

TENNESSEE FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

Winter Combined Board of Directors and Business Meeting

Jackson, TN – 2 February 2024

Members present: Matt Henderson, Brian Biggs, Melvin Martin, Bob Dudley, Eric Turner, Jamie Summers, Rich Hartfield, Lee Turner, Scott Boyd, P.J. Duncan, Jay Moore, Ken Reeves, Gary Farley, James Fountain, Eddie Phillips, Barron Kennedy, and about 30 guests.

Opening: President Henderson called the meeting to order at 9:10 CST, David Woody opened with a prayer and Brian Biggs led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Adoption of Minutes: The Board/Business meeting minutes from Gatlinburg were approved by motion.

Recognitions: All present Past Presidents and Life Members were recognized.

First time Fire Chiefs attending: There were three first-time attendees at the Board/Business meeting.

Reports from Association Officers:

- **Treasurer's Report:** Eddie Phillips said there is \$157,451.31 in the General Account, \$88,976.97 in the Conference Account, and \$101,038.95 in the Special Projects Account. He explained that bills were paid. We are in sound financial condition thanks to members, vendors, corporate sponsors, and cuts to expenses.
- **Conference Report:** James Fountain presented future meeting dates and locations. The Spring 2024 meeting will be at the Park Vista in Gatlinburg on May 14-16, 2024. The Annual Conference will be July 13-16, 2024, at the Embassy Suites in Murfreesboro. The Fall '24 (October 22-24) meeting at the Meadowview in Kingsport. He said the 2023 Annual Conference was a real success with 115 attendees and we cleared over \$24,000.
- **Fire Marshal's Report:** Gary Farley gave a report of the office's accomplishments. Code adoption may be late Spring with rule making coming soon. The Fire Loss Consultant program is going well and TBI is working well with us. Also working on Mutual Aid with TFCA and SFMO.

New Business:

- Life Memberships for Chief Tom Brown of the Putnam County FD and Chief Paul Swafford of the Pikeville VFD were approved by a motion.
- David Woody has been appointed the new Chaplain replacing Steven Dillard who was thanked for his service.
- A discussion was held about the TFCA LODD check and clarifying details and parameters. The committee should have suggestions by Gatlinburg.
- The Fire Chiefs Hall of Fame will have a committee to work out details.
- Ken Reeves reported on work with TIMS on electrical vehicle fires and utility vehicle fires with Haz Mat.
- Brian Biggs spoke about the CFSI event in Washington April 30-31.
- Bob Dudley spoke about getting badges for retired Past Presidents. They are about \$100 each. This was approved by a motion.

Old Business:

- SAFER Update – Eddie Phillips reported that we are about to enter Phase III grant with James Fountain and Eddie leading the charge as we do this one in-house. The grants have been very successful thus far. They hope this continues and becomes more available to more departments.

Associated Organizational Reports:

Academy - Jason Sparks reported for TFACA.

Recruit class begins Feb 26, we have 8 waitlisted.

Fall recruit class begins August 12, 2024.

NFPA Alternative Fuel Vehicles Course TFACA Campus February 13th and AFV TtT February 14th.

Fire Chief Orientation Schedule for 2024

April 6-7 East TN Fire Rescue Conference
September 7-8 TFACA Campus
November 2-3 TN River Weekend

Our new 95ft mid-mount platform to replace TFACA's original 100 ft ladder is estimated to be delivered in May 2025

The bid opening for our residential burn prop was in December, and the project was awarded to a general contractor.

We are still doing free training for volunteers. This includes most courses that we do, including on-campus courses. For the on-campus course meal and dorm fees are included. YTD we have trained over 1,000 volunteers free.

East TN Fire Rescue Conference is scheduled for April 6-7, 2024 in Kingsport.

SMW is scheduled for June 15-16, 2024.

July NFA Courses at TN Fire Chiefs Annual Conference

ESS: Exercising leadership Through Conversation

LIS: Frameworks to Success

Firefighting Commission – Gary Farley reported for Shane Clark who was sick. There is a Rule Making Hearing on Jan 29th and will hopefully be in the regulations by the Fall. They are starting a pilot program at TFACA for online testing. They will be working to expand it.

