



New Jersey State Association of Fire Districts Meeting was held at the Wildwood Convention Center on September 16th, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 PM by President Craig Aumack with a salute to the flag and Moment of Silence for the following

- ASM Ronald Dancer
- Dr. Harry Carter
- Robert Burns

The oath of Office was held by Director of DFS Richard Mikutsky for the following executive board. President Craig Aumack, Vice President Robert Donahue, Treasure Edward McDermott, and Secretary Artie Hayducka.

Director of DFS Richard Mikutsky held a lengthy discussion on changes taking place at the Division of Fire Safety ex; programs are being certified by Pro Board, new inspectors getting hired etc.:

Brian Wallace from VFIS Insurance company held a discussion on [WHY A MEMBER FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM?](#) This is designed as a value-added service for VFIS clients with an Accident and Sickness policy. Our Member Family Assistance Program (MFAP) supports the health and wellness of first responder employees, volunteers, and the workplace. There are services in place to help enable personnel to resolve personal and work-related issues to maintain individual productivity, health, and wellness and harness the power of full-scale support solutions with an exclusive arrangement through VFIS. I just want to add that VFIS provided all the snack & beverages for today's meeting, and it was much appreciated!
See attachment:

Assemblyman Kevin Rooney gave a short eulogy about Assemblyman Ronald Dancer who was a great advocate for the fire service as well as working on the Fire safety Commission. Assemblyman Rooney also held a lengthy discussion about the use of Cannabis and the issues it will have on the fire service and why it should not be allowed.

Senator Testa gave a eulogy about Assemblyman Ronald Dancer as well and held a lengthy discussion about his very own commitment to the fire service.

Treasure man Edward McDermott gave a report on our financial funds results as follows: Checking account was \$63,731.49 and the Money Market account was \$28,876.82 Total \$92,608.31

Secretary report by Artie Hayducka: We have stopped sending out US postage mail and have changed over to E-Mail which allows us faster response as well as better communication. Cash out of pocket \$151.08 / yearly stipend \$500.00 = \$651.08

State of New Jersey Local Government Services
Melissa Ford DCA See Attached report

Legislative report by Lynn Nowak
See attached report

Access Compliance, LLC
Firefighter Medical Programs
See attached report.

Adjournment

Our Zoom meeting will be Dec 3rd at 0930 hours

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86291008295?pwd=WjFFeDY3eEtwcWVXR3M2WE9HT1Jrdz09>

Meeting ID 862 9100 8295

passcode 798110

Our next Quarter Meeting will be held at the Adelphia Fire Station on December 3rd at 9:30 hours the address is 933 Route 33 in Freehold NJ 07728

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
DIVISION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES
BUREAU OF AUTHORITY REGULATION

2023 FIRE DISTRICT BUDGET CALENDAR

<i>Actions</i>	<i>Statutory Date</i>
Introduction and approval of budget by Fire Commissioners at least 60 days prior to the annual election. LOSAP resolution must be adopted. The introduced budget must be “cap compliant.”	12/20/2022
District uploads into FAST a copy of the introduced budget by the Fire Commissioners, at least 60 days prior to the annual election. Upload into FAST a copy of the adopted LOSAP resolution. To place a property tax levy cap referendum on the budget, the submitted budget must include and identify the specific amounts and budget line items for which funds approved at referendum will be used.	12/20/2022
Advertisement of public hearing at least ten days prior to such hearing	01/11/2023
A complete copy of the approved budget is posted and made available to each person requesting a copy during the week preceding the hearing and during the hearing.	01/13/2023 to 01/20/2023
Public hearing to be held not less than twenty-eight days after approval of the budget by Fire Commissioners. (After closing hearing, Fire Commissioners may adopt the budget without amendments, or may approve amendments).	01/21/2023
Adoption of budget not later than twenty-five days prior to the annual election. If a property tax levy referendum is included in the adopted budget, all amounts to be put out for public vote must be indicated. The Board of Commissioners must pass a resolution authorizing the referendum question at adoption. The amount to be raised by taxation must agree with the amount in the adopted budget.	01/24/2023
District uploads in FAST a copy of the complete adopted budget package within seven days after adoption.	01/31/2023
Division certifies in FAST a copy of the adopted budget within seven days.	02/07/2023
Advertisement of certified, adopted budget at least seven days prior to the annual election.	02/11/2023
Annual Election and LOSAP ratification. A public question for a cap levy referendum is handled as part of the annual fire district election. (only if required)	02/18/2023
Submit annual election results in FAST within three days after annual voter referendum and copy of official ballot. Please note: Failure to submit election results will delay certification of taxes to the municipal assessor. (only if required)	02/21/2023

MEMBER FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Services designed specifically for Emergency Service Organization personnel and their families.

