



New Jersey State Association of Fire Districts Meeting was held at the Adelphia Fire Station, 933 Route 33, Freehold NJ on June 3rd, 2023.

The meeting was called to order at 930 AM by President Craig Aumack with a salute to the flag and Moment of Silence for our past members.

Roll Call President Craig Aumack, Vice President Robert Donahue & Secretary Artie Hayducka / Absent, Treasure Edward McDermott

Lynn Nowak gave the Legislative report – See attached.

Election of Officers was held, the body requested that secretary cast one vote to have all officers remain the same. Motion was made by George Patten 2<sup>nd</sup> by Frank Biddle

Artie Hayducka gave the Secretary report. See attached.

President Craig Aumack gave the Treasure report - \$51,309.60.

We did some research and found that we had \$42,876.82 in our money market account and \$51, 309.60 in our checking account. Artie Hayducka made a motion to move \$20,000.00 from our checking into our money market account. Motion was 2<sup>nd</sup> by Frank Biddle and George Patten

President Aumack will be working with Richard Braslow to see about getting our 501C back from the state. It's been over 3 years now and there been very little movement by the state with supporting documents.

We sent out 163 Emails with copies of the minutes, 91 were delivered successfully and the rest were not open yet.

We collected \$14,700 in dues this year. President Craig Aumack is going to try and call the fire district direct to get input from each district as to why they have not paid their dues.

Cash out of pocket: \$5.97 for website updates, / Frank Biddle \$43.25 for coffee & donuts

Motion to pay bills was seconded George Patten & James Donahue

Adjournment

Our next Quarter Meeting will be held at the Wildwood Convention Center, Ballroom C, In Wildwood New Jersey on September 15 @ 1300 hours.

**NEW JERSEY STATE ASSOCIATION OF FIRE DISTRICTS**  
**QUARTERLY REPORT**  
**BY LYNN NOWAK- Porzio Governmental Affairs**  
**JUNE 3, 2023**

**GOVERNOR MURPHY'S FY24 PROPOSED BUDGET - AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN (ARP)  
FIREFIGHTER GRANT PROGRAM**

In the Governor's proposed Budget for the coming fiscal year, unveiled on Feb 28, he proposes \$10 million more in funds to the ARP Firefighter Grant Program. Previously, this program provided funds to 293 fire departments for "proper protective, cleaning and sanitizing equipment during a time of community need."

As you may recall, I previously researched fire district eligibility for ARP funds. Per a May 2021 Q & A from the Federal Department of the Treasury, fire districts fall under the definition of "special purpose units of local government." "Special purpose units of government perform specific functions in the community such as fire...." and are not eligible for direct funding allocations. However, **"a state and .... may transfer funds to a special purpose unit of local government."** Regarding for what purposes a fire district could make the case for fund eligibility: funds can be utilized for "reduction of revenue for ....and FIRE and other public safety services." As these monies would be a grant from the State, they would ostensibly be "transferring" the funds.

*Rich, Craig, Bill Kramer and I met with John Butler and Derek Fischer the Governor's office on March 27 to discuss fire district eligibility for these funds. It was concluded that fire districts are eligible, bolstered by the fact that Bill applied for and received funds in FY 23. I will begin working on how to apply for the funds through DCA and provide information to be circulated to all districts. This is based on the Legislature keeping this funding in the FY24, which is almost a sure thing.*

**MUNICIPAL REVIEW OF FIRE COMMISSIONER SALARIES**

Rich and Craig have brought to my attention that over the past two years, DCA has been requiring municipalities to pass resolutions approving fire commissioner salaries. Many of these bodies have been refusing to do so. The statute that provides the framework for this review, 40A:14-88, states that "each member of the board of fire commissioners shall receive compensation such amounts as the board shall fix subject to **review** by the governing body wherein the fire district is located." Apparently, this language is ambiguous enough to be interpreted that an action such as passage of a resolution is allowable/required.

We need to seek passage of legislation that more clearly states a more pro-forma review. Removal of the review altogether is a better option but more likely to receive opposition. I will be seeking a meeting with Assemblywoman Carol Murphy to discuss this and seek her support as sponsor. Senator Jim Beach is a potential Senate sponsor.

### **CYBERSECURITY INCIDENT REPORTING**

**S297, Greenstein /A493, Murphy** - Requires ALL public agencies and government contractors to report cybersecurity incidents to New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness within 72 hours of the incident. Public agency of the State is defined as any public agency of the State or political subdivision thereof.

*Signed into law, March 13, 2023, P.L. 2023, c.19.*

### **PERIOD OF USEFULNESS FOR FIRE ENGINES**

**S3807, Bucco/Sarlo/A5667, Torrissi** - Extends period of usefulness of fire engines for bonding purposes from 10 to 20 years; eliminates exclusion of passenger cars and station wagons.

