

Atlantic County Firefighters' Association

"In Union For The Safety Of All"



February 18, 2026

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Atlantic County Firefighters' Association was called to order at 19:30 on February 18, 2026 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.

In Attendance

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

Total Chief/Delegate Attendance – 37 of 172 Total Member Departments/Companies Represented – 21 of 43

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2026 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 \$104,104.75, as submitted by Treasurer Jaime C. Mellon and read by Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Clayton E. Tucker.

Bank of America / Bank of America / Parke Bank / Parke Bank / Parke Bank
Checking: \$6,265.14 / Savings: \$3,023.70 / Checking: \$61,116.67 / Money Market: \$1,043.39 / CD, matures 4/5/2026: \$32,655.85

Special Presentation

President Mackintosh welcomed and introduced Chuck Schaech from the Sandpipers Pipes and Drums of Atlantic County. Chuck currently serves as the Drum Major and served as a Captain at the airport fire department before retiring. Chuck reported that the band had close to forty members before Covid and now they average between fifteen and twenty. Chuck reported on the many local, and distant, events that the band has performed at, including the services for a line of duty death in Milmay (2018) and the annual memorial service at the National Fire Academy. Chuck reported on the name change of the band to be more inclusive of everyone who would like to join. Everyone is invited to join the band regardless of age, no need to be a first responder, and no requirement that new members already have musical skills. The band will help everyone find a place and learn. Chuck reported that he would appreciate invitations to local company meetings so that he may share information and seek new members for the band. Chuck shared a handout with information about the band. They are working on sustainable membership to keep the band moving forward and to provide the proper sendoff for those that we have lost.

Membership now includes iron workers, schoolteachers, and other professions along with first responders. Chuck shared that the band has had several road trips across the east coast for line of duty death funerals in cities such as Boston, Washington D.C., and Baltimore.

Installation of Officers for 2026

President Charles J. Mackintosh administered the oath of office for officers that were unable to attend in January.

President Mackintosh installed the following into office for the year 2026:

Executive Comm.	Eugene M. Sharpe
Sgt.-at-Arms	Wayne Dilks

Committee Reports

Executive Committee – Chairman Howard Berchtold summarized the minutes from the meeting and reorganization of the Executive Committee held on January 2, 2026, and thanked the Pomona Vol. Fire Co. for hosting. The committee received information via phone call from Dana McCullough, Vernan Advisors, on how their company can assist the association with credit card acceptance and fundraising utilizing a program package that they will discount for the association. Dana reviewed their program and how it works with credit card acceptance, which would only cost the association a very discounted flat rate of \$30 per month. Dana reported that there is no required commitment and the program may be canceled at any time. Howard noted that if the association goes with this program, then all Atlantic County fire departments/companies would also be able to utilize the program at the discounted \$30 per month rate, and any other referrals would be able to also get a discounted rate, though not as generous as the \$30 fire service discount. Howard reported that the Executive Committee is recommending that the association approve moving forward with the proposal and that a motion be presented under new business. Chip Stockton informed the Committee that Germania Vol. Fire Co. is planning a 100th anniversary celebration for June and Pomona Vol. Fire Co. is planning for a 100th anniversary celebration in October. Howard thanked the Executive Committee for reelecting him as Chairman, for the 31st year, and Lefty Clayton as Vice-Chairman. The committee reviewed the outstanding tuition report and Howard noted that only \$744 of 2025 tuition was still outstanding. The committee reviewed ongoing planning for fundraising and will also continue to seek health and wellness topics for future meetings. The next meeting of the Executive Committee is scheduled for March 13, 2026 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 20, 2026 at the training center.

Training – Howard Berchtold shared the report submitted by the Brian Middleton, Director of Training, who was unable to attend. The Firefighter I graduation ceremony held on January 5th went very well. The next Firefighter I class starts on February 19th with forty students. Firefighter II starts on March 9th and currently has ten students registered with room for more. The Rapid Intervention Crew (RIC) class runs in June and has seven students registered with only five spots still available. The old roof prop has been torn down. The new roof prop has arrived and will be installed soon. The instructor gear room project is ongoing, and the architect is working on bids for the drop ceiling in classroom four. New nozzles, approved under 2026 capital expenditures, have been received and the academy has also acquired twenty Harris XG-25 portable radios for more realistic radio training. A nine-week career class will start on April 13th.

Atlantic County Radio Communications – Howard Berchtold reported that John W. Risley Jr., Chairman Atlantic County Board of County Commissioners, reported at the January meeting, of the Atlantic County Firefighters' Association, that he expects the Board of County Commissioners to introduce and vote on a resolution to support of the concept of a central 9-1-1 call center with fire/EMS dispatch in Atlantic County at the February 17th meeting of the Atlantic County Board of County Commissioners. Howard reported that he was unable to attend that meeting and noted that the resolution was not on the posted agenda and that he will reach out for an update. Howard asked everyone to continue getting the message out to local leadership that the goal is to reduce call taking/dispatching delay for the benefit of public safety. Howard reported that the working group is requesting to meet with the Atlantic County Mayors Association and the Atlantic County League of Municipalities. Howard reviewed the email that he sent to the Atlantic County Mayors Association and noted that a similar request was sent to the Atlantic County League of Municipalities. "...As the Mayors are aware, the fire and EMS communities have been working closely with Atlantic County Government to once again explore implementing Countywide Central Dispatch as well as a centralized 911 Call Center. While such efforts have been attempted in the past, as most are aware, they were unsuccessful for various reasons. Since those efforts, it is now a fact that Atlantic County is the only county in the state that does not have some degree of Central Dispatch, many including all agencies, police, fire and EMS. Many Mayors and other officials attended the meeting hosted by the county in early December during which ADCOMM, the most respected company in the country for public safety communication, presented results of the feasibility study completed

for this effort. The major emphasis of the study was the now mandated requirement that all Dispatch Centers implement NG911. It also specifically centered on the fire and EMS aspects of operation as these services have, and continue to experience, critical challenges with increased delay in receiving timely 911 calls as well as significant delay in dispatching mutual aid resources. This of course is due to 13 different PSAPs, Public Safety Answer Points, Dispatch Centers currently operating in the county. It is noteworthy that this study did not include the law enforcement community to the extent of past studies, although most of the Centers are controlled by police departments. Obviously, we truly hope that centralization can be achieved and include all Public Safety. That said, we also know that the police community is not experiencing the level of critical, dangerous delay that fire and EMS do since they don't use mutual aid to the same degree. They do quite often, however, experience delays in receiving 911 calls in a timely fashion. We know that this is a complicated issue and presents numerous challenges for elected officials. Respectfully, representatives of fire and EMS would like to attend a meeting of the Mayors Association to explain the current challenges we are facing, frankly putting lives and property in increased danger. In doing so, we would certainly welcome questions and comments. While we understand the fiscal challenges, our focus will be on safety and our operations. We know that we are not financial experts..." Howard reported that the Mayors' Association is taking the request to attend their meeting under advisement.

Fire Marshal – Fire Marshal Dave Buzby reported that the 2026 schedule cards have been received, compliments of Atlantic County.

Fire Coordinator – Fire Coordinator Clyde W. "Chip" Stockton Jr. reported that Steve Adair is the new Chief at the Cologne Vol. Fire Company. Chip reported on the recent multiple-alarm fires, both in and out of county. Somers Point had a 3rd alarm fire on January 30th, mutual aid responded to a 2nd alarm fire in Tabernacle, Burlington County, on January 31st, Cologne had a 2nd alarm fire with a fatality on February 3rd, Oceanville has a multi-alarm fire on February 8th with Tender Task Force Alpha was requested, and Milmay had a 2nd alarm fire on February 9th. Chip reported that mutual aid updates have been completed with the addition of marine resources and that registered Atlantic County departments will be scheduled to turn over old firefighting foam to the state in March. Chip reported that the top two NJ DFS positions serve at the pleasure of the incumbent Governor and they are waiting to see what the new Governor will do.

