

Frederick County Fire and Rescue Advisory Board Meeting

Meeting Minutes

APPROVED

Date: June 9, 2025 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)	Present
	Battalion 3 (Cassie Goodman)	Present
	Battalion 4 (Daniel Moré)	Present
	Battalion 5 (Mike Duble)	Present
	Career Rep (Brandon Burke)	Present
	Career Rep (Anthony Gramiccioni).....	Present (phone)
	Citizen Rep (Mark Kirchman)	Present (phone)
	Citizen Rep (Gunnar Pedersen)	Present

Nonvoting Reps:	Frederick County Executive (Jessica Fitzwater).....	Absent
	Jurisdictional Medical Director (Dr. Jeffrey Fillmore)	Absent
	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:
Susie Nicol
Jeff Scire
Michael Wiand

Frederick County Fire and Rescue Advisory Board Meeting

June 9, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Todd Johnson.

II. ROLL CALL OF VOTING AND NONVOTING MEMBERS:

Absent was:

1. Jessica Fitzwater, County Executive
2. Jeffrey Fillmore, Jurisdictional Medical Director

III. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:

Jeff Scire (IHC Company 1)
Susie Nicol (BVAR Company 19), Ad Hoc Committee Secretary
Michael Wiand, Incoming Battalion 4 Representative

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

V. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:

Motion to approve May minutes: Moved by Mark Kirchman
Seconded by Gunnar Pedersen

VOTE: **YES:** 9 **NO:** 0 **ABSTAIN:** 0 **PASSED**

VI. REPORTS:

a. Ex-Officio Member Reports

i. **Frederick County Executive, Ms. Jessica Fitzwater**

As County Executive Fitzwater was absent, no report was given.

ii. **Jurisdictional Medical Director, Dr. Jeffrey Fillmore**

As Dr. Fillmore was absent, no report was given.

iii. **Fire & Rescue Division Director, Chief Tom Coe**

Events

American Legion Post 11 recognized Firefighter/Paramedic Justin Roth as their Paramedic of the Year and Firefighter Patty Staniewicz was recognized as their Firefighter of the Year.

Attended the High School Work-Based Learning Internship Program graduation on May 19th.

Attended the Jefferson Ruritan Club dinner, followed by a fire service question-and-answer session.

Hosted representatives from the Taoyuan District Fire Brigade (Taiwan) for a tour of the Training Center, lunch and drills at Station 3 as part of their visit to the United States.

Attended the WFMD Touch-a-Truck event at the Frederick Fairgrounds.

Division Updates

Recruitment is underway for a new recruit class scheduled to begin in January. Written testing begins this week.

Recruit Classes 38 and 39 remain in session, with graduation scheduled for July 25th.

Paramedic Class 11 remains in session with 7 students. National testing is expected between late November and early December.

Staffing at Wolfsville Fire Company is scheduled to begin on July 28th.

The new paramedic engine at Station 5 is scheduled for final inspection in July, with the goal of placing it in service by September. Tower 7 is scheduled for final inspection in August, with plans to have it in service by the end of the year. The hybrid fire engine is slated for final inspection in December.

MIEMMS Protocol needs to be completed by July 1st.

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

President May stated that he did not have anything to report.

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

President Jones stated that he did not have anything to report.

b. Committee Reports

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

Compliance Training

Final audit is scheduled for June 30th.

Fire/Rescue Work Based Learning Internship Program

A graduation ceremony was recently held at the Independence Hose Company's Social Hall. The event was well-received and drew strong attendance. The next session begins on August 22, 2025, and applications are currently being accepted

Planning Workgroup

The Planning Workgroup did not meet on Tuesday, June 3, 2025.

Recruitment & Retention

14 students completed Gear Up class. The next class will be held July 14-19, 2025.

PPE Voucher Program

The last fitting for the year will be on June 18th.

APS Update

All stations have been completed. Emergency phone project is underway.

Operations Committee

The Operations Committee met on Tuesday April 15, 2025. Division updates were presented along with committee and workgroup updates. There were no items of business to vote on, nor any new business presented. The next meeting will be an All-Chiefs Meeting on June 10, 2025.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

a. Ad Hoc Committee Report

Battalion 4 Representative Daniel Moré read a statement (Attachment 1) from Clarence 'Chip' Jewell. Copies of the statement were distributed to members for reference during the reading.