*S3807 was heard and released by the Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee on June 1. NJ State Association of Fire Districts support was registered. Please note the current law, being amended here, gives the power to determine usefulness of any purpose, according to its reasonable life computed to the date of the bonds to the GOVERNING BODY OF THE LOCAL UNIT, so fire districts are included. The Assembly bill was just introduced.*

### **AMBULANCE/EMT LEGISLATION**

**S2946, Singleton/A4505, Murphy** - Increases Medicaid reimbursement for ambulance transport from \$58 to \$200.

*The bills were heard in Committee in each house in 2022 and then 2<sup>nd</sup> referenced to another committee neither of which has heard them this year.*

*Per Craig: This bill may affect any fire district that provides ambulance service and bill for service. Per a meeting with Sen Sarlo, chair of the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee, a budget resolution was requested to fund this in the FY24 Budget Bill. While there is no formal fiscal note attached to the bill, it is believed that the cost will be \$20 million. I need to follow up with Sen Sarlo's office to see if the Resolution was submitted (the deadline was Fri, May 26). The Budget always trumps legislation – for at least one year. So, it if makes it into the Budget, this increase will be in place for that period of time. Legislation can also be pursued*

**A3772, Mukherji/ S2223, Oroho** - Revises requirements to receive reimbursement from the EMT training fund.

*A3772 passed the full Assembly in January. Per my conversation with staff in Senator Oroho's office, he has requested that the bill be heard in the Senate Health Committee but he has not heard back from Chairman Vitale.*

***Per Craig: This bill changes how the state classifies a volunteer EMT (and therefore eligible for training reimbursement). Currently, if an EMS agency bills for service, the state considers EMTs associated with that service as non-eligible (regardless of whether they get paid or not). This bill revises that classification to whether the individual EMT is volunteer rather than whether the service bills.***

#### **FIRST RESPONDERS PTSD PROTECTION ACT**

**A2886, Moen/S703, Beach** - Provides employment protections for paid first responders diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder under certain conditions.

*A2886 passed the full Assembly unanimously on Nov 21. It was received in the Senate on Dec 1 and its next step will be consideration on the floor.*

***The full Senate has not considered it yet.***

#### **WATER COMPANY MANDATES**

**A1345, Mosquera/Murphy** – Prohibits water companies from assessing more than one charge per fire hydrant to fire departments, fire districts or volunteer fire companies for use of fire hydrants.

*A1345 was introduced on Jan 11, 2022 and referred to the Assembly Law and Public Safety Committee.*

*The NJ State Association of Fire Districts has proposed amendments to this bill that would also place a limit on rate increases to no more than two percent per year and prevent an effective date for a rate increase prior to the first date of the ensuing fiscal year.*

**A1346, Mosquera/Murphy**– Requires water companies to provide representative of fire department, fire district or volunteer fire company access fire hydrants for water flow rate testing purposes.

*A1346 was introduced on Jan 11, 2022 and referred to the Assembly Law and Public Safety Committee.*

***I have again spoken with the Asw Mosquera's COS, John Saben, and they have not heard back regarding getting the bills on the Assembly Law and Public Safety agenda. I spoke with the chair of committee, Asm Bill Spearman and it appears that the water companies have weighed in with serious concerns. He suggested that we perhaps sit down with the representatives of the water companies, with assistance from his office, to discuss our main issue: raising the rates in the middle of a fiscal year. However, limiting the increase to 2% is something that they probably will not consider.***

## **CAPITAL PURCHASES**

**A2715**, Dancer, Murphy – Permits fire districts to undertake capital projects upon resolution of board of fire commissioners. (Removes the voter approval mandate for fire district capital purchases and debt issuances.)

*Introduced on Feb 14, 2022 and referred to the Assembly State and Local Government Committee.*

*At our Sept 2022 meeting with her, Asw Murphy agreed to work with us on language that will accomplish the fire districts' needs and pass legislative muster. **This bill is another even more difficult lift. I think we need to regroup on this one particularly with the death of Assemblyman Dancer. It may be something we can pursue in the new session after the election.***

## **FIRE SAFETY/FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEMS/FIRE EXTINGUISHERS /SMOKE ALARMS**

**S181**, Stack/ Requires certain residential buildings to have fire barriers in common attic areas. ***This bill was scheduled to be heard by the Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee on June 1. However, the bill was held. There is no Assembly companion.***

**S3516** , Cruz Perez/**A5179**, Verrilli - "**Smoke Control System Act**;" Requires routine maintenance and operational testing of smoke control systems in certain buildings by certain qualified personnel.

