



New Jersey State Association of Fire Districts

The meeting of the New Jersey State Association of Fire Districts, held on June 1st, 2024, at 09:30 hours. Located Adelphia Fire Station at 993 Route 33 in Freehold NJ

Elections are June 1st, 2024

Executive staff

President Robert Donahue

Vise President Richard Horton

Treasurer Greg Santonastaso

Secretary Artie Hayducka

Trustees

North Nick Lombardi

Central Peter Goldring

South John Mulholland

At Large Benjamin Guerrini

The meeting was called to order by President Robert Donahue at 09:30 hrs.

Salute to the flag and a moment of silence was called for our past members.

Legislative report was given by Lynn Nowak – See attached

Treasure report by Greg Santonastaso see attached

Secretary report by Artie Hayducka see attached

CFSI _ Washington report by Nick Lombardi -see attached

Our next meeting will be in Wildwood NJ on 9/13/24 @ 1300 hours Ballroom -C

NEW JERSEY STATE ASSOCIATION OF FIRE DISTRICTS
QUARTERLY REPORT
BY LYNN NOWAK- Porzio Governmental Affairs
June 1, 2024

Petition for Rulemaking

The Feb 20, 2024 NJ Register contained a “petition for rulemaking” to the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) that would prevent members of public bodies who are participating remotely from voting during a declared emergency. This comes from a request from Larry S. Loigman, Esq. requesting that the DCA promulgate a new rule prohibiting any member of a local public body from being counted towards a quorum, or voting on any motion, resolution, or ordinance if that member is participating remotely. The petitioner argues that the above-referenced rule is necessary to address inconsistent practices in the conduct of public meetings by different political subdivisions. The petition was received on Dec 27, 2023. The notice in the Feb 20, 2024 Register states that the Department has determined that the matter needs further review and has 90 days to respond. **Rich Braslow received word from Jason Martucci in the Division of Local Government Services that they are going to deny the petition for rulemaking.**

Local Finance Notices

In early May, I received an email from Jason Marucci stating that the Division of Local Government Services is in the process of issuing two Local Finance Notices relevant to fire districts. One of these involves updates to Local Finance Board regulations pertaining to encumbrance accounting and maintenance of general ledgers. The other deals with volunteer firefighter incentive programs. He wanted to give the executive board of the New Jersey State Association of Fire Districts the opportunity to provide any input they may have on the draft guidance text. I forwarded to the board and to Rich Braslow. Rich reviewed and stated that they were fine. I am expecting to see them in the next NJ Register which should be issued on Monday, June 3.

Townhouse Sprinkler Mandate

Almost immediately after the mandate was signed into law, legislation was introduced in the new session to amend it.

A3453, Sumter/S2469, Greenstein - Concerns implementation of fire sprinkler system requirements in newly constructed townhouses.

The new bill extends the amount of time for an applicant, whose application is deemed complete, from conformance with the law, from seven months to 25 months, along with many other new provisions that would exempt applicants from the law. This will ostensibly give DCA more time to promulgate the necessary rules.

While the bill was quickly heard and released by the Assembly Appropriations Committee on Feb 8 and was on a subsequent Assembly Board List, it was not acted upon. It was also scheduled to be heard by the Senate Community Affairs Committee in February but was held.

A4458, Sumter/S3342, Greenstein – Establishes exemptions and revises timeline for townhouse sprinkler mandate.

On May 20, these two new bills on this subject were proposed for introduction. Their text is not yet available so I have not had a chance to review. It appears that these two bills will now take precedence. I am following up with staff.

Tax Credits/Exemptions for First Responders

S2083, Gopal/Corrado/A1754, Rumpf- Allows certain volunteer firefighters, rescue and first aid squad members to claim \$2,000 gross income tax exemption.

I have spoken with Senator Gopal's office and his staff is going to make sure that the language defining volunteer firefighters includes fire district volunteers.

S2386, Gopal/A3532, Donlon- Provides gross income tax credit to active members of volunteer emergency service organizations for use of personal motor vehicle in performance of active duty.

In definition of "volunteer emergency services organization" – fire districts are included.

SCR82, Gopal/ACR110, Peterpaul - Proposes constitutional amendment authorizing municipalities to provide partial property tax exemption of up to 15 percent of assessed value for primary residence of certain volunteer first responders.

All three Senate bills were heard and released by the Senate Law and Public Safety Committee on May 16. I registered NJ State Association of Fire Districts support for all three. A3532 will be heard in the Assembly Public Safety and Preparedness Committee on June 3 and I will register support.

Changes in Fire Safety Statutes

S2580, Bucco/Singleton/A3894, Murphy - Amends certain fire safety statutes to update licensure and equipment requirements and liability, fee, and penalty provisions.

Among other things, this bill changes the guiding entity for the installation of smoke-sensitive devices in two-family homes from the National Fire Protection Association Standard No. 74-1984 to regulations established by the Department of Community Affairs. It also removes the portable fire extinguisher requirement. It also changes conditions of licensure for fire inspectors and fire officials. It also addresses changes of ownership of certain buildings and responsibilities of new owners for unabated fire violations and/or unpaid fees.

S2580 was heard and released by the Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee on May 6. Support was registered by NJ State Firemen's Association, NJ Builders' Association, NJFMBA.

Fire Escape Inspections

S2948, Singleton/**A4266**, Venezia - Requires that certain fire escape inspections be performed by structural engineer or employee with certified fire escape inspection company.

This bill adds fire escapes to the statutory definition of fire protection equipment and defines requirements for fire protection contractor who is responsible for inspecting fire escapes and exterior stairways per above definition.

This bill was also heard and released by the Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee on May 6 with the support of the NJ State Firemen's Association. A4045,

Training for Electric Vehicle Fires

A4005, Conaway/**S1687**, O'Scanlon - Requires firefighters and EMTs to receive training for handling electrical vehicle (EV) fires.

This legislation was re-introduced this session with more favorable sponsors.

Public Question at General Election if Levy Exceeds Cap

S2972, Turner - Requires public question to allow fire district to raise amounts that exceed permissible property tax levy increase to be submitted at general election.

This bill was introduced on March 18. It does not have an Assembly companion. As the statement briefly describes, it a fire district with a February election proposes a tax levy that exceeds the cap, it has to be put before the voters at the Nov election. I am working with staff to find out the impetus for this bill and if it has legs.

OPRA Reform

S2930, Sarlo/ **A4045**, Danielsen – Makes various changes to OPRA.

This highly controversial bill does a variety of things aimed at reducing costs and time spent on OPRA requests for government entities. Among the most controversial is changing the current OPRA requirement in which those governments have to cover the "reasonable" legal costs of anyone who successfully challenges a records request they denied. Under the new bill, judges would have the discretion over whether to award plaintiffs legal fees in records requests cases, unless they determine the denial was made in "bad faith," "unreasonably" or the government agency "knowingly or willfully" violated the law.

The bill moved quickly through committees in both houses in March before stalling. It then passed both houses by the slimmest of margins, 21-10 in the Senate and 42-29 in the Assembly, on May 13. It is currently on the Governor's desk. He has given little indication about his intentions to either sign, veto or conditionally veto the bill. My guess is that it will be a CV.

Assembly Public Safety and Preparedness Committee

The Assembly has created a new, above-titled committee, chaired by Assemblyman Danielsen (D-Middlesex/Somerset), a former volunteer firefighter and fire district commissioner. Its first hearing focused on issues/bills of interest to fire districts.

The Committee first took testimony on the growing shortage of first responders and the findings of the Special Task Force on Volunteer Retention and Recruitment. Joseph Hankins, the chair of the Task Force, spoke along with several others including Rich Mikutsky. Among the issues raised were: the need for incentives; training requirements may be too rigid; the need for interested young people to graduate from high school with credentials. Rich pointed out that there are 26,000 active volunteers vs. 7,000 career individuals in the fire service and there has been a recent reduction of about 3,000 volunteers.

Bills were also considered:

Mental Health Assistance

A2386, Spearman/ **S2834**, McKnight - Establishes Firefighter Critical Mental Health Assistance Grant Program; appropriates \$1 million. NOTE: As currently drafted, this only applies to paid firefighters.

*A2386 was introduced on January 9, 2024 and referred to the Assembly Public Safety and Preparedness Committee. S2834 has been proposed for introduction but not yet referred to a Senate committee. **A2386 was heard and released unanimously by the Assembly Public Safety and Preparedness Committee on February 22, 2024, and second referenced to the Assembly Appropriations Committee.***

Emergency Medical Technician Training Fund

A3537, Stanley/**S2435**, Greenstein - Revises certain requirements concerning eligibility for reimbursement from "Emergency Medical Technician Training Fund."

*A3537 was introduced and referred to the Assembly Public Safety and Preparedness Committee. S2435 was introduced and referred to Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee. **A3537 was heard and released unanimously on February 22, 2024 with committee amendments, and then referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. NOTE: S2435 was also heard and released from Senate Health on February 22. It was second referenced to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee.***

Experienced Firefighter Exemption

A441, Danielsen - Exempts experienced firefighters from certain requirements.

*A441 was introduced and referred to Assembly Public Safety and preparedness Committee. There is no Senate companion listed as of now. **A441 was amended but not reported in the committee on February 22.***

A fire department or force, whether [paid,] 1 part-paid [,] or volunteer, shall not prohibit a volunteer firefighter who has five or more years of experience in fire suppression, firefighting, or fire rescue from engaging in fire suppression, firefighting, or fire rescue solely on the grounds that the volunteer firefighter is uncertified or does not meet a requirement that is not imposed pursuant to statute, rule, or regulation.