The Firemen's Association – Gary West reported the new President is Jason Driver from Putnam County FD. Their conference will be September 26-28 in Cookeville. A membership drive will begin in March through June with membership being the lifeblood of the organization. The fund raiser for the Fallen Firefighter Memorial will be the Shady Brady Memorial Ride and a jeep ride.

MTAS – Steven Cross reported on

UT MTAS and the TN State Fire Marshal's Office are partnering to study Tennessee's Fire Deaths and Risk Factors contributing to this outcome in our state. This will be an update and follow-up to the previous mortality studies. The update will likely be complete and available in early 2024.

The continuing collaboration between the University of Tennessee Municipal Technical Advisory Service (UT MTAS) and the UT Tennessee Language Center (UT TLC) allows municipalities **free** access to interpretation and translation services. Follow this link for additional information: <https://tlc.tennessee.edu/interpretation-and-translation/lcmo/>

MTAS is sponsoring language classes for municipal officials at no cost through the UT TLC. Follow this link for additional information: <https://tlc.tennessee.edu/interpretation-and-translation/lcmo/>

Grant Opportunities:

Federal Assistance to Firefighters Grant application period is open through March 8, 2024, at 5:00 Eastern Time.

[AFG Application](#)

Tennessee Rescue Squad Grant application period is open through February 8, 2024, at 4:30 PM Central Time.

[Tennessee Rescue Squad Grant](#)

2024 State of the University Address by President Randy Boyd.

Thursday, Feb. 8, 2024, at 9:30 a.m. EST/8:30 a.m. CST

[State of UT Address Live Stream](#)

Fire Chief Orientation Class required by T.C.A. § 68-102-108 for new Fire Chiefs. MTAS Fire, Legal, and Finance consultants will be assisting.

Sullivan County Fire Rescue Training Weekend – April 6-7, 2024

TFACA – September 7-8, 2024

Tennessee River Training Weekend – November 2-3, 2024

MTAS has recent informational reports and resources available:

Tennessee Firefighter Minimum Training Law (and exemptions).
James “Dustin” Samples Act (PTSD) – Public Chapter 465 report.
Sample interlocal agreement for mutual aid and automatic aid.

The Insurance Service Office (ISO) and MTAS will continue to host quarterly (approximate) virtual ISO sessions. Let us know if you are interested in covering a specific section of the FSRs. The date for this quarter is to be determined.

MTAS Salary Survey-MTAS collects salary data annually for positions and provides access to that information through the MTAS Salary Survey. If your city/town has not already participated, reach out to your HR Director, and request them to do so. Municipalities can register and submit information at the following link: [MTAS Salary Survey](#)

Public Entity Partners-Grant Opportunities throughout the year.

PEP Grants

Safety Partners Grant-Employee safety programs and equipment
James L. Richardson Driver Training Grant-Driver training
Property Conservation Grant-Help prevent property loss
Cyber Security Grant-Cyber security tools, training, services, etc.
Excellence in Risk Management PRIMA Institute Scholarship-Scholarship to attend PRIMA Institute training programs.
Excellence in Risk Management TnPRIMA Scholarship-Scholarship to attend TnPRIMA Risk Management Education Conference

MTAS Leadership and EOA Training Opportunities: MTAS has two leadership programs that will be available this year:

Emerge is aimed at those transitioning into supervisory roles.

Connect is designed for mid-level municipal leaders who wish to enhance their leadership mindset and influence, develop higher-level critical thinking and visioning, and lead thriving cultures in their municipalities.

MTAS Elected Officials Academy: Municipal Operations will be incorporated into the 2024 TML Annual Conference.

For more information, visit our website at <https://www.mtas.tennessee.edu/training>.

CTAS: Marc Alley reported on

Tennessee County Services Association, county elected officials on the Hill will be upcoming. This is an All Hands CTAS event to give the opportunity for county government to work with legislatures for their counties.

