



Frederick County Fire and Rescue Advisory Board Meeting

Meeting Minutes

APPROVED

Date: June 10, 2024 1900 hours

Location: Winchester Hall
1st Floor Meeting Room
12 E. Church Street, Frederick, MD 21701

Attendance:

Battalion 1 (Todd Johnson).....	Present
Battalion 2 (David Fox)	Absent
Battalion 3 (Nelson Smith)	Present
Battalion 4 (<i>Vacant</i>)	<i>Vacant</i>
Battalion 5 (Mike Duble)	Present
Career Rep (Brandon Burke)	Present
Career Rep (Anthony Gramiccioni).....	Present (phone)
Citizen Rep (Mark Kirchman)	Present
Citizen Rep (Gunnar Pedersen)	Present (phone)

Nonvoting Reps:

Frederick County Executive (Jessica Fitzwater).....	Absent
Jurisdictional Medical Director (Dr. Jeffrey Fillmore)	Present
Fire & Rescue Services (Chief Tom Coe).....	Present
Volunteer Fire & Rescue Assoc. (President James May)	Present
Volunteer Fire & Rescue Services (Deputy Chief Shane Darwick)	Present
Local #3666 (President Stephen Jones)	Present

Guests: None

The 2024 Firefighter Safety Stand Down will be held June 16-22, 2024. This year's theme is "Fire Training: Back to the Basics."

FY25 Budget has been finalized with the following additions for DFRS:

- Monday – Friday Day Work Engine Company at Wolfsville
- 2 additional Lieutenants in the Fire Marshals office
- 1 additional Captain in the EMS office

Recruit Classes 36 & 37 are down to a total of 41 recruits.

Recruitment efforts are underway for Recruit Classes 38 & 39. To date we have received 510 applications. Class to start January 13, 2025.

Medic 4 24/7 staffing occurred on May 18th, which completes phase 3 of the ALS Deployment Plan. The next unit will be a Paramedic Engine at Thurmont Fire Station.

Work continues on the modification of OSHA 1910.156. The workgroup has drafted a response letter to OSHA.

Correspondence (Attachment 1) was sent to FRAB members regarding the plan to approve and publish draft Chain of Command Policy 1.01.06 (Attachment 2).

iv. **President, FCVFRA, James May**

President May reminded everyone to support your local fire company carnivals.

v. **Local #3666, President, Stephen Jones**

President Jones stated that he did not have anything to report for the June meeting.

b. Committee Reports

i. **Director of Volunteer Fire & Rescue**

Operations Committee

Both the Emergency Services Certification List and Command Officer Annual Training & Certification policies along with the Lithium-Ion Battery draft policy will be up for discussion and vote at the All-Chiefs meeting on June 11th.

PPE Voucher Program

End of year Vouchers must be used by June 30th.

Annual Compliance Training

Reopened FCG Learn on June 1st for new members and anyone needing to catch up, about 286 operational volunteers. Biggest issue is logins and multiple email address.

Work-Based Learning Internship Program

Students graduated on May 14th. Received approval by FCPS and the State for running a two-year completion program with juniors and seniors.

Planning Workgroup

Met on June 4th and approved Company 10 replacement Brush truck.

Gear Up Class

GEAR UP vehicle will be on display at the MSFA Convention.

Special Events

IAP Emergency planning is under development for Gran Fondo Maryland- Sunday September 15, 2024.

Attended The Great Frederick Fair pre-fair security team meeting on June 6th.

Planning for 4th of July is underway.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

a. CY 2024 Accreditation Process

Final Peer Review report will be presented at the July 8th FRAB meeting.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

a. Discussion on election of 2024-2025 Chairman and Co-Chair

Chairman Johnson and Co-Chair Pedersen offered to continue in their positions. No other nominations were received.

IX. ACTION ITEM(S)

b. Election of 2024-2025 Chairman and Co-Chair

Motion to re-elect Todd Johnson as Chairman and Gunnar Pedersen as Co-Chair:

Moved by Mark Kirchman

Seconded by Nelson Smith

VOTE: YES: 7 NO: 0 ABSTAIN: 0 PASSED

X. COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Todd Johnson

Looking forward to seeing if students of the Work-Based Internship program apply for the current recruitment process.

Good work on the MDA Fundraiser.

