



# **PIEDMONT NORTH CAROLINA FIREFIGHTER'S ASSOCIATION**

**FIRST QUARTER MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

**JULY 24, 2024**

**PINEY GROVE FIRE DEPARTMENT, FORYTH COUNTY**

## **Call to order**

President Scott Hackler called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM.

## **Welcoming Remarks**

Welcoming remarks were provided by President Hackler and Chief Carl Walker with the Piney Grove Fire Department.

## **Meeting Host/Vendor Comments**

President Hackler recognized and thanked Piedmont Fire Equipment for the meal sponsorship.

President Hackler recognized the other vendors that were present for the meeting.

## **Prayer**

Tracey Mosely gave the invocation and blessed the evening meal.

## **Meeting Minutes**

The minutes from the April 24, 2024, association meeting was presented for approval. Minutes were posted to the PNCFA website. Ed Duffield motioned to approve the minutes. Charles Holtzman seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

## **Treasurer's Report**

Ed Brinson presented the details of the Treasurer's report. Copies were distributed to all attendees. Jerry Brooks motioned to approve the Treasurer's report. Chris Davis seconded the report. The vote was unanimous.

- Saving = \$52.67
- Money Market = \$32,313.459
- Civic Share = \$20,003.12
- Checking = \$495.08
- Total of all for all accounts \$32,861.20

## **Old Business**

### **➤ Scholarship and Training Grant Recognition**

- Ted Armstrong Scholarship – Tyler Easter (Monroe/Wingate FD)
- Jerry Brooks Scholarship – Evan Ray (Creedmore FD)
- Chris Hooper – Matthew Hardy (Elkin FD)
- Ted Armstrong Scholarship – Rilan White (Guil-Rand FD)
- Jerry Brooks Scholarship – Hannah Chandler (Yanceyville FD)

- Northern Wake Fire Department (Brooks-Ward Training Grant)
- Efland Fire Department (Brooks-Ward Training Grant)

### **New Business**

- President Hackler announced the PNCFA awards were open until September 30<sup>th</sup>. Award applications for Fire Chief, Officer, Firefighter, and Fire and Life Safety of the year can be found on our website.
- President Hackler opened the floor for nominations for Southern Director for the PNCFA Executive Board. No nominations were given from the floor. President Hackler announced the Southern Director would be readvertised until August 30<sup>th</sup>. If no nominations were received by August 30<sup>th</sup> nominations would be open for the entire PNCFA region.
- President Hackler announced on member had submitted their name for the position of PNCFA Treasurer, Ed Brinson. President Hackler opened the floor for nominations for Treasurer. No nominations from the floor were brought forth. Brian Causey moved for nominations to close, seconded by Chris Davis. Ed Brinson was selected as Treasurer for the PNCFA by acclamation.
- President Hackler announced the Executive Board voted to formally endorse NCAFC Piedmont Region Director and PNCFA Past President Brian Causey for the position of 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President of the NCAFC.

### **Agency Reports**

**NCSFA-Tim Bradley & Ed Brinson attached.**

**NCAFC-Wesley Hutchins attached.**

**OSFM- Vernon Ward attached**

**NCFMA -Bobby Cameron Attached**

**NC IAAI- No Report**

**NCFFF- David Swaim attached.**

**IAFC-SEAFC-No report**

**NCFLSE-No report**

**NCSFRI – Ed Duffield Piedmont Representative**

- Visit website for books
- \$35.00/year membership

**N.C. Community College – Michael Caviness**

- Introduced himself in his new role with the Community College System.
- Technical Rescuer upgrade in progress

**N.C. Emergency Management – No report**

**NVFC – attached.**

**Roll call by county.**

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held in Forsyth County hosted by the Piney Grove Fire Department on July 24, 2024, beginning at 6:30 PM

### **Adjournment**

President Hackler adjourned the meeting at 8:20pm.

NCSFA 3rd Quarter Report  
July, 2024

**Introduce Any Past Presidents**

**Introduce Any Board**

**Introduce Any Staff**

**Relief Fund**

The Treasurer's Financial Report is due October 31<sup>st</sup>, based upon the year close at June 30<sup>th</sup>. Please remind them the system is open for them to begin submitting the report on-line and to submit their bank statements as well.

In addition, this year the Chief will again submit the Certificate of Eligibility at the same time they are doing their roster at year end, rather than a separate report in October to OSFM. The submittal is integral to the roster system on-line. That report, like the roster, is due by January 15<sup>th</sup>.

Each year staff spends the last week of October trying to contact Relief Fund Treasurers to get their reports and bank statements submitted. If they are not submitted the local relief fund will not receive a check in 2025. Please help us by telling Chiefs to remind their Treasurers to submit the report and bank statements.

**Relief Fund Use Fiscal Year 2021/2022**

During the last fiscal year there were 615 requested uses of the local Relief Fund totaling \$2.9 million dollars. We continue to see an increase in request and uses of the relief fund. The highest use is supplemental insurance followed by supplemental retirement funding requests. The increased use follows the General Assembly guidance in 2014 that we either use it or lose it.

**Conference Update**

This year's dates for the SAFRE Conference are August 7-11th, 2024, and we will be back at the Raleigh Convention Center. We have a great lineup of classes and hands on training for you this year. Our keynote address for 2024 will be given by Fire Chief, international speaker, and best-selling author Frank Viscuso. Chief Viscuso wrote Step up and Lead and Common Valor, among several other bestselling books. He has also delivered keynote addresses and classes all over the world, including at FDIC. We are excited to welcome Chief Viscuso to SAFRE in 2024 for his keynote address, as well as a 4 hour seminar on leadership in the fire service. The SAFRE expo floor is completely sold out and will feature some exciting new exhibitors. As always it will feature the latest in apparatus, gear, fire service technology and so much more. Whether you come every year, or this will be your first time, we encourage and challenge you to bring a friend with you to SAFRE this year so we can introduce the Conference to the next generation of firefighters. The SAFRE week is a great opportunity for fellowship, mentorship, and leadership from/with your peers in the fire service. What can you learn, what can you teach and who can you meet? Join us Aug. 7<sup>th</sup>-11th at SAFRE 2024!

On Tuesday of this year's conference at 12:00 noon we will have a combined Summit of the State and Regional Boards to discuss current issues. This will include the Eastern, Western, Piedmont, NCSFA, NCAFC, and staff from OSFM.

**Attendees will enjoy a free exhibitor floor again this year** and we have extended Saturday's hours till 2pm. Free conference tee shirts will be given to all full conference registrants, and additional conference shirts will be on sale.

On Thursday morning, August 8th, during the SAFRE Opening Session we will once again be honoring those members of NCSFA who have achieved either their 25 or 50 Years of Service by presenting them with an NCSFA Service Award pin. If you have reached one of these milestones, please join us and get your service pin.

Our banquet, as always is being held on Saturday night, and our Memorial Service & a candlelight memorial service will be held Thursday afternoon at 3:00 PM. If you've had a member pass during the previous year, please make sure we have their name so they can be recognized.

Please remember to sign up for banquet.

### **Legislative Report**

#### **Legislative Day**

Legislative Day was a success with one of the biggest groups we've had in years. It was also very effective. We had several key legislators come and talk, including Majority Whips from both the House and Senate.

#### **Introduction**

This is the short session of the 2023/2024 biennial session, and our focus has been to get our priorities through before the session adjourns and we start over in 2025.

Again, the priorities of the joint Legislative Committee session of the NCSFA and the NCAFC's included the following priorities for 2023/2024:

- **Increase in Fire and Rescue Pension Benefits. This would include a \$5 increase in benefits with a \$5 increase in premiums.**
- **Secure continuation funding for the Cancer Insurance Pilot Program going into the future.**
- **Revise the Background Check Law for the fire service allowing alternatives for applicants who have lived in NC for five years and exempting junior members. (HB 378) is now session law.**
- **Continue to pursue the use of blue lights on the rear of fire apparatus.**
- **Oppose any legislative increase in use or sell of fireworks.**
- **Monitor and discuss any additional legislation introduced.**

#### **Permanent Funding for Firefighter Cancer Benefits Passes**

*(Bill Also Includes an Increase in Fire and Rescue Workers Pension)*

With assistance from Legislators like Senator Jim Perry, Representative John Bell, and Representative Julia Howard who all spoke at our Legislative Day, our permanent funding for Firefighter Cancer Benefits, corrections to Workers Comp funding, and an increase in our Fire and Rescue Workers Pension Benefit have passed the House and Senate and are headed to the Governor for signature. Added to an Insurance Amendment Bill, SB 319, which had passed the Senate previously, it went before the House and passed WITH A UNANIMOUS VOTE. It now has been concurred in the Senate and goes to the Governor for his signature. **IT IS ENROLLED!!!!**

The Bill accomplished several of our Priorities for this session, in addition to some added benefits. Since the **Cancer and Workers Compensation** changes have an effect on Finance and GPA collection and distribution, the Budget, and require OSFM to make changes, those changes are not effective until **July**

1, 2025. The Pension Increase is effective July 1, 2024. PLEASE NOTE EFFECTIVE DATES BESIDE EACH BENEFIT

- It makes the Firefighter Cancer Benefit Program a permanent program within the Office of State Fire Marshal, removing the "Pilot" designation; **EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2025**
- It makes the initial benefit \$37,000 rather than \$25,000, effectively including the previous reimbursements for expenses of \$12,000 that required submittals. The lump sum benefit is now \$74,000 instead of \$50,000 if an individual has two instances of cancer; **EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2025**
- It now includes retirees, who have retired within 10 years; **EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2025**
- It provides a permanent funding source for the Firefighter Cancer Benefit Program;
- It continues to provide funding to the Volunteer Safety Workers Comp program to support and reduce premiums; **EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2025**
- It increases the Fire and Rescue Workers Pension Benefits from \$170 to \$175 per month, a \$5.00 increase, and also increases the premiums \$5 per month as well to keep the fund sound. **EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2024**

Our thanks go out to each of you whom have lobbied, our lobbyist Debbie Clary, and all our legislators who have worked to move this forward.

**As previously reported, HB 378 has been signed into Law as Chapter Law 2023-104. Here is a reminder of what that includes.**

**HB 378, which is now law, allows for three variations of criminal background checks normally requiring fingerprints, if the applicant or member has lived in NC for more than five consecutive years. They are:**

**(1) A statewide criminal history record check without fingerprints may be conducted by the North Carolina Department of Public Safety. The requesting entity shall provide to the North Carolina Department of Public Safety any information required by the Department to conduct a name only search and a form signed by the State resident to be checked consenting to the check of the criminal record and use of other identifying information required by the State Repository. The name and other required information shall be forwarded to the State Bureau of Investigation for a search of the State criminal history record file.**

**(2) A statewide criminal history record check of the State resident's name may be conducted by a third-party vendor. The requesting entity and State resident shall provide the third-party vendor's required documentation to complete the request.**

**(3) A statewide criminal history record check of the State resident's name may be conducted and certified by the clerk of court, at the clerk's discretion.**

**In addition, applicants for junior membership and current junior members of a fire department under the age of 18 shall be exempt from the criminal history record check.**

### **Staying Active Legislatively and Engagifi**

Right now, we have 2123 active Advocates on Engagifi. That means out of 50,000+ firefighters, just over 4%.

We would prefer to have many more, but the system is designed to allow people to join, not force or bulk sign them.

If you want to keep up with what's going on and be a part of promoting and getting good legislation passed, join up. At the very least it will give you weekly updates and contact information for all of your representatives.

Log on to NCSFA, click on the Legislative Banner called Engagifi, or look under the Legislative Flag. Provide your email, design your own password, and provide your home zip code. It allows for much more, but that is all that is required. It takes less than 3 minutes.

### **First Responders Day, on September 11<sup>th</sup>**

Please remember and start planning events for First Responder Day, September 11<sup>th</sup>. This is a designated holiday in NC, established in 2017 by the General Assembly.

### **LGFCU Swipe It Rich Credit Card Promotion Program**

The NCSFA is working closely with the LGFCU on a Debit Card program aimed at increasing its use. As you know, the fees from these cards have helped keep NCSFA dues low over the last decade, and recent events have seen a decline in their usage. The program is designed to get members using their cards again.

It's based on usage and a \$5 buy and you qualify!

- You enter to win every time you make a qualifying purchase using your NCSFA Visa® Debit Card from Local Government Federal Credit Union.
- You'll be entered to win \$3,000 during each period that you make purchases using your card: from June through August, September through November, and in the month of December.
- The more you use your NCSFA Visa Debit Card for qualifying purchases, the more entries you get!

Visit the NCSFA Visa Debit Card webpage for more details about the Swipe it Rich Giveaway, including a link to the official rules and regulations: [lgfcu.org/ncsfa](http://lgfcu.org/ncsfa).

### **No card? No problem!**

If you're an LGFCU member, you can apply for your NCSFA Visa® Debit Card. Simply call LGFCU at 888-732-8562.\* Apply today to help support your fellow firefighters while you get in on the Swipe it Rich Giveaway!

### **Federal OSHA Revision of 1910.156 Fire Department Standards**

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is proposing an extensive new safety and health standard, titled "Emergency Response," to replace the existing "Fire Brigades Standard" 1910.156. This would now cover Emergency Response Organizations (ERO's), which are fire departments. The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for the "Emergency Response Standard" was [published in the Federal Register](#) on February 5, with the public comment period open until September 9th. In some states public agencies are not required to meet this standard, but in NC, since we are an OSHA state, public agencies are not exempt.

Being an OSHA state, all of our departments will be impacted to some extent by this new proposed rule, and just the paperwork itself for applying this standard could be exhausting. Even though NC state law exempts volunteer fire departments, that is questionable, especially given the benefits and supervision they receive, as well as the impact of providing or receiving mutual aid from career departments and the issue of combination departments. I'm not sure many departments in NC will actually be exempt.

While we 100% agree with firefighter safety and everything that can be done to improve it, we feel the financial and time-consuming changes in the standard could actually have negative impacts on the fire service organizations and could actually decrease the already struggling number of firefighters and may force many to leave the service. We also question the reliability of some of the data and theories used to

produce this proposal. 22 NFPA standards are now included in the proposed OSHA standard by reference. This means that any place the NFPA standard says “shall” or “must” the fire department would be responsible for including them. There are another 14 NFPA standards that are included in part. The bottom line is these changes would have major implications for every department, Officer, and firefighter in NC. Good or bad, your department needs to comment.

We have commented on the standards as an association, and many of you have commented across the State. We encourage each of you to comment on how the new standard will impact your department.

### **BCBS PTS Grant**

In 2021, Blue Cross contributed \$500,000 to our non-profit organization, the North Carolina Firefighters Fund, to use in fire service programs with the NCSFA. Half of it went in the form of direct grants to small rural departments through OSFM like the previous year’s grant, but we are excited that \$250,000 is being used to provide assistance to firefighters seeking treatment and assistance with PTSD and mental health issues. Here are the numbers so far: Since the opening of the grant application process in February 2021, a total of \$104,601, has been awarded to 56 different individuals to help pay for counseling, in-house treatment or travel. Please make sure all of your members are aware of the availability of these funds to assist those seeking help. The application and more details are available on the NCSFA website. This program can help bridge the gap between insurance and/or employee assistance programs and out-of-pocket costs for the firefighter. The funds are there for use and are very under-utilized.

### **BCBS Cancer Grant**

At the end of 2023, NCSFA and representatives from the North Carolina Firefighters Fund, the non-profit arm of the Association, received a \$200,000 Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina check for an additional grant program to assist with cancer screening costs for volunteers. The grant applications have been posted and mailed. This will be the third year that Blue Cross has partnered with NCSFA and NCSFA to provide funds for the NC fire service and we appreciate their generosity. Applications are on the NCSFA.com website under the Forms Tab.

**NCAFC 3rd Quarter Report  
July 2024**

**OSFM 3rd Quarter Report  
July 2024**

## **NCFMA 2nd Quarter Report April 2024**

- Next meeting will be held at SAFRE in Raleigh.
- Fire Marshal 101 courses scheduled for Concord and Chatham County
- ICC Hazmat course scheduled for September 19<sup>th</sup>.
- NCFMA Fall Conference scheduled for November 12-14 in Greensboro
- Safety Summit scheduled for November.

## **North Carolina Fallen Firefighters Foundation Quarterly Regional Report July 2024**

The Memorial Expansion Project is ongoing. The committee is continuing to work with the City of Raleigh, designers and others to proceed forward with our expansion plans to add additional tablets and remain within the footprint of the Memorial circle in Nash Square. Inquiries or those wishing to assist in sponsorship for the Memorial Expansion, please Contact Jeffrey Shaw, Eastern Regional Director, at (252) 532-2648.