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. Howard Berchtold inquired about the name change confusion with all local associations being reincorporated. Cindy reported that the use of "Firemen" in the name is being changed to "Firefighter" and all local associations will be reincorporated with the changes to bring all records up to date and create a uniform format.

Atlantic County Firefighters' Death Benefit Fund Assn. – Cindy Badger reported that the next meeting of the ACFDBFA will be 7:30 PM on February 26, 2026 at the Elwood Fire Company.

NJ Firemen's Home – Oscar Dutch, Atlantic County Board Manager, reported that a committee is working on determining the cost for getting all rooms in the home converted to single occupancy without losing any rooms. Oscar reported that only one female has been a guest of the home, though they do have two rooms designed for female occupants after an approximately \$50k donation to create them.

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 11, 2026 at the Buena Borough Fire Department.

Harold J. "Whitey" Swartz Valor Awards and Service Recognition – Billy Merola reported that the committee met prior to this meeting to finalize reviewing the nominations submitted and a report will be sent to association officers so that planning for the presentation in April may commence.

Fundraising – President Mackintosh reported no update on the golf tournament and Butch Kuenzle reported that Chris Kislow has some businesses lined up for the discount card and is working on finding additional businesses with recommendations welcome.

Communications

There were no communications to report.

Deferred Business

There was no deferred business to act upon.

New Business

Motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve working with Vernon Advisors for payment processing via WAVit by MiCamp with no commitment, cancel anytime, at \$30 per month, as recommended by the Executive Committee.

Bills

The bills, totaling \$13,673.68, were submitted by Treasurer Jaime C. Mellon and read by Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Clayton E. Tucker. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to pay the bills from the proper funds.

Bills --- Chase Credit Card - \$4,747.62 (credit card) / Fed Payroll - \$6,183.66 (payroll taxes) / Fed Unemployment - \$456.03 (payroll taxes) / NJ GIT - \$576.85 (payroll taxes) / NJ SUI - \$609.52 (payroll taxes) / David Dougherty - \$1,100.00 (semi-annual Accounting Services)

Good of the Order

Dennis Sharpe reported that county fire photographers have photos of almost all recent incidents and the chiefs may request copies.

Dennis Sharpe reported that Dorothy Volunteer Fire Company is scheduling a new apparatus housing for August.

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 18, 2026 in Weekstown.

Attested:

Robert A. Mellon, Secretary

Fire Department/Company/Association Events

Sun. Mar. 1, 2026	13:00	King Pin Lanes, EHT	4th Annual Bowling with Heroes, Bargaintown VFC (13:00 - 16:00) **Tickets MUST be purchased in advance**
Sat. Mar. 14, 2026	09:00	Range 129, Absecon	Shooting Fundraiser for Northfield VFC
Fri. Mar. 27, 2026	17:00	Hammonton VFC Sta. 2	14th Annual Firehouse Fish Fry Dinner
Sat. Apr. 11, 2026	15:00	Oceanville VFC	Baked Ham or Fried Oyster Dinner *DRIVE-THRU/TAKEOUT ONLY
Sat. May 9, 2026	15:30	Port Republic VFC	Roast Beef Dinner (15:30 - 19:30) *DRIVE THROUGH ONLY
Sat. Jun. 6, 2026		Germania VFC	Germania Vol. Fire Co. 100th Anniversary Celebration
Sun. Jun. 7, 2026	12:00	Dorothy VFC	69th Annual Chicken BBQ (12:00 - 18:00)
Wed. Jun. 10, 2026	18:00	Smithville Inn, Smithville	Beef & Beer to Benefit Oceanville VFC
Tues. Aug. 11, 2026	19:00	Egg Harbor City VFD	New Jersey Firemen's Association Atlantic County Caucus
Fri. Sep. 18, 2026		Wildwood Convention Center	New Jersey Firemen's Association Annual Convention
Sat. Sep. 19, 2026		Wildwood Convention Center	New Jersey Firemen's Association Annual Convention
Sat. Oct. 3, 2026		Pomona VFC	Pomona Vol. Fire Co. 100th Anniversary Celebration

ACFFA Meetings

Atlantic County Firefighters' Association

Wed. Mar. 18, 2026	19:30	Weekstown VFC	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Apr. 15, 2026	19:30	Anthony "Tony" Canale Training Center (Host -Margate FD)	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting and Annual Valor Awards Presentation
Wed. May 20, 2026	19:30	Bayview VFC	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Jun. 17, 2026	19:30	East Vineland VFC	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Jul. 15, 2026	19:30	Linwood FD	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Aug. 19, 2026	19:30	Cologne VFC	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Sep. 16, 2026	19:30	Hammonton VFD Sta. 2	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Oct. 21, 2026	19:30	Port Republic VFC	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Nov. 18, 2026	19:30	Somers Point VFD Sta. 1	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Dec. 16, 2026	19:30	Scullville VFC	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Jan. 20, 2027	19:30	Egg Harbor City VFD	Hosting ACFFA Annual Reorganization Meeting and Annual Memorial Service
Wed. Feb. 17, 2027	19:30	Longport VFD	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting

Atlantic County Firefighters' Association - Executive Committee

Fri. Mar. 13, 2026	19:30	Cardiff VFC	Hosting ACFFA Executive Committee Meeting
Fri. May 1, 2026	19:30	Longport VFD	Hosting ACFFA Executive Committee Meeting
Fri. Jul. 10, 2026	19:30	Somers Point VFD Sta. 1	Hosting ACFFA Executive Committee Meeting
Fri. Sep. 4, 2026	19:30	Absecon VFD	Hosting ACFFA Executive Committee Meeting
Fri. Oct. 30, 2026	19:30	South Egg Harbor VFC	Hosting ACFFA Executive Committee Meeting
Fri. Jan. 8, 2027	19:30	Pomona VFC	Hosting ACFFA Executive Committee Meeting (Annual Reorganization)

Other Atlantic County Organization Meetings

Atlantic County Fire Training Advisory Board

Mon. Apr. 20, 2026	19:00	Anthony "Tony" Canale Training Center	Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Training Advisory Board
Mon. Jul. 20, 2026	19:00	Anthony "Tony" Canale Training Center	Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Training Advisory Board
Mon. Oct. 19, 2026	19:00	Anthony "Tony" Canale Training Center	Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Training Advisory Board
Mon. Jan. 11, 2027	19:00	Anthony "Tony" Canale Training Center	Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Training Advisory Board

Atlantic County Fire Chiefs' Association

Wed. Mar. 11, 2026	20:00	Buena Borough VFD	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Wed. Apr. 8, 2026	20:00	Scullville VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Wed. May 13, 2026	20:00	Northfield VFD	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Wed. Jun. 10, 2026	20:00	Collings Lakes VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Wed. Jul. 8, 2026	20:00	East Vineland VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association

Wed. Aug. 12, 2026	20:00	Laureldale VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Tues. Sep. 9, 2026	20:00	Nesco VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Wed. Oct. 14, 2026	20:00	Estell Manor VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Tues. Nov. 10, 2026	20:00	Bayview VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Wed. Dec. 9, 2026	20:00	Sweetwater VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
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Tues. Jan. 26, 2027	20:00	Absecon VFD	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
February 2027-----	-----	-----	NO MEETING-----

Atl. Co. Firefighters' Death Benefit Fund Assoc.

Thurs. Feb. 26, 2026	19:30	Elwood VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atl. Co. Firefighters' Death Benefit Fund Association
Thurs. May 28, 2026	19:30	Bargaintown VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atl. Co. Firefighters' Death Benefit Fund Association
Thurs. Aug. 27, 2026	19:30	Somers Point VFD Sta. 1	Hosting Meeting of Atl. Co. Firefighters' Death Benefit Fund Association
Thurs. Nov. 19, 2026	19:30	***TBD***	Hosting Meeting of Atl. Co. Firefighters' Death Benefit Fund Association