

**ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY**

**VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION**

**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**



**As Amended January 7, 2022**

## **CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**

### **PREAMBLE**

We, the delegates of the Volunteer Fire Companies in Anne Arundel County, State of Maryland, in convention assembled, in order to have a more perfect organization, establish harmony, insure prosperity and success, obtain and compile statistics concerning the practical workings of various apparatus, cultivate, and promote the best interests of the Volunteer Firefighters of Anne Arundel County, do hereby adopt the following Constitution and Bylaws.

## **ARTICLE I**

### **Name of Organization and Membership Requirements**

Section 1. The name of the Association shall be The Anne Arundel County Volunteer Firefighters Association, Inc., hereinafter referred to as “the Association.”

Section 2. Active membership in the Association shall consist of those volunteer organizations in Anne Arundel County that are affiliated with the fire, rescue, EMS, &/or support services and attending six of the twelve previous meetings and are:

- a) Fire Companies in Anne Arundel County maintaining and operating a minimum of one emergency response vehicle.
- b) Fire Companies in Anne Arundel County operating as an Administrative Company.

Section 3. Associate membership in the Association shall consist of those volunteer organizations affiliated with the fire, rescue, or EMS services, but not meeting the requirements of Article I, Section 2 of these bylaws.

- a) Organizations designated as Associate Members by virtue of Article I, Section 3 shall have all privileges of regular members except the privilege to make motions, vote, or hold office.
- b) Associate members shall be required to pay dues.

Section 4. Application for membership in this Association may be presented at any regular meeting. Payment of first year's dues must accompany membership application payable through December 31st of current year. Upon request for membership, the application shall be referred to the Board of Directors for investigation. Upon completion of the investigation, the application shall be presented at the next regular meeting for vote. If the request for membership has been denied, the paid dues shall be refunded.

Section 5. The approval for membership in this Association shall in no way be constituted as a stepping stone toward receiving an appropriation from the County Government nor leverage on the Fire Advisory Board for approval and recommendation for such appropriation.

Section 6. Charter members shall maintain all rights and privileges (Grandfathered when they joined the Association). No charter members can be removed from the Association as long as the requirements of Article II, Section 1 and Article VII, Section 1 are met.

## **ARTICLE II**

### **Dues**

Section 1. Association dues notices shall be distributed by the Secretary to member companies by December 1st of each year and are payable from January 1st and no later than February 15th.

- a) Active membership dues shall be two hundred (\$200), per annum
- b) Associate membership dues shall be twenty-five (\$25), per annum.

Section 2. Failure by a member company to comply with provisions of Article II, Section 1 shall deprive the delinquent company and its members from participating in any activities or proceedings of the Association, to include Convention, until dues are paid and up to date.

Section 3. Any company that fails to meet the provisions of Article II, Section 1 and Article VII, Section 1 for two years in succession shall be removed from the roster of member companies of the Association and shall be required to submit a letter of application in order to participate in Association business.

## **ARTICLE III**

### **Officers Elected by the Association and their Duties**

Section 1. The elected officers of this Association shall be a President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Chaplain, Sergeant-at-Arms, and three (3) Trustees.

- a) The President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Chaplain, and Sergeant-at-Arms shall hold office for one year or until their successors are elected and installed.
- b) The three (3) Trustees shall each hold office for a term of three (3) years, with one Trustee's term expiring per year on a rotational basis.

Section 2. Any member in good standing of any active member volunteer company of this Association shall be eligible for office.

- a) A letter of endorsement, for nomination of candidates for office, must be received from the President or Board of Directors of the candidate's company at the July meeting, at which time it shall be read.
- b) All member companies of the Association shall be notified in writing (to include electronically) the names of candidates nominated for each office no more than 7 days following the July meeting.

Section 3. All officers shall be elected at the Annual Convention.

- a) It shall require a majority of the votes of the eligible Companies present to elect. Each eligible company shall be entitled to five (5) votes. The vote shall be by written ballot.
- b) In the event of no declared winner on the first ballot where there are more than two (2) candidates, the candidate(s) receiving the lowest number of votes shall be dropped after the first ballot. A subsequent ballot shall be cast of the two (2) candidates who have received the highest number of votes from the first ballot.

Section 4. Officers elected at the Annual Convention will be sworn in and assume office on the night of the election.

Section 5. Any officer who is absent from two (2) successive meetings without good and sufficient reason shall forfeit his/her office. The presiding officer shall

declare the office vacated and immediately proceed with the election of a successor for the expired term.

