



**DVFA EXECUTIVE MEETING**  
**Delaware State Fire School**  
**March 9, 2025**

The March 9, 2025 DVFA Executive meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM by President Tom DiCristofaro at the Delaware State Fire School complex in Dover.

**President DiCristofaro declared that there was not a quorum of member companies in attendance at the present time, so there would be no “official” business conducted and no “motions” at this time.**

Invocation offered by Guy Hudson. A moment of silence was given for Past Presidents Ken Ryder and Bill Betts

Pledge of Allegiance led by Past President Richard Toulson

Roll Call of Officers:

All Officers, Directors and Office staff are present and/or accounted for.

**10:15 AM Credentials committee stated that we now have 31 companies registered and that constitutes a quorum to conduct business**

**Report of Officers**

**President DiCristofaro: (copied and pasted from email report)**

- Stated that DVFA Assistant Chaplain would be Rich Walton
- Thanked everyone who were able to attend all the funeral services during the last two months and the fact that we lost two Past Presidents of the DVFA
- Was honored to have been asked to give the Commencement Address for the Graduating Fire Academy Class
- On February 3<sup>rd</sup>, the DVFA and the Fire Commission met to air out some differences and agreed to work in unison, along with the State Chief's, to take the fire service into the future years
- Talked about CFSI and the low turnout. Also talked about the video that 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Jim Arrington, Jay Jones and myself were in. We have taken some ribbing over the video, but honestly, we thought it was just a photo being taken with Senator Chris Coons
- Talked about going through the underground tunnel system to get from one building to another. Will talk about DC Chief John Donnelly as the keynote speaker, talking about the helicopter and plane crash in the Potomac River
- Went to the JFC hearings for the State Fire Marshal's office, the State Fire School and the Fire Commission. The Executive Officers agreed that, I as President, would under public comment, say that the DVFA fully supports the budget requests from all three agencies
- Things are starting to ramp up in Legislative Hall, where we will be spending some long days
- Attended 40 events/functions since our December meeting

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Manley: (copied and pasted from email report)**

- It is the duty of the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, in March, to appoint the Life Safety Committee and the Scholarship Committee. I will appoint Guy Hudson as Chairman of the Life Safety committee and have him appoint the committee members as he chooses. I appoint Ron O’Neal as Chairman of the Scholarship committee and have him appoint the committee members as he chooses.
- Discussed the CFSI event in Washington and the low numbers
- Discussed the partnership with Walmart and the \$100,000.00 grant. More info to follow

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Arrington:**

- Discussed the CFSI event
- Attended 31 events/meetings and traveled 1,313 miles

**Secretary Steele: (copied and pasted from email report)**

- Worked with Ray Stevens to finalize the 2024 Conference and close out the books
- Started the process for Conference 2025 at the beach. Contract was signed and 1<sup>st</sup> deposit was made. 2<sup>nd</sup> deposit is due on March 22<sup>nd</sup>
- Made contact with Bally’s Dover Casino Resort regarding the 2026 Conference. Not very friendly
- As a reminder, if you make a report today and want it included in the minutes, please send it to me my e-mail
- Travel report since the last meeting; 19 events, 1,514 miles and 85 hours in service

**Treasurer Whitham: (copied from email report)**

- As of March 1<sup>st</sup>, we have the following balances:
  - Checking - \$137,933.76
  - Money Market - \$217,855.37
  - Brinker Financial Account - \$279,647.21
- Attached is a Budget vs Actual report as of the end of February to give you an idea of where we stand expense wise.
- The financial review has been completed by Bumpers & Company. Dan and I are working on a date for later this month for the committee to review along with working on next year’s operational budget.
- This year we offered three options for pension payment. The traditional method via USPS, dropping off at the office or EFT. Only one company took advantage of the EFT. It took 6 days from notice to deposit into the checking account. We still had 4 companies that were late with their payment.
- On February 26<sup>th</sup>, we wired **\$1,731,899.93** to cover the 2024 pension payment.

***Motion by Dan Carrier and second by Joe Zeroles to accept the Officer reports and spread them upon the minutes. Motion carried***

**Executive Manager Jay Jones: (copied and pasted from email report)**

Thank you to everyone for their contributions to CFSI’s success.

Apparatus Inventory forms are due. Please email them to Warren at [wjones@dvfassn.com](mailto:wjones@dvfassn.com). Be sure your list is updated and accurate. We only have a third of the state reporting at this time.

New Officers are past due. Please update your contact information after your company's elections to the fire commission. They will distribute out the proper contact information to all the other agencies. We are missing a few.

