**2025 DVFA/LADVFA Conference Meeting Minutes**

The February 17, 2025 meeting was called to order at 7:02 by Eric Haley, Conference Co-Chair with the following in attendance: Warren Jones, Jeff Dennison, Jay Jones, Ron O’Neal, Karen Majewski, Mary Alice Maichle, Pam Ingle, MaryJane Stubbs, Ann Hill, Muriel Gillespie Allaband, Regina Headley- Marvel, Stacy Northam-Smith, Paige Seppanen, Jerry Daniels, Patricia Fox, Ann M Krystopolski, Mickey Decino, Dana Dugan, James Arrington, David Ruff, Elmer Steele, Joe Zeroles, Tom DiCristofaro, Shirley Pennington, Gerald Manley, Kim O’Malley, Brian Ferguson, Patti Carnevale, Ginni Tice, Isabel Stevenson, John Wright, Mark Harris, and Carol Walton.

**Reports:**

**DVFA Conference Treasurer** John Wright will be working with Elmer Steele to prepare a budget for the 2025 conference. Balance in savings as of 1/31/25 was $73,056.41 with a balance in the checking of $17,706.80. A deposit of $1,070.00 has been made plus a donation from Delmarva has been received.

**Facilities Management:** Elmer Steele & Warren Jones opened a very lengthy discussion as to options if we were to go to the Chase Center in Wilmington or Bally’s in Dover. Warren Jones – provided a listing of dates that he was able to secure for the Rehoboth Convention Center through 2030. Elmer Steele advised that the contract for the Hyatt for 2025 has been signed and a deposit for $5,000 was paid with another payment of $10,000.00 due on March 22nd. He also received a menu list with increased pricing. Sleeping rooms for committee and officers have been secured for the 5 nights with check in on Sunday and check out on Friday morning. The ladies need to work with Warren for the convention center. A decision needs to be made on how to handle the drinks. Do we provide 2 drink tickets per person or open bar? Elmer felt that the open bar would be best and would be a savings. We had prepaid for drink tickets in the past and they were just left on the table and not used. Tom DiCristofaro mentioned that we saved a significant amount ($53,000) last year at the beach compared to the Chase. The Hyatt will provide the same room prices for 2025 and 2026 with a $5/per room increase in 2027. The Hyatt also mentioned they would make a donation of 5% to the DVFA Foundation of funds spent. Last year the installation party would have cost $23,000.00 but we paid nothing. They plan to do the same for 2026 and 2027. At the meeting in Rehoboth, we were told that parking will not be an issue for 2025. We don’t know about 2026. Warren looked for other places that could hold 400 people for the Memorial Service but hasn’t heard back yet. They are expecting to have meters for weekends only (Friday, Saturday and Sunday). Elmer also mentioned Bally’s would not consider any private parties in Fire & Ice. Representatives from the conference committee met with each of these venues and by the report it seemed pretty plain to see that they didn’t wish to have us return and did not wish to make little to no concessions. We could not have any hospitality rooms and all drinks and food in the rooms would need to be purchased through the venue. Also issues with the outside exhibit area at Bally’s was a major concern. A motion was made by Brian Ferguson, 2nd by Jeff Dennison and carried to guarantee 2026 and 2027 at the beach.

Rehoboth Beach Convention Center dates available for future conferences:

2026 – Sept 14, 15, 16 or 24 & 25

2027 – Sept 20, 21, 22

2028 – Sept 18,19 ,20

2029 – Sept 24,25 ,26

2030 – Sept 23, 24, 25

\*\* Need to confirm that these dates are available for Hyatt.

**Corporate Sponsors –** Jay Jones reported they are working on it. Still waiting on a donation from last year from Kent County Levy Court but since we are not holding conference in Kent, we may not see these funds.

**DVFA Luncheon –**Warren Jones stated that last year was tight but decent.

**DVFA meeting –** Tom DiCristofaro – We’re going to have a meeting.

**EMS Training** - Patricia Fox – Looking at Monday am & pm. We do not wish to hold training during Opening ceremonies. Mark Harris asked if night classes are possible?