President Jones shared the proposed changes as submitted by IAFF Local 3666 (Attachment 2).

A discussion of the report followed.

b. Fire and Rescue Advisory Board Representation

Michael Wiand has been confirmed by the County Council as the new Battalion 4 representative effective July 1st.

Battalion 5 representative Mike Duble has submitted his letter of intent for reappointment.

Currently have one applicant for the Citizen Representative vacancy.

c. Discussion on election of 2025-206 Chairman and Co-Chair

Chairman Johnson offered to continue as the Board Chair. No other nominations for Chair were received.

Anthony Gramiccioni was nominated to serve as Co-Chair.

VIII. ACTION ITEM(S)

a. Vote on Ad Hoc Committee Report

A motion was made to table the vote on the report until the July meeting, to allow time for all members to review the information and to hear Chief Coe's recommendations.

Moved by Daniel Moré

Seconded by Gunnar Pedersen

VOTE: YES: 9 NO: 0 ABSTAIN: 0 PASSED

b. Election of 2025-2026 Chairman and Co-Chair

Motion to re-elect Todd Johnson as Chairman and elect Anthony Gramiccioni as Co-Chair:

Moved by Daniel Moré

Seconded by Cassie Goodman

VOTE: YES: 9 NO: 0 ABSTAIN: 0 PASSED

IX. COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Citizen Representative Gunnar Pedersen stated that this would be his final official meeting, as his term expires on June 30th.

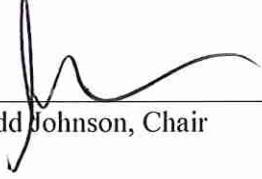
Battalion 4 Representative Daniel Moré announced that this would be his last meeting, with his term set to expire on June 30th.

Career Representative Anthony Gramicci thanked the members of the Ad Hoc Committee for their work and expressed appreciation for the constructive comments from all participants. He added that the Key City Fire Conference will return in 2026, scheduled for March 18–21.

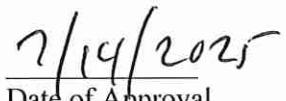
XI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

APPROVED


Todd Johnson, Chair

APPROVED


7/14/2025
Date of Approval

APPROVED


Gunnar Pedersen, Co-Chair

APPROVED


Date of Approval

Fire/Rescue Advisory Board
Frederick County Government
12 East Church St.
Frederick, MD 21701

June 2, 2025

To the Members of the Fire/Rescue Advisory Board and other dedicated members of the Frederick County Fire and Rescue Service,

Thank you for your commitment to our fire and rescue service. I want to apologize for the length of my comments, but I feel it is very important for everyone to understand the history and intent of the ordinances presently in force and the detailed background of each issue.

I have read the recommendations and the PowerPoint presentation from the adhoc committee of the Fire/Rescue Advisory Board (FRAB). I commend the committee for attempting to streamline the process and attempt to enhance the effectiveness of the FRAB. As the co-author of the ordinance initiating the FRAB, I wanted to share my observations and opinions on some of the recommendations.

I, too, have been concerned with the apparent lack of involvement of the FRAB in the implementation of policy changes in the county fire/rescue service. With that in mind, I would like to clarify some of the statements made in the recommendations with respect to the initial implementation of the FRAB and ordinance.

“The FRAB becomes an Advisory Board as intended. It no longer has a vote on policy changes.” This statement is not fully accurate. The initial intent was for the FRAB to vote on policy changes to provide input of all concerned involved parties and organizations prior to final policy implementation. Though the ordinance does not specify actually voting on every policy, the ordinance is very clear the FRAB was to “...serve in a capacity to review and provide cooperation to the Director on issues related to the delivery of fire and rescue services in Frederick County...”

The intention was for the FRAB to review and provide consensus on policy changes and provide input to the chief with regard to potential concerns. A timeline of a maximum of 30 - 60 day was envisioned to allow for all stakeholders to review and provide additional comments of input to the chief before final presentation to the FRAB for concurrence. If the FRAB did not initially agree with a policy proposed by the chief, or if there was significant

controversy, the chief would be requested to take the policy back to the review stage. If, on the second presentation to the FRAB, the chief would implement the policy as he or she saw fit regardless of the FRAB vote. It has been always understood that even if the FRAB does not meet consensus, the fire chief has the authority to implement policies, pursuant the Delegation of Authority ordinance effective July 1, 2013.

