

TENNESSEE FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

Fall Combined Board of Directors and Business Meeting

Kingsport, TN – 24 October 2025

Members present: Brian Biggs, Melvin Martin, Ben Wexler, Lee Turner, David Bell, P. J. Duncan, Jamie Summers, Rich Hartfield, Ronnie Beasley, Eric Mitchell, James Fountain, Eddie Phillips, Barron Kennedy and several others.

Opening: President Biggs called the meeting to order at 0830 EST. Chaplain David Woody opened with a prayer and David Bell led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Introduction of guest and announcements: Presentation of TN Fire Chiefs Volunteer Fire Chief of the Year Award, sponsored by NAFECO, presented to Chief Walt Cross by President Biggs, VP Wexler and East TN Board members Chief Mitchell, Chief Bell and Chief Turner.

Adoption of Minutes: Minutes from the Annual Conference in Murfreesboro were presented, Motion to approve by Ben Wexler and seconded by Jamie Summers.

Reading of communications: None.

Reports from Association Officers:

- **Treasurer's Report:** Eddie Phillips said there is \$135,149.75 in the General Account, \$85,871.74 in the Conference Account, \$130,194.71 in the Special Account, and \$19,858.87 in the TNPERI Section account. The income and operating expenses were explained. Thanks to all our donors and members for their support. Motion to approve the treasurer's report by Eric Mitchell, seconded by Rich Hartfield, motion passed.
- **Conference Report:** James Fountain presented upcoming meeting notes; Winter- Jackson Double Tree February 3-6, Spring- Gatlinburg Park Vista May 6 – 8, Annual Murfreesboro Embassy Suites July 31 - August 4, Fall 2026 and Winter 2026 no contracts yet.
- **Fire Marshal's Report:** Deputy Commissioner Chip Kain announced the Volunteer Grant will open November 3, 2025, with \$20,000,000 available. Currently seeking an Executive Director for the Commission.
- **Executive Committee:** September 12, 2025, meeting minutes are available.

New Business:

- **Past President's badges-** None were presented.
- **Eddie Phillips reported on SAFER:** A lot going on and training is available.
- **Life Membership for Tony Watson, Pigeon Forge FD.** Motion to approve by Rich Hartfield, seconded by Ben Wexler, motion approved by vote.

Old Business

None.

Reports by agencies and associations:

- TFACA – Jason Sparks Recruit class 25-02 graduated October 17th
 - Our new 95ft mid-mount platform to replace TFACA's original 100 ft ladder is estimated to be delivered in January 2026.
 - Our residential burn prop is done, and the final gas line repair was finished last week. We plan to do training with the manufacturer next week.
 - TN River Weekend is November 1st and 2nd in Savannah, TN
 - We will be following an NFPA standard change in early to mid-2026. We are communicating with the FFC and will implement these changes to coincide with roll out of NFPA 1010. This will mean textbook changes for:
Firefighter 1 & 2 related curriculums
Intro to Fire and Emergency Services (16)
Basic Firefighting (64)
Recruit Firefighter (400)
Basic/Live Firefighting (80)
Pumper Driver Operator
Aerial Driver Operator
- Laurie is submitting the new Fire Inspector which is NFPA 1030 in November.
- Fire Commission – Deputy Commissioner Kain said Asst. Commissioner Bell will be leading the commission interim.
- TN Firemen's Association – Cory Comstock reported the 2025 TFA conference went very well, good attendance and good support. Thank you to the TFCA for your support physically and financially by helping support the live burn. 2026 Annual Conference is scheduled for September 9-13 in South Pittsburg. Membership is going great, highest we have seen in many years. TFA maze trailer is staying booked 95% of the year. 12th Annual Shady Brady Memorial Ride is scheduled for April 11, 2026.
- MTAS – No report received.
- CTAS – No report received.
- NFPA – No report received.
- TN Fire Safety Inspectors – No report, conference is scheduled for December 2-5.