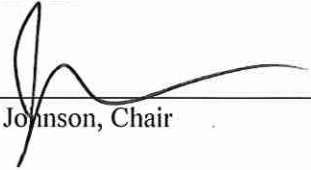
Gunnar Pedersen

Suggested that FRAB email correspondence be included in the meeting minutes.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

APPROVED




Todd Johnson, Chair

APPROVED



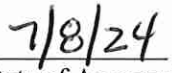
Date of Approval

APPROVED



Gunnar Pedersen, Co-Chair

APPROVED



Date of Approval

**FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT**Jessica Fitzwater
*County Executive***DIVISION OF FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES**

Office of the Chief

Thomas E. Coe, Chief

June 6, 2024

Mr. Todd Johnson, Chairperson
Frederick County Fire and Rescue Advisory Board
12 East Church Street
Frederick, MD 21701

Chairperson Johnson,

In accordance with Article XI, Section F of the Bylaws of the Frederick County Fire and Rescue Advisory Board, I am writing you to provide a written explanation as to why I plan to approve and publish policy 1.01.06 "Chain of Command".

Background:

Through the Summer and Fall of 2023, staff from the Division of Fire and Rescue Services and the Division of Volunteer Fire and Rescue Services worked to develop and update policies required by the County Code and were noted as recommendations for improvement in the Ball Road After Action Report and Improvement Plan. Two of those policies dovetail together to outline the organizational hierarchy of the Fire Service in Frederick County and the commensurate training and experience required to hold specific ranks within the service. On October 17, 2023, the Operations Committee was presented with the Chain of Command and Volunteer Rank Structure Policies for review. At the next Operations Committee Meeting, which occurred on November 14, 2023, the volunteer chiefs presented 15 recommendations that requested modifications to the policies presented as well as the development of additional policies to clarify processes.

I took the next several months to evaluate the recommendations and worked to implement the overwhelming majority of them into the two draft policies. Those policy updates were presented back to the Operations Committee at their meeting which was held on March 19, 2024. At the end of the presentation a motion was made "to accept all of both policies with the exception of the Operational Chain of Command". That motion failed 4 in favor, 5 against and 1 abstention.

On Tuesday March 26, 2024, the Frederick County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association's Executive Board was briefed on the policies as they moved through the process to the Fire and Rescue Advisory Board. While the Executive Board normally does not vote as part of the policy approval process, the body voted to support the Volunteer Rank Structure Policy.

The two draft policies were initially presented for review to the Fire and Rescue Advisory Board (FRAB) on April 10, 2024. The May 13, 2024 FRAB agenda had both policies listed as action items. After discussions on both policies, the FRAB voted four against and three in favor on

supporting Policy 1.01.06 “Chain of Command” and voted 7-0 to support policy 5.00.03 Volunteer Rank Structure. Policy 5.00.03 – Volunteer Rank Structure was supported unanimously by the members of the FRAB.

Article IV, Section 1-2-64 of the Frederick County Code states “There shall be one integrated chain of command for career personnel of the Division of Fire and Rescue Services and the volunteer fire, rescue and ambulance companies.” To date, there is a clear lack of a documented integrated chain of command within our Fire and Rescue Service. The lack of this document breeds assumptions. This exact issue was clearly brought out in the Ball Road After Action Report and Improvement Plan. A panel of external Fire and Rescue experts reviewed a structure fire that occurred on August 11, 2021. The panel reviewed facts related directly to the incident as well as organizational policy and procedure that related to the response. There were three specific recommendations related to this chain of command discussion:

- 9.1.1 Chain of Command – Observation #1, Recommendation #1 – “The Department must develop and adhere to a singular chain of command that fully clarifies the operational chain of command in an integrated (career and volunteer) workforce. This structure should outline the authority of every officer position from Fire Chief to the lowest level of company level supervision (Lieutenant).”
- 9.1.1 Chain of Command – Observation #1, Recommendation #2 – “The chain of command policy must avoid equivalency position types, where different ranks with dissimilar qualifications are considered equal in rank. Instead, the Fire Chief must consider the overall responsibility of each officer rank and must also consider the minimum qualifications required to be in each position before determining organizational structure.
- 9.1.1 Chain of Command – Observation #1, Recommendation #3 – “The chain of command policy should be developed and approved by the Fire Chief alone, free, and absent of any political influence, and based on actual day-to-day responsibilities and professional qualifications.

