategy. That strategy also includes an increase to the tax credit for volunteer firefighters and ambulance personnel, real property tax relief for volunteers, greater workplace protections for volunteers, and incentives designed to attract future generations of volunteer firefighters. **That work is best done at the table, not through public tantrums and missives posted on blogs that deliberately misstate FASNY's longstanding positions and advocacy on key issues affecting the volunteer fire service.**

While coalitions that seek to align various groups to promote their own self-interests and agenda will come and go, **FASNY is and will remain as the only state-wide fire service organization whose mission is to serve the men and women that do the job that every other fire service organization depends on for its success and existence,** you, the volunteer firefighters of the State of New York.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: I HAD A MUCH LONGER COMMENTARY LAST NIGHT BUT I'M NOT GOING TO GET SUCKED INTO THIS PISSING CONTEST. ALL I'M GOING TO SAY IS GET YOUR STUFF TOGETHER, SIT DOWN AT THE BIG CONFERENCE TABLE AND MEET IN THE MIDDLE FOR THE SAKE OF THE VOLUNTEER FIRE SERVICE THAT IS SLOWLY SLIPPING OVER THE EDGE.
LOOK FORWARD TO A SOLUTION AND WORK TO MAKE IT HAPPEN. DON'T LET THE POLITICIANS IN ALBANY SMELL THE BLOOD IN THE WATER. THE PROPOSED BILL NEEDS TO BE REINTRODUCED IN THE 2027-28 LEGISLATIVE SESSION. YOU HAVE TIME TO START ACTING LIKE ADULTS. **NO ONE** IS IN CHARGE OF THE VOLUNTEER FIRE SERVICE IN THIS STATE, WE HAVE A LARGE CAPABLE GROUP THAT WHEN EGOS ARE PUT ASIDE CAN MAKE THINGS HAPPEN. NOW; MAKE THINGS HAPPEN IN A POSITIVE WAY! THE AVERAGE FIREFIGHTER ON THE STREET IS COUNTING ON ALL OF YOU.]

*****The Legacy Engine: Structural Reform for Volunteer Fire Department Sustainability***

Tom McKellips

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- *Across volunteer and combination fire departments, a quiet pattern is emerging: Fewer people are doing more work, and the system looks stable right up until it fails.*
- *In many volunteer fire departments, response volume and operational load are carried by a small core group: the "active few." The system still functions but only because the same people absorb more demand. From the outside, a department appears stable. From the inside, it's fragile.*
- Sustainable volunteer fire departments take a different approach than what convention dictates. They measure participation concentration, not just headcount; track attrition patterns year over year; identify overload before morale collapses; design onboarding to reduce *active few* dependency; build leadership succession intentionally; align expectations with realistic capacity; and design systems that don't require heroism to survive.

Citizens call 9-1-1, and they expect help in minutes. In most of the United States, that help still comes from volunteers. However, across rural and combination departments, a quiet pattern is emerging: Fewer people are doing more work, and the system looks stable right up until it fails.
We keep talking about recruitment. "We need better marketing." "We need social media." "We need to 'ask more people.'"
Recruitment matters, but recruitment alone doesn't explain why departments that have respectable membership rosters still struggle to staff apparatus, maintain training momentum or fill officer positions.
The deeper issue is sustainability.

THE PROBLEM ISN'T HEADCOUNT

Most departments measure operational health by total membership. If the roster lists 28 members, leadership assumes that the department is healthy. However, sustainability isn't about total numbers. It's about participation distribution.
In many departments, response volume and operational load are carried by a small core group: the "active few." These are the responders who make most of the calls, show up to most of the drills, handle informal mentorship, take on administrative burden and step into leadership gaps. A*s participation narrows, workload concentrates. The system still functions but only because the same people absorb more demand. From the outside, it appears stable. From the inside, it's fragile.*

EMOTIONAL STRAIN NO ONE TALKS ABOUT

Over years of observing volunteer departments and speaking with firefighters and officers, several themes surface consistently: duty, camaraderie, leadership climate, time pressure, politics, family tension.
Volunteers aren't lazy. They aren't indifferent. Most join because they care deeply about their community. However, many experience a quiet internal conflict: *They feel obligated to stay, but they increasingly are drained by workload, cultural friction or unclear direction.* ***So, they don't quit dramatically. They withdraw slowly. They respond less. Then one day, they're gone. The remaining active few absorb the difference, again.***