Section 6. Any vacancies in the elected officers shall be temporarily appointed by the President and shall serve until relieved by a duly elected officer. Nominations, along with a letter of endorsement from the candidate's Company President or Board of Directors, will be accepted from the floor at the next general membership meeting and voted on at the following general membership meeting. If nomination is unopposed, the position will be filled by acclamation.

Section 7. The President shall preside at all meetings, appoint all committees not otherwise provided for, sign all orders on the treasury for payment of monies, require the Treasurer to account for the disbursement of all funds, assure a written report is presented at the Annual Convention of expenses for the year, and shall perform other duties as may be required by the Association. He/she shall assure that all officers perform duties as may be required as stated in these Bylaws.

Section 8. The 1st Vice President shall assume the duties of the President in his/her absence and shall perform other duties as assigned by the President. He/she is the Director of the Administration committees as designated under Article V, Section 2. He/she there shall ensure reports are presented as referenced under Article V, Section 3.

Section 9. The 2nd Vice President shall assume the duties of the President and the 1st Vice President in their absence. He/she shall perform other duties as assigned by the President. He/she is the Director of the Operational committees as designated under Article V, Section 2. He/she thereby shall ensure reports are presented as referenced under Article V, Section 3.

Section 10. The Secretary shall keep a correct record of all meetings and conventions of the Association. He/she shall receive and answer all communications pertaining to the Association and keep correct files of same. The Secretary shall mail (to include electronically) notices of meetings to all Companies, Officers of the Association, and the Past Presidents one week before said meeting. He/she shall ensure that all business of the Association is handled in an expeditious manner and that proper and correct minutes and correspondence are available when called for by the Association or the presiding officer. The Secretary shall be reimbursed for expenditures necessary for the performance of the duties of the office. It shall be the duty of the Secretary to give a report of the membership status of the Association and supply the Sergeant-at-Arms with a copy of same at

the first meeting in March, to determine the eligibility of companies to participate in the proceedings of the meeting.

Section 11. The Financial Secretary shall fulfill the duties of the Secretary in his/her absence. The Financial Secretary shall collect all monies due the Association, turning same over to the Treasurer, with a copy of the receipts from the voucher book. He/she may be called upon to perform such duties as required to assist with the duties assigned to the Office of Secretary. The Financial Secretary shall be reimbursed for expenditures necessary for the performance of the duties of office.

Section 12. The Treasurer shall receive from the Financial Secretary all monies of the Association. He/she shall pay all purchase orders signed by the President and perform such other duties pertaining to the office as may be required.

- a) The Treasurer shall make a monthly report at each general membership meeting of the Association, as well as an Annual report to the Association at each Convention, giving an itemized statement of receipts and disbursements accompanied by vouchers and orders thereof.
- b) He/she shall make other reports from time to time to the Board of Directors as may be required of him/her.
- c) The Treasurer shall be bonded at the expense of the Association.
- d) In addition to the Treasurer, the President, 1st Vice President, and 2nd Vice President may sign checks authorized for payment by the Board of Directors and shall be bonded.

Section 13. The Chaplain shall open and close all meetings with a prayer, and perform such other duties as may be required of him/her.

Section 14. The Sergeant-at-Arms shall perform such duties as may be directed by the presiding officer and other duties as assigned. He/she shall track all member companies for eligibility to take part in Association business.

Section 15. The Board of Trustees shall perform the following:

- a) Hold in trust all physical property of the Association.
- b) During the month of April, the Board of Trustees, acting as the Auditing Committee, shall audit the books of the Secretary, Financial Secretary and Treasurer and report on the same at the May meeting.
- c) The Trustees shall be responsible for ordering the Convention badges and the Association awards presented at the Annual Convention.



- d) The Board of Trustees shall be the administrator over the Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP).

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **Board of Directors**

Section 1. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall be the elected officers and the immediate Past President.

- a. The President of the Association shall serve as the Chairperson of the Board.
- b. The immediate Past President shall serve as an ex-officio member of the Board of Directors for one year following their term. The immediate Past President shall not be eligible to make motions or vote on the Board of Directors.

Section 2. The Board of Directors shall hold meetings as required during the year, to consider business referred to them, and to establish the strategic goals for the operations of the Association.

Section 3. During the month of October, the Board of Directors shall develop an operating budget for the upcoming fiscal year of the Association, to begin on January 1st and ending on December 31st. The operating budget shall be presented to the general membership of the Association at the November general membership meeting for approval.

Section 4. During the month of April, the Board of Directors shall develop an operational budget for the County funds. The funds shall be budgeted from July 1st to June 30th of the following year.

Section 5. In the event of a vacancy in the position of Volunteer Coordinator, the Board of Directors shall recommend to the County Fire Chief/Administrator, the name(s) of a person or persons to be considered to fill the vacancy.

