

Frederick County Fire and Rescue Advisory Board Meeting

Meeting Minutes

APPROVED

Date: September 8, 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)	Absent
	Battalion 4 (Michael Wiand)	Present
	Battalion 5 (Mike Duble)	Present (phone)
	Career Rep (Brandon Burke)	Present
	Career Rep (Anthony Gramiccioni).....	Present
	Citizen Rep (Mark Kirchman)	Present (phone)
	Citizen Rep (Pete Raumann)	Present (phone)

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 Jeff Scire)	Present
	Volunteer Fire & Rescue Services (Deputy Chief Shane Darwick)	Present
	Local #3666 (President Stephen Jones)	Present

Guests:
Marc McNeal, Deputy Chief - United Steam Fire Engine Company 3
Susie Nicol – FCVFRA
Jeana Panarella, FCVFRA EMS Committee Chair

Frederick County Fire and Rescue Advisory Board Meeting

September 8, 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. Cassie Goodman, Battalion 3 Representative
 2. Jessica Fitzwater, County Executive
 3. Jeffrey Fillmore, Jurisdictional Medical Director

III. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:

Marc McNeal, Deputy Chief - United Steam Fire Engine Company 3
Susie Nicol – FCVFRA
Jeana Panarella, FCVFRA EMS Committee Chair

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Marc McNeal, Deputy Chief - United Steam Fire Engine Company 3, spoke about the Ad Hoc Committee recommendations. (Attachment 1)

Jeana Panarella, FCVFRA EMS Committee Chair, spoke about the Ad Hoc Committee recommendations. ([Attachment 2](#))

V. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:

Motion to approve August minutes: Moved by Anthony Gramicci
Seconded by David Fox

VOTE: **YES:** **8** **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**

Division Updates

- Fire Prevention Week – October 5th – 11th. Note: Following the meeting, it was clarified that this year's theme is "Charge into Fire Safety: Lithium-Ion Batteries in Your Home", not "Smoke Alarms – Make Them Work for You" as mentioned during the report.

- The first Fire/Rescue Open House event will be held on October 18th at FSK Mall from 11am – 3pm.
- Digital Vehicle Repeater System (DVRS) devices have been installed in all ALS units, Truck Companies and Command vehicles.
- Took delivery of all replacement SCBA equipment. Fit testing has begun, and training has been distributed. Distribution of SCBA is scheduled for on or around October 25th.
- Apparatus
 - Received Engine 52.
 - The Mid-mount Tower is nearing completion.
- Recruit Class 40 is scheduled to begin on January 26, 2026.
- Promotional processes - Technician and Lieutenant.
 - The promotional process for Technician has been completed, resulting in an eligibility list of 15 personnel.
 - The Lieutenant promotional process has concluded the written testing phase; the assessment center is scheduled to take place in the coming days.
- Command Competency Training is underway for all Command Officers.
- Compliance Testing – Hose testing, ladder testing and EMS inspections are underway
- Fire Marshal's office has moved to 1501 Tilco Drive, Suite A

iv. **President, FCVFRA, Jeff Scire**

President Scire stated that the first Presidents meeting will be held at the end of September.

Bylaws and committee-related matters were discussed during the Executive Meeting. Efforts are underway to address the identified issues.

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**

Budget Committee: Volunteer Fire/Rescue Companies are encouraged to begin preparing budget requests. Submissions may include needs for additional personnel, apparatus or vehicles, and major building repairs.

Fire/Rescue Work-Based Learning Internship Program: Class started on August 22, 2025.

Fire/Rescue Planning/Research Workgroup: Met on September 2nd, discussion included updates to the Service Delivery Plan.

Recruitment & Retention: Next class will be October 13-November 1. Improvements have been made to the PPE/SCBA class and Annual Compliance Training was added.

PPE Voucher Program: Next fitting will be on October 13th. The Fire Store is our new vendor, and Lion is the gear manufacturer.

Operations Committee: The next meeting is scheduled for August 19, 2025, at 1900 hours – Committee Meeting. There will be an All-Chiefs meeting on October 21st.

Special Events:

- High School Football: The season schedule has been released, and coverage has been organized.

- The Great Frederick Fair: Incident Action Plan (IAP) is scheduled for release tomorrow.
- In the Streets: Scheduled for September 13th, along with several downtown foot races.
- 2025 Gran Fondo: IAP will be posted tomorrow; the event is set for September 14th.
- Army 10-Miler: Assistance is needed for the event on October 12th.
- Bay Bridge Run: Seeking personnel commitments for November 9th.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

a. Ad Hoc Committee Report

Chairman Johnson reminded members to submit their comments to FRAAB@FrederickCountyMD.gov.

