

KENTUCKY FIRE COMMISSION

Fire Commission Meeting

Minutes

October 15, 2025

Paris, Kentucky

Present:

Cheryl Allen

Chris Black

Nick Clark

Josh Keats

Ricky King

Andrew Scott

Dwane Smeathers

Dr. Irvin Smith

Jerry Stephens

Mike Sutt

Father Matthew Young

Absent:

Joe Choate

Mike Haney

Ex Officio Members

Present:

Todd Kilburn

Joe Baer

Steve Kyle

Eddie Rucker

Absent:

Ricky King called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm (EST). Chris Black motion to approve the minutes from July 31, 2025 in Maysville Kentucky. Josh Keats seconded. Motion approved.

EMS Committee

Nick Clark said the EMS Committee met this morning. Nick said that Gary Hall, Bruce Roberts, Brenda Goddard, and he met on August 28th to discuss finances for another round of the Hybrid EMT and EMR classes for this fiscal year. Nick said the EMS Committee decided on a Hybrid EMR class with one hundred students and five skills sites and a Hybrid EMT class with one hundred students and five skills sites. The EMT class will start in January. The EMR class will start around the second half of February. Nick said that Gary Hall is going to work with Ericka Cole on a survey to gauge interest for these two courses. Nick said this survey will run for about two weeks. Nick said the EMS Committee is going to meet at the beginning of November to review the data from the survey. The official application will go out by November 7th. The applications will be due back within about three weeks. Nick said we have to start the classes by a certain time so the billings can come back before the end of the fiscal year. After the application process closes, the EMS Committee will meet on December 2nd at 1:00 pm and will have their recommendation to the Commission on December 3rd. Nick Clark said the EMS Committee voted and approved for \$107,660.00 for a Hybrid EMT class that will have one hundred students with five skill sites and a Hybrid EMR class that will have one hundred students with five skills sites. Josh Keats motion to approve. Andrew Scott seconded. Motion approved.

Scott Helle with the Kentucky Office of Rural Health introduced himself to the Commission. Scott said they are tasked with working with small rural hospitals and clinics. They have created an EMS Leadership Academy that they provide for all people across the State. Scott said he came to the Commission to see if we would support their Academy. Nick said he is going to get contact information from Scott and send it to the Commission.

Loan Committee

Dwane Smeathers said the Loan Committee met this morning to discuss two loans. Northern Pendleton Fire Department is requesting \$125,000.00 for twenty-five sets of Structural Fire Gear. Chris Black motion to approve. Cheryl Allen seconded. Motion approved.

Fulton City Fire Department is requesting \$125,000.00 for a 2007 Sutphen Rescue Pumper. Father Matthew Young motion to approve. Cheryl Allen seconded. Motion approved.

Eligibility Committee

Dwane Smeathers said the Eligibility Committee met this morning to discuss the items on the agenda. Coon Creek Fire Department is requesting reinstatement of their State Aid. They have some litigation going on and have outstanding funds owed to the Fire Commission. The Eligibility Committee made a motion to deny their reinstatement at this time until things get straightened up with the litigation. Nick Clark motion to reject the reinstatement of Coon Creek's State Aid. Chris Black seconded. Motion approved.

Dwane Smeathers said we have a LODD for Regina Huffman with the Coon Creek Fire Department. This was a vehicle accident. Cheryl Allen motion to approve. Dr. Smith seconded. Motion approved.

Dwane Smeathers said we have a LODD for Brian Hatt with the Raywick Fire Department. This was a vehicle accident. Mike Sutt motion to approve. Nick Clark seconded. Motion approved.

Dwane Smeathers said Dr. Smith discussed that out of the eight LODD's this calendar year, three were from vehicle accidents.

Grants Committee

Chris Black said the Grants Committee met this morning. Chris said we had two hundred fifty departments apply for the Thermal Imaging Camera grants. The Grants Committee reviewed all of the applications and removed anyone who failed to submit their Financial Disclosure paperwork, not compliant with the 2024 Phase 2 PPE grants, departments who were non-compliant with State Aid and the departments who received TIC grants within the last two years. Chris Black said the Grants Committee approved 158 fire departments for the TIC grant. Dwane Smeathers motion to approve. Cheryl Allen seconded. Motion approved. Chris Black said letters should be sent out within the next couple of weeks.

Chris Black said with the last Thermal Imaging Camera grants process, some departments applied for the grant and was awarded the grant. They declined after being awarded the TIC grant. This knocked other departments out of receiving the TIC grant. The Committee discussed the departments who were awarded a TIC grant and turned it down. These departments will be ineligible for the TIC grant for two years. Cheryl Allen motion to approve. Dwane Smeathers seconded. Motion approved.

Chris Black said he thinks if a department is non-compliant by a grant deadline then they should be removed from the application process. The Grants Committee agreed with this. Chris Black said this will go for all Grants across the Board. Nick Clark motion to approve. Cheryl Allen seconded. Motion approved.

State Fire Rescue Training

Marc Rudder said since July 1, 2025, SFRT has provided training to 248 departments. They have delivered 1374 classes, which is up almost 13% for FY25. Marc welcomed Jennifer Randolph to District 3. Marc said there will be Firefighter I and II in Greenville next week. Marc said the graduation ceremony at the Academy will be held on November 14th at 10:00 (CST). Everyone is invited to attend. Marc said the Kentucky Fire Commission funds Drivers training. This funding does not count towards their twenty one hours.

Fire Commission Operations

Carrie Wilburn said if you received a 2025 Thermal Imaging Camera grant, and you want reimbursement for that, we need the supporting documents. Carrie said if you have received a Training Facility Grant, the quarterly reports are due of your progress and finances. Carrie said she has received a lot of questions on the PPE grants. We have put those on hold because of the audit and basically she does not see us doing anything until July 1, 2026 or maybe a little bit longer until we get some policies and procedures in place. Carrie said we have been receiving calls concerning State Aid. We only have a million dollars that we can disburse a month. The State Aid is on a first come first serve basis. Carrie said everyone is aware that NFIRS is changing to NERIS. The NERIS Helpdesk information is on the Fire Commission website. Carrie said we changed the requirements for the Chief changes. We will need the Chief change form and supporting documentation before we can change the chief in the training system. Carrie said we lost Peggy Bryant earlier this year. We have been collecting plastic caps to make a bench in memory of her. After we collect one hundred pounds of lids, we may send out an email requesting donations for the bench. The memorial bench will be at the Salato Park in Frankfort, which was a place that Peggy loved to go to.

Fire Commission Facilities

Derrick Hall said the dormitory at the Fire Academy has moved into Phase B. The maintenance building at the Academy is moving into Phase C. Derrick said we had a Geotechnical survey at District 4. They advised that there is no sinkhole under the building. Derrick said we are in discussion with a private entity for a possible donation of twenty to twenty five acres of land for District 5. Derrick said they are working with engineers to get the roof inspected for District 6.

Derrick Hall said we have three action items to bring before the Board. The first item is for the property in Mt. Sterling that was the IFSAC Testing Center. We would like to make this a surplus property for sale. Dwane Smeathers motion to approve. Chris Black seconded. Motion approved.

Derrick Hall said the second action item is we are looking at land in Prestonsburg for District 11. The land would cost \$685,000.00 for 28.35 acres. Chris Black motion to purchase this property. Dwane Smeathers seconded. Motion approved.

Derrick Hall said the third action item is purchasing an additional 3.81 acres for District 13 in London Kentucky. The cost of the property will be \$121,920.00. Father Matthew Young motion to purchase this property. Cheryl Allen seconded. Motion approved.

Fire Commission Human Resources

Val Parks said we just finished filling the finance positions. They will start tomorrow.

Fire Marshal's Office

None.

Kentucky Office of Homeland Security

Josh Keats said they applied for and awarded a grant for Behavioral Analysis and Management Teams within the Kentucky Office of Homeland Security for schools and other private organizations. Josh said they are still working on getting more Fusion Center liaisons.