Section 6. In the event the Association membership votes to dissolve itself, the Board of Directors shall assume the management of the Association assets. The Board of Directors shall transact only such other business as is specifically and solely allocated to a Board of Directors by Maryland Corporate law for dissolution.

Section 7. A quorum for transaction of business at Board meetings shall be at least six (6) members.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **Standing Committees and Duties**

Section 1. The President at the regular meeting following the Annual convention shall appoint a chairperson and members of the standing committees. Appointed members must be members in good standing of an active /associate member company. The President is an ex-officio member of all committees.

- a) Each standing committee shall be composed of at least 4 members selected one from each battalion in the county unless the President deems that the duties of the committee require fewer members, or unless fewer members come forth for appointment.
- b) All committee members shall serve for a term of one year or until their successors are appointed.
- c) Three (3) members of standing committees shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of transacting committee business unless fewer members have been appointed to a particular committee. In such cases, the committee chairperson shall determine the required number.
- d) The failure of any committee member to participate and perform the prescribed duties of the committee of which he/she is a member will be just cause for the President to remove and replace the committee member unless extenuating circumstances exist.
- e) The President of the Association shall be empowered to appoint other committees, subcommittees, and workgroups.

Section 2. The Administrative and Operational Standing Committees of the Association shall be designated as follows:

- a) Administrative: Constitution and Bylaws, Convention Book, Outstanding Member of the Quarter, Hall of Fame, Legislative, Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP), Public Relations, Ways and Means, Website, and 508 Funds. The 1st Vice President shall be responsible for overseeing the Administrative Committees and is an ex-officio member of each Administrative Committee.
- b) Operational: Chief's, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Fire & Life Safety, Recruitment and Retention, Rennfest, and Training. The 2nd Vice President shall be responsible for overseeing the Operational Committees and is an ex-officio member of each Operational Committee.

Section 3. All Committees shall report verbally to the general membership at the regular monthly Association meetings, provide in writing to the appropriate Vice President, and provide a property inventory at the Convention meeting.

Section 4. The duties of the Administrative and Operational Committees are as follows:

a) Administrative

1) Constitution and Bylaws Committee – shall receive and review all proposed amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws and make recommendations to the membership, prior to voting, providing the proposed amendments have been submitted in writing, in accordance with Article IX. In addition, the committee shall review the Constitution and Bylaws on an annual basis to ensure the operations of the Association are in compliance with the Constitution and Bylaws.

2) Convention Book Committee – shall be responsible for the gathering of data and the publication of the Convention Book distributed at the Annual Convention of the Association. The committee shall coordinate with the Association and Ladies Auxiliary officers for the dedication of the book and memorial page(s), etc. The committee shall also coordinate with the host company for host company data, photographs, and a schedule of Convention events.

3) Outstanding Member of the Quarter – shall be responsible for establishing rules and procedures for the Anne Arundel County Volunteer Firefighter's Association Outstanding Member of the Quarter Award. The committee shall receive nominations in accordance with the publicized rules and procedures and conduct meetings for the selection of the awardee(s).

4) Hall of Fame Committee – The Hall of Fame Committee shall be responsible for establishing rules and procedures for the Anne Arundel County Volunteer Firefighters Association Hall of Fame Award. The committee shall receive nominations in accordance with the published rules and procedures and conduct meetings for the selection of the inductees to the Hall of Fame. The induction of the new members to the Hall of Fame shall be conducted at the Annual Convention of the Association.

5) Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP) –The LOSAP committee shall assist the Board of Trustees in the administration of the volunteer Length of Service Award Program. Members of the LOSAP committee shall ensure that each member company from their respective district submits all

required forms and certifications to the Board of Trustees in a timely manner. (a) The Working Group for the LOSAP Committee is responsible for reviewing the benefits provided under the LOSAP. (b) They shall also investigate ways to improve the benefits provided under the program.

6) Legislative Committee – shall monitor the proposal and passage of legislation that may be of interest and benefit to the Association. The Chairman of the Legislative Committee shall report regularly and seek advice from the officers and general membership on the positions of the Association on proposed legislation.

7) Marketing Committee – shall promote awareness of the association to the public via print, broadcast, social media etc. The committee shall plan and market outreach events promoting the value and benefits of the volunteer fire service in Anne Arundel County.

8) Public Relations Committee – shall compile information of interest to the fire and rescue companies and the public, making this information generally known throughout Anne Arundel County by whatever method that can be used to the best interest of the Association.

9) Ways & Means Committee - shall devise and manage fund-raising activities on behalf of the Association, primarily to provide supplemental financial support for the operation of the Association.

10) Website Committee – shall be responsible for establishing and updating the Association website. They shall also investigate ways to improve the website.

11) 508 Committee – shall receive and review requests for the 508 funds as provided by the State of Maryland. After review of applications they shall make recommendations to the Board of Directors as to the distribution of funds.

b) Operational

1) Chief's Committee – shall consist of one voting representative from each active/associate member company in good standing. This representative shall be the only person eligible to make motions or vote on behalf of the company being represented. During the month of January, each active/associate member company shall designate a primary and alternate representative to serve on the Chief's Committee. Representatives shall be limited to the Chief Officer or senior company officer as elected or appointed by their respective company. The Chief's Committee shall be responsible for overseeing the activities of the Training and Emergency Medical Services

(EMS) Committees. The chairperson of each of these committees shall make a written report to the Chief's Committee as deemed necessary by the chairperson of the Chief's Committee. The Chief's Committee shall provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and dialogue among the Chief Officers or senior volunteer company officers in areas relative to the operational functions of the volunteer fire service.

2) Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Committee – shall represent the EMS services of the member companies in formulating standards to comply with the regulations as deemed necessary under the emergency medical services of the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services System. The EMS Committee shall also cooperate with the Chief's Committee, Training Committee and the EMS Division of the Anne Arundel County Fire Department to formulate training programs for the betterment of emergency care provided to the citizens of Anne Arundel County.

3) Fire Prevention & Life Safety Committee – shall develop and promote a year-round fire prevention and life safety program. The program shall be planned and promoted to inform the citizens of Anne Arundel County of all age groups. In addition, the committee shall be responsible for scheduling, training and cleaning of the AACVFA fire prevention trailer.

4) Recruitment & Retention Committee – shall develop and promote a year-round program for the recruitment, retention, and orientation of new volunteer members for member companies of the Anne Arundel County Volunteer Firefighters Association.

5) RennFest Committee – shall be responsible for recruiting and scheduling EMS personnel from active member volunteer companies of this Association to provide medical services at the Maryland Renaissance Fair held annually in Anne Arundel County MD. He/she shall be responsible for obtaining and maintaining the necessary supplies and equipment for effective operations.

6) Training Committee – shall promote programs responsive to the needs of the volunteer fire service in Anne Arundel County. This training program shall be developed in cooperation with the Chief's Committee, EMS Committee, the Training Division of the Anne Arundel County Fire Department, Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services System (MIEMSS) and the Maryland Fire Rescue Institute (MFRI), University of Maryland.



## **ARTICLE VI**

### **Conventions and Meetings**

Section 1. The Annual Convention shall be held during the week that contains Labor Day, at such place as shall be selected by the member companies of the Association. The Association shall have the authority to change the date of the Convention.

Section 2. Regular meetings of the Association shall be held on the first Friday of each month, at such place as shall be selected by the President. The President shall be authorized to change the regular meeting night under the following conditions:

- a) when the meeting night occurs on a major holiday
- b) when the meeting is postponed due to severe weather
- c) when the meeting night conflicts with the host company's ability to handle the meeting

Section 3. The President may call special meetings. The President is obligated to call a special meeting upon written request of five (5) member companies. Said meeting shall require a minimum of three (3) days advance notice of which shall be written (to include electronically) or verbal.



## **ARTICLE VII**

### **Representation, Quorum, and Vote**

Section 1. During the month of January, each active/associate member company of the association shall appoint up to five (5) delegates and up to five (5) alternates to the Association. These delegates and alternates shall serve for one year or until their successors are appointed. Member companies who fail to submit a list of delegates and alternates by February 15th shall have their voting privileges suspended until a certified list is provided.

Section 2. A quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting shall consist of at least fifty-one percent (51%) of the member companies in good standing represented by delegates or alternates as listed on the current company credentials.

Section 3. Voting on all motions, including the election of officers, shall be by Company and each Member Company shall be entitled to five (5) votes, except where otherwise specified. The Delegates or Alternates shall cast the votes. Questions, when the total votes cast are less than the majority of the member companies present and in good standing in the Association, shall fail for lack of a voting quorum.

Section 4. To be a valid motion for consideration by the Association, a member company other than the company whose member made the motion, must second the motion.

Section 5. Elected officials of the Association are eligible to make motions.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **Pledge of Protection**

Section 1. The member fire companies of this Association pledge protection for each other against amalgamation of Fire/Rescue Companies with organization other than those organized to provide EMS, Fire and Rescue Services, and from unfair attacks from any other source.