If you refer to the early FRAB meetings, policies were brought forth after to the FRAB after initial review by the FCFRA (Frederick County Volunteer Fire & Rescue Association), Local #3666 (Career Firefighters Association Frederick County, MD) and the Operations Committee. These three entities were directly involved as a triumvirate to assure vetting from all levels of fire service involvement. The three bodies that were specified for review were: the volunteer input, the union input, and the input for the Operations Committee which includes DFRS chief officers, union representatives and volunteer representatives.

Initially, when the FRAB met, every firehouse in Frederick County watched on the county cable channel as there were comments, concerns and collaboration in public, another intent of the FRAB. The fire and rescue service receives the second largest budget allocation in county government next to the school board. If you consider the ownership of apparatus and fire station ownership by the 24 independent fire and rescue companies, the fire service is probably the largest public service in county government. Thus, public input and partner organization concurrence should be a priority. Fire and rescue service should not operate in a vacuum, but rather in a public forum as the tax payers of Frederick County have a large direct investment each year.

At some point in the last several years, a county attorney determination was made to nearly circumvent the FRAB and allow the fire chief to implement policy without direct FRAB involvement or concurrence. Though, as noted, the fire chief does have this ultimate authority, it is in the best interest of all fire service partners and the public to have input, vetting and public presentation of policies to enhance the cooperative effort to provide the highest level of service in the public domain.

I personally believe all three of the entities noted should continue to have direct input. The FCFRA has been noted in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Frederick County Code, for over 50 years as an advisory capacity to the then county commissioners and presently under home rule and the executive/council form of county government. The FCFRA represents the 24 independent non-profit corporations in every section of Frederick County. In many communities, the volunteer fire department is one of the largest businesses in the town. In some communities, the volunteer fire department is the center of the community.

FCVFRA represents a unique constituency of citizens of Frederick County that volunteer their time, not only to benefit the community, but to provide a level of public safety that no other volunteer organization can match. The Executive Committee of the FCVFRA has no direct authority, but, under the by-laws of the FCVFRA, acts on behalf of the association between meetings to act for the welfare of the association. Not only are there still approximately 500 operationally qualified personnel still responding to incidents, but hundreds more volunteer fire company members that are still behind the scene raising monies to purchase apparatus and fund company owned fire stations. The continued input of the volunteer fire service is a necessary component to a truly combination and consolidated fire and rescue service.

IAFF Local #3666 is a critical partner in the delivery of fire and rescue service. Over the years, the number of career personnel has drastically increased due to the massive increase of incidents and the decrease in the number of operational volunteer. Local #3666 plays a vital role in the daily response to incidents. Most of the county volunteer fire and rescue companies have recognized the importance of needed staffing. Over the last 20 years the leadership of these volunteer fire and rescue companies have requested the majority of career personnel assigned to volunteer owned fire and rescue stations. Volunteer fire and rescue corporations requesting career personnel is something unheard of in most metropolitan combination fire service systems and is a positive relationship unique to Frederick County.

Each member of Local #3666 has a vested interest, both financially and future career ladder, in the direction of our county fire and rescue service. A fire service career is much more than a job, it is also the livelihood and normally the primary family income. A member of the career fire and rescue service forms comraderies and bond that no other career can provide. These dedicated individuals essentially live with a shift for 24 hours. A career member of the fire service looks to a career ladder and advancement that will not only provide a level of leadership, but also provide for an increase in salary to enhance their family financial position. It is critical that this partner organization also maintain input to policies.

The third leg of the fire service delivery triumvirate is the Operations Committee. This unique body is made up of officer level DFRS leadership, volunteer officer leadership and general representatives of Local #3666. The members of this committee are the daily operational officers that oversee the various levels of the fire service and provide on scene operational oversight. This level provides the third tier of input that is unique from FCVFRA or Local #3666.