DID YOU KNOW?

- An estimated 30% of first responders develop behavioral health conditions, including depression and PTSD.
- First responders experience higher rates of suicide ideation and attempts than the general population.¹

WHY A MEMBER FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM?

Designed as a value-added service for VFIS clients with an Accident and Sickness policy, our Member Family Assistance Program (MFAP) supports the health and wellness of first responder employees, volunteers and the workplace. Services help enable personnel to resolve personal and work-related issues to maintain individual productivity, health and wellness. Harness the power of full-scale support solutions with an exclusive arrangement through VFIS.

COVERAGE HIGHLIGHTS

Designed for people in Emergency Services

VFIS has partnered with Homewood Health* to offer access to trained professionals experienced in counseling emergency service personnel.

Easy-to-use

All services are simple and easy to use, so each member can benefit. Online solutions allow easy and secure access anywhere, anytime. Clinical response is fast and available 24-7 and counseling is short-term and solution-focused. Support services are available in-person, over the phone, or through video conferencing.

Prevention-focused

Comprehensive and preventative approaches to health, well-being and productivity. Solutions focus on prevention to strengthen the resiliency of your workforce.

BENEFITS

Counseling Services

Unique solution-based cognitive behavioral therapy approaches focus on teaching individuals, couples and families the skills necessary to help resolve life problems without creating a long-term, dependent counseling relationship. Confidential counseling is offered in the local community through an extensive national network with the highest ratio of clinical psychologists. Sessions are centered on specific goal attainment, behavior change, accurate diagnosis of complex problems and the best possible outcomes. Treatment is provided for a full-range of personal or work-related issues including but not limited to:

- Addiction, substance abuse
- Child development and adolescent issues
- Aging and caregiving
- Anger management
- Depression, anxiety, etc.



- Grief, bereavement
- Family and marital issues
- Personal adjustment problems
- Relationship difficulties
- Trauma

Lifestyle and Specialty Coaching Services

- Childcare and parenting
- New parent
- Elder and family care
- Financial advisory
- Legal advisory
- Relationship solutions

Health Coaching Services

- Nutritional coaching
- Wellness coaching
- Smoking cessation program

Career Coaching Services

- Career development services
- Pre-retirement planning services
- Shift-worker support services

Online Services

- E-Learning Courses
- Child Care Resource Locator
- Health Risk Assessment

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

All employees or volunteers of Emergency Service Organizations that hold a VFIS Accident and Sickness Policy and their immediate family members.

HOW TO UTILIZE THESE SERVICES?

For confidential and professional help:

Call the dedicated VFIS help line provided by Homewood Health at 866.349.5579

Simply have your organization's name ready to provide.



OUR PHILOSOPHY

Much like our founder, the VFIS approach to serving the market is very relationship-focused. We've forged strong partnerships with ESO leaders that allow us to continually develop policy and program enhancements, provide top-notch educational, consulting and training opportunities and pay our clients' claims. We're committed to protecting the resources of emergency service organizations and promoting the health and interests of their members with an unmatched level of understanding and dedication.

800.233.1957 | vfis.com | 183 Leader Heights Road | York, PA 17402

*VFIS's Member Family Assistance Program (MFAP) offers services provided by Homewood Health. Homewood Health is a separate, third party entity offering mental health and counseling services. It is not affiliated with or part of VFIS, its parent company, or any of their subsidiaries.

© 2022 VFIS | All rights reserved. Administered by Volunteer Firemen's Insurance Services, Inc., a/k/a VFIS, a/k/a VFIS Insurance Services in CA. CA Insurance Producer License #0B39073. Volunteer Firemen's Insurance Services, Inc., an American International Group, Inc. (AIG) company, is one of the largest providers of insurance for fire departments, ambulance and rescue squads and 911 centers in North America. All products and services are written or provided by subsidiaries or affiliates of AIG. Products or services may not be available in all countries or states, and coverage is subject to actual policy language. Non-insurance products and services may be provided by independent third parties. Certain property-casualty coverages may be provided by a surplus lines insurer. Surplus lines insurers do not generally participate in state guaranty funds and insureds are therefore not protected by such funds.