CTAS Website- In the process of updating E-Li to add information to assist counties and emergency services with legal opinions and information.

Tennessee Fire Handbook- beginning the process to update and revise the Handbook. Looking at having it updated in 2025.

Working on training program for county elected officials to build the bridge between county officials and emergency services.

Hot Topics and Questions:

County Wide Fire Departments

Fire Funding

ISO

TMAS

Has been conversation over the last few years concerning a 8 hour class from ISO in the southeast, in conjunction with Tri State Mutual Aid Association

CTAS, MTAS, and ISO Lunch and Learns TBD. Looking at a subject on “How to Prepare for your ISO Evaluation”.

CTAS Newsletter are sent out every quarter to the county mayors, Commissioners, and all elected officials. This quarter the AFG Grant was included in the newsletter to gain awareness of this opportunity to assist county fire departments to gain support from the elected officials.

NFPA: Kelly Ransdell sent these training links,

For Information on lithium ion batteries you can visit www.lithiumionsafety.org

Electric vehicle training for all types of users including tow truck drivers, fire service, insurance and others at www.readyforevs.com

Information on Energy Storage Systems: www.nfpa.org/ess and [NFPA 855](http://www.nfpa.org/855)

Information on ebikes and e-scooters at www.nfpa.org/ebikes

Need to access NFPA codes online- do a free trial of NFPA Link at www.nfpa.org/link To set up a demo just reach out to Kelly Ransdell at 9197170017 or kransdell@nfpa.org

To help safeguard Buildings Under Construction you can use www.nfpa.org/241 and enhance this by requiring a Fire Prevention Program Manager for onsite supervision.

NFPA Conference and Expo to be held June 17-20 in Orlando, FL, <https://www.nfpa.org/Events/Conference/Sessions>

Thanks for Matt Henderson attending the NFPA Fire Chief Forum

Reports from Committees and/or Sections:

Chaplain's Section – David Woody reported.

Northeast Regional Fire Training Association

- Assisting Individuals in Crisis (13-hour training) fully imbedded in Recruit School
 - Fall 2023 session complete – 25 rookies and 1 chief of department.
 - Spring 2024 session – Day 1, March 26; Day 2, April 30

Johnson City Fire Department

- Assisting Individuals in Crisis
 - Training all three shifts – 133 employees
 - Started January 11
 - Complete March 22

Assisting Individuals in Crisis

- Standalone class – 10 participants
 - Newmansville VFD (Greene County)
 - Jefferson City FD
 - Sevierville FD
 - Waldens Creek VFD (Sevier County)
 - Greeneville PD
 - Greeneville City Schools
 - Burks United Methodist Church (Hamilton County)
- January 26-27
- Greeneville, TN – open to public

Mt. Juliet Fire Department

- Assisting Individuals in Crisis
- Training all three shifts – 78 employees and 3 or 4 more who I owe a makeup class that got cancelled at TFACA

▪ February 12-16

We are working to schedule the Group Crisis Intervention class (14 hours) or the GRIN (group and individual combined) class at the summer conference or at an additional time. The GRIN class is a full 3 days, 24 training hours.

The Group Crisis Intervention class covers all the other components of CISM not covered in the Assisting Individuals in Crisis class:

- Staff Support Programs
- Surveillance
- Strategic Planning
- Informational Groups
 - Rest, Information, Transition Services (RITS)
 - Crisis Management Briefing (Community Mass Briefing)
- Interactive Groups
 - Defusing
 - Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD)
- Follow-up and Referral Services

It is recommended that all chief and company officers be required to take this class. It provides the tactical framework for applying ALL the CISM protocols.

Communications: Matt Henderson reported for Amy Maxwell. The conference posters for 2024 – Seatbelts/Speeding and Active Shooter. We are moving the TN Volunteer Fire to our Go Daddy TFCA account. TFCA Facebook/Instagram followers activity has increased – regarding sharing posts of classes and special events. 36,700+ people have visited the website. Need classes or information sharing??.... Email her at amym@hamiltontn.gov.