Kentucky Firefighter's Association

Eddie Rucker said the KFA's Fall meeting will be held on November 1, 2025 at the East Marshall Fire Department at 1:00 pm (CST).

Kentucky Association of Fire Chief's

Steve Kyle said he looks forward to working with everyone. Steve said they are searching for a new Director. Michael Morgan has moved on to other activities.

Kentucky Professional Firefighter's Association

Joe Baer said the KPFF's next Board meeting will be on December 8th in Nicholasville. Immediately following that, they will host their Christmas Reception at Shamrocks. Joe said the 2026 Legislative Session begins on January 6th. This session will be a long session. Joe said the Lobby Day, and the Legislative chili dinner will be on January 13th at the Foundry on Broadway. Joe said they have a number of priorities that they intend to pursue this Legislative Session. Joe asked are we going to host a Legislative meeting this year. Bruce Roberts said he plans on setting one up next month.

KCTCS

Todd Kilburn said we had a system forum last week, where Bruce made chili. Mr. Kilburn said we have been trying to build good relationships between KCTCS and the Fire Commission.

Old Business

Chris Black said since the last Commission meeting, the Salary Workgroup has met twice. Val Parks brought in Amanda Conley from Systems Office to help the Workgroup. Chris Black said the Workgroup met again this morning. Most of the job descriptions are done. Chris said we are going to meet again on the morning of December 3, 2025. Chris said we hope to have everything finalized by the Fire Commission meeting in February at the Green River Officer's School and to go into effect on July 1, 2026.

Ricky King asked where are we on IFSAC. Mike Sutt said we need to establish the next meeting. Ricky asked can we try to have some ready by the February Fire Commission meeting and have it take effect in July 2026? Mike Sutt said yes.

New Business

Bruce Roberts said we have been through two audits in the last year and a half. Bruce said we go before the LRC Committee on October 29, 2025. Bruce said we received the draft of the other audit. It was just sent to the Fire Commission Board. Bruce said we have given a short response back with assistance from John Wood and Chelsea. Bruce said we received our final report back on Monday evening. Bruce said he sent it to the Fire Commission Board, Fire Commission Office staff, Dr. Quarles, Todd Kilburn, John Wood, and Chelsea. We have sixty days to respond. Bruce said there is no money missing. Everything on the expense side looks in order. They did get us on policies and procedures. Most of those are over how we handled the grants, PPE's, and the testing that we do at the end of year not having signatures. Bruce said we are going to have to tighten up our ship. Father Matthew Young asked going forward, what is the role of the Board? Going forward, we need some clarity of our obligations. Bruce Roberts said the Board will need to be more involved. Bruce said just like the property that was discussed today, was that property brought before the Board before we purchased it. Bruce said he thinks the Board will take on a bigger role on the way we move forward, than what they have in the past. Ricky King said communication is key. Josh Keats asked has the latest audit been shared with the Board? Bruce said it is in everyone's packet today. Carrie Wilburn will email it to everyone on Zoom today. Todd Kilburn said we will have to report this to our Audit Committee as well.

Carrie Wilburn said that she exchanged some emails with Josh Keats and some of the stuff that he is working on, he felt might be helpful to the volunteer departments. Josh said he has been working with KSP on their next communications system. This system should provide statewide emergency communications to all levels of Government. Josh said one of his questions was if someone does have a communications project, maybe it would be good if they could gear that project to tuning into KSP's system as we go forward.

Josh Keats said he knows that the Fire Chief in Anderson County has been working diligently with the Anderson County High School on a fire science program. They have twenty-seven students in that program. Josh said this seems like a good beta test that maybe the Fire Commission wants to adopt most holistically across the State. Marc Rudder said there are at least nineteen high school programs throughout

the State that is recognized by the Department of Education that we have been working with for over two years. The Kentucky Fire Commission offers only to the High School programs the Apprentice I and II recognition. Marc said the High Schools will need to contact Erica Settelen with the Department of Education. The Department of Education offers this to all of the schools recognized by them.

Announcements from the Audience

None.

Chris Black motion to adjourn. Dwane Smeathers seconded. Meeting adjourned at 2:07 pm (EST).