**Exhibits** – Randy Roberts (Chair), Brian Bashista (outside) – Jeff Dennison (inside) Randy was unable to attend due to sickness. Eric asked how much is an outside space? $300.00. He also asked if the Fire Commission paid for their space last year. There will be no free spaces –if they don’t pay – they don’t stay,

**Firefighter Training –** Michael Edwards was unable to make the meeting so he provided the following report: I’ve spoken with Elmer to learn Monday is available for a morning and afternoon session along with a morning session on Thursday. We will not compete against opening ceremonies or another meeting this year. Chiefs will hold training at a spot on Monday and EMS will have the other. Thursday we will have a session set up before the luncheon.

**Joint Installation –** Pam Ingle no report at this time

**LADVFA Golf** – Barbara Rossiter orLil Noonan – absent but advised they had no report at this time.

**Welcome – Beach Party –** Brian Ferguson reported Nothing yet – all good but may have a band versus DJ this year.

**LADVFA Hospitality –** Mary Jane Stubbs & Karen Majewski – no report at this time.

**LADVFA Luncheon** - Isabel Stevenson & Ginni Tice - we need to meet with Warren after this meeting.

**LADVFA meeting –** Mickey Decino & Shirley Pennington – we will have a meeting.

**Memorial Service -** Muriel Gillespie Allaband – in progress

**Mutual Relief -**  Mary Alice Maichle – we’ll have one

**Opening Ceremonies –** Jay Jones – Warren Jones – same as last year

**Printing -** Regina Marvel reported she has a new ad list. Need a volunteer from New Castle and Kent for soliciting patron ads. We will be staying with the new vendor for the book. They were excellent to work with last year. They have all the templets and we hope to make another profit this year.

**Public Relations -** Jay Jones working on it. If anyone has old conference books for archives.

**Seminars & Workshops –** Jay Jones – Eric mentioned that the Career Pension workshop was a home run and we should hold again this year. Jay stated they are working on the schedule and looking at speakers.

**Souvenirs –** Patti Carnevale turned in $457.00 tonight. She has chances for the bourbon basket plus the Wine basket to sell if anyone wishes to take chances with them tonight. Jeff Dennison mentioned that Patti needs help for souvenirs at the convention center to get merchandise there.

**Past Presidents Dinner –** Ron O’Neal & Stacy Northam-Smith – They are working with Elmer on menu.

**State Fire Chiefs –** Michael Edwards – see Firefighter training report.

**State Fire Police –** Paige Seppanen last year we had 140 people and it was a good time.

DVFA President: Tom DiCristofaro – nothing further at this time

DVFA First Vice-President – Gerald Manley – nothing at this time

DVFA Second Vice – James Arrington – good to go

DVFA Treasurer – Terry Whitham - absent

LADVFA President – Mickey Decino nothing

LADVFA First Vice-President – Shirley Pennington – all good

LADVFA Second Vice-President – Ginni Tice - all good

LADVFA Co-Chair - Ann Marie Krystopolski - fine right now

Co-Chairs – Kim O’Malley - fine

Co-Chair – Isabel Stevenson - ok

2024 Chair – Mark Harris wants to meet with Warren on the forms. He wants all forms to be fillable online as well as have them so they can be automatically returned upon completion.

Eric Haley – what is the return date for all forms. We need the dates to be all the same. Motion was made by Patti Carnevale, 2nd by Shirley Pennington and carried to require all forms be returned by July 15th.

 Co-Chair – Joe Zeroles – all good

Co-Chair – David Ruff – all good

Closing Comments: Eric mentioned the agenda needs to be worked on and finalized by the DVFA meeting March 9th. There was concern on getting the forms finished and on the website, early enough to meet the July 15th return deadline.

Next meeting dates: May 19th, July 21st and August 18th

Motion made by Tom DiCristofaro, 2nd by Ron O’Neal to adjourn at 8:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Walton, Secretary