

# Atlantic County Firefighters' Association

*"In Union For The Safety Of All"*



February 19, 2025

## **Call to Order**

The regular meeting of the Atlantic County Firefighters' Association was called to order at 19:30 on February 19, 2025 at the Longport Volunteer Fire Department by President Charles J. Mackintosh. The meeting was opened with a flag salute followed by an Invocation by Howard Berchtold. President Mackintosh then pointed out the fire exits and asked that all electronic devices be silenced.

## **Introduction of Host Chief**

President Mackintosh introduced Chief Levon "Lefty" Clayton of the Longport Volunteer Fire Department. Chief Clayton welcomed all to Longport. Chief Clayton introduced Longport Mayor Patrick Armstrong. Mayor Armstrong welcomed everyone to Longport.

## **In Attendance**

Roll call was taken by Secretary Robert A. Mellon who reported a quorum was present.

Total Chief/Delegate Attendance – 49 of 172

Total Member Departments/Companies Represented – 22 of 43

## **Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the minutes of the January 15, 2025 meeting, as sent to the member companies.

## **Report of Treasurer**

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to accept the report of the Treasurer, totaling \$96,500.41, as read by Treasurer Jaime C. Mellon.

Bank of America / Bank of America / Parke Bank / Parke Bank / Parke Bank  
Checking: \$53,889.23 / Savings: \$5,022.74 / Checking: \$5,448.80 / Money Market: \$1,003.42 / CD, matures 4/5/2025: \$31,136.22

## **Special Presentation**

Dan Adams welcomed and introduced Lauren Sheets, Senior Market Development Manager with Lucid Diagnostics. Lauren reviewed the statistics showing firefighters are at increased risk for esophageal cancer. Lauren reported on the new EsoGuard esophageal DNA test from Lucid Diagnostics. The EsoGuard test assesses genes from cells collected non-invasively from the esophagus, in a quick visit. This gives clinicians the ability to detect disease before it progresses to cancer, all without the need for sedation. Lauren reported that fire departments could host esophageal precancer testing events allowing many firefighters to be tested quickly. Lauren reported that they are working with Medicare/Medicaid to set an approved pricing structure for the test and that some insurance companies will not cover the test until the Medicare/Medicaid approvals are in place. Lauren did not that some insurance companies are proactively covering the cost and that some larger fire departments have cover the current \$1,200 per test cost for their members. Lauren noted that some career and volunteer fire departments

have been working on grant applications to find the funds for the testing. Lauren provided handouts and her contact information. There was good discussion on how state legislation listing some cancers, though not esophageal, as being presumptive in the career fire service could be updated to add esophageal cancer and include the volunteer fire service.

### **Committee Reports**

**Executive Committee** – Chairman Howard Berchtold summarized the minutes from the meeting and reorganization of the Executive Committee held on January 3, 2025, and thanked the Pomona Vol. Fire Co. for hosting. Howard thanked the Executive Committee for reelecting him as Chairman and Lefty Clayton as Vice-Chairman. Howard thanked Sandy Walczak for her years serving as the Assistant Secretary-Treasurer and welcomed Clayton Tucker onboard as he assumes that role. Howard noted that the Memorial Service and the Firefighter I Graduation Ceremony, both held in January, were wonderful and well attended. The committee reviewed some ideas for future fundraising and received an update from Treasurer Jaime Mellon on the progress transferring primary banking from Bank of America to Parke Bank. Howard reported that the Executive Committee reviewed the 2025 Atlantic County Fire Academy Training Budget proposal, with a total of \$21,532, and the 2025 Atlantic County Fire Academy Training Capital Purchase proposal, with a total of \$8,960, for a new forcible entry prop, and they are recommending approval under new business. The next meeting of the Executive Committee is scheduled for March 7, 2025 in Cardiff.

**Atlantic County Fire Training Advisory Board** – Howard Berchtold reported that the next meeting of the fire training advisory board is scheduled for April 21, 2025 at the training center. Howard reported on the makeup of the board that includes two representatives from the Atlantic County Firefighters' Association, two representatives from the Executive Committee of the Atlantic County Firefighters' Association, two representatives from the Atlantic County Fire Chiefs' Association, two representatives from the Fire Instructors of the Atlantic County Firefighters' Association, and additional representation from Atlantic County including one of the Commissioners.

**Atlantic County Radio Communications** – Howard Berchtold summarized the current draft of the “Centralized Fire/EMS Dispatch Center Feasibility Study” from received from ADCOMM Engineering LLC. Howard noted that they have shifted more towards a primary recommendation for a centralized dispatch and 911 call center. There are currently fourteen dispatch centers with thirteen also being PSAPs (public safety answering point). There was discussion on the future impact of upgrading the county for Next Generation 911 (NG911) technology if thirteen call centers need to be updated as opposed to just one. There was much discussion on the recent Atlantic City fire that required assistance from eight or nine of the current dispatch centers to reach all the mutual aid and coverage resources and the time it took for that to happen. Also discussed was how the recent plane crashes out of our area provided impressive recordings of larger and better resourced dispatch operations. Howard reported that the working group will meet soon to review the updated draft and prepare for presenting the feasibility study to the County Executive and the Board of County Commissioners.

**Training** – Director of Training Brian Middleton reported that Firefighter I started on February 20<sup>th</sup> with forty students and that Firefighter II will start on March 10<sup>th</sup> with twelve students currently registered. Brian reported that six of the instructors will attend the NJDFS train-the-trainer course so that the academy can start teaching the RIC (rapid intervention crew) course. Brian noted that anyone currently holding any current RIC course certificate may challenge the RIC certification test instead of attending the new course and that the RIC Leader certification will require a Fire Officer certification. Brian reported that the academy is working with the Cape May Fire Academy to split the hosting of a career class between the two locations. Brian also reported that they are still looking at a combined Firefighter I/II course and if there would be interest in the much longer combined class.

**Fire Coordinator** – Fire Coordinator Clyde W. “Chip” Stockton Jr. reported that the Tender Task Force Alpha (TTF-A) trailer is being refurbished by the Port Republic Vol. Fire Company and will then be stationed at the 177<sup>th</sup> Air Guard Fire Department. Chip reported that the county restocked the foam trailer, and it is stationed at the SJTA Fire Department at the airport. Chip informed everyone that any old foam is not to be dropped off at the training center and that a plan for disposal of old foam is still pending from the state. Chip reported that they are looking to schedule a wildland urban interface drill in the spring and that some fire coordinators will be attending a 2026 FIFA World Cup planning meeting up north. It is likely that Stockton University will be one of many NJ sites hosting a FIFA World Cup event.

**NJ State Firemen's Assn.** – Executive Committeewoman Cindy Badger reviewed the upcoming local relief association reports due to be filed and reported that updated forms and applications are being posted to NJSFA.com when they are approved. Cindy reported on the “Know Your Line Number” memo distributed and posted online. Cindy provided an update on some pending NJ legislation of interest to the fire service. Cindy answered an inquiry about the healthcare reimbursement benefit reporting that new spousal assistance applications are on hold and that firefighter nursing home expenses are covered but not assisted living facility expenses, other than approved certified provider costs occurred while in assisted living.

**NJ Firemen's Home** – Oscar Dutch, Atlantic County Board Manager, reported that the NJ Governor signed off on the home's budget and that they are working on an updated survey of the property. Oscar provided a summary of the disciplinary action and expulsion of George Heflich Sr., Hudson County, from the Board of Managers. Oscar summarized an incident involving George, the public disciplinary process requested by George, and the ruling of an administrative law judge banning George from visiting the home for a period of three years and excluding George from ever serving on the Board of Managers again. Oscar also reported that the home is at capacity and a waiting list has been established.

**Atlantic County Fire Chiefs' Association** – Butch Kienzle reported that the next meeting of the Atlantic County Fire Chiefs' Association will be 8:00 PM on March 12, 2025 at the Buena Borough Fire Department.

**Harold J. "Whitey" Swartz Valor Awards and Service Recognition** – Billy Merola reported that three members will be recognized for fifty years of service.

**Finance** – Kim Feinstein reported that the committee met on January 30<sup>th</sup> to plan for the annual audit. The audit has not yet been scheduled. Kim reported that expense reimbursement forms are available, and copies of the NJ ST5 sales tax exemption are available for those making purchases on behalf of the association.

**Public Relations** – Kim Feinstein reported that the association trailer only has some lettering left to do and that he is looking for volunteers to represent the association at the ACUA Earth Day event on April 27<sup>th</sup>. This will include table and tent setup, fire safety information, and sales of 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary merchandise.

### **Communications**

There were no communications to report.

### **Deferred Business**

John Yochim inquired if the county was still proving identification card for the fire departments seeking them. No one had an answer and President Chuck Mackintosh reported that he will reach out to the county.

### **New Business**

Motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the 2025 Atlantic County Fire Academy Training Budget proposal, with a total of \$21,532, and the 2025 Atlantic County Fire Academy Training Capital Purchase proposal, with a total of \$8,960, as recommended by the Executive Committee.

### **Bills**

The bills, totaling \$1,975.61, were read by Treasurer Jaime C. Mellon. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to pay the bills from the proper funds.

Bills --- Chase Credit Card - \$1,492.87 (credit card) / NJ EFT - \$482.74 (Payroll Taxes)

### **Good of the Order**

Howard Berchtold reported on the excellent mental health presentation from Eric Nilson, from Greenbranch Recovery, at the January meeting of the Atlantic County Fire Chiefs' Association.

Thank you to the Longport Volunteer Fire Department for hosting the evening and providing refreshments.

### **Adjournment**

Benediction was conducted by Howard Berchtold. There being no further business at hand, the meeting was adjourned at 20:45. The next regular meeting is scheduled to be held at 19:30 on March 19, 2025 in Elwood.

Attested:

Robert A. Mellon, Secretary

**Fire Department/Company/Association Events**

Sun. Mar. 2, 2025	13:00	King Pin Bowling, EHT	Bowling with Heros to Benefit Bargaintown VFC Aux.
Spring TBD 2025	08:15	Newtonville VFC & Weymouth VFC	Wildland Urban Interface Drill
Sun. Apr. 6, 2025	12:00	Tropicana Casino	200 Club of Atlantic & Cape May Counties - Memorial Brunch
Sat. Apr. 12, 2025	09:00	NJFM, 4 Polhemustown Rd, Allentown, NJ	NJ Fire Museum 5th Annual Swap Meet (09:00 - 15:00)
Sat. Apr. 12, 2025	15:00	Oceanville VFC	Baked Ham or Fried Oyster Dinner
Sat. May 17, 2025	07:30	Atlantic City Int'l Airport	Triennial Emergency Preparedness Drill
Wed. Jun. 18, 2025	18:00	Smithville Inn, Smithville	Beef & Beer to Benefit Oceanville VFC
Fri. Aug. 8, 2025	18:00	Atlantic County 4H Fairgrounds, Rt. 50	ACFFA at Atlantic County 4H Fair w/ Fire Prevention Booth & Apparatus Display
Sat. Aug. 9, 2025	13:00	Atlantic County 4H Fairgrounds, Rt. 50	ACFFA at Atlantic County 4H Fair w/ Fire Prevention Booth & Apparatus Display
Tues. Aug. 12, 2025	19:00	Egg Harbor City VFD	New Jersey Firemen's Association Atlantic County Caucus
Sun. Aug. 17, 2025	10:00	Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center, Millville, NJ	Annual Fire Muster & Firefighters' Family Day presented by Glasstown Antique Fire Brigade
Fri. Sep. 12, 2025		Wildwood Convention Center	New Jersey Firemen's Association Annual Convention
Sat. Sep. 13, 2025		Wildwood Convention Center	New Jersey Firemen's Association Annual Convention
Sun. Sep. 28, 2025	09:00	NJFM, 4 Polhemustown Rd, Allentown, NJ	NJ Fire Museum Annual Open House (09:00 - 15:00)
Sat. Jun. 6, 2026		Germania VFC	Germania Vol. Fire Co. 100th Anniversary Celebration

**ACFFA Meetings****Atlantic County Firefighters' Association**

Wed. Mar. 19, 2025	19:30	Elwood VFC	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Apr. 16, 2025	19:30	Anthony "Tony" Canale Training Center (Host -Margate FD)	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting and Annual Valor Awards Presentation
Wed. May 21, 2025	19:30	Pomona VFC	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Jun. 18, 2025	19:30	Richland VFC	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Jul. 16, 2025	19:30	Linwood FD	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Aug. 20, 2025	19:30	Weymouth VFC	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Sep. 17, 2025	19:30	Hammonton VFD Sta. 1	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Oct. 15, 2025	19:30	Dorothy VFC	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Nov. 19, 2025	19:30	Somers Point VFD Sta. 2	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Dec. 17, 2025	19:30	Bargaintown VFC	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Jan. 21, 2026	19:30	Egg Harbor City VFD	Hosting ACFFA Annual Reorganization Meeting and Annual Memorial Service
Wed. Feb. 18, 2026	19:30	Longport VFD	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting

**Atlantic County Firefighters' Association - Executive Committee**

Fri. Mar. 7, 2025	19:30	Cardiff VFC	Hosting ACFFA Executive Committee Meeting
Fri. May 2, 2025	19:30	Longport VFD	Hosting ACFFA Executive Committee Meeting
Fri. Jul. 11, 2025	19:30	Somers Point VFD Sta. 1	Hosting ACFFA Executive Committee Meeting
Fri. Sep. 5, 2025	19:30	Absecon VFD	Hosting ACFFA Executive Committee Meeting
Fri. Nov. 7, 2025	19:30	South Egg Harbor VFC	Hosting ACFFA Executive Committee Meeting
Fri. Jan. 2, 2026	19:30	Pomona VFC	Hosting ACFFA Executive Committee Meeting (Annual Reorganization)

**Other Atlantic County Organization Meetings****Atlantic County Fire Training Advisory Board**

Mon. Apr. 21, 2025	19:00	Anthony "Tony" Canale Training Center	Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Training Advisory Board
Mon. Jul. 21, 2025	19:00	Anthony "Tony" Canale Training Center	Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Training Advisory Board
Mon. Oct. 20, 2025	19:00	Anthony "Tony" Canale Training Center	Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Training Advisory Board
Mon. Jan. 12, 2026	19:00	Anthony "Tony" Canale Training Center	Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Training Advisory Board

**Atlantic County Fire Chiefs' Association**

Wed. Mar. 12, 2025	20:00	Buena Borough VFD	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Wed. Apr. 9, 2025	20:00	Bargaintown VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Wed. May 14, 2025	20:00	Northfield VFD	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Wed. Jun. 11, 2025	20:00	Collings Lakes VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Wed. Jul. 9, 2025	20:00	East Vineland VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Wed. Aug. 13, 2025	20:00	Laureldale VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Tues. Sep. 10, 2025	20:00	Nesco VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Wed. Oct. 8, 2025	20:00	Estell Manor VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Wed. Nov. 12, 2025	20:00	Bayview VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Wed. Dec. 10, 2025	20:00	Sweetwater VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
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Tues. Jan. 27, 2026	20:00	Absecon VFD	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
February 2026-----	-----	-----	NO MEETING-----

**Atl. Co. Firefighters' Death Benefit Fund Assoc.**

Thurs. Jul. 24, 2025	19:30	Somers Point VFD Sta. 2	Hosting Meeting of Atl. Co. Firefighters' Death Benefit Fund Association
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Thurs. Jan. 22, 2026	19:30	Elwood VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atl. Co. Firefighters' Death Benefit Fund Association
Thurs. Jul. 23, 2026	19:30	Somers Point VFD Sta. 1	Hosting Meeting of Atl. Co. Firefighters' Death Benefit Fund Association