

KENTUCKY FIRE COMMISSION

Fire Commission Meeting

Minutes

February 20, 2026

Owensboro, KY

Present:

Cheryl Allen
Chris Black
Joe Choate
Nick Clark
Mike Haney
Ricky King
Andrew Scott
Dwane Smeathers
Dr. Irvin Smith
Jerry Stephens
Mike Sutt
Father Matthew Young

Absent:

Ex Officio Members

Present:

Joe Baer
Todd Kilburn
Steve Kyle
Eddie Rucker

Absent:

Ricky King called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm (CST). John Dunning thanked everyone for being here.

Guest Speakers

The Kitchen Table Foundation

Thomas Jenkins – Fire Safety Research Institute

Orlando Hernandez – National Fire Protection Association

Old Business

Ricky King said there was no opposition for the position of Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary for the Fire Commission Board. Ricky King is running for the Chair position. Dwane Smeathers is running for the Vice Chair position. Chris Black is running for the Secretary position. Joe Choate motion to approve. Andrew Scott seconded. Motion approved.

Dwane Smeathers motion to approve the minutes from December 3, 2025 and December 18, 2025. Chris Black seconded. Motion approved.

Ricky King thanked everyone for being here. Ricky thanked the Green River Firefighters Association for hosting this meeting. Ricky thanked the Fire Commission Staff for everything that they do. Ricky thanked the KPFF, KAFC and KFA for all of their hard work. Ricky said he thinks we are moving forward for the right reasons.

Health and Wellness Committee

Dr. Smith said the Health and Wellness Committee met this morning. We reviewed the 2025 data on the stress injury and PTSD program as well as the cancer screening program with UDS.

Grants Committee

Chris Black said that the Grants Committee met this morning. Chris said the Dundee Fire Department is requesting an extension on their paperwork for a TIC grant. Dwane Smeathers motion to approve for a ninety day extension. Cheryl Allen seconded. Motion approved.

Chris Black said that the Pembroke Fire Department returned \$50,000.00 for their Training Facility Grant. The Grants Committee voted to reallocate that money. \$34,000.00 will go to the Russellville Fire Department. Father Matthew Young motion to approve. Dwane Smeathers seconded. Motion approved.

Chris Black said \$16,000.00 will go the Jessamine County Fire Department. Dwane Smeathers motion to approve. Mike Sutt seconded. Motion approved.

Chris Black said that two hundred departments were approved for the PPE grants. The following departments were approved:

Department Names

Garrison Volunteer Fire Department
Germantown Vol. Fire Department
Gott Volunteer Fire Dept
Grayson Fire Department
Greasy Creek Volunteer Fire Dept
Green County Fire & Rescue Dept
Greensburg Fire & Rescue Dept
Greenup
Greenville FD
Gulnare Volunteer Fire Department
Hadley Volunteer Fire Department
Halifax Volunteer Fire Dept
Harned Area Vol Fire & Rescue Dept
Hazel Green Volunteer Fire Dept
Hindman Volunteer Fire Department
Hiseville Community Vol Fire Dept
Hodgenville Fire Department

Jenkins

Jonesville Fire Department

KyRock Vol Fire Dept

Lacy Volunteer Fire Department

Leatherwood Volunteer Fire Dept

Lee County Volunteer Fire Dept

Lewisburg Volunteer Fire Dept

Little Sandy Fire Dept

Livermore Fire Department

London Fire Department

Lotts Creek Vol Fire Dept

Magnolia Fire & Rescue

Manchester Fire Department

Marrowbone Volunteer Fire Dept

Mattoon Community Vol Fire Dept

Mayking Volunteer Fire Department

Mays Lick Volunteer Fire Department

Melber Civic Club Volunteer Fire Dept

Middle Fork Volunteer Fire Dept

Millard East Shelbiana Vol F & R

Milton Fire & Rescue

Mt. Victory Vol. Fire Dept.