President Jones stated that he will fill the committee vacancy created by Matt Shaw's retirement.

Chief Coe urged the committee to get started reviewing the comments.

b. Open Meetings Act Training

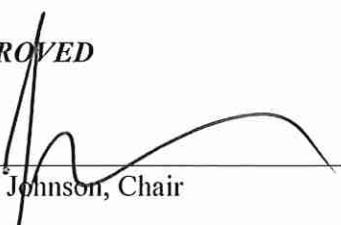
Chairman Johnson reminded all voting members that they are required to complete the Open Meetings Act Training and submit a Certificate of Completion to Leslie by the end of October.

VIII. COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Johnson stated that accreditation will start in January. Companies need to make sure their ESCL is up to date. Process details will be announced late 2025.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

APPROVED

 Todd Johnson, Chair

APPROVED

 Anthony Gramiccioni, Co-Chair

APPROVED
 10/13/2025
 Date of Approval

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 10/13/2025
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United Steam Fire Engine Co. No. 3, Inc.

Established 1845

79 South Market Street
Frederick, MD 21701



Phone 301-600-1711
Fax 301-600-1709

September 7, 2025

Jeff Scire, President
Frederick County Volunteer Fire & Rescue Association
5370 Public Safety Place
Frederick, Maryland 21704

Dear President Scire,

I have reviewed the recommendations of the Fire and Rescue Advisory Board's (FRAB) Ad Hoc Committee, and Chief Coe's recommendations that he presented at the July FRAB meeting, intended to both streamline and improve stakeholder input for the combination fire and rescue service.

Please accept these observations, comments, and recommendations based upon this review.

1. Director of Volunteer Fire and Rescue Services

The Ad Hoc Committee of the FRAB has recommended placing the Director of Volunteer Fire and Rescue Services under the authority of the DFRS Fire Chief and reclassifying the position as an Assistant Chief within DFRS. This proposal is strongly objectionable, as it would severely undermine the volunteer fire and rescue service's direct access to the County Executive and other key County leaders who are essential in shaping policies that impact volunteer services, particularly in the areas of finance, and recruitment and retention.

Such a change would effectively strip the volunteer Director of the independent authority to communicate with County officials on matters directly affecting volunteers, forcing all communication through the DFRS chain of command. This not only diminishes the voice of the volunteer service but also risks losing the path to address conflicts with the Fire Chief's policies, weakening the voice of the volunteer fire and rescue service.

2. FCVFRA

The FCVFRA should conduct a review of its current Bylaws concerning committee structure. Amendments should authorize the Executive Board to establish a flexible framework that permits committees to be created or dissolved by Executive Committee decision, without requiring future Bylaw changes.

3. Operations and EMS Committees

EMS represents the majority of services delivered by Frederick County fire and rescue. For that reason, the EMS Committee must hold a strong and authoritative voice in shaping the County's operational performance and overall readiness.

At present, the EMS Committee is chaired by a volunteer member, with representatives from each volunteer corporation serving as members. This structure differs from that of the Operations Committee, and participation in both is inconsistent and often inadequate. From the Operations Committee's standpoint, there is a clear lack of engagement from many Battalions and the corporations within them, which weakens the effectiveness of these bodies.

The Chief has recommended converting the EMS and Operations Committees into EMS Officers and Fire Officers meetings. Under this plan, EMS Officers would be managed by the Battalion Chief of EMS, while Fire Officers would be managed jointly by the Deputy Chief of Volunteer Services and the Deputy Chief of Emergency Services.

Regardless of what these groups are called or who manages them, their framework must be consistent. Both committees should be co-chaired by representatives from the volunteer service and DFRS, ensuring equal partnership and accountability. In addition, the current voting structure of the Operations Committee requires immediate review and reform. A clear, enforceable recommendation must define how these committees are represented, how they are managed, and what specific authority they hold in shaping policy and procedure. Only with these changes will the committees achieve the effectiveness and efficiency the fire and rescue service demands.

4. Fire and Rescue Advisory Board

The FRAB should take on a stronger role in shaping both the short- and long-term strategic direction of the fire and rescue service and policy implementation, including fiscal policy. A thorough review of its roles and responsibilities at the code and policy levels is needed, with recommended changes to enhance the board's overall effectiveness. The FRAB should serve as the driving force in setting strategic goals for the FCFRA and its member corporations, while also providing robust guidance to the Fire Chief and elected County officials. At present, the FRAB does not demonstrate this level of advisory strength or influence.