LEADERSHIP MATTERS, BUT IT ISN'T THE WHOLE ANSWER

Strong leadership improves morale. Volunteers stay where they feel valued. They stay where communication is open. They stay where they experience belonging and camaraderie, where their contributions are recognized, and where they are trusted with meaningful responsibility and opportunities to grow. The management research of Abraham Maslow, who's the author of "Eupsychian Management: A Journal" (Dorsey Press, 1967), emphasized these same conditions. Leadership behaviors influence retention, but even excellent leadership can't override structural overload. If call volume rises, then expectations increase, compliance requirements expand and participation narrows, and good leadership only delays the breaking point. The issue isn't just culture. It's load concentration.

TIME ISN'T AN EXCUSE; IT'S A WARNING SIGN

Time often is cited as the reason that volunteers step back. It's easy to dismiss that as an excuse. However, time pressure frequently is a system variable. If five members handle most responses, training, meetings, fundraisers and administrative work, their time constraint reflects structural imbalance, not weak commitment.

When the same few people are required to do more each year just to maintain the appearance of stability, burnout becomes predictable, and predictable problems can be measured.

SUSTAINABILITY SHIFT

Traditional fire service thinking asks, "How do we get more volunteers?" A sustainability mindset asks, "How long can our current participation pattern support our current workload?"

That question forces a different kind of leadership. It pushes leaders to consider:

- *What happens if two high-volume responders leave?*
- *What happens if call volume increases 10 percent next year?*
- *What happens if new compliance requirements add training hours?*
- *What happens if one officer steps down?*

If the answer to any of those questions is "The same five people will figure it out," your department isn't short on volunteers; it's short on sustainability.

THREE STRUCTURAL BLIND SPOTS

From a systems perspective, most struggling departments share three blind spots:

Active few dependency. The department appears stable, but a small percentage of members carry a disproportionate share of workload. The loss of even one high-participation member creates ripple effects.

Cultural debt. Traditions, internal politics and outdated expectations accumulate quietly. Volunteers absorb friction because of loyalty, until the friction outweighs the mission. Service might begin as purpose beyond the self, but the system should never allow service beyond self to become destruction of self.

Reactive recruitment. *Recruitment efforts focus on filling empty spots rather than redistributing workload or redesigning participation models. New recruits enter a strained system and quickly mirror the same burnout patterns.*

None of these are motivational failures. They are structural conditions.

WHAT SUSTAINABLE DEPARTMENTS DO DIFFERENTLY

Sustainable departments take a different approach. They:

- Measure participation concentration, not just headcount.
- Track attrition patterns year over year.
- Identify overload before morale collapses.
- Design onboarding to reduce active few dependency.
- Build leadership succession intentionally.
- Align expectations with realistic capacity.
- Stop asking volunteers to be heroic.
- Design systems that don't require heroism to survive.

A so-called People First organizational development framework protects the volunteer's time, value, trust and opportunity to grow while still meeting the department's responsibility to the community.

WHAT YOU CAN DO NEXT MONTH

If you're a chief or officer, here are four practical starting points.

- *Map participation*. Identify your top responders. What percentage of total calls are they handling? If the same names dominate reports, acknowledge the risk.
- *Stress-test your roster*. If two high-participation members leave tomorrow, what would change operationally? Write it down. If the answer makes you uncomfortable, that discomfort is useful.
- *Reduce unnecessary load*. Examine administrative, meeting and training structures. What can be simplified? What can be delegated? *What expectations are cultural habits rather than operational necessities?*
- *Redesign onboarding*. Instead of inserting new members into existing overload, create roles that genuinely distribute the work. Sustainability must be designed around both the mission and the people who are asked to carry it.