When the Fire-Rescue Advisory Board was developed, it was envisioned these three critical parts of the combination fire/rescue service of Frederick County would be sought for comment and consensus before the final delivery to the FRAB. As it normally takes several months to develop policy, there should be adequate time to seek the input needed to take the policy forward to the FRAB for consensus and public input. Yes, public input. One of the key components of the FRAB is the opportunity for the public, or individuals from the fire-rescue service, to provide direct public input in an open forum. As noted earlier, when first implemented, there was global interest in the FRAB meetings. The open public discussion and concurrence vote of the FRAB was envisioned to help foster a healthy and efficient combination fire and rescue service in Frederick County.

Having served in the initial positon of Director/Chief of the Division of Volunteer Fire & Rescue Services, I must provide direct comment in opposition to changing this position from the present format. I am perplexed why this issue is the ad hoc committee report as there is not a direct correlation between the FRAB and the Director/Deputy Chief of the Division of Volunteer Fire & Rescue Services. I was honored to be hired for the initial position of Volunteer Director that was implemented in 2003 as an administrative position directly reporting to the County Manager and Board of County Commissioners (BoCC). Over a period of time, this position was eliminated and thus creating a void in the ability of the volunteer fire and rescue service to have direct input in county government.

The FCVFRA requested the BoCC to re-establish the position. There were many months of delay within the association membership attempting to decide on the level of representation was desired. In July 2014, the BoCC independently established a separate Division of Volunteer Fire & Rescue Services and established the position of Chief/Director of the division. This position reported directly to the County Manager and BoCC. The position was established as a division director level and exempt employee direct appointment by the BoCC.

At the time, I was serving as the Director of the Department of Emergency Communications. I was asked by the BoCC to serve in this initial division director level position. Though the position was a chief and equal in authority as the county fire chief, I considered myself as a Division Chief in operational authority. I concurred this appointment should have had some input from the FCVFRA. However, due to months of delay and impending county elections, the BoCC decided to act independently to address the void in representation of the volunteers and established the present position and the division independently.

Establishing this position as an “equal” within county government was a positive move by the BoCC. As an equal, I was able to have direct discussion with the fire chief as an equal,

not a subordinate. Thus, I could be open and frank without any fear of possible direct retribution or actions. There were some uncomfortable situations behind closed doors that thankfully I was not a subordinate. There were instances that I would advocate on behalf of other DFRS departments and staff as there would not always be provided an opportunity for some of the DFRS leadership to provide input on policy or budget requests to the fire chief.

As an equal partner in the administrative functions of county government, I would attend all division director meetings and be provided an opportunity to provide direct input on volunteer issues to the BoCC and later County Executive. This position was later codified by county ordinance, developed by Chief Owens and I, to remain a Division Director but hold the operational rank of Deputy Chief. The ordinance states the appointment would be made directly by the County Executive with input from the FCVRA. The position became an integral part of the command staff as the third fire service deputy chief. The present position continues to function in the manner as an operational deputy chief and the Director of the Division of Volunteer Fire & Rescue Services directly responsible to the County Executive.

To change the positon to a direct report to the county fire chief could have potential serious negative consequences to the volunteer fire and rescue service. The elimination of the volunteer director and dependence of the fire chief to provide volunteer input at the executive level has already proven to fail. Though the fire chief has the legal and ultimate authority of the provision of fire and rescue service, the independent ability of the volunteer stakeholders to have an avenue to provide an independent and potentially conflicting opinion to the County Executive will still assure the volunteer component can maintain direct input.

The creativity of the then BoCC to provide the direct report while providing an operational level component to the positon has proven to be effective. The personality and agenda of a county fire chief could well be in conflict with the opinions or programs of the volunteer fire and rescue service. It must always be understood our combination county fire and rescue service is partnership of career, volunteer and county government. Both career and volunteer components need some form of direct input.

Local #3666 has regular contract negotiations to represent the interests of the dedicated career employees. Not only does the union have the ability to provide input, but through binding arbitration, the ability to have proposals not totally agreeable to county government possibly implemented by contract. Though the volunteers do not have binding arbitration as a means of resolving conflicting issues, the volunteers at least have a direct report to the County Executive to voice concerns or proposals that may be opposed or in conflict with

the fire chief. A change is the ordinance to eliminate this provision would be detrimental not only to the volunteer fire service, but also potentially to the entire county fire and rescue service.

