



STATE OF ARKANSAS FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES BOARD

September 9, 2026 Minutes



Meeting held at the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management in North Little Rock, Arkansas.

Members Present:

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| ○ Michael Cossey, APFF | ○ Keith Hillman, ARVFA | ○ Brandon Taylor, ASFFA |
| ○ Travis Dover, APFF | ● John Hogue, State Fire Marshal | ● Grant Warner, AFTA |
| ○ Ben Hammond, AFMA (<i>Virtual</i>) | ○ Kathryn Mahan-Hooten, AFD (<i>Virtual</i>) | ○ Michael Willhite, ASFFA (<i>Virtual</i>) |
| ○ Brad Hardin, AAFC | ○ Mark McCollum, AAFC | ○ Shane Wood, AAFC (<i>Virtual</i>) |
| ○ Bo Higginbotham, ASFFA | ○ Brad Moore, ASFFA | |

Members Absent:

- | | | |
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| ○ Scott Baltz, ