

# **Virginia Fire Services Board**

Live Fire Training Structure Committee

Tuesday, June 9, 2026

Virginia Department of Fire Programs

1005 Technology Park Dr, Glen Allen, VA, 23059

11:00 AM

## **MINUTES**

A meeting of the Live Fire Training Structure Committee was held at the Virginia Department of Fire Programs in Glen Allen, Virginia. The meeting was called to order by Committee Chair James Calvert, and a quorum was present.

### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT**

James Calvert, Committee Chair – Industry (SARA Title III/OSHA)  
Billy Hanks – Local Fire Marshal  
Charles Sterne – General Public  
Jerome Williams – Certified Fire Service Instructor  
Steve Sites – Virginia Fire Prevention Association

### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT**

Jess Rodzinka – Virginia Professional Fire Fighters  
JM Snell II – Virginia Board of Housing and Community Development  
Carla Keesee – Virginia Chapter, International Assoc. of Arson Investigators

### **AGENCY MEMBERS PRESENT**

Theresa Hunter, Chief Administrative Officer  
Marc Brade, Chief of Training & Operations  
Zeina Altaha, Grants Manager  
Spencer Willett, Government Affairs Manager  
Greg Cavalli, Policy Analyst

### **GUESTS PRESENT**

Lee Williams                      Robby Dawson                      Larry Gwaltney                      Phillip Keyser  
Jeffrey Bunnell                      Benjamin Ruppert

### **CHANGES IN THE AGENDA**

There were no changes to the agenda.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No public comment provided.

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## **CONSENT AGENDA**

**Motion:** Approval of the minutes of the previous committee meeting (February 2026)

**Motion:** Sterne **Second:** Hanks

**Discussion on the Motion:** None

**Vote:** Unanimous

**Action:** Minutes approved

**Motion:** Approval of the minutes of the special meeting (April 2026)

**Motion:** Sterne **Second:** Hanks

**Discussion on the Motion:** None

**Vote:** Unanimous

**Action:** Minutes approved

## **REPORT FROM VDFP ADMINISTRATION**

Theresa Hunter provided a report from the agency, which included six open construction projects, six repair projects, and three renovation projects.

All board members were given a report and a summary of the report that names each project by locality.

## **COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIR**

Committee Chair James Calvert noted the efforts of the committee in the April special meeting. He believes the policy changes will benefit both localities and the agency/Board.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

No unfinished business.

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## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **a. Mecklenburg County Renovation Request**

Jeffrey Bunnell of Mecklenburg County, spoke for the request. He explained that a 5-year inspection noted that there are some needed repairs. More specifically, some things need to be brought up to National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1403 standards, such as means of egress and the general exterior, and the application has quotes from SRG. These are effectively more than typical repairs.

There was also a desire to add an additional burn room to increase facility capabilities. This would not require any additional footprint.

Committee Chair Calvert asked for the total amount of the request. The total amount requested comes to \$179,446.35.

Committee Chair Calvert asked Hunter if the price encompassed both renovations and the new addition for the burn room. Hunter said the renovation application covered both requests.

Committee Chair Calvert then asked if there were matching funds in this request. Hunter said there is only a matching fund requirement if the building is larger than the standard, but the building in question is not so it would qualify for 100% funding.

Committee Chair Calvert asked how much funds were available for the project. Hunter stated that there was \$877,000 available.

Committee Chair Calvert read the document to clarify that the locality has 15 departments and about 400 firefighters. Bunnell then said that the facility is jointly owned by Mecklenburg and Brunswick counties and that they are also a regional test site for the Department of Fire Programs.

Committee Chair Calvert asked Bunnell to detail the specific types of damage being repaired to which Bunnell said it was concrete cracking, mostly on the exterior, and there was no thermal damage.

Steve Sites then asked about Mecklenburg bringing in their own engineer and if there are discrepancies in the reports between the state and local engineer. Bunnell responded that the engineer hired by the county is completing repairs for them.

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## **b. Northumberland County Renovation Request**

Committee Chair Calvert introduced the next request from Northumberland County which is seeking \$102,077.25 to which Phillip Keyser, Chief of the Fairfield's Volunteer Fire Department, spoke.

Chief Keyser said their 5-year study conducted by The Structures Group (TSG) came back and provided recommendations on what items needed repair or renovation.

At that point the locality hired an outside engineer which did a very poor job as they estimated repair costs of \$11,000. However, the replacement of the temperature monitoring system alone ended up costing more than \$30,000.

Keyser explained that this inaccurate estimation is why the request is at the proposed cost and has taken the time that it has, thanking the Board for its patience.

## **c. City of Hopewell Extension Request**

Committee Chair Calvert introduced a project extension from the City of Hopewell.

Fire Chief Benjamin Ruppert of the City of Hopewell said that the locality put the request for proposal (RFP) out last year to purchase a containerized system, with an engineer to do site work and supervision. Ruppert explained that the RFP returned bids which far exceeded their estimates. Vendors seemed confused about what the project was intended to be. Ruppert explained that the locality decided to separate site work from building and installation. At the same time, there were internal delays with the loss of the city procurement officer.

Sites asked if site plan had been approved, to which Ruppert affirmed it has been.

Calvert asked if this is a containerized project, to which Ruppert affirmed that it is.

Fluvanna County is seeking approval for a similar plan, and Hopewell hopes to follow their process to shorten the timeline.

Ruppert said that December 2027 is the requested date, providing an 18-month extension. Sites asked if they are confident in that timeline, as the Board could give a longer extension if needed.

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Ruppert said the city had already been approved through June but asserted they would be glad to get more time than the requested 6 months.

Sites said that the project should be extended to July 1st, 2028 to maximize the ability for the city to complete the project.

**Motion:** To approve the City of Hopewell's Extension Request to July 1, 2028

**Motion:** Sites **Second:** Hanks

**Discussion on the Motion:** None

**Vote:** Unanimous

**Action:** Extension request recommended to the Board

**Motion:** To approve the Mecklenburg County and Northumberland County Renovation Requests

**Motion:** Sterne **Second:** Hanks

**Discussion on the Motion:** None

**Vote:** Unanimous

**Action:** Renovation Request(s) recommended to the Board

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Clerk of the Committee

Spencer Willett

Minutes completed by Ryan Deegan

*Documents related to this meeting of the Virginia Fire Services Board may be requested by contacting the Government Affairs Division by emailing [PolicyOffice@vdfp.virginia.gov](mailto:PolicyOffice@vdfp.virginia.gov)*