Community Risk Reduction – Adam Wodzinski is now working on Community Risk Reduction.

EMS – Jeff Beaman reported on the following.

ALS First Responder Licensure Legislation – Moved to next State legislative session in 2025.

Further education is needed with our Senators and Representatives about what our goals are and what our goals are not with the ALS First Responder Licensure. This is a leftover effect from the EMS Board Realignment that needs correction with some of the elected officials.

The Fire Service Day on the Hill is an opportunity to speak with each member's local officials about the ALS First Responder Licensure legislation which will help tremendously during the 2025 Legislative Session.

EMS In-Service Pay

There are still many unanswered questions about the EMS In-Service Salary Supplemental Pay. The EMS Board will be discussing this during their March meeting and hopefully more information will be forthcoming. The limited information that has been put out is somewhat in conflict with the legislation as written.

To help ensure EMS training qualifies for the EMS In-Service Salary Supplemental Pay:

Ensure the training is in-person.

Make sure it is documented. Consider using CE Broker to document this.

EMS Board - Fire Service Committee

The EMS Board has considered establishing a Fire Service Committee that would provide information about EMS related needs of the Fire Service to the Board.

Members from each Grand Division were nominated by TFCA Matt Henderson. Originally the nominations had to meet a very quick deadline which limited the time available for discussion within the TFCA. The EMS Board will consider this during their March 2024 meeting.

Fallen FF Memorial – Gary West reported they are waiting on the website to be developed. The updates are complete at the Academy. Spring will bring more work. Thanks to TFCA for leading monthly cleanup of the site. February 17th is the next Board Meeting.

FF Health and Safety – Rich Hartfield below are the talking points we discussed during the Safety, Health, and Wellness committee meeting. Had a great meeting. Everyone was engaged in the conversations.

1. Extra posters available from previous conferences
2. Unveiling of the 2 newly designed posters for approval to be produced. Hopefully we will have them by the Gatlinburg conference, at the latest, the annual conference in Murfreesboro.
3. Introduced Chris Harris from the Tennessee Public Safety Network. We listened to him speak of the different avenues of PTSD and PEER Support classes and training offered, as well as their ready response PEER Support teams. This committee, as well as the Chaplain's committee, will try to work together with them, to provide other tools in our Chiefs toolbox, or should I say maybe different tool set to work towards curbing the PTSD outcry.

Homeland Security – Matt Henderson reported for Dewey Woody. The State of TN is hiring 120 Homeland Security Agents with the goal of placing an agent in every county to work directly with emergency services.

Legislation – David Windrow reported on Fire Department Day on the Hill is scheduled for March 20, 2024.

We are tracking the following bills:

HB 2506/SB 2441 Allowing response to any district

HB 1892/SB 2057 Privatizing plans review and code inspections

HB 1010/SB 707 Privatizing plans review and code inspections

HB 1919/SB 1939 Mutual aid clarification 3

Membership – Barron Kennedy reported 482 members, which is the largest number at this time of the year. About 35 have still not renewed their memberships.

Mutual Aid – Eric Mitchell reported on reports and discussion on the pending updates to the Mutual Aid Act.

The legislation has support from TFCA, PEP, TML, TN Police Chiefs

Chief Selberg led a discussion concerning municipal water system outages and the role of using fire department tenders to support healthcare facilities in times of need.

New forms in the ReadyOp system were reviewed and recommendations to proceed with the form development.

All Hazards Incident Management Team presentation on the Recognition of Prior Learning process for specific AHIMT positions.

Professional Development – Jamie Summers reported that planning is underway for the Annual Conference and other Quarterly meetings.

SEAFAC – Brian Goss reported the SEAFAC Board of Directors Winter Meeting was held in Atlanta on January 12, 2024. Reminder: SEAFAC Annual Leadership Conference will be held in The Battery in Atlanta July 15-17, 2024. Registration is now open on the SEAFAC website. Financials are strong with cash accounts totaling \$230,248.00.

