

KENTUCKY FIRE COMMISSION

Fire Commission Meeting

Minutes

December 3, 2025

Paris, Kentucky

Present:

Cheryl Allen
Chris Black
Nick Clark
Mike Haney
Josh Keats
Ricky King
Andrew Scott
Dwane Smeathers
Dr. Irvin Smith
Jerry Stephens
Mike Sutt

Ex Officio Members

Present:

Joe Baer
Steve Kyle

Absent:

Joe Choate
Father Matthew Young

Absent:

Eddie Rucker

Ricky King called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm (EST). Chris Black motion to approve the minutes from October 15, 2025. Jerry Stephens seconded. Motion approved. Ricky King thanked everyone for all of their hard work.

EMS Committee

Nick Clark said the EMS Committee has been really busy since our last Commission meeting trying to get the EMT and EMR classes put together for the coming 2026 year. They met on November 5th and December 2nd. Ericka Cole sent out a survey to determine the best locations to hold the EMT and EMR classes. Nick said they came up with the locations of Districts 2, 5, 7, 12 and 15 for the EMT class and Districts 2, 3, 6, 12 and 14 for the EMR class. Nick Clark said we received 199 applications for the EMT class and 32 applications for the EMR class. Nick said during our meeting yesterday, we decided to eliminate the EMR class for 2026 because of the low number of applications. The EMS Committee came up with instead of 100 EMT students, there will be 150 students for roughly the same amount of money because of the elimination of the EMR class. Nick said out of the EMT applications, thirteen were not filled out correctly and were eliminated. Nick said this number is down to 186 applications. The committee looked at adding additional testing skills sites. The testing sites will be in Louisville and Bowling Green. Nick said the next step will be an entrance exam. Nick said we have 186 applications and only 150 slots open. Nick said with the entrance exam, we think the numbers will come down and get us close to the 150 students. The EMS Committee has their next meeting scheduled for December 16th to look at the numbers.

Josh Keats motion to eliminate the EMR class. Dwane Smeathers seconded. Motion approved.

Josh Keats motion to take the money from the EMR class and move to the EMT class for the additional fifty students. Chris Black seconded. Motion approved.

Nick Clark said we originally had Burlington as one of our skills sites. There were only eight people who signed up in that area. The EMS Committee decided to eliminate Burlington and add Louisville and Bowling Green as skills testing sites. Josh Keats motion to approve. Dwane Smeathers seconded. Motion approved.

Nick Clark said the entrance exam will close on December 13th at midnight. We will meet on December 16th to look at the final numbers.

Finance Committee

Mike Sutt said the Finance Committee met this morning to discuss the Salary Workgroup update. Mike said he refers to Chris Black and Val Parks for the update. Chris Black said the Salary Workgroup has met several times and is ahead on our goal. Val Parks and Amanda Conley looked through the job descriptions and wanted to make sure that everyone is in the right band. Chris thanked everyone for their hard work on this. Chris said we found that the impact is going to be minimal on the budget. The changes will begin on January 1, 2026. John Wood asked would this be a recommendation to KCTCS? Amanda Conley said she oversees compensation at KCTCS. KCTCS is supportive of this as well. Bruce Roberts said we ran this through Todd Kilburn as well. Dwane Smeathers motion to approve. Mike Sutt seconded. Motion approved.

Loan Committee

Dwane Smeathers said the Loan Committee met this morning to discuss two loans. Chalybeate Volunteer Fire Department is requesting \$90,000.00 for a 2000 International Tanker and a 2004 Chevrolet Brush Truck. Cheryl Allen motion to approve. Chris Black seconded. Motion approved.

Flatwoods Fire Department is requesting \$125,000.00 for a 32x55x14 Commercial Metal Building. Cheryl Allen motion to approve. Chris Black seconded. Motion approved.

Education Committee

Mike Sutt said the Education Committee met this morning to discuss training for First Responders and Firefighters in the State of Kentucky. Mike Sutt said the Committee looked at a Mental Health program similar to Indiana's. Mike Sutt said he would like for Chair Ricky King to appoint a workgroup to explore this option and have the Fire Commission require some type of mental health training. Ricky King appointed Mike Sutt, Father Matthew Young, Cheryl Allen, and Joe Baer to the Mental Health Workgroup. Bruce asked John Wood if this would fall within the

PTSD policy? John Wood said that was what he was thinking. He said he look into that.

Grants Committee

Chris Black said the Grants Committee met this morning. Carrie Wilburn received an email from Pembroke Fire Department requesting an extension on their grant that was issued in 2024. They had to get the property and get a building change on the property. Since that time, the cost of the building has gone up due to the tariffs. The Grants Committee decided to request this funding back so it can be reallocated before June 30, 2026. The Committee asked Pembroke to reapply for the Training Facility Grants in the Spring of 2026, and they will be top priority. Cheryl Allen motion to request the \$50,000.00 back from Pembroke Fire Department and reallocate those funds. Dwane Smeathers seconded. Motion approved.