Surf Fishing Tags: The bulk dates of drops offs are complete. If you have any get them to the DVFA office or email to Jay at [norm912@aol.com](mailto:norm912@aol.com) and they will be processed in a timely matter.

New Federal Background Check bill is still being drafted. We hope to see a bill in the upcoming weeks

OSHA Update has nothing new since the last update. It's in a waiting mode to see what the new Secretary of Labor and the Trump Administration do with it.

In Washington DC, on February 12<sup>th</sup>, President Dicristofaro, Second Vice President Arrington, and I met with Senator Coons and his staff to discuss our top priorities the two most important were OHSA and the SAFER and AFG grants process and how they are reauthorized but need to be fully funded and a system that would be more fair. We also provided informational materials to Senator Blunt, Senator Rochester, and Congressperson McBride. Senator Brown has two bills under committee review: SB 28, which clarifies language by removing the word "reasonable" and revising certain permissive "shall" clauses to mandatory "must" clauses; and SB 29, which proposes increasing the limit from \$7,000 to \$10,000—an increase that faces significant hurdles given its magnitude. The increase change would apply to state employees and retirees along with Volunteer Firefighters. Representative Carson is developing comparable legislation encompassing both aspects, although the key distinction lies in a proposed increase from \$7,000 to \$8,000. Working with both staffs I asked if they could work together on a bill. That ask was unsuccessful.

Last year there were similar bills that did not go anywhere due to the Governor's Carney not supporting the bill. Comparable legislation failed due to Governor Carney's lack of support.

We endorse SB 21, a bipartisan bill with leadership sponsorship in both legislative chambers. This initiative aims to retain corporations in Delaware, addressing the exodus of major companies to states with more favorable business climates. Annual franchise taxes contribute over \$2 billion to the state budget. In 2009, the state faced an \$800 million budget deficit, and grant-in-aid was cut 10%. We along will almost everyone will support this bill.

Amendments to Title 4 proposed by trial attorneys pose a significant threat to businesses providing bar services and their employees, removing critical liability protections. This could lead to substantial increases in insurance costs and premiums, mirroring trends observed in other states. While the trial bar exerts considerable influence, this proposal faces significant opposition. We will monitor legislative developments closely.

## **Committee Reports**

### **Advisory to DSFM – John Rudd: (copied and pasted from email report)**

1. 2025 Delaware Fatal Fires
  - a. 3 fire deaths to date.
2. Staffing Update
  - a. Fire Protection Specialist Steven Callaway retired after 20+ years with the agency.
  - b. Working through the hiring process to fill vacant Fire Protection Specialist I @ NCC Division.
3. Attended the DVFA statewide fire prevention awards in Cheswold on January 5, 2025.
4. United States Fire Administration Fire Marshal Symposium and NERIS
  - a. National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS) to replace DFIRS.
    - i. Duane Fox, Dave Wilson, and I attended training at Emmitsburg on January 22-24, 2025.

- ii. NERIS is rolling out by FEMA Regions; we are in Region 3, with planned on-boarding of all Delaware Fire Departments beginning in September 2025.
  - iii. Working to provide a statewide training session @ DSFS. This would be open to all fire chiefs and their data/fire recorder staff.
5. Attended the CFSI Symposium on February 13, 2025.
  6. Attended the State of the Guard address at the DNG Joint Training Center on February 20, 2025.
  7. Attended the National Association of State Fire Marshals' Community Risk Reduction Symposium in Concord, NC on February 24-25, 2025.
  8. Thank you to DSFS Director Dempsey for the SCBAs; developing guidelines on their use by staff.
  9. Regulation 701 of the Delaware State Fire Prevention Regulations has been submitted to the SFPC and will be posted soon to the State's Register of Regulations. Due to new format requirements, each individual regulation has to be revised to comply with State requirements. Updates will be on-going.
  10. New Castle Division currently has a new HVAC installation underway; Kent/HQ Division has a window and door replacement project in planning stages and a water infiltration project planning meeting will be happening in the next few weeks. Sussex Division Evidence Building hit a delay with FAA permitting but that has been resolved; no start date given yet. We have reached out to Facilities Management to begin the process of addressing expansion of the Sussex Division building.