Committees are working on the following initiatives:

- Recruitment and retention.
- Drafting legislation to increase representation at the state and federal level for fire-based ALS and BLS providers.
- IAFC Apparatus Committee working on mandatory lighting and reflectivity standards to help reduce interstate highway crashes involving first responders.
- Suicide prevention among first responders.

I will be submitting the TFCA career and volunteer Fire Chief of the Year for consideration as the SEAFAC Fire Chief(s) of the Year. SEAFAC & TFCA Joint Conference, July 15-17, 2025, at the Embassy Suites in

Franklin. Joint committee meeting bi-monthly (me, James Fountain, and Ashley McDonald) More members will be added as the conference gets closer.

- Working on sponsors, already have commitments from two major corporations.
- Welcome Reception to be held at The Factory in Franklin; a great event space.
- More information and a Save the Date will be forthcoming.

TNPERI – Richard Griggs reported on their meeting with Nate Miller, Ken Tuggle, Stephen Hart, Eddie Phillips, Richard Griggs, James Kelley, John Wyatt, and Curtis Reasons attending.

Minutes from previous meeting before the group for approval by.

Griggs made motion to approve last meeting minutes with 2nd all approved last meeting minutes.

Chairmans Welcome— All welcome by Ken.

Membership Update—Tiffany Baker new FEMSA Liaison

- Need representative from Police Chiefs Association and TENA, Eddie Phillips will work on trying to find representation.

Treasurers report --- no money to report at this time.

Committee Reports –

Grants- Stephen reported that the grant was moving forward waiting on the MOU from Marion County, the TN-PERI is up and running. The system will alert responders. There is a lot of work being put into the data. We have all fire information but need to find an avenue to obtain information from EMS, Law Enforcement and EMA. It was discussed to enact fees and waive for first year to establish revenue for the 2026 year. James Kelly said Perg funds will be available and operators could get credit for outreach training with our program. Our system can be used to track the areas where training is needed.

Instructors- James Kelley stated that there may be available funds for training, and emergency preparedness grant opportunities for symposiums and or training, etc. Tag grants that may cover computers, projectors, etc.

Program Development- The group will critique the program after the board meeting this date.

Operator outreach-the Tennessee Gas Board could get us a list of members, Steven recommends a marketing campaign and promotion materials promoting the program, welcome letter, coffee mug suggested.

New business- Two applications were submitted for review motion was made and seconded to onboard Ken Reeves, and Bill Burke as instructors for our organization. They will be 1099 contractors.

The MOU with Marion County will be coming soon for review.

Next Meeting: May 16th 9:00 am Gatlinburg TN.

Volunteer/NVFC – Melvin Martin reported on Volunteer grants update, AFG Grants are open now through March 8. Fire Marshals volunteer grants \$10 updates on number of applications departments, Michelle Price gave update on number of applications statewide 300 applications and 192 awards. Also \$3 million for rescue squads is open until Feb. 8.

Education incentive pay, how do we get more volunteers to participate? making it easier, if you're a volunteer, notarized statement of chief is not required, all paperwork will be electronically submitted. Submit your whole training program as many hours as you want over the 30 hours. A individual can participate through the TN Fireman's Association. Taking CPR requirement out soon. All TFACA classes on campus are free to volunteers including housing on campus. TN Fire Chief's SAFER grant update, \$1500 scholarships to attend VCOS and NVFC training summit, next 2 years, Update from Chief Philips on SAFER grant #3. Legislation effecting volunteers, is there something we need to push next year? Removing the 35 counties that are exempt from the State training requirements was mentioned as a priority. NVFC has a great program for mental health called "Share the load" any firefighter can join NVFC for \$21 membership. www.NVFC.org. TN River Training weekend coming up on November 2-3, 2024 in Hardin County

President's Moment: Matt Henderson reported that Chief John Tallent is still having serious medical issues and needs prayers.

Adjournment: There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:41 CST.

Respectfully submitted: Barron Kennedy, Secretary