State of New Jersey
Department of Local Government Services
Bureau of Authority Regulation
www.nj.gov/dca/lgs/
Annual Meeting of State Organization of Fire Districts
Wildwood, NJ September 16, 2022

Melissa Ford
melissa.ford@dca.nj.gov

- **LFN for 2023**

This LFN for 2023 will be issued shortly (waiting on healthcare %)

- **ALL DOCUMENTATION IS SUBMITTED THROUGH FAST.**

The grant program for the fire departments being administered by DLGS is the **American Rescue Plan Firefighter Grant (ARPPFG)**. There are three scenarios that where these grants could affect the 2023 fire district budgets:

- If the grants are awarded before the fire district introduces their budget, they can include it in their budget.
- If the grants are awarded between introduction and adoption, they would be able to amend the budget to include the funds.
- If the grants are awarded after adoption, they would have to do a Chapter 159 to amend.

- **GovConnect (My New Jersey Portal)**

The Division requires all fire districts to have at least one official enrolled on the internet based GovConnect network to receive Division and other state government information via e-mail. Once enrolled, an authorization link must be set up for specific Fire District information. Please contact egg@dca.nj.gov for further information.

- **Fire District Internet Website**

The website has had the attention of the public and the Division does receive a lot of feedback in non-compliance issues with the Websites. If the Officer is certifying the form, please make sure the website is in full compliance with the statute. It will also affect the LFB application process. The Director scrutinizes the LFB applications to make sure they are compliant.

- **November Elections**

For the Fire Districts who have switched to November elections, we will be requiring seeing the approval to switch to November from their county board of elections.

2023 Budget Submission

- **Budget Submittal and Public Hearing Dates-**

- please be mindful of the statutory due date for all 2023 Fire Districts which is *December 20, 2022*. There is only a small window of time for submittal, examination, and approval. Due to the high volume of Fire District budgets in the small window of time, the Division strongly recommends that Fire Districts submit their introduced budgets as early as possible rather than waiting until the statutory due date. Delayed submittal of a budget without at least a week in advance to review, could result in the delay in approval and pushing back your hearing date.

- **Budget Message-**

Please complete all questions thoroughly in the Budget Message sections. Spaces have been provided in the Fire District Budget Template. This does help the budget examiners during review especially for any new transactions/agreements.

- **Revenue/Grants/Sale of Assets-**

When including the anticipated revenue in the budget please include back-up documentation of revenue for example: the grant award letter and/or a completed contract for sale of assets. If the back-up documentation cannot be presented, a budget amendment would be required. If it was the sale of an asset, the asset can still be sold, and the revenue would just go into surplus. Please upload all supporting documents into FAST when submitting the Introduced Budget.

- **Variiances over +/- 10%-**

Attach any supporting documentation that will help to explain the reason for the increase/decrease in the budgeted line item.

- **Capital Appropriations**

Chief's vehicles (special purpose vehicle)

A vehicle used for responding to fire calls, is considered a special purpose vehicle for the purpose of determining useful life of the vehicle and (not a passenger vehicle) to have a useful life of 5 years or more as defined in **NJSA 40A:2-22**.

- **Special Meeting**

All required documentation will be required for any special meeting and/or special election before budget approval will be granted.

- **Election Ballot**

If multiple projects are being considered, they should be addressed by individual questions on the ballot.

Election Results-should be submitted to the Director within 3 days after the annual election in February. Failure to submit election results will delay the certification of taxes to the municipality. **The Division requires a copy of the Election Ballot to be submitted along with the Election Results in FAST.**

Audit Report- To be submitted thru FAST along with the other required audit documents (audit questionnaire, group affidavit, proof of publication and corrective action plan). Many are outstanding.

Municipal Approval of Elected Commissioner Compensation

Zach Smith, Auditor
Zachary.smith@dca.nj.gov

LFB Applications

1) LFB applications consist of any capital financing projects. Please contact Nick Bennett at nick.bennett@dca.nj.gov for an application. In addition to the application packet, the LFB are looking for the following information to be included:

2) Additional Information in the LFB applications

- Number of registered voters
- District population
- District square miles served
- Average tax in dollars and average assessed home value of typical resident
- Average tax increase to the residential taxpayer if financing is approved
- Ownership of the capital item
- Special elections documentation

**NEW JERSEY STATE ASSOCIATION OF FIRE DISTRICTS
ANNUAL REPORT
BY LYNN NOWAK- Porzio Governmental Affairs
September 16, 2022**

LAME DUCK (END OF LAST LEGISLATIVE SESSION – Dec 2021-Jan 18, 2022)

FIRE MUSEUM

A5075, Burzichelli/ S4001, Sweeney – Removes Fire Museum and Fallen Firefighters Memorial from auspices of DEP and establishes independent organization.