**Advisory to DSFS – Tucker Dempsey: (copied and pasted from email report)**

- Gave up-dates on building renovations
- Gave up-dates on various classes at the school
- Delaware week-end in Emmittsburg has been cancelled
- Will be dedicating a monument next Sunday at 11:00 am in honor of Rodney Marvel
- Discussed computer issues
- Advised of new employees

**State Fire Prevention Commission – Ron Marvel: (topics discussed)**

- Reported on a new foam, that does not seem to be working well
- Discussed red light money and what happened with the short fall
- Discussed cancer presumption and the number of cases and pay-outs
- Discussed scratch rates

**Life Safety – Guy Hudson: (copied from hand written notes)**

- Since last meeting, the committee held the paster and essay luncheon for the State winners. Thanks to the Ladies Auxiliary for providing the lunch at Cheswold on January 5<sup>th</sup>
- We discussed the matching funds requests for 2024 and approved them and they were sent over to Ron Marvel at the Fire Prevention Commission
- Total of 32 Companies and Associations requested matching funds. Total was \$154,771.01. The refund total is \$74,999.86
- Thanks to Tom DiCristofaro for the appointment last year to the Life Safety committee
- Thanks to Gerald Manley for the appointment to the Life Safety committee for this year

## **Recruitment & Retention – Warren Jones: (copied and pasted from email report)**

Since the launch of online efforts, First Arriving, our marketing company, has actively run Facebook and Instagram ads. In the second half of 2024 we noticed that the majority of the leads were coming in for New Castle County so I had First Arriving refocus some of their efforts on Kent and Sussex County. New Castle County has always been a strong source of leads, and with this balanced approach we were hoping to ensure growth in all counties.

When the videos were completed in Q1 of 2024 they were integrated into the campaign. Additional initiatives included movie theater ads in July of 2024 running for 13 weeks during major box office releases. The ads in movie theaters played a total of 53,126 times. The DART bus advertisements ran through 2024. YouTube and Google search ads were also launched. The movie theater ads were repurposed for YouTube.

In 2024, 570 leads came into our recruitment website "Joindelawarefire.com. Of those leads almost 50% were for EMS. The leads came into Jeff Brown. Jeff would take the address, find out whose district the person was in and pass that lead off to that Fire Company.

I am still not happy with the leads throughout the state especially Kent and Sussex County. What my plans were, was to repurpose \$20,000 or more from the sections of the grant that are not being used and move that money to marketing. Then bring the film crew back to do some new videos, I want to make sure we are including female, Hispanics, blacks and empty nesters. Also, I wanted to do a video featuring the current active firefighters in general no matter the gender or race. We can use the Academy Class when they are doing structural firefighting and vehicle rescue.

Delaware is unique that the media base is split. New Castle County is in the larger Philadelphia market, where in Kent and Sussex it is the Salisbury market. I'd like to run those video ads on the morning and evening news broadcast in addition to the YouTube, Facebook and Instagram items we have been doing. We have been doing social media but not much regular media.

Prior to the recent confusion in Washington, I had already talked to FEMA about moving the money. Then the freeze came about. I had a \$30,000 plus payment request in when that happened. FEMA like a lot of Federal Agencies were confused about what they could and could not do. Finally, this week I received a note from FEMA asking for clarification on the payment request.

We have a lot of money in the grant. I'd like you all to take advantage of the 1582 Physicals and the \$3500 for fire gear. We have had some confusion and a learning process to go through. But we have this down now. Jeff Brown (41) is still handling the applications for reimbursement. Jason McCabe will be getting all the leads and distributing them out to the companies and he will be coordinating the recruitment program. I will be handling the communications with FEMA.

## **Revolving Loan – Tom DiCristofaro:**

- If you apply for funds from the revolving loan, your request must be in 21 days prior to their meeting

## **Scholarship – Ron O'Neal:**

- Scholarship applications are due by March 31<sup>st</sup> to the DSFS
- As of today, there are NO applications on file
- Applications are on the DVFA web site

## **Sprinklers – Paul Eichler**

- Discussed the need for sprinklers
- Discussed the codes and the builders lack of support

## **Recognition of Past Presidents and President Emeritus in attendance - 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Gerald Manley, Jr**

13 Past Presidents and 1 President Emeritus

President DiCristofaro asked that ALL company Presidents stand to be recognized

## **Affiliated Organizations/Agency Representatives**

### **Ladies Auxiliary:** President Mickey Decino

- Introduced the LADVFA officers, LADVFA Past Presidents and the County Officers that were in attendance today.
- Ladies presented checks to the Foundation for the Scholarship fund.
  - LADVFA presentation of \$1,500
  - Sussex County Ladies Association presentation of \$1,000
  - New Castle County Ladies Past Presidents presentation on \$500
  - New Castle County Ladies Association presentation of \$1,000
  - Kent County Ladies Association presentation of \$1,500