I believe there is a need to enhance the direct involvement of the FRAB, not to question or overstep the authority of the fire chief, but rather to provide input and guidance on the implementation of policy and delivery of fire and emergency services in Frederick County. I believe the FRAB can be a positive resource for not only the fire chief, but for the FCVFRA, IAFF Local #3666 and the people we all serve. Maintaining the present formula of collaboration can serve to strengthen what I consider the best combination fire and rescue service in Maryland.

The Division of Volunteer Fire & Rescue Services needs to continue in the present form as an affiliate of DFRS and but a separate entity and division of county government with independent leadership appointed by and directly reporting to the County Executive for all administrative and governmental issues while serving as a deputy chief of the Division of Fire/Rescue Services operationally reporting to the fire chief.

I sincerely appreciate the time and efforts of the ad hoc committee and share in their concerns. However, I believe the present structure, utilized as envisioned, with consultation and input from the fire service partners and concurrence by the FRAB would address the present issue of the lack FRAB involvement. A fire chief is hired to make tough decisions that are often in contrast to opinions of volunteers or union local. That is why a person is hired as the chief. It can be a lonely position.

We are fortunate our present chief is willing to take an objective and global view of our fire service and is willing to take input. At times, the chief makes decisions not supported by the volunteers or union. By simply following the initial structure of the FRAB and providing the partnership and public component, the structure and delivery of fire and rescue service would be enhanced and potential conflict avoided.

Maintaining the Director/Deputy Chief and the present structure of the Division of Volunteer Fire & Rescue Services will assure the critical volunteer component of the combination fire and rescue service of our county will continue to have an independent report function that would assure the volunteer leadership at the County Executive level, while providing an operational Deputy Chief reporting to the fire chief the enhance the entire fire and rescue service.

In closing, I believe in cooperative management and leadership. Nearly 20 years ago, I presented a cooperative management format known as "Together in Service" to develop direct input from both the volunteer association and Local #3666. I sincerely believe in a

cooperative and collaborative effort to provide input on the county fire and rescue service. I am proud to have worked with Chief Owens to develop the present ordinance to implement the Fire/Rescue Advisory Board that we believed could serve to help guide the fire chief while assuring public and partner input. I was also honored to work with Chief Owens to propose the ordinance to assure the volunteer service is always provided a direct avenue to county government as intended in 2003.

I appreciate the time and effort the members of the Fire-Rescue Advisory Board each month to provide assistance and insight to the fire chief. I am also appreciative of the efforts of the ad-hoc committee taking the time to provide recommendations recently presented to the FRAB. My comments are my personal reflections and opinions having been a part of the development of the ordinances, personally serving in the initial position of Volunteer Director and as the first Deputy Chief/Director of the Division of Volunteer Fire and Rescue Services. Having served in our county fire and rescue service for 56 years, I have been fortunate to be a part of the development and growth of our fire and rescue service.

BE SAFE

Sincerely,

Clarence "Chip" Jewell, III
Deputy Chief/Director (retired),
Frederick County Division of Volunteer Fire & Rescue Services
Past President, Frederick County Volunteer Fire & Rescue Association
President, Libertytown Volunteer Fire Department