QUIET COLLAPSE

Volunteer departments rarely fail overnight. They erode. The warning signs are subtle. The names on every report are the same. Training compliance is achieved by the same small group. There's an increasing reliance on mutual aid. There's a growing silence in meetings. Leadership fatigue is masked by professionalism.The collapse is quiet, because ***the most committed members hold it together, until they can't.***

REAL LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITY

Sustainability isn't about motivational speeches. It's about systems stewardship. It's about recognizing that attrition often is structural, not personal. It's about understanding that recruitment without load redesign accelerates burnout. It's about measuring what most departments never measure.

Volunteer service is one of the strongest civic traditions in this country, but tradition alone doesn't guarantee survival. If we want volunteer departments to endure, we must move beyond headcount and heroism. We must design for sustainability. That starts with asking better questions before the collapse makes the decision for you.

5 SIGNS YOUR DEPARTMENT IS STRUCTURALLY OVERLOADED

1. Same Names Appear on Every Run Report

If a small percentage of members are responding to the majority of calls, your department is operating on concentration, not capacity.

2. Training Compliance Depends on the "Active Few"

If mandatory certifications and drills consistently are completed by the same core group, the system is narrowing, even if total membership looks stable.

3. Leadership Roles Are "Filled" by Default

When officer positions are accepted out of obligation rather than readiness, succession is reactive, not sustainable.

4. Recruitment Adds Members but Doesn't Reduce Workload

If new volunteers enter the department but the operational burden on senior members doesn't decrease, your structure hasn't changed, only the roster has.

5. You're One Departure Away from Mutual-Aid Dependency

If losing two high-participation responders would affect response capability significantly, your margin of safety is thin.

Structural overload rarely announces itself loudly. It hides behind dedication and professionalism. The question isn't whether your volunteer's care; it's whether your system protects them from carrying too much for too long.

QUESTION TO FIRE DISTRICTS: *Would you be willing to provide nominal compensation to your volunteers, for calls or to stand by in station i.e. Duty Crews to answer calls?*

We realize that not all departments/districts will be able to afford nominal compensation but may be able to afford gas cards, or amazon gift cards or other nominal compensatory rewards for participation. We also understand that there will need to be strict policies and administration of payments so that they are not abused by either payors or payees. It has to be fair and equally applied.

Let us know how likely it would be for you to use nominal compensation to recruit or retain volunteer firefighters for your fire district? Email your reply to secretary@CAFDA.net

CHANGING ORGANIZATIONS

Town of Dryden in discussions of a unified fire district

Town of Dryden officials are in the process of potentially creating a unified fire district.

The proposal, which the town is calling the Dryden Fire District, would consolidate business operations of the fire departments that are presently under contract with the town.

The fire district that is under consideration would include the W.B. Strong Fire Company of Freeville, the Varna Volunteer Fire Company and the Neptune Hose Co. No. 1 of Dryden.

Town officials and the three fire companies are now in the midst of discussions, following conversations at Dryden town board meetings.

Town Supervisor Jason Leifer noted in the past that the villages of Etna and Freeville, both of which are within the town of Dryden, would have to approve the creation of the district under New York state law.

If approved, a fire commissioners election would be held starting in 2027.

Leifer said on May 21 that each fire department is a nonprofit with a separate budget, and the proposed district would merge them into one budget line.

A January deadline is in place, as efforts from town officials and the three departments to work out logistics begin.

Town Deputy Supervisor Dan Lamb recommended at the June 11 meeting that work should be completed before the deadline.

“The initial structuring of the fire district is where it’s going to take some intense work, and people who understand what assets are among the departments, how they should be allocated, what the current needs are and what the long-term needs are in terms of building capacity or apparatus,” Lamb added. “The public will never see a difference in terms of first responders. These departments are high performing, so they’re going to be out the door just like they always have been.”

Dryden Fire Board Chair Tom Pirko, who has spoken on behalf of the three fire companies, mentioned that so far, local firefighters’ reactions to the proposed unified fire district have been mixed.

“I think there’s a lot of nerves because nobody really knows what it’s going to look like,” Pirko noted, adding that the firefighters do have a “strong idea” of how the district could come out. “It’s very unlikely, but it could go very badly. Again, very unlikely, but it could.”

At the May 21 town board meeting, Pirko expressed his confidence in each of the three departments and how they operate.