5. Dissemination of Information

A significant amount of information is communicated from DFRS, VFRS, and FCFRA leadership to the volunteer corporation leadership; however, a clear disconnect remains between those receiving the information and the general membership of each organization.

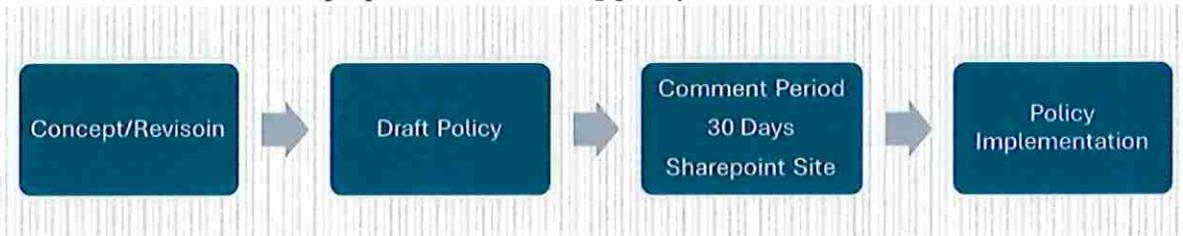
The Chief's recommendation to establish a SharePoint site as a central hub for information sharing is a sound one. This concept was originally proposed by the FRAB early in its formation, but County IT was unable to implement it at the time. Regardless, the FCFRA must ensure accountability by requiring those responsible to provide timely communications and opportunities for comment through such a platform.

6. Presidents Meetings

The establishment of regularly scheduled Presidents' meetings, led by the Director of Volunteer Fire and Rescue Services, is a great recommendation that should be implemented. In addition, meetings with Corporation Treasurers should be convened—at a minimum—prior to the start of each fiscal year to ensure financial alignment and accountability.

7. Proposed Policy Flow and Committee Structure

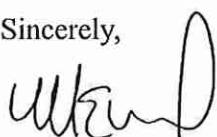
The Fire Chief has proposed the following policy flow:



This policy flow is reasonable regardless of the committee structure; however, there should be an opportunity for review after the comment period to address revisions based on stakeholder feedback. The proposed committee structure seems to eliminate stakeholder voting or, at minimum, the ability to reach a collective consensus on approval or disapproval. In practice, voting already carries little weight, as the Fire Chief ultimately makes the final decision regardless of the majority position of stakeholders.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input regarding these critical decisions affecting the future of the fire and rescue service.

Sincerely,



Marc E. McNeal, Deputy Fire/Rescue Chief

cc: Shane Darwick, Deputy Chief, Volunteer Fire and Rescue Services
 Todd Johnson, Fire and Rescue Advisory Board, Chair, Battalion 1 Rep

September 8, 2025

EMS Committee Comments to the FRAB

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen of the Fire & Rescue Advisory Board. The FCVFRA EMS Committee convened on Thursday, August 28th to review and discuss the proposed changes put forth by Chief Coe concerning recommendations for the FRAB. After careful consideration, while we appreciate and understand the intent and purpose behind Chief Coe's remarks, we would like to respectfully propose the following for your consideration.

- We propose that the EMS Committee be established as a standing committee, similar to the Operations Committee, serving both the FCVFRA and the County. It would be formally titled the County EMS Committee.
- The meetings would be co-led by the Battalion Chief of EMS and an appointed Chairperson from the FCVFRA.
 - o It is understood that these meetings will primarily serve as a forum for discussion. It is important that volunteers continue to have a voice and the opportunity to exchange ideas and perspectives, especially regarding the approximately 80% of fire and rescue services provided to the citizens of Frederick County. However, it should be noted that the majority of the policies and procedures implemented originate from the State of Maryland's MIEMSS (Maryland Institute of Emergency Medical Services Systems).
- Meetings would be held quarterly on Thursday evenings in February, May, August, and November, with flexibility to schedule additional meetings off-cycle if necessary.

We appreciate your time and consideration of these recommendations. Our goal is to ensure continued collaboration and open communication between all parties involved in delivering exceptional fire and rescue services to our community. We believe these proposals will help maintain a strong voice for our volunteers while aligning with broader County and State initiatives. We look forward to your feedback and to working together toward the best outcomes for Frederick County.

Thank you!