Treasurer's report for NJSAFD / PNC BANK

As of June 1st, 2024:

Deposits from Dues Collected = \$26,400.00

Checking Account = \$34,332.29

To be paid;

Cash Out of Pocket Arite Hayducka = \$534.87

Cash Out of Pocket Nick Lombardi = \$1600.00

(Today's refreshments will be listed in next report)

Balance - \$32,902.70

Waiting on deposit from outstanding Dues = \$ 26,400.00

Money Market Account = \$48,881.61

Greg Santonastaso

Treasurer

NJSAFD – Meeting 6/1/24

Cash out of pocket.

\$102:00 for Constance contact services

\$122:40 for last year's payment never turned.

\$170.49 New Zoom service for our meetings for the year

\$136.00 US postage stamps for mailing Due's notices

\$ 3. 98 website parking for our host agency

\$ 534.87 is Total cash out of pocket.

Trustee Nick Lombardi put out the cash for CFSI Dinner in Washington DC \$1600.00

Wildwood Agreement was signed and sent back to the Wildwood, NJ

Food & Drinks will be paid by VFIS - \$847.28



TOWNSHIP OF PISCATAWAY

MIDDLESEX COUNTY

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

P.O. BOX 8060

PISCATAWAY, NEW JERSEY 08855

FIRE DISTRICT No. 1

May 3, 2024

We would like to take a moment to thank both VFIS and New Jersey State Association of Fire Districts for their support in paying for both Nick Lombardi & I, Artie Hayducka to attend this year's Congressional Fire Services Institute Dinner and Symposium.

On April 28-30, 2024, the Congressional Fire Services Institute (CFSI) hosted the 34th Annual National Fire and Emergency Services Symposium and Dinner in Washington, DC. Once again, the annual tribute to the nation's fire service drew over 1,500 of your colleagues from the fire and emergency services. Nick Lombardi and I attended educational seminars and tried to conduct a meeting with a member of Congress, Bill Pascrell, and networked with other colleagues.

At the conclusion of the two-day event, both Nick Lombardi and I met together in the Washington Hilton ballroom to hear national political leaders pay tribute to the dedication and commitment of our nation's firefighters and emergency services personnel. The National Fire and Emergency Services Symposium and Dinner is an event like no other in the fire and emergency services. One can develop a better understanding of the federal government's role in addressing the challenges and concerns of our firefighters, emergency services personnel and the fire service industry. There are opportunities abound to interact with members of Congress and federal agency officials to discuss both national issues and local concerns. The knowledge we acquired helped us increase our understanding of federal programs and legislation, while emboldening us to take a stronger interest in advocating for fire and emergency services on Capitol Hill.

The seminars program is something you can only experience in our nation's capital. Featuring federal policy makers and national fire service leaders, the program covered a broad array of national issues being considered by Congress and implemented by federal agencies as well as, issues being addressed collectively by national organizations and distinguished fire service officials.

Capping off the two-day event, the 34th Annual National Fire and Emergency Services Dinner featured leaders of the Congressional Fire Services and the Administration who

paid their personal tributes to the men and women of the fire and emergency services. The program also included four award presentations for individual and organizational leadership in advancing the readiness and response capabilities of our nation's fire and emergency services.

The classes we attended included the following:

Artificial Intelligence; Machine Learning and the Fire Service

Open conversation with the US Fire Administrator

Strengthening communities and reducing risk across the country

Leading the way with research: Lithium -ion battery safety

NERIS and Vital research are being conducted by the Insurance Institute for building and home safety.

Addressing Cancer in the Fire and Emergency Services:

1. Reducing Carcinogenic Exposure During Live Fire Training
2. Exploring Fire Departments Cancer Prevention Initiatives

Respectfully

Artie Hayducka – Secretary

Nick Lombardi – Trustee North



6-1-24

Print name	County	Township	District
Nick Lombardi	Middlesex	PISCATAWAY	1
Greg Santomaso	Middlesex	piscataway	1
Richard Horton	Burlington	Riverside	70
DOUG FULTON	MONMOUTH	NARBOROUGH	1
MIKE FOGARTY	MONMOUTH	FREEHOLD	1
FRANK BIDDUE	MONMOUTH	Howell	2
GEORGE PATTEN	IL	IL	IL
PETER COOPER	IL	IL	IL
A.J. Stony	Mon.	Freehold	1
Robert m Donohue	mon	Howell	5
Kenneth Harper	mon	Howell	5
James Harper	Mon	Howell	5
Sam KoubeK	mon	Howell	5
ACTR HAYDUCK	MIDDLESEX	PISCATAWAY	1