

MINUTES

FIREFIGHTING COMMISSION WORK SESSION & BUSINESS MEETING 4.22.25

Chairman David Windrow called the Firefighting Commission Work Session to order at 9:00 a.m. on April 22, 2025.

Roll was taken by Executive Director Heather Zimmerman. All commission members are present. Quorum is met.

Chairman Windrow presented a couple of highlighted items on the last agenda to be corrected.

Chairman Windrow inquired about two resumes in one of the course packets that did not seem to belong anywhere. Director Zimmerman explained that those were the instructors for Vector and should be with the Vector packet.

Chairman Windrow suggested discussing the request from Johnson City. They were denied a salary supplement for a firefighter who had passed away before finishing the training. They stated that in the past, salary supplements were paid out to deceased firefighters even if they did not finish the training. It was determined by the commission that these prior approvals were done by the office staff and not the commission. The only way they should have received the salary supplement without completing training, according to TCA 4.24.202, is if they received orders in support of enduring freedom.

Commissioner Bill Scott stated that the reason Johnson City came before them was for additional guidance. It is not a waivable item. It is recommended by Commissioner Stephanie Boatright to possibly put it into a rule, so this doesn't happen again. Chairman Windrow recommends they speak to legal during the break to see if it could possibly be waived or what other alternatives we have. There was discussion among the commission members about whether it was an actionable item. Morally, they feel it should be approved, but do not want to break policy or rule.

Commissioner Bill Scott makes a motion to add letter H to the agenda. This is concerning a waiver for Ethan Oody. It's for firefighter II within 30 days of testing for firefighter I due to military deployment. Second by Chairman Windrow. No discussion. All in favor.

Commissioner Bill Scott makes a motion to add letter I to the agenda. This motion is to add a schedule for the rules subcommittee to meet on a monthly basis. Second by Commissioner Kory Green. No discussion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Commissioner Mike Henry makes a motion to add the IAAI representative to the agenda. He is here from Hamilton County to bring forth in front of the commission for training for the conference in Pigeon Forge this year. Second by Commissioner Kory Green. No discussion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Break

Resumed Business Meeting at 9:20 a.m.

Roll Call: all members present

Prayer: Chairman David Windrow

Pledge:

Motion by Chairman David Windrow to approve the minutes from the March 12th meeting after corrections. Second by Commissioner Bill Scott. The motion was unanimously approved.

Legal discussed upcoming rule changes on July 1, 2025.

Joshua Holdeman – West TN Regional Coordinator: Josh returned as coordinator in March. The biggest discussion with his West TN area is the new rule changes coming in July and the volunteer education program.

Steven Morrell – East TN Regional Coordinator: Everything is going great in East TN. The Fire Department Instructor I test validation has now been completed.

Todd Ratley: Middle TN Regional Coordinator: Not much to report for Middle TN. Now focusing on Commission 101 and EIP.

Chairman David Windrow added that during this legislative session, the volunteer side was awarded grants up to \$20 million and up to \$10 million for rescue squads. And three (3) more cancer bills were passed.

Jason Sparks (TFACA): We currently have a recruit class going on. They will graduate on May 2, 2025. Fire Chief Orientation will be at the Smoky Mountain weekend, May 31 to June 1st and Upper Cumberland Weekend, September 20th and at the TFA Conference in Jackson September 27th & 28th. The new 95ft platform is coming along slowly. We are now looking at the end of July as a realistic timeline. Our training for volunteers turned in some good numbers this year.

Executive Director Heather Zimmerman: The commission office is now fully staffed. A new Accreditation Manager started this week. He has been working on policies and procedures for the State. As for EIP/VEIP stats, we have had 78 career departments submitted with a

total of 683 full-time firefighters that have been paid out. We have had 52 combo departments submitted with a total of 79 full-time and 384 volunteers. We have had 35 volunteer departments submitted with a total of 337 volunteers. We have had 94 applications for reciprocity and 237 certificates issued. We are currently in the process of splitting ACADIS. TFACA/FFC will soon be separate from TLETA.