### **State Fire Chief's:** President Mike Edwards

- Cardio Kinetics money has finally run out
- Next meeting will be March 27 at Sta. 26 Townsend

### **State Fire Police:** President Paige Seppanen

- No report

### **DVFA Foundation:** Chairman Lynn Rogers

- No report
- Glad to see Carol Walton in attendance today

### **Mutual Relief Association:** Jim Woznicki

- Presentations are available. Just request, if you want one

### **National Volunteer Fire Council:** Jay Jones

- Need someone to replace Bill Betts on the Council

### **Del-Mar-Va Association:** President Jay Jones

- Delmarva Convention will be held in Millsboro, DE. May 1,2,3

## **Communications:**

The following communications were received and were summarized by Secretary Steele

- Letter from Elsmere Fire Co, Clayton Fire Co, Five Points Fire Co, Bowers Fire Co, Delaware City Fire Co, Farmington Fire Co, South Bowers Fire Co. and Mill Creek Fire Co. changing Delegates/Alternates
- Copy of a letter penned by DVFA President DiCristofaro to Attorney General Kathy Jennings expressing displeasure of the punishment received by a driver that struck and seriously injured a Fire Police Officer in New Castle County. (Dated Nov. 12, 2024)

- Copy of a letter penned by DVFA President DiCristofaro to Governor John Carney and Governor-Elect Matt Meyer to dissolve the State Fire Prevention Commission as it currently sits. (Dated Dec. 5, 2024)
- Copy of a letter from the State Fire Prevention Commission Chairman Marvel, that was actually sent to Governor Carney, in response to the letter from DVFA President DiCristofaro to dissolve the Fire Commission. (Dated Dec. 23, 2024)
- Copy of a letter penned by DVFA President DiCristofaro to OSHA Assistant Secretary Douglas Parker expressing the Fire Service displeasure with OSHA proposed modifications to 29 CFR 1910.156. (Dated Jan. 14, 2025)
- Letter from New Castle County Fire Chief’s Association reference to a letter that DVFA President DiCristofaro sent to Governor Carney and Governor-Elect Meyer, regarding the State Fire Prevention Commission. (Dated Jan. 15, 2025)
- Letter from Sussex County Firefighter’s Association giving Tom DiCristofaro a vote of confidence as DVFA President (Jan. 28, 2025)

*Motion by Ray Stevens second by Mike Perrone to accept communications and spread upon the minutes*  
**Motion carried**

**OLD BUSINESS**

NONE

**NEW BUSINESS**

- Mike Perrone raised a question regarding insurance discounts for installing home sprinklers. Some discussion took place and this will be looked into

**PAYMENT OF BILLS**

Treasurer Whitham highlighted the bills to be paid.

1:14 PM  
 03/02/25

Delaware Volunteer Firefighter’s Association  
 Expenses by Vendor Summary  
 December 2024 through February 2025

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	<u>Dec '24 – Feb '25</u>
AT&T Mobility	262.05
Canon	581.61
Champion Trophies	1,339.45
Comcast	583.48
Congressional Fire Services Institute	24,150.00
Ctrl+Alt+Repair	1,000.00
First Arriving LLC	19,627.41
Goldfain & Joseph, P.C.	105.00
Guy Hudson	2,300.00
Handi Services LLC	77.50
Herbein+Company Inc.	560.00
M&T	6,315.36
McGinnis Partners	2,700.00

Michael Lowe	63.71
National Vol. Fire Council	500.00
NFPA	225.00
Northern Trust Company	1,731,899.96
Pratt Insurance	5,000.00
Rogers Sign Co. Inc.	540.00
Ron Marvel	129.63
Steve Austin	79.48
U.S. Postal Service	<u>268.00</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,798,337.64</b>

***Motion by Johnny Hopkins and second by Dick Ward to pay the bills as presented.***  
**Motion carried**

**GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION**

- Jim Watson gave an up-date on Deb’s medical condition. Thanks to everyone for the cards, prayers, phone calls and acts of kindness

**ADJOURNMENT**

It was regularly moved by Jim Arrington and seconded by Guy Hudson that the March 9<sup>th</sup> Executive meeting be adjourned. **Motion carried.**

Benediction was given by Guy Hudson

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 AM

**Respectfully submitted,**  
*Elmer B. Steele*  
**Elmer B. Steele**  
**Secretary**

I hereby attest that this a true copy of the proceedings of the Delaware Volunteer Firefighter’s Association Executive Meeting held on Sunday, March 9, 2025

**Attest: Jay Jones**  
**Executive Manager**

**Tom DiCristofaro**  
**President**