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **Bylaw Amendment Procedure**

Section 1. Any member company, officer, or committee of this Association may submit amendments or revisions. These amendments or revisions must be submitted in writing to the Secretary for assignment to the Bylaws committee. A motion shall be made to table proposed amendment until the next meeting.

Section 2. The proposed amendment shall be presented at the next two (2) general membership meetings by the Bylaws committee and voted on at the third general membership meeting by a two-thirds vote of the eligible companies present and voting.

## **ARTICLE X**

### **Rules of Order**

Section 1. The presiding officer of a meeting shall not vote unless he/she is a voting representative of a company. All voting shall be by voice vote with roll call when called for. Election of officers shall be by written ballot.

Section 2. The President shall decide all questions of order, without debate, subject to an appeal of the meeting. In case of an appeal, the point of order may be debated.

Section 3. A member called to order shall immediately take his/her seat until point of order is decided, when he/she shall again be entitled to the floor. Each member while speaking shall not use personal or inappropriate attacks or language.

Section 4. Roberts Rules of Order shall be the Associations final authority of procedure on parliamentary law not covered by this Constitution and bylaws.

## **ARTICLE XI**

### **Fire Advisory Board**

Section 1. The Anne Arundel County Volunteer Firefighters Association shall elect three (3) members to serve on the Fire Advisory Board. The membership and responsibilities of the Fire Advisory Board is specified in the Anne Arundel County Charter and shall report as defined by the Association President. This article of the Constitution and bylaws provides the specific requirements for the volunteer fire service appointments to the Fire Advisory Board.

Section 2. The representatives to the Fire Advisory Board shall hold a term of appointment equal to the term of office of the County Executive.

Section 3. Any candidate for the Fire Advisory Board shall have NFPA Firefighter I certification and ten (10) years of active fire service or NFPA Firefighter II certification and five (5) years active service.

Section 4. There shall not be any more than one member from any Councilmatic District on the Fire Advisory Board at any one time. The address of the Station is used to determine the Councilmatic district.

Section 5. Candidates for the Fire Advisory Board must file with this Association a letter of recommendation and qualification from their respective company. Letters of recommendation and qualification from each candidate's fire company must be submitted at or before the regularly general membership meeting in October.

Section 6. The election shall be held at the regular monthly meeting in December. The three (3) candidates receiving the majority of the votes cast will be elected. In the event there is more than one candidate from a single Councilmatic District, there shall be a runoff election conducted prior to the regular meeting in December.

Section 7. If a vacancy occurs on the Fire Advisory Board between the times scheduled for an election, an announcement shall be made of eligible Districts and Companies at the first meeting of the Association following the vacancy. Nominations will be held the next month and the election will be held the following month. The election procedure outlined in Article XI, Sections 3 through 6, will be followed in selecting the replacement.

Section 8. Replacements for vacancies occurring between elections shall take over the duties of said position at the first meeting of the Board following their election. Members so elected shall serve only the remainder of the term of the member(s) being replaced.

Section 9. No members shall be allowed to serve more than two (2) consecutive terms.

Section 10. Volunteer representatives of the Fire Advisory Board must attend at least nine (9) meetings of the Fire Advisory Board each year unless a bonafide excuse is presented and accepted by the Association. Any member failing to comply will be subject to removal and the Association will declare his/her position vacant.

Section 11. At least one Volunteer representative of the Fire Advisory Board shall attend the Monthly AACVFA Board of Directors meeting to provide a report of activities.

## **ORDER OF BUSINESS**

### **Regular Meetings**

1. Call to Order
2. Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance
3. Welcome by Host Company
4. Recess for dinner (if applicable)
5. Roll Call, Introduction of Past Presidents and Guests
6. Reading of the Minutes
7. Reports of Officers & Committees
8. Report of Others (County Fire Chief, MSFA, MFCA, etc.)
9. Reading of Communications
10. Unfinished Business
11. New Business
12. Receipts and Expenses
13. Good of the Association
14. Place of Next Meeting
15. Benediction
16. Adjournment

## **Annual Convention**

1. Call to Order
2. Invocation
3. Presentation of Colors
4. Pledge of Allegiance
5. Welcome by the Host Company
6. Convention Book Dedication
7. Hall of Fame Awards
8. Trustee Awards
9. Recess for the Meal
10. Firefighters and Ladies Auxiliary part for separate meetings
11. Roll Call & Introduction of Past Presidents
12. Introduction of & Comments from Guests
13. Nominations of Officers
14. Recess (15 minutes) for Caucus (if necessary)
15. Election of Officers
16. Firefighters and Ladies Auxiliary reconvene together
17. Installation of Officers
18. Good of the Association
19. Place of Next Meetings
20. Benediction
21. Adjournment