Old Business: No old business to discuss. Motion by Chairman David Windrow to move to new business, seconded by Commissioner Travis Solomon. The motion was unanimously approved.

New Business:

Item A: EIP/VEIP Subcommittee Report – Commissioner Bill Scott stated that one common theme that we need to look at is a workaround for the volunteers as far as the mission. Unfortunately, for a volunteer department, they do not have the resources available to them like a career department has. At a career department, they have a full-time training officer who can have programs submitted by October. Volunteer departments do not have that luxury. One of the ideas that came up was what if we turned around and, when we did our full submissions for our program at the end of the calendar year, could be the submission for the EIP program itself, which would do away with peer review, and the October 1 deadline would go away. This would spur the participation of the EIP program for all involved. The second piece is that we have many volunteer departments that do not participate. One of the purposes of the Fire Commission is to enhance the overall firefighter for the State of Tennessee and get them certified, but for some of the volunteer departments that don't have the resources available. We know we have the minimum training standards outlined in TCA that every firefighter must complete. If we look at issuing the TN State Volunteer Firefighter Certification only certificate (for example), for a volunteer firefighter, and there are other states that actually have the certification, that will include a 16-hour and a 64-hour, and include HMA.

Item B: Vector Training Courses – Motion made by Commissioner Solomon to approve courses, seconded by Commissioner Green. Question by Sharrock Cobb regarding the length of the online class. Minimum one hour is required. The motion was unanimously approved.

Item C: Tennessee Advisory Committee – Motion for approval by Commissioner Scott, seconded by Commissioner Boatright. No discussion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Item D: Rockvale High School - Motion to approve by Commissioner Boatright, seconded by Commissioner Scott. No discussion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Item E: Steve Whaley Rescue Training – Motion to approve by Commissioner Solomon, seconded by Commissioner Boatright. No discussion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Item F: Johnson City Fire Department/Assistant Chief Jason Powell – Supplemental pay denied for deceased member. A motion was made by Commissioner Scott that, based on historical actions done by the commission office, it be paid. Seconded by Commissioner Boatright. The only discussion was a comment by Chairman Windrow that we take a look at this in the rules going forward, clean it up, and make it so that we define and stick to the rule. The motion was unanimously approved.

Item G: Medical/Legal Class – Michael T. Highfill – Motion to approve by Commissioner Boatright, seconded by Commissioner Henry. Discussion – This class is not only being taught on the police department side but also on the fire department side in West Tennessee. It is very thorough. They want to have this as part of an approved full course for EIP purposes. It is a 3-hour course. The motion was approved. Commissioner Scott abstained due to a conflict of interest.

Item H: Ethan Oody military deployment – Motion was made for approval by Commissioner Solomon, seconded by Commissioner Scott, with the addition of a stipulation that an official letter be presented to Executive Director Zimmerman requesting the waiver. No discussion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Item I: Commissioner Scott motions to add a schedule for the rules subcommittee to meet on the second Thursday of each month, alternating between Teams and in-person meetings, starting in May. The first meeting will be in person. Commissioner Green seconds. The motion was unanimously approved.

Item J: IAAI representative asking to present training at the conference in Pigeon Forge this year. They asked for a motion for a symposium in West Tennessee and another motion for a conference in East Tennessee to try to provide more coverage completely across the state, so fire investigators can get the training. Motion made by Commissioner Henry, seconded by Commissioner Scott. Discussion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Item K: Audits—Commissioner Scott read the audits for this round: Alcoa, Bradley County, Etowah, Gatlinburg, Greeneville, Jefferson City, Jacksboro, LaFollette, Sevier County, Sevierville, Vonore, Ashland City, Brentwood, Clarksville, Franklin, Hendersonville, Nolensville, Shelbyville, Decherd, Tullahoma, Arlington, Lexington, Oakland, Piperton, Trenton, Union City, Martin, and those participating for the first year in the program.

Commissioner Green made a motion for the meeting to be adjourned. Seconded by Commissioner Solomon. The motion was unanimously approved.