Determination

The May 13, 2024 FRAB meeting included an extended discussion on the proposed Chain of Command Policy. During that conversation I outlined my thought process on why this policy is important both organizationally and operationally. The Chain of Command is mated to both policy 5.00.03 – Volunteer Rank Structure Policy as well as 2.03.01 Uniformed Employee Competitive Promotional Requirements and Procedures to ensure that operational training and experience is as equivalent as reasonably possible for both our career and volunteer responders by rank.

After careful thought and consideration and with genuine respect for the recommendation of the Fire and Rescue Advisory Board my intent is to move Policy 1.01.06 - Chain of Command forward with an effective date of July 1, 2024. I have amended the draft policy (attached) based on one of the recommendations that were discussed at the May FRAB Meeting. In Section IV Procedures, I have added A and B that took sections directly out of the County Code regarding respect for and authority of Officers and both points now reside directly in the policy.

The decision to move this policy forward without the recommendation of the Fire and Rescue Advisory Board is not one that has been taken lightly. It is my belief that we have taken the last 11 months to craft this policy and receive stakeholder input and feedback. Perspectives vary on this policy, and it is one where I believe consensus will not be found. This policy is required by our County Code and important to the daily operations of our organization. The chain of command policy places great authority and responsibility in the hands of both our career and volunteer responders. While some feel that this policy is divisive, I think the opposite is true, this policy is inclusive and empowering to all our responders.

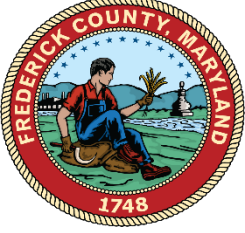
It is important to note, all Division of Fire and Rescue policies are regularly reviewed once issued to insure effectiveness. I will be sure that the Chain of Command policy is reviewed one year from its effective date and will provide feedback to the Fire and Rescue Advisory Board on any modifications needed.

Yours in Service,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas E. Coe".

Chief Thomas E. Coe, Director
Frederick County Division of Fire and Rescue Service

Cc: Frederick County Fire and Rescue Advisory Board Members

	Frederick County, Maryland Division of Fire and Rescue Services STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE	
	1.01.06	Chain of Command
Effective Date: January 1, 2025		Page 1 of 2
Revised From: N/A		Related Forms:
<p style="text-align: center;">Approved: _____ Director/Chief Thomas E. Coe</p>		

SECTION I: PURPOSE

To establish a standardized Administrative Chain of Command for Uniformed County Employees, and an integrated Operational Chain of Command for the combination fire and rescue system in Frederick County, Maryland.

SECTION II: APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all personnel of the Frederick County Division of Fire and Rescue Services (DFRS).

SECTION III: DEFINITIONS

- A. Chain of Command – The ranking order of operational positions within the Frederick County Division of Fire and Rescue Services.

SECTION IV: PROCEDURES

A. An operationally authorized officer has the authority commensurate with the officer's position and shall be afforded appropriate respect at all times by career and volunteer personnel.

B. The authority of officers shall be in accordance with county ordinance, division policies and standard operating procedures.

C. Administrative Chain of Command (Supervision / Daily Workflow)

1. The daily administrative chain of command for uniformed County Fire/Rescue employees shall be:

- a. Fire Chief
- b. Career Deputy Chief
- c. Career Assistant Chief
- d. Career Battalion Chief
- e. Career Captain
- f. Career Lieutenant

- 28 g. Career Technician, Firefighter III, Firefighter II, Firefighter I
29 h. Career Recruit
- 30 2. The daily administrative chain of command for volunteer personnel shall be
31 determined by the leadership of their assigned volunteer company.
- 32 D. Integrated Operational Chain of Command
- 33 1. The integrated operational chain of command for career and volunteer operational
34 personnel shall be:
- 35 a. Fire Chief
36 b. Career Deputy Chief
37 c. Career Assistant Chief
38 d. Career Battalion Chief – Volunteer Chief
39 e. Volunteer Deputy Chief – Volunteer Assistant Chief
40 f. Career/Volunteer Captain
41 g. Career/Volunteer Lieutenant
42 h. Career Technician
43 i. Career/Volunteer Firefighter
44 j. Volunteer EMS Only Provider
- 45
- 46 2. All personnel in the Integrated Operational Chain of Command are required to
47 meet the training, education and experience standards for the rank that they hold
48 as outlined in policy 5.00.03 – Volunteer Rank Structure or 2.03.02 Uniformed
49 Employee Competitive Promotional Requirements and Procedures.
- 50
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