*S3516 was heard and released by the Senate Economic Growth Committee on Jan 26. NJ State Association of Fire Districts support was registered. **It was heard and released by the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee on March 16. A5179 quickly moved through the Assembly in March, after clearing two committees, it passed the full Assembly (74-0) on March 30. This should be considered and pass the full Senate in June and head to the Governor's desk.***

**A1673**, Quijano/**S996**, Ruiz – Requires **fire suppression systems** in new single and two-family homes.

*A1673 was introduced on Jan 11, 2022 and referred to the Assembly Housing Committee. It has not yet received a hearing in committee. S996 was introduced on Jan 31, 2022 and referred to the Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee.*

**S281**, Greenstein/**A3791**, Sumter – "**New Townhouse Fire Safety Act**"; requires automatic fire suppression systems in new townhomes.

*S281 was introduced on Jan 11, 2022 and referred to the Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee. A3791 was introduced on May 2 and referred to the Assembly Housing Committee.*

## **RAISING ALLOWABLE AGE OF SERVICE FOR FIRE CHIEFS**

**A2158, Verrelli/S1367, Scutari** - Allows police chief and fire department chief members of PFRS to serve until age 67.

***Signed into law by Governor Murphy, April 12, P.L. 2022, c. 9***

## **CANCER SCREENING EXAMINATIONS FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS**

**S3405, Gopal/A5081, Stanley** - Mandates access to periodic cancer screening examinations for volunteer firefighters; increases tax on fire insurance premiums.

***S3405 was heard and released by the Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee on Feb 9. NJ State Association of Fire Districts support was registered. Note that the tax on the fire insurance premiums to fund this initiative was amended out so it is unclear how this will be funded. Hence, it was referred to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee for additional review. A5081 has not yet been considered by the Assembly.***

## **FIREFIGHTER EXEMPTION**

**A377, Danielsen** - **Exempts experienced firefighters from certain requirements.** It states that a "fire department or force" shall not prohibit a firefighter who has five or more years of experience in fire suppression, fire fighting or fire rescue from engaging in these activities because the firefighter is uncertified or does not meet a requirement imposed by statute or regulation.

***It was heard and released by the Assembly Homeland Security Committee on Jan 19. There is no Senate companion.***

## **ELECTION-RELATED LEGISLATION**

**A5260, Atkins** - **Requires availability of outside voting process for elderly or voters with disabilities** when their assigned polling place does not meet accessibility requirements.  
***Introduced on Feb 28 and referred to Assembly State and Local Government Committee.***

**A4299, Danielsen/S3324, Zwicker** - **Permits county boards of elections to open certain ballot drop boxes for fire district elections**

***A4299 was introduced on June 20 and referred to the Assembly State and Local Government Committee. S3324 was introduced on Nov 14 and referred to the Senate State Government Committee.***

**A4948, Greenwald /S3365, Stack-** **Requires mail-in ballot applications to include prepaid postage.** The cost of the postage is to be covered by the State.

***A4948 was heard and released by the Assembly State and Local Government Committee on Dec 8. It was referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee for further consideration. The Senate bill was heard and released by the Senate State Government Committee on Feb 2 and referred to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee.***

**A3818, Haider/Rooney – Designates specific dates for fire district “special elections.”**  
**Fortunately, this bill appears to be on the way-back burner. I think that the Association along with Woodbridge fire commissioners and the two fire unions helped to do this. There is still no Senate companion which is also a good signal.**

*This bill was heard by the Assembly State and Local Government Committee on May 12 along with a variety of bills, supported by the Speaker, to expand voting access. Prior to the hearing, Craig and I had a Zoom meeting with the sponsor, Asw Haider, to discuss the impetus for the bill and the problems it presents to fire districts.*

*I testified in opposition to the bill at the hearing, explaining how the selected dates are arbitrary and do not work with the existing calendar of dates for districts who still hold elections in February and submission of budgets to DCA. The bill was released from the Committee. Subsequently, I discovered that the designated dates are the ones set in law for school district special elections. Please note that the two firefighter unions submitted slips in opposition to the bill. The lobbyist for the PFANJ has told me that they will provide further support in opposition if needed.*

*I also spoke with the Chief of Staff in the Assembly Majority Office and Rich, Craig and I met with the aide in in the Majority Office who is handling the bill. The bill was heard and released by the Assembly Judiciary Committee on June 9 and I again testified in opposition. It then received a highly unusual third committee reference to Assembly Appropriations which has not considered it. There is no companion bill in the Senate. WHILE SEVERAL OTHER BILLS IN THE SPEAKER’S PACKAGE MOVED IN THE SPRING, THIS ONE DID NOT.*