Chris Black said the Grants Committee would like to open up the PPE Grant applications on January 5, 2026 and close on January 30, 2026. Carrie Wilburn said the process will be similar to the Training Facility Grants. Brenda Goddard said there is \$1,400,000.00 to award. Cheryl Allen motion to approve opening up the PPE Grant applications on January 5, 2026 and closing on January 30, 2026 and reviewing the applications at the February 2026 meeting. Jerry Stephens seconded. Motion approved.

State Fire Rescue Training

Marc Rudder said for the first four months of FY 2026, SFRT has trained 354 fire departments or 47%. Marc said the Fire Academy completed Recruit class #7 graduation on November 14th. Registration is currently open for Recruit class #8. Pat Thompson is traveling across the State to present information on the Academy. Pat Thompson said the presentations have been well received. Marc Rudder said that Christy Rodgers is now the District 9 Coordinator. Marc Rudder said Dawson Birch and Tanner Rayburn have resigned.

Fire Commission Operations

Carrie Wilburn thanked the Operations Staff for their hard work. Carrie said 701 departments have met the criteria for training. Carrie said Bonita has been working hard on the grants. Carrie said with Incentive there is only a thirty day back pay.

Fire Commission Facilities

Derrick Hall said we received the keys for Prestonsburg. It is ours now. Derrick said the two building projects that we have going right now is for the dormitory and maintenance building for the Academy.

Fire Commission Human Resources

Val Parks said all of the Evaluations for 2025 has been completed.

Fire Marshal's Office

Mike Haney said the Fire Marshal's Office is having their annual end of the year lunch and learn. They have promoted from within Assistant Director Michael Burke.

Kentucky Office of Homeland Security

None.

Kentucky Firefighters Association

None.

Kentucky Association of Fire Chiefs

Mike Sutt said the Directors position is open. The Fire Chiefs Conference will be held on August 25th and 26th in Bowling Green.

Kentucky Professional Firefighters Association

Joe Baer said the KPFF's next Board meeting will be held on December 8th in Nicholasville. Joe said the Legislative Session begins on January 6, 2026. They currently have two bill drafts. One is concerning the LODD cancers. The other bill is concerning the pension. Joe Baer said that Building and Housing Taskforce is recommending support of single stairwell construction. We oppose this. Joe Baer said we are looking at having a Peer Support class in Bardstown in April.

Marc Henderson said he became the Kentucky State Director for the Firefighter Cancer Support Network this past March. Marc said we are trying to get the word out to the departments and firefighters. Marc said cancer is the leading cause of LODD deaths for firefighters in the Nation. Marc said we are trying to get this class out across the State.

Old Business

Mike Sutt said the IFSAC Workgroup is scheduled to meet tomorrow.

New Business

Ricky King said the next item on the agenda is for the elections of Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary. Bruce Roberts said we received a letter from Ricky King the Chair position. Dwane Smeathers sent a letter for the Vice Chair position. Chris Black sent a letter for the Secretary position. John Wood said the elections will be held at the February Fire Commission meeting.

Ricky King said the next item on the Agenda is the dates and locations of the 2026 Fire Commission meetings. The meeting dates are as follows:

Date	Time	Location
February 20, 2026	1:00 pm (CST)	Owensboro, KY
April 15, 2026	1:00 pm (EST)	Paris, KY
June 11, 2026	1:00 pm (EST)	Lexington, KY
August 1, 2026	1:00 pm (EST)	Ashland, KY
October 14, 2026	1:00 pm (EST)	Paris, KY
December 9, 2026	1:00 pm (EST)	Paris, KY

Chris Black motion to approve the 2026 Fire Commission meeting dates. Mike Sutt seconded. Motion approved.

Correspondence

Erica Settelen, Academic Program Consultant, Law and Public Safety for the Department of Education conducted a presentation on the high school fire programs.

Announcements from the Audience

Ericka Cole said she needs everyone's hotel information for Officer's School in Owensboro. Joe Baer said the firefighter lobby day, and the Legislative chili dinner will be on January 13, 2026. The Legislative chili dinner will be held at the Foundry.

Scott Helle said four of the sixteen people chosen for the Leadership Academy are from Fire/EMS.

Chris Black said we lost Mike O'Day on November 2nd. Please keep Alice and Mike's family in your thoughts and prayers. Ricky King asked everyone to keep Anchorage Middletown in your thoughts and prayers. Ricky said if you are struggling, please reach out. The help is there.

Chris Black motion to adjourn. Dwane Smeathers seconded. Meeting adjourned at 2:23 pm (EST).