The NCFFF provided support and assistance to the Lexington and Denton Fire Departments the first week of April for the services of Captain Ronnie Metcalf. Please keep the Metcalf family and the firefighters he served with in your thoughts and prayers as the move forward.

The NCFFF Merchandise Trailer has been to several fire schools and events throughout the state, and we have several more scheduled throughout the year. The NCFFF appreciates the continued support, assistance and sponsorships we receive as we work to honor and remember our fallen.

Our social media platforms and website is being updated continuously and please follow us to stay up to date with events and information.

Please feel free to reach out to any of the Foundation Board members if you have any questions or need any information or if we can be of assistance. Our direct emails are up and running and of course feel free to contact your Regional Representatives if needed.

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## **NVFC Regional Board Meeting Update** **July 2024**

**OSHA:** NVFC is still moving full steam ahead on heading off the anticipated ramifications of the proposed OSHA standard. Actions include:

- NVFC is sending out **daily pain points** with a comment template to help make it as easy as possible for individuals and organizations to submit comments.
- NVFC's **draft comments** to OSHA are available
- NVFC's [OSHA landing page](#) continues to be updated frequently and is a great resource to share with anyone who is looking for information.
- The House Education and Workforce Committee sent out a press release announcing that Committee Chair Foxx and 23 other Republican members of Congress sent a letter to the acting Secretary of Labor urging them to scrap the development of the proposed Emergency Response Standard. Education and Workforce is the House Committee that has oversight over the Department of Labor and OSHA.
- NCSFA Executive Director Tim Bradley will be testifying before the committee at the end of July.

**Reauthorization of AFG/SAFER/USFA:** The bill reauthorizing AFG/SAFER and USFA passed the Senate and the President signed it. The NVFC was a part of the signing with the President.

**Family Guide:** The NVFC has released an updated guide to help families of new recruits adjust to the volunteer fire service lifestyle. [What to Expect: A Guide for New Firefighter Families \(Second Edition\)](#) is designed to introduce new fire service families to the basics of the job and provide guidance to keep family relationships strong. The guide can be downloaded for free, and print copies can be ordered from the [NVFC store](#).

**Training Summit:** It just wrapped up NVFC's 10th annual Training Summit in Buffalo, NY. This was a phenomenal event with a record 217 attendees from 40 states and 20 corporate sponsors to round out the event. Over 90% of attendees indicated they are interested in attending again next year. Next year's Summit will take place in Salt Lake City, Utah.

**Firefighter Strong:** The 2024 issue of [Firefighter Strong](#) is now available. This annual newsletter includes articles and resources focused on health, safety, recruitment, retention, and leadership. A print copy of the publication was mailed to all U.S. volunteer and combination fire departments, and the issue is also available to read online. Suggested social media posts are attached. If you would like copies for an

upcoming conference or event, contact Lorraine Higgins at [lorraine@nvfc.org](mailto:lorraine@nvfc.org) with your request, including how many copies you need, the date you need them by, and the mailing address.

**Mike Rowe:** In case you missed it, catch [Episode #387 Make Me A Firefighter with Candice McDonald and Jonathan Dayton here!](#)

**Charity Rating:** Once again, NVFC has received the Platinum Seal of Transparency from Candid (formerly Guidestar) and the highest 4-star rating from Charity Navigator.

**Columbia Southern Scholarships:** Our annual scholarship application with CSU is now open! Please share information about this great program with your networks.

**DripDrop:** The NVFC is excited to partner with DripDrop Hydration for the fifth year to donate 200,000 sticks of electrolyte drink mix to volunteer fire departments. Departments can enter for the chance to win two cases (200 sticks) of DripDrop to help keep responders hydrated during summer heat and long incidents. The entry period will be open from July 8-21.

### **Upcoming Events:**

Webinars: Check out our new online training page for upcoming webinars: <https://www.nvfc.org/online-trainings/> and please share this link with your audiences! Other upcoming trainings include:

- July 12 – 13 | [PIT Crew \(Hazmat\) Training](#)  
In-person Training | Concord, New Hampshire
- Jul 17 | 3:00 – 4:15 pm eastern | [Volunteer Voices Live – Grant Writing \(interactive event\)](#)
- July 24 | 2:00 p.m. eastern | [Roundtable Talk: Behavioral Health](#)