Signed into law on Jan 18, 2022, P.L. 2021, c. 463

COLLECTIVE NEGOTIATIONS

S3810, Sweeney/A5862, Benson - "Responsible Collective Negotiations Act" – Revises various laws governing collective negotiations to provide greater power to the employees.

As amended the bulk of this bill now only pertains to State employees. Further, the definition of "employee" excludes firefighting employees of public fire departments.

Signed into law on Jan 18, 2022, P.L. 2021, c. 411

CANCER SCREENINGS

A6093, Stanley/S4201, Greenstein – Mandates periodic cancer screening examinations for firefighters enrolled in SHBP.

Signed into law on Jan 18, 2022, P.L. 2021, c. 478

OF NOTE: THESE BILLS OF CONCERN DID NOT MAKE IT THROUGH THE LAME DUCK AND ARE UNLIKELY TO MOVE IN THE NEW SESSION:

SHARED SERVICES

S1, Sweeney/A3389, McKeon – Encourages sharing of services.

New Session:

A3160, McKeon.

OPMA AND OPRA REFORM

A748, Johnson/S379, Weinberg – Reforms Open Public Meetings Act.

A749, Johnson/S380, Weinberg – Reforms Opens Public Records Act.

NEW LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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 had a meeting in the spring with staff to both sponsors to discuss a plan of action to get these bills moving. Asw Mosquera has agreed to our amendments to A1345 and she has put in request to the chair of the Assembly Law and Public Safety Committee that the two bills be heard. It is apparent that these bills are on the radar of the Assembly Majority Office as the aide to the Majority Leader has reached out to me for information about our desire to see these bills move. I am working with the two Assembly sponsors to secure a Senate sponsor, likely one of their running mates. I also continue to work with the League of Municipalities to gain their support.

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.

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

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

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.

Additionally, the Cannabis Regulatory Commission last week issued a Guidance for Workplaces. I will be sharing this information with Rich Braslow.

ELECTION-RELATED LEGISLATION

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

Introduced on June 20 and referred to the Assembly State and Local Government Committee.

A3818, Haider/Rooney – Designates specific dates for fire district “special elections.”

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.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN -LOCAL NATIONAL FISCAL RECOVERY FUNDS

"Special purpose units of local government are not eligible for funding allocations." "Special purpose units of government perform specific functions in the community such as fire...." However, "a state and may transfer funds to a special purpose unit of local government." We need the state to transfer the funds to the fire districts. Regarding for what purposes a fire district could make the case for fund eligibility: funds can be utilized for "reduction of revenue forand FIRE and other public safety services."

We met with John Butler, policy advisor to the Governor on these issues on Sept 15, 2021

We need to make the case that fire districts are eligible for these funds and show "reduction of revenue."



ACCESS COMPLIANCE, LLC
 622 Georges Road Suite #202
 North Brunswick, NJ 08902
 Phone: 732-296-1000 Fax : 732-296-1001
 Email: lynda@accesscompliance.net



Thank you for considering **ACCESS COMPLIANCE** to meet the medical needs of your department. We are a woman owned/veteran owned medical surveillance company, currently providing medical services for over 20,000 firefighters across New York State, Vermont and New Jersey .

Our **Firefighter Medical Program** is designed to provide quality medical services and training for fire departments at a **cost effective rate**. Our menu of services can be tailored to your department's particular needs and budget.

SERVICES INCLUDE:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Medical Clearances consistent with NFPA 1582 | Respiratory Clearances |
| Blood Chemistry / Urinalysis | DOT Classifications |
| Electrocardiograms | Hepatitis Screenings / Vaccinations |
| Fit Testing | Drug Testing |
| PPDs | Blood Typing |
| Tetanus Vaccinations | Flu Vaccinations(Seasonal) |
| PSA (Prostate Cancer Screening) | Hemoglobin A1C |

These services can be provided **on-site at your fire house** or in our office located in North Brunswick, N.J. In addition, we provide the most advanced proprietary data management and record keeping, always helping to keep your department in full compliance.

I have provided some additional information about Access Compliance. Please take the time to review the information. If you have any questions or comments about Access Compliance or any of our services please feel free to contact me at 732-296-1000.

Sincerely,

Lynda Joy

Lynda Joy,
 Program Coordinator

