

KENTUCKY FIRE COMMISSION

Fire Commission Meeting

Minutes

June 11, 2026

Lexington, KY

Present:

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

Absent:

Ex Officio Members

Present:

Joe Baer
Eddie Rucker

Absent:

Todd Kilburn
Steve Kyle

Ricky King called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm (EST). Heather Thomas conducted the swearing in of Scott Lawson. Chris Black motion to approve the minutes from April 15, 2026. Jerry Stephens seconded. Motion approved.

Education Committee

Mike Sutt said the Education Committee met this morning. The only item on the agenda was a recap from Casey Hall on the IFSAC Accreditation program and the Degree Program.

Health and Wellness Committee

Dr. Smith said the Health and Wellness Committee met online on June 8, 2026. Dr. Smith said we sent out surveys for the PTSD program and the Cancer screenings. Dr. Smith said with the PTSD surveys, 106 were sent out. Twenty-three surveys were sent back. Dr. Smith said the next survey was for cancer/ cardiovascular screening. Dr. Smith said we sent out 263 surveys. We received thirty-four responses back. Dr. Smith said that Bruce Roberts and John Wood are working on a cancer screening KAR.

Grants Committee

Chris Black said the Grants Committee met on June 10, 2026. They had received eighty-nine applications. They had \$1,000,000.00 to award. Chris asked the departments not to spend any money until they receive an award letter from the Fire Commission. Chris said the following departments were awarded Training Facility Grant monies:

Name	Amount
Bagdad	\$11,750.00
Belfry	\$3,400.00
Buckeye Fire	\$7,050.00
Calloway County	\$9,650.00

Clark County	\$58,165.00
Coal Run	\$3,250.00
Cornettsville	\$7,100.00
Corydon	\$7,000.00
Cynthiana	\$23,000.00
Daviess County	\$5,150.00
Dukes	\$30,700.00
Erlanger	\$30,050.00
Evona	\$8,775.00
Flaherty	\$49,385.00
Frankfort	\$3,100.00
Franklin County	\$33,800.00
Franklin-Simpson	\$17,775.00
Glasgow	\$3,000.00
Gulnare	\$2,375.00
Henderson	\$35,000.00
Hitchins	\$9,825.00
Independence	\$60,000.00
Jamestown	\$1,375.00
Jenkins	\$3,000.00
Jessamine County	\$53,250.00
KyRock	\$4,750.00
Lawrenceburg	\$28,000.00
Leatherwood	\$12,775.00
Louisville	\$38,000.00
Madisonville	\$21,000.00
Martin	\$2,150.00
Middlefork	\$40,000.00
Mt. Eden	\$3,000.00
Newport	\$50,000.00
Owensboro	\$23,350.00
Pikeville	\$20,000.00
Piner Fiskburg	\$20,250.00
Russell Springs	\$25,000.00

Russellville Rural	\$43,000.00
Sharon Grove	\$41,150.00
Shelbyville	\$6,900.00
Taylor County	\$10,000.00
Thruston Philpot	\$2,300.00
Wallins	\$3,400.00
Washington County	\$6,500.00
Watts-Caney	\$7,575.00
Wax	\$15,175.00
West Cloverfork	\$30,750.00
White Hall	\$58,350.00
Wolfcoal	\$4,850.00
Yelvington	\$4,850.00

Chris Black said that Dwane Smeathers abstained from voting for Daviess County, Derrick Hall abstained from voting for Leatherwood and Cheryl Allen abstained from voting for Russellville Rural during the committee meeting. Jerry Stephens motion to approve. Scott Lawson seconded. Motion approved.

Loan Committee

Dwane Smeathers said the Loan Committee met this morning to look at two loans. Hyden Fire Department is requesting \$65,490.00 for a 1996 Emergency-One Cyclone II. Nick Clark motion to approve. Chris Black seconded. Motion approved.

Rousseau Volunteer Fire Department is requesting \$100,000.00 for a 2003 Freightliner F-180 Elliptical Tanker. Scott Lawson motion to approve. Cheryl Allen seconded. Motion approved.

Finance Committee

Joe Choate said the Finance Committee met this morning to look over the 2027 budget. The committee recommends approving the budget. Dwane Smeathers motion to approve the budget. Jerry Stephens seconded. Brenda Goddard said that

she emailed the budgets to the Fire Commission Board members. Brenda said that the SFRT budget will now be funded out of the surcharge dollars. Brenda said we kept everything the same as the 2026 budget and reenacted it for 2027/2028 with the exception of the changes in incentive pay, state aid and SFRT. Brenda said we included in it 2.5% increase in salaries and the fringe benefit rates went up. Motion approved.

Eligibility Committee

Dwane Smeathers said the Eligibility Committee met this morning to discuss items. Dwane Smeathers said that the Meade County Fire Department is applying for incentive and pension. Chris Black motion to approve. Cheryl Allen seconded. Motion approved.

Dwane Smeathers said that the Warren County Fire Department is applying for incentive and pension. Jerry Stephens motion to approve. Cheryl Allen seconded. Motion approved.

Dwane Smeathers said the next line of business is a LODD for Jonathan Routian with the Mackville Fire Department. He passed away from cancer. The committee recommended to deny. Cheryl Allen motion to deny this benefit. Nick Clark seconded. Joe Baer asked why are we denying this claim. Dwane Smeathers said it was because of cigarette usage. The KAR says that the firefighter cannot use tobacco products for a period of ten (10) years prior to the diagnosis of cancer and that the type of cancer that he had was not covered under the KAR. Motion approved.

Dwane Smeathers said the next item on the agenda is State Aid and the allowable limits for insurance, utilities, and internet. The committee recommends the following increases:

Insurance- \$10,000.00

Utilities- \$4,500.00

Internet- \$1,500.00

Mike Sutt motion to approve. Chris Black seconded. Motion approved.

EMS Committee

Gary Hall said everyone should have an EMS sheet in their packets. Nick Clark thanked Gary Hall and Marc Rudder for all their hard work on this. Nick said he will be meeting with them in August to start planning the upcoming classes.

State Fire Rescue Training

Marc Rudder said as May 31, 2026, SFRT has trained 679 fire departments. Marc discussed the mobile props. Marc said that Derrick Hall is working on finalizing the AFG application. Marc said the AFG grants are open until June 22, 2026. Marc said the grant that SFRT is applying for does not take away any funds from the fire departments. Marc said that recruit class #8 graduated in May. Recruit class #9 will start in August. Marc said that Casey Hall will be updating a lot of curriculums next year. Marc said there will be a skills testing fee with the Accreditation certifications starting July 1, 2026.

Fire Commission Operations

Carrie Wilburn thanked the staff in the Paris office for their hard work. Carrie said the deadline for State Aid paperwork is September 30th. Carrie said the twenty hours that is required for volunteer firefighters is due by June 30, 2026. Carrie asked the incentive pay departments to please send notifications to Lisa Bradley when they have changes within thirty days. Carrie said we have seen an increasing number of departments with junior firefighters under the age of fifteen on their active roster. The department will have to have a junior firefighter program to have juniors on their roster. Any firefighter under the age of fifteen will not be covered by Workers Comp.

Fire Commission Facilities

Derrick Hall said the Fire Academy has been approved for a maintenance building. Derrick said that District 4 Office to look at building repairs. District 5 is looking for additional properties and additional classroom space. District 6 has received the approval to move back into their building. District 11 is waiting on approval from KCTCS Facilities to begin working on the sewer project. District 12 is continuing to look for property to try to get them some more space. Derrick said they are looking for some property for District 15. Derrick said he is waiting for the contractor approval for roof repairs for the Office in Paris. Derrick welcomed Joe Mardis to the Fire Commission.

Fire Commission Finance

Brenda Goddard said for FY 2026, the revenues are up. Brenda said that Heather Thomas is here today and they are testing today, tomorrow, and Saturday. Brenda said they are up to 129 participants for the PTSD program for this year.

Fire Commission Human Resources

Val Parks said the Fire Commission has hired a new IT person, Joe Mardis for the Paris Office. Val said we recently posted a job opening for a Training Specialist at Districts 5, 6, and 7. Val said we have another opening for Training Specialist at the Fire Academy. Val said we are almost 100% complete on the performance evaluations for the year.

Fire Commission Accredited Certification

None.

Fire Marshals Office

Mike Burke said they are in the process of working on policies and procedures. Mike said that they have two people resign. Mike said that Chris Crawford is retiring. The Fire Marshals Office is looking at future hiring for up to six positions.

Kentucky Office of Homeland Security

None.

Kentucky Firefighters Association

Eddie Rucker said the KFA will be meeting today at 5:00 pm (EST).

Kentucky Association of Fire Chiefs

Cheryl Allen said the KAFC had a meeting in Versailles in May. Their conference will be held on August 25th through the 27th in Bowling Green.

Kentucky Professional Firefighters Association

Joe Baer said that Kentucky just hosted the Southern Federation Professional Firefighters conference. Joe said the Southern Legislative Conference will take place in Lexington. Joe said that he and Jake Silvati had a conversation with the IAFF Peer Support yesterday and there appears to be some issues with our PTSD Form 3 that is required for reimbursement. Joe said we are going to meet with the Health and Wellness committee and work on this form.

Kentucky Emergency Management-Urban Search and Rescue

Chris Black said we are about three weeks away from go time. Chris said the MOA's have went out to the departments.

Marc Henderson said his team is offering a two-to-three-hour class on firefighter cancer and would like to offer it to every department. His team will be at the vendor show tomorrow night.

Bruce Roberts said he was at the Southern Federal Professional Firefighters Conference and there was a presentation by Chris Bartley with the IAFF. Bruce said that the Federal ESOP has approved going back to 2020 for cancer related deaths.

Bruce said if you have a firefighter who passed away from cancer since 2020, they could qualify for federal benefits.

Old Business

None.

New Business

Mike Sutt said we had a discussion this morning in the Finance Committee about putting together a workgroup to look at the waiting list and overage for the Fire Academy. Ricky King said he will get with Bruce Roberts on this.

Correspondence

None.

Public Commentary

None.

Dwane Smeathers motion to adjourn. Chris Black seconded. Meeting adjourned at 1:59 pm (EST).