Committee / Section Reports:

- Chaplains Section – David Woody spoke about peer support training available.
- Codes – No report.
- Communications - Amy Maxwell mentioned there has been a lot of activity on our website. She needs updated material to post in effort to keep us fresh. Finally, she needs updates from our committees.
- Community Risk Reduction – A brief report was made on smoke alarm distribution.
- EMS – Jeff Beaman, no committee report. Jeff did report on the 1st Responder Committee's business.
- Fallen FF Memorial – Amy Maxwell said cleanup efforts have been great this year. We will kick off maintenance again this spring.
- FF Safety Health, & Wellness – Rich Hartfield asks to please send him new poster ideas.
- Homeland Security – No report received.
- Industrial – No report received.
- Legislative – David Windrow says not much activity at the moment. They are pushing to make fire protection an essential service.
- Membership – Barron Kennedy reported 478 members to date. Another invoice reminder will be sent in November.
- Mutual Aid – Eric Mitchell presented a program on the Hurricane Helene deployment on Thursday, October 23, 2025
Patrick D'Angelo, EMAC Specialist of TEMA delivered a presentation on the EMAC process focusing on the MRP, pre-deployment paperwork required for deployment and how this relates to post deployment reimbursement.
New Coordinators - Chief Colin Hurst, Alcoa will be serving as a District 2 Coordinator, primarily Blount, Loudon, Roane Counties.

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- Professional Development – Ronnie Beasley reported on survey results:

Overview

The Professional Development Committee held a scheduled meeting on Thursday with active participation from conference attendees. The meeting lasted approximately 30 minutes. This was the first meeting chaired by Chief Ronny Beasley following a smooth transition from the previous committee chair, Chief Jammie Summers. Chief Beasley also received a thorough briefing from Chief James Fountain the night before, which provided valuable context on current committee responsibilities and ongoing initiatives.

Discussion Summary

Chief Beasley presented an overview of the statewide Professional Development Survey, which seeks to identify current and future training needs among Tennessee fire service leaders. The survey data highlights several key areas of interest and varying levels of participation across the state.

A brief discussion was held regarding strategies to ensure inclusive participation from both career and volunteer fire departments. The attendees emphasized the importance of developing professional development pathways that serve chief officers, emerging leaders, and future succession candidates across all department types.

Chief Beasley invited additional TFCA members to consider joining the Professional Development Committee to broaden representation and strengthen program design.

Next Steps

Compile and analyze the updated survey data collected today.

Share the compiled results with the full committee for review and feedback.

Begin drafting recommendations for future professional development offerings and potential partnerships that could support college-level credit or certification pathways aligned with CPSE Fire Officer and Chief Fire Officer designations.

Acknowledgment

The committee extends its appreciation to Chief Jammie Summers for his prior leadership and to Chief James Fountain for his continued guidance and support in ensuring a successful handoff of committee responsibilities.

SEAFCA – Brian Goss reports IAFC Board met just outside of Washington, D.C. on September 29th for a special called meeting to discuss the IAFC CEO recruiting and hiring processes. Tom Murphy, Chief Operations Officer, has agreed to step up as Acting CEO until a permanent replacement is named. Rob will remain as a consultant through the end of the calendar year. Truity Partners is the search firm contracted to conduct the CEO candidate search. Obviously, we continue to monitor for potential impacts from the government shutdown. The IAFC is on solid footing financially, but we received notice that we were not awarded a SAFER Recruitment and Retention Grant or the FPS Community Wildfire Resilience Grant. This will negatively impact the Association over the next 3 fiscal years to the tune of about \$3M. The IAFC is searching for alternative, sustainable funding streams in order to be less reliant on grants.

Awaiting work on when our next in-person meeting will be. Normally it would be at TSI, but with the fluidity of the CEO recruitment process and the potential need for another in-person meeting to work through that, we are in a holding pattern. We ultimately want to avoid having two consecutive in-person meetings in order to avoid that expense.

- TPERI Section – Eddie Phillips, no report.

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- Volunteer – Melvin Martin reported grants are on hold due to the government shutdown.

President's Moment – No report.

Other Business: - Madisonville Fire-Rescue Chief Mike Smallen was presented at the business meeting. Three other first-time attendees were at the conference.

36th Annual CFSI National Fire & Emergency Services Symposium & Dinner is March 18-19, 2026. Dinner will be Thursday March 19th at 7:00pm and TN Fire Chiefs have sponsored a table for 10. If you wish to attend, please get with President Biggs and he will keep a list of the first 10 that can attend in Washington, D.C.

- Adjournment: There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 0956 EST.

Secretary Matt Henderson