#### **USE OF CANNABIS BY FIREFIGHTERS**

**A3868, Mosquera/S2723, Beach – Prohibits PAID first responders from use of recreational cannabis.**

*A3868 was introduced on May 9 and referred to the Assembly Law and Public Safety Committee. The Senate bill was introduced on May 26 and referred to the Senate Law and Public Safety Committee.*

***The Cannabis Regulatory Commission issued a Guidance for Workplace back in Sept. I need to connect with Rich Braslow on this.***

#### **E-PROCUREMENT**

**P.L. 2018, c. 156 –** I just became aware that this law allows for e-procurement by “local units of government” and thus fire districts. What brought it to my attention is a more recent Department of Community Affairs Rule Adoption (March 2022) on the topic. 5:34-5.9 and 5.10,



regarding sale or lease of real property, which specifically includes fire districts in the final adoption.

[https://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/dlgs/resources/rules\\_docs/R.2021%20d.031%20\(53%20N.J.R.%20501\(a\)\).pdf](https://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/dlgs/resources/rules_docs/R.2021%20d.031%20(53%20N.J.R.%20501(a)).pdf)

## Secretary report under old business

On May 22–23, 2023, the Congressional Fire Services Institute (CFSI) hosted its 32nd 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 Firefighters and colleagues from the Fire and Emergency services. Nick Lombardi and Artie Hayducka registered for educational seminars, conducted meetings with members of Congress, and networked with other colleagues. At the conclusion of the two-day event, we were joined at the Washington Hilton ballroom to hear national political leaders paying tribute to the dedication and commitment of our nation's firefighters and emergency services personnel.

The courses which we attended are as follows:

1. Recruitment, Development, and Retention Strategies for Today's Fire and Emergency Services
2. Federal Government Partners in Fire service health and safety research
3. Lithium-Ion Batteries: Challenges Facing the Fire and Emergency Services
4. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Creating a Path Forward
5. Government 101: Advocating for the Fire and Emergency Services
6. Enhancing Fire service - based EMS
7. Active Shooter and Hostile event response preparedness and planning

Nick and I have been attending these programs held by the Congressional Fire Services Institute for the last 16 years and have been sponsored by VFIS and the NJSAFD who help pay for Hotel and Dinner Tickets each year. However, this year I forgot to ask the NJSAFD to support us at our last meeting which was held in March.

The following is a list of things we have learned by attending these meetings.

### Recruitment, Development, and Retention Strategies for Today's Fire and Emergency Services

The fire and emergency services have been impacted by difficulties attracting, developing, and retaining fire and EMS personnel. This seminar discussed strategies to assist with overcoming these challenges and help fire departments recruit, train, and retain talented personnel.

### Federal Government Partners in Fire service health and safety research

The federal government engages in many areas of critical research that affect the fire and emergency services. The National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health (NIOSH) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) are two agencies that have several important ongoing research projects focused on the health and safety of fire and EMS personnel across the country.

*Edo  
Frank*

## Lithium-Ion Batteries: Challenges Facing the Fire and Emergency Services

Lithium-ion batteries are a growing challenge for the fire and emergency services. This panel discussed issues pertaining to compliance, installation, and safety risks posed to Firefighters who are responding to incidents involving these batteries.

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Creating a Path Forward

Industry researchers and national fire service leaders from across the country joined to discuss the value of diversifying the fire service workforce and offered tools to assess your organization's work environment to ensure that every employee has the support to perform to the fullest of their abilities. Learning how DEI is directly linked to successfully recruiting and retaining talent and why fire departments prioritize equitable access and how they can benefit.

## Government 101: Advocating for the Fire and Emergency Services

Every year, national fire and emergency services organizations work together to advocate on Capitol Hill in the executive agencies for the interests of fire and EMS personnel. This seminar provided an overview of the work being done at the federal level by the government affairs directors of our major fire service organizations, and provided the tips and tricks needed to take our advocacy efforts to the next level.

## Enhancing Fire service- Base EMS

While the Fire service-based EMS policies, regulations, deployment models, training, and other program elements continue to evolve EMS systems have become sophisticated in every aspect of practice and management. This seminar provided an overview of current system innovations in three separate locations in the United States

## Active Shooter and Hostile event response preparedness and planning

The question was asked, "Is your department prepared to respond to an active shooter incident? The panel provided information on the importance of preparedness pertaining to active shooter/hostile event planning, response, and recovery.

So, the bottom line is both Nick Lombardi and I Artie Hayducka are asking if the body of the NJSAFD can help pay for part of our expenses which we incurred while attending the 33<sup>rd</sup> Congressional Fire Service Institute Seminar this year. We are asking for a total of \$800.00 each which would cover the cost of the hotel for the two days while we attend the seminar. The total is \$1,600.00. and this is what we asked for back in March's meeting.