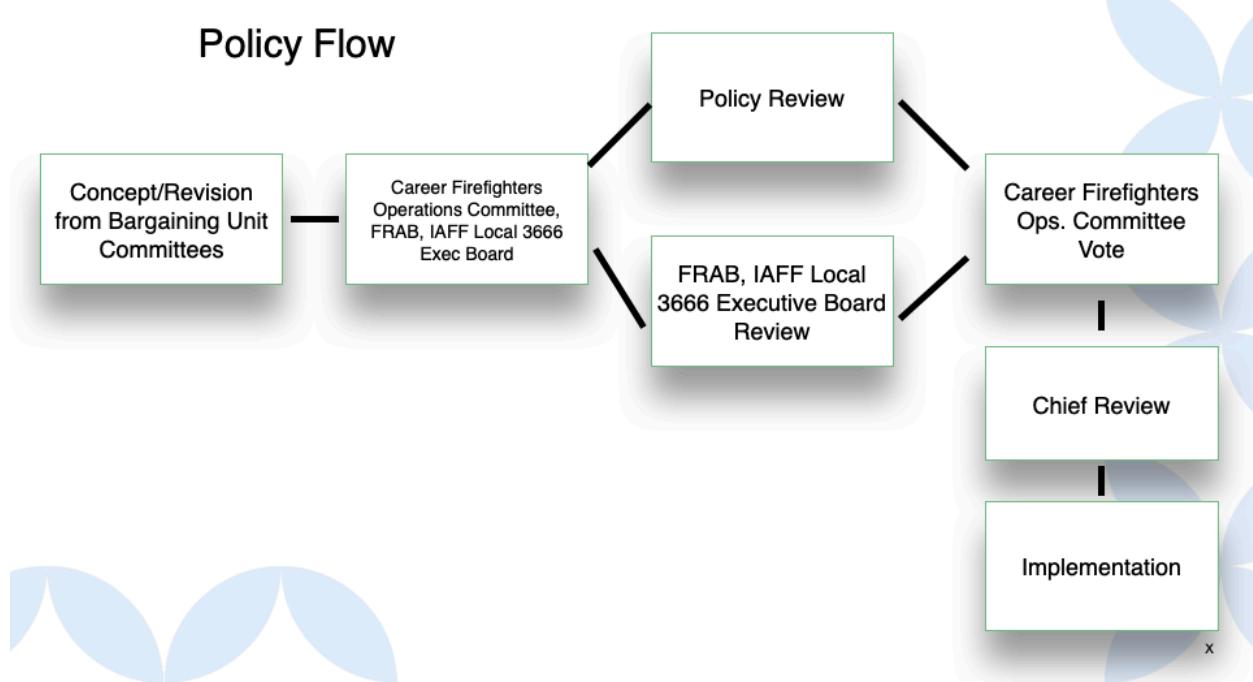
Proposal 1

- ~~No change to the committee makeup and/or number of personnel on it.~~ FRAB voting member makeup changes to 5 Bargaining Unit Members, 2 FCVFRA Members, 2 Citizen Reps.
- The FRAB becomes an Advisory Board as intended. It no longer has a vote on policy changes.
- The IAFF Local 3666 Executive Board ~~FCVFRA Executive Board~~ provides oversight but functions as an advisory board. It no longer has a vote on policy changes.
 - Operations Committee falls under the IAFF Local 3666 Operations Committee. ~~remains under FCVFRA Executive Board~~ (See Below)
 - ~~FCVFRA~~ IAFF Local 3666 Executive Board may overrule the Operations Committee for exigent circumstances only (ex. Life safety, Financial, etc.)
- The FRAB & ~~FCVFRA~~ IAFF Local 3666 Executive Board are afforded the opportunity to be notified of things brought to the table at Operations Committee meetings.
 - FRAB & IAFF Local 3666 Executive Board is given the right to submit commentary to the Operations Committee prior to them voting on policy changes or other pertinent decisions.
- The FRAB meetings change to ~~Quarterly the Third Tuesday of each odd numbered month.~~
- The Fire Chief must add their typed notes to the written FRAB report for dissemination to the board members review prior to the bi-monthly meeting.
- Remove & restructure the current FCVFRA Director position to be a Deputy Director position. This aligns the FCVFRA structure to match the rest of FCFRS and it places the true authority on the Director/Fire Chief as intended.
- Restructure the current FCVFRA Deputy Director position to the next tier below to continue to align it with current practices.

Makeup of the Local 3666 Operations Committee:

-5 Bargaining Unit Members
-3 FCVFRA Members

Policy Flow Proposal:



FRAB AD-HOC RECOMMENDATIONS

Proposal 2:

- Abolishment of the FRAB
- All committees become committees of DFRS with equal representation from FCVFRA and IAFF Local 3666.
- Any Policy changes or proposals will be posted for stakeholder comment. Comments will be taken under consideration by the fire chief prior to policy implementation or changes.
- Remove & restructure the current FCVFRA Director position to be a Deputy Director position. This aligns the FCVFRA structure to match the rest of FCFRS and it places the true authority on the Director/Fire Chief as intended.
- Restructure the current FCVFRA Deputy Director position to the next tier below to continue to align it with current practices.