Mud Creek Fire Department

Munfordville Fire and Rescue

Nebo Volunteer Fire Dept

Nelson County Fire & Rescue

New Liberty Volunteer Fire Dept

Northwest

Oak Grove Volunteer Fire Dept (#604)

Oil Springs Volunteer Fire and Rescue

Olive Hill Fire Department

Olympian Springs Volunteer Fire Dept

Oneida Volunteer Fire & Rescue

Owen County Volunteer Fire Dept

Owenton Volunteer Fire Dept

Owingsville Fire Department

Park City Volunteer Fire

Park Hills Volunteer Fire Dept

Parkers Mill Volunteer Fire Dept

Pendleton County Fire

Pineville Fire Department
Pleasureville FD
Pond Creek Fire / Rescue
Possum Trot Sharpe Fire Dept
Prestonsburg Fire Department
Primrose Volunteer Fire Department
Red Lick Volunteer Fire Department
Reed Volunteers Fire Department
Richardsville Fire Department
Richland Vol. Fire Department (#783)
Richland Volunteer Fire Dept (#332)
Rochester Volunteer Fire Dept
Rockhouse Fire & Rescue
Rousseau Volunteer Fire Dept
Rural Bradfordsville
Russell Springs Fire Department
Russellville Rural Fire Department
Sacramento Fire Department
Salt Lick Fire Department
Salyersville Volunteer Fire Dept
Sandlick Vol. Fire Dept.
Sardis Volunteer Fire Department
Shady Grove Voluntary Fire Dept
Shelby Valley
South Allen Volunteer Fire Dept
South Hopkins Fire Department
Southeast Casey Volunteer Fire Dept
St. Charles Fire Department
Stanford Fire Department
Stanton Fire Department
Stony Point Volunteer Fire Dept
Summersville Volunteer Fire Dept
Tilton Vol Fire Dept
Toler Creek Vol Fire Department
Tollesboro Volunteer Fire Dept
Trammel Volunteer Fire Dept
Trigg/Lyon Volunteer Fire Dept
Upton Fire Department
Vanceburg Vol Fire Dept
Verona Fire Protection District

Vicco-Sassafras Vol. Fire and Rescue
Vine Grove Fire Department
Viola - North Graves Vol Fire Dept
W.R. Castle Fire & Rescue
Waco Volunteer Fire Department
Washington fire Department
Warfield Fire Dept
Wax Fire and Rescue
Webbville Vol. Fire Department
West Cloverfork
West Hardin Fire and Rescue
West Marshall Fire Dept
West McCreary Volunteer Fire Dept
West Side Volunteer Fire Department
West Van Lear Volunteer Fire Dept
Western Rockcastle Vol Fire Dept
Westwood Volunteer Fire Dept
Wheatcroft Fire Dept
White Oak Fire Department
Whitesburg Fire Department
Wickliffe Rural Fire Department
Williamstown Fire Department
Wingo Volunteer Fire Department
Wolfe County Volunteer Fire Dept
Woodburn Community Fire Dept.

Dr. Smith motion to approve these departments for the PPE grants. Dwane Smeathers seconded. Motion approved.

Eligibility Committee

Dwane Smeathers said the Eligibility Committee met this morning. Dundee Fire Department is requesting a ninety day extension on their State Aid. Father Matthew Young motion to approve. Mike Sutt seconded. Motion approved.

Bruce Roberts said the Peer Support class will be held on April 21-22, 2026 in Bardstown. The link for the class is on the Fire Commission Website. Bruce said there are over eight hundred bills in legislation right now. Bruce said there will

probably be over 1200 bills before this legislative session is over with. Bruce said there are a couple of bills that will affect the Fire Commission. HB 419 would give the four officio members voting rights. Bruce said during our audit, LRC wanted clarification on the 5% administrative charge that we pay. Bruce said under the Hepatitis A and B, there is \$500,000.00 in that program. In past years we have only spent \$10,000.00. We want to add cancer screening to the KRS.

Joe Baer discussed House Bill 34 which would amend KRS 61.315 to include additional cancers which, when they are the cause of death of a firefighter, would make the firefighter eligible for death benefits; make a technical correction. Joe Baer discussed House Bill 500 which is a budget bill. There are a number of things that would have a negative impact on the fire service. This would put a cap on the employer contributions to the health care. This could have a huge impact and reduction in benefits. Bruce said House Bill 500 could make a 7% cut of State Fire Rescue Training's budget over the next two years. The Fire Commission would take a 7% cut over the next two years. With State Fire Rescue Training, theirs is a mandated program. This could potentially hurt the training that is given to the fire departments.

Carrie Wilburn said the Fire Commission sent out emails concerning volunteer firefighters who make over \$8,000.00 a year. Carrie said there is a thresh hold in KRS with Worker's Compensation, which states that a volunteer firefighter has to make less than \$8,000.00 a year. Carrie said paid per run is not considered a salary. Carrie said this is a legislative issue. Bruce said when Carrie contacted Worker's Compensation, they wanted him to set a salary. Bruce said we have never set a salary. This will be up to the KFA and the KAFC to decide on how we want to move forward on this legislation. Bruce said this is something that we really need to look at and discuss. Carrie said to email her if you have any questions.

Agenda – Kentucky Association of Fire Chiefs

Call to Order

Treasurer's Report

Legislative Report

Executive Director's Report

Division (Area) Board Members – Recognize

- Area 1 - Chris Owen - Paducah
- Area 2 - Jeff Mayfield - Madisonville
- Area 3 - Mike Hughes - Stoney Point
- Area 4 - Mark Malone - Elizabethtown
- Area 5 - T. A. Rankin - Versailles
- Area 6 - Doug Neyman - Wilder
- Area 7 - Jeff Anderson - Morehead
- Area 8 - Preston Hays - Hindman
- Area 9 - Lonnie Madden - Sand Gap
- Area 10 - Norman Rutherford - Eubank

Section Board Members – Recognize

- Volunteer - Josh Day - Wilmore
- Combination - Danny Eades - Jessamine County
- Career - Marty Kazsuk - Nicholasville

Committee Reports

- Constitution, Resolution, & Bylaws
- Conference
- Community Risk
- Government Relations
- Health & Safety
- EMS
- Mutual Aid
- Nominations/Election
- Professional Development

Old Business

- Constitution and Bylaw changes were implemented
- Elections were held for open and newly created positions

New Business

- Organizational update
- Budget presentation/approval

Agenda – Kentucky Firefighters Association

Roll Call

Approval of 2025 Fall Meeting Minutes

Officers Reports

- President Eddie Rucker
- 1st VP Chris Crawford
- 2nd VP Troy Roberts
- 3rd VP Chris Black
- VP at Large Pat Thompson
- Treasurer Bonita Bobo
- Secretary Eric Philpot

Treasurers Report – Bonita Bobo

- Financial standings

Membership Report – Eric Philpot

- Membership status

Executive Director Report – Randy Lawson

Directors Reports:

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| • Big Sandy | Mike Brown |
| • Bluegrass | Stephen Fante |
| • Buffalo Trace | David Kalb |
| • Central Ky | Shane Yocum |
| • Daniel Boone | Jeff Anderson |
| • Dixie | Michael Long |
| • Eastern Ky | Billy Selvage |
| • Green River | Dwane Smeathers |
| • Jackson Purchase | Tex Johnson |
| • Jefferson | Joey Bowman |
| • Lake Cumberland | David Gross |
| • Mountain | Robert Keith |
| • Northern Ky | Steve Rath |
| • South Central | Nelson Slaughter |
| • Southeastern Ky | Terry
Wattenbarger |

Committees:

Advisory
Chapter 75

EMS
Legislative
NVFC

Special Events &
Marketing

Honor Guard & Funerals
Memorial

Scholarship
History

Public Education & Fire
Prevention

Recruitment & Retention
Ethics

Hall of Fame

Constitution and By-Laws /
SOG's

Resolutions

Conference Management

Finance

Steering

State Fire School

PTSD

Jeff Pohlman

Jason Meiman / Stephen
Fante

Kyle Carpenter

Joey Bowman

Pat Thompson

Pat Thompson

Charlie Rafferty

Bruce Roberts

Jimmy VanCleve

Jimmy VanCleve

Adam Fuller

Adam Fuller

Dave Jansing

John Beatsch

Chris Crawford

Keith Hurm

Randy Lawson / Joel

Trandell

Bobby Cowherd

Stephen Fante

Marc Henderson

Pat Krogman

Old Business

- No old business to discuss

New Business

Executive Session if needed

Next Meeting – Kentucky State Fire School Thursday June 11, 2026 at 5:00 PM Eastern Time

Agency, Director & Partner Reports

Fire Marshal's Office

None.

Kentucky Office of Homeland Security

None.

Kentucky Professional Firefighters Association

Joe Baer said the KPFF Biennial Convention will take place in Owensboro in May 2027. Joe said he received a call from a retired firefighter who is traveling the country and meeting with state associations to encourage participation in the National Firefighter Cancer registry. Joe said he will be meeting with him this Thursday. Joe Baer said that he had a meeting with the CEO of a company called Lion. They want to roll out a new program in Kentucky in regard to cleaning and decontaminating turnout gear and repairing it. According to him the extractors that we have are good but only remove about 50% of toxins in the turnout gear. Their system removes about 90%. Joe said we are going to follow up with them to see if this will be a benefit to firefighters here in Kentucky. Joe said their next board meeting will be on March 23rd. Joe said they will be hosting a conference for the Southern Federation of Professional Firefighters on June 1st and 2nd in Louisville, Kentucky.

Kentucky Association of Fire Chiefs

None.

Kentucky Firefighters Association

None.

State Fire Rescue Training

Marc Rudder said through January 2026, SFRT has trained 501 fire departments. Marc said the IFSAC has administered 305 written tests during the month of January. Marc said there is a fee structure for IFSAC exams and skills that has been passed. It is still going through the approval process. The estimated implementation date will be on July 1, 2026. Marc introduced Greg Palmer to everyone. Marc said we are monitoring House Bill 500.

Fire Commission Operations

Carrie Wilburn went over numbers and statistics for last year concerning the Fire Commission programs.

Fire Commission Facilities

Derrick Hall said they purchased the District 11 Office in Prestonsburg. They also purchased three plus acres for District 13. Derrick said they are currently working on a property project for District 5 in Elizabethtown.

KBEMS

Wayne Briscoe said to make sure that you get with your inspector to make sure that everything that needs to be done is taken care of. Wayne said House Bill 447 aims to overhaul emergency ground ambulance reimbursement rates. The bill mandates

that insurance plans cover these services and pay a minimum standard rate, even for out-of-network providers, effective January 1, 2027.

Kentucky Fire Commission Human Resources

Val Parks said the approvals in salary compensation took effect on January 1, 2026. Val said she also continues to address one of the audit findings in regard to performance evaluations. We just completed our mid-year performance evaluation and compliance. Val said we currently have two jobs open. One is for a Facilities Manager and the other is for the Paramedic Program.

Supporting Heroes

Eric Johnson said they rescheduled their annual gala for July 11, 2026. Eric said they have a booth at the vendor show on Saturday.

Firefighter Cancer Support Network

Marc Henderson said he would like to do a class for everybody. Marc said we are doing fund raisers for firefighter cancer.

Announcements from the Audience

Rebecca Brown said they are offering Chaplain classes at the fire schools across the state. Rebecca said they are having a class on April 21st through April 23rd at the Hopkinsville Fire Department.

Steve Kyle said the Southeast Association of Fire Chief's is having their annual conference in Savannah Georgia. The new CEO is Donna Black.

Bryan O'Neill said CPSE is coming to the Louisville Fire Department putting on a seminar for grant writing on May 12 through the 14th.

Mike Sutt motion to adjourn. Dwane Smeathers seconded. Meeting adjourned at 3:19 pm (CST).