“This isn’t an operational issue with the three departments,” Pirko added. “They’re very well-run departments that work together very well with very good leadership.”

Update to this ongoing endeavor

Representatives for the future Dryden Fire District met with the Dryden Town Board Thursday to discuss a solid plan of action for the working group and potential commissioners.

The discussion revolved around an initiative to combine Dryden’s three fire departments, Neptune Hose Co. #1 of Dryden, the Varna Volunteer Fire Company and W.B. Strong Fire Company of Freeville, into a single fire district for the Dryden area. The idea began to take shape at a town board meeting in May, when representatives from the Corning Fire District gave a presentation on forming a fire district. The May meeting was well-attended by local firefighters.

A main topic for lawyers working with the future district, Steve Shahan and Mike Perehinec, was whether they could develop a budget within the timeline originally proposed for the working group responsible for consolidating budgets and resources. “I think there was a joint decision from the working committee that we

are not going to be able to pull this off to form a fire district 2026 in time for them to form a budget," Shahan told the board.

Later, a member of the working group and Chair of the Neptune Hose Co. #1 of Dryden Board Tom Pirko clarified the district would form in January of 2027 and would manage the three departments' typical budgets separately for one year while they take time to consolidate into a single operating budget.

Pirko said the original timeline gave the working group only two weeks to combine the fire departments' budgets. "There was no realistic way to get it done in the time frame that everybody thought it was going to work — and if we tried, we had a really big risk of kind of setting ourselves up for failure," said Pirko.

Standing in the way of district formation are a series of votes and procedures, for which the process would begin Sept. 10, according to Shahan.

A vote that night would set a public hearing for Oct. 1, and then votes by the boards of Dryden, Varna and Freeville. If the three municipalities all vote to form the district, residents could stall progress, if they so wished, by filing a "properly formatted petition," said Shahan, at which point a referendum would be required.

If all goes smoothly, the district could be formed as early as November, but January 2027 was the goal for the town. Five commissioners will be named before then, and then in Dec. 2027, the district would hold an election for the commissioner roles.

The commissioner elections would set up the slate for future, staggered elections. The top-voted commissioner would have a full five-year term, followed by truncated terms for each trailing commissioner based on their vote ranking.

The fifth-place commissioner would serve only one year.

"I think the important part for everyone to understand is, at this point, the district work group, and who are likely to be the district commissioners, are all members or supporters of the fire departments," said Pirko of the change for local first responders. "We all have the best interest of keeping those three departments running as much the way that they currently are as possible so that we continue to have the best emergency response for our community as possible."

FIRE APPARATUS

Internal Intake Valves: Fire Pump Panel Design, Pros, Cons & Maintenance

Andy Soccodato

When it comes to fire apparatus design, intake valve selection is one of those decisions that can quietly impact everything, from pump panel layout to long-term maintenance.

In this Training Minutes video, Andy Soccodato takes a closer look at internal intake valves and how they compare to external options. While external valves offer flexibility and can be added after delivery, internal intake valves are built into the apparatus and create a cleaner, more streamlined pump panel.

That cleaner design comes with tradeoffs. Internal valves typically need to be specified during the build process, can increase upfront cost, and often require more involved maintenance since access isn't as simple as removing a component from the panel.

The video also walks through operational differences, including manual, pneumatic, and electronic controls, along with where internal intake valves are most commonly found on modern apparatus.

One point that can't be overstated: routine valve exercise is critical**.** Whether internal or external, a valve that isn't regularly operated is a valve that may fail when you need it most.

If you're involved in apparatus specification, pump operations, or fleet maintenance, this is a practical overview that highlights both the advantages and the real-world considerations of internal intake valves.

Watch YouTube Video Here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LE-kEg8zzoA

[EDITOR'S NOTE; HIGHLY RECOMMEND INTERNAL MASTER INTAKE VALVES, WE HAVE SPECCED THEM ON OUR LEFT, RIGHT AND REAR SUCTION INTAKES.]

GREEN ENERGY AND THE IMPACT ON THE FIRE SERVICE

No reports found this week.

NEIGHBOR'S HELPING NEIGHBORS, thank you for your support!!

New York Women in Fire Day



Hoags Corners VFD

All you can eat breakfast buffet, 1st Sunday of each month. $15.00 8am to 11am.
7237 NY-66, East Nassau, NY 12062

Gansevoort Fire Department Breakfast

See you in the fall, Sunday September 20th to be exact.

Clifton Park Fire Department Breakfast

Next Breakfast will be held in October at a date to be announced.

Speigletown Fire Department Breakfast 2nd Sunday of each month

Sunday October 11th from 7:30 to 11:30, $10 adults, $5 children, under 5 free

You're Invited! Firefighter's Home Open House September 26

Join us on Saturday, September 26th, for The Firefighter's Home Open House.
When: Saturday, September 26th from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

We salute all of the kitchen help who hustle, giving up their Sunday mornings, to make these events
special for all the attendees and work hard to support their fire company's. Thank you for your tough work and dedication.

GENERAL INTEREST TO ALL

***Imposter Syndrome in the Fire Service: The Disservice Senior Members Heap on Probationary Firefighters*

Dana Larkin

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- It can be argued that the uncertainty that some firefighters feel about their suitability to share their perspectives is rooted in the long-held fire service premise that probationary and rookie firefighters' take on concepts isn't valid and must be kept to themselves.
- Senior firefighters, company officers and chiefs must foster the idea that probationary members can contribute right away in terms of thinking outside of the box.
- When fire department leaders foster the thought process that probationary and rookie firefighters are permitted to present ideas, the fire service will benefit today and tomorrow.

I was asked recently to be on a well-known podcast. I went back and forth with the podcaster, and we came up with a date. I was told that more information about my appearance would be provided to me as the date of my appearance got closer.

After getting off of the phone and coming down from the excitement of being asked and booked, it hit me: What the hell was I doing? Why did I believe that I was worth being on this show? Why did the host believe that I would be a good guest? Holy shit! What did I just agree to?!

I came to realize that the reason for my self-doubt relates to probationary firefighters and how the fire service views them. This must change. *Senior members must foster the idea that probies can contribute right away*.

FEAR OF INTELLECTUAL FRAUD

With those thoughts of self-doubt going through my mind, I texted the host and told him that I was excited and very worried at the same time. He responded that he hears something like that from every person who he books. That really got me to thinking about why that would be. What makes firefighters, who are people who do amazing, dangerous things without thinking, scared of talking about their perspectives and what they do? I spent a bit of time reflecting, listening to podcasts where others talked about their beliefs of being undeserving and remembering conversations that I had with instructors from conferences. The main phrase that kept coming up was *imposter syndrome*.

The most common definition of imposter syndrome among multiple sources is some version of a psychological or internal experience in which the individual feels self-doubt or fear of intellectual or professional fraud, despite evidence of competence. ***In other words, people don't feel that they deserve their accolades and that their success is more a product of luck than ability.***

Maybe this is coming up more because I am looking into it, but it seems to be more of an issue in the fire service than in other sectors.

THEN AND NOW

I joined the fire service later in life (I was hired full-time at the age of 36). I worked in various industries before joining but spent most of my time working for Culligan International and a locally owned franchise as an operations manager. I spoke at regional and national conferences, sales seminars and dealer/owner meetings. Never during that time was I anxious about a talk that I had to give nor to whom I was presenting. I knew that

I was asked to talk from my experience and expertise on the subjects and that the attendees were there because they wanted to hear what I had to say. The thought of imposter syndrome never entered my mind.
So, why the shift? Why am I now unable to get the thoughts of "Who do I think I am?" out of my head?
I had the same experience in 2025 when I was asked to speak at the F.O.O.L.S. International convention in West Palm Beach, FL. I was mortified, and that caused me to do some self-sabotage: I didn't practice and prepare as I know that I should have. When I presented it, it went OK but not great. Some people really got some good out of it, but I know that I let it fall flat. I also know that my performance at that conference lost me another speaking event that was on the table. Maybe that's why I didn't prepare: to subconsciously lose the other gig.
Regardless of that outcome, this latest invitation really got me to thinking about what's going on and why imposter syndrome seems to be so prevalent in the fire service. I think back to many one-on-one conversations that I had with national speakers. They all talked to me about some form of imposter syndrome and their nervousness about "being found out" before every talk.

PLANTING THE SEEDS OF DOUBT

Here is where I'll bite the bullet and profess my thoughts on the issue and why it's happening. I'm sure that my ideas will create discomfort and naysayers.
We are the problem. The fire service causes the issue in people who wouldn't have anything other than just the normal nervous butterflies before public speaking. By this, I specifically mean probation. *The fire service plants the seeds of imposter syndrome in every recruit. We initiate the thoughts of inadequacy, nurture the discomfort and grow the doubt through how we treat probationary firefighters.*
Think about it: We hire, or attempt to hire, talented men and women. These men and women are predominantly in their early 20s. For quite a few, the fire service is their first real job. Then we send them to academy to learn about our trade. Typically, probation is 12 months, although I know that some departments have a pre-academy, academy and a post-academy. *We then bring them back and put them on probation, with none of that academy time counting toward the probationary period*.
What is the main theme that we teach these promising young recruits? "Don't think. You're new, you're on probation, your opinion doesn't matter. Don't look at the TV. Don't sit in the recliner. Don't stop cleaning. Don't stop doing busy work. Above all, don't even think that you can come up with a better way of doing things. You're just a probie. You don't know what you're doing."
We follow this up with the double down when they get off of probation. Now, they are the new member. "You must listen to everyone else. You aren't the senior crewmember. You're allowed to have an opinion but only down the chain of command. You haven't been on enough calls. You haven't been around long enough. You need more time on the job before you will have anything to contribute."
Why do we treat probationary firefighters this way, and why does it continue for the first year or so after probation? The only real reasons that I can come up with are the tried and true "That's the way it was for me, so that's the way it's going to be for you" or "I was treated that way, so now it's my turn to be on the other side" or, going back to the old adage, firefighters hate two things: change and the way things are.

'CAN'T WAIT TO DUMP ON THEM'

I am a parent to three boys, and I know that one of the main promises that I made to myself and to my wife was that I didn't want to be the same kind of parent as my mother and father were. This is a common theme among almost everyone who I ever talked to who has kids. Why do fire service leaders want the same thing for their fire service kids (probies) that they experienced?
I'm sure most people disliked probation and couldn't wait to be a "contributing" member of the team. However, the more common thing that I hear is people talking about how they can't wait to dump on the new probies.

NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS

The reason that I was comfortable speaking and expressing thoughts in the private sector was that the bottom line was king. All ideas were welcomed, and individuals' previous experiences were valued, because these experiences could lead to a different way of doing things that could result in a better bottom line. At the very

least, discussions could spark new ideas that took us in different directions that created better results. This is where the fire service can break the cycle.

We must work on changing how we view probation. Yes, probation should be a time when new firefighters learn their job and their position in the fire service, but we must be more caring and compassionate. We must foster the idea that probies can contribute right away. How many examples are there of people saying something that sparks the next great idea or a thought for someone else? *Probationary firefighters have the great advantage of not being biased toward what did or didn't work in the past. They can bring a fresh perspective and potentially think outside of the box enough to come up with a really great concept or to inspire someone else to create a new way.*

If we foster this new thought process, we can teach new firefighters that thinking, creating and presenting their ideas can be of great benefit to the fire service. Once that thought takes hold and is developed, we potentially will eliminate the issues of imposter syndrome in the next generation of fire service leaders.

TAKE A MOMENT TO SMILE

At this age if I say, "I'll think about it" there's a 97% chance I've already decided NO! I'm just trying to be polite.

CLASSIFIED

CAFDA IS SEEKING A TREASURER FOR OUR FIRE SERVICE NOT-FOR-PROFIT ASSOCIATION.

Our current excellent treasurer has announced that he will be giving up the position as soon as we find a replacement due to increased workload with his own business. Any candidate should be familiar with Quick Books and the structure and operation of a not-for-profit organization as well as some familiarization with the operation of fire districts in New York State. CAFDA offers a stipend which won't make you rich, but you get to hang out with some great people, get free meals prior to meetings and trying to provide a service to fire district officials. The Association requires our treasurers to be bonded. If you are interested let us know by providing a resume and cover letter to secretary@cafda.net.

Duties of the Treasurer:

I. Shall collect all dues, be the custodian of all funds of the Association, and shall keep all Association funds in such bank accounts as may be designated by the Board of Directors

II. Shall send to all member organizations the Membership Forms and Dues Invoices for membership

III. Shall pay the bills of the Association, keep accurate financial records of all transactions and shall present a brief report at each meeting

IV. Shall submit a detailed financial report to the Board of Director's at year's end, which is to be audited by the Auditing Committee and approved at the March General Membership meeting

V. Shall be bonded at the expense of the Association in the amount of $100,000.

VI. Shall transfer money into and out of investment accounts upon approval of the Board of Directors.

VII. Shall be paid a salary as determined by the Board of Directors

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We would consider expanding the number of Directors if individuals from other counties would volunteer to participate!!

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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 join in!
If your Fire District is a member, you are a member!!

Please advise your secretaries that all correspondence should be mailed to:
All correspondence & Capital Area Fire Districts Association Mailing Address should be directed to:
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Wish to become a member of CAFDA, go to CAFDA.net/membership to apply.

CAPITAL AREA BUSINESS PARTNER'S

Welcome to Siddons-Martin Emergency Group, apparatus sales and service.

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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 2026. 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.

Setting the Record Straight – Fire Service Organizations Express Concern Over Lack of Support for Nominal Compensation Initiative

Organizations Renew Call for Collaboration to Address Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment and Retention Challenges

New York State, August 2026 – Representatives from the Association of Fire Districts of the State of New York (AFDSNY), the New York State Association of Fire Chiefs, the County Fire Coordinators' Association of the State of New York (CCASNY), and Long Island Fire Service legislative advocates are expressing concern over what they describe as a lack of meaningful support from the Firefighters Association of the State of New York (FASNY) regarding efforts to advance nominal compensation for volunteer firefighters.

The coalition states that volunteer firefighter recruitment and retention remain among the most significant challenges facing the New York fire service. Supporters of nominal compensation believe that providing limited compensation or reimbursement for time and expenses could help address those challenges while preserving the volunteer nature of the fire service.

Volunteer firefighters dedicate substantial time to emergency response, training, meetings, fundraising, public education, advocacy, and maintaining operational readiness. In addition, volunteers often incur personal expenses related to fuel, vehicle use, childcare, meals, clothing, and equipment.

According to a 2020 survey conducted by the County Coordinators' Association of the State of New York, the main reason for the decline in volunteer firefighters is a lack of time. The demands on a volunteer firefighter due to the amount of required training, family obligations, secondary employment, and dual-income schedules often preclude people from joining or sustaining their membership.

"Many volunteers are balancing family responsibilities and multiple jobs while continuing to serve their communities," proponents said. "The concept of nominal compensation is intended to recognize those sacrifices and help remove barriers to service."

Currently, New York state does not allow this option to the authorities responsible for providing fire and emergency medical service. This needs to be addressed legislatively by elected officials in Albany. The Association Fire Districts of the State of New York (AFDSNY), New York State Association of Fire Chiefs (NYSAFC), County Coordinators' Association of the State of New York (CCASNY), and Nassau-Suffolk Long Island Fire Districts Legislative Committee collaborated with state officials to work on legislation to allow, on a voluntary basis, nominal compensation for volunteer fire department personnel.

These organizations, the actual stakeholders, represent the leaders who are responsible for making sure that communities have adequate and timely emergency services when people need it. There was a draft bill that had sponsorship in the New York State Assembly (A10630), along with a similar bill that unfortunately did not get to the New York State Senate in time before the legislative session ended. The aforementioned groups are committed to moving this initiative forward next year.

Supporters note that one of the original concepts discussed was expanding reasonable expense reimbursement for volunteers, an idea that was raised during joint discussions among state fire service organizations.

According to coalition representatives, FASNY was repeatedly invited to participate in meetings and discussions surrounding the development of nominal compensation proposals. While FASNY claims that they have supported this legislation from the beginning, that is totally untrue. On more than one occasion, FASNY has stated they will not support it at all. However, they have also stated they would support it, as amended by the coalition, but then the next day reverted to their position of opposition. Coalition members contend that participation by FASNY leadership has been inconsistent and opportunities for collaboration have not been fully realized.

"We have always believed that meaningful progress requires all statewide organizations to work together," coalition representatives said. "The volunteer fire service is strongest when we present a united front on major issues affecting recruitment and retention."

The organizations also expressed concern regarding what they view as conflicting public messaging concerning the state of volunteer firefighting in New York. While many fire service leaders have openly acknowledged
ongoing recruitment and retention challenges, coalition members believe certain public statements have minimized the severity of those issues.

Additional concerns raised by coalition members include:

· The absence of nominal compensation proposals within FASNY's recently released 14-point plan addressing volunteer fire service challenges.

· A perceived lack of member engagement regarding the organization's position on nominal compensation.

· Reports of internal communications that, according to proponents, discuss efforts to oppose or delay nominal compensation initiatives.

· Public comments and social media interactions that seemingly discouraged open discussion among volunteer firefighters with differing viewpoints.

Despite these concerns, coalition members emphasize that their goal is not to create division within the fire service. “This issue is bigger than any single organization,” coalition representatives stated. “Every volunteer firefighter in New York deserves to have their concerns heard and their service valued. We remain committed to working with any organization that is willing to engage in constructive dialogue about solutions.”

The coalition also believes it is important to address a recent article published in the July/August edition of The Volunteer Firefighter magazine. Unfortunately, the article presents a significantly different picture than what coalition members have experienced firsthand throughout this process. Several statements and characterizations in the article are inaccurate, incomplete, untrue or fail to reflect the reality of the discussions, negotiations, and actions that have occurred.

As a result, readers should be aware that the article does not fully represent the facts surrounding the issue of nominal compensation and the efforts undertaken by coalition members to advance this important legislation on behalf of New York’s volunteer firefighters.

FASNY’s mission, as stated on their website is, “To serve the volunteer fire and EMS services, and the public they serve, through education, advocacy, recruitment and retention, recognition and community service.” Their organizational vision is, “To be the respected voice for legislation, regulation and standards while serving as the preeminent resource for recruitment, education and retention for the fire and EMS personnel.” FASNY was established in 1872 and has provided an important voice for the volunteer fire and EMS service in New York state. However, they have no responsibility to provide fire and EMS service delivery. That is the responsibility of local government entities (towns, villages, fire districts) throughout the state. Respectfully, FASNY can be more accurately compared to a “union” for the volunteer fire and EMS service with a responsibility to advocate for benefits to support our brave first responders.

Unfortunately, they believe that because of the amount of financial assets they have, they are THE VOICE for the fire and EMS service at large. Although they do have a strong presence in the halls of Albany and political influence, they are not THE VOICE of the entire fire service. They are just “A” voice. Although they were at the table and agreed to support the nominal compensation initiative, it became evident that a small minority of FASNY representatives decided to undermine the effort being undertaken by the “stakeholders.” They lobbied against the legislation and were able to stall its progression. Their main argument was that funding provided by the state is necessary so that all fire departments would have the ability to provide nominal compensation. The stakeholders are not against the need for funding; however, it was felt that it was most important to get the legislation passed so we could begin to assist our volunteer firefighters and fire departments and then go to the Governor and the Legislature during the budget process to obtain funding. By then, we had hoped to share success stories to use as evidence in the fight for funding. FASNY’s shortsightedness, asking for funding with only days left in the session, caused the bill to die in committee.

New York state is a home rule state. Fire and EMS service delivery is a local responsibility, including its funding. Nominal compensation may not be necessary in all communities based on a local risk assessment, but for those fire departments that have a need or desire to provide that incentive, the legislation simply gives that authority on a voluntary basis. This is a win-win for both the community and for the members of those fire departments.

The coalition is encouraging volunteer firefighters, fire officers, fire district commissioners, and elected officials to review the nominal compensation concept and participate in discussions about the future of volunteer emergency services in New York state.

Provided by the NYS Fire Coordinators Association and Task Force and was this week sent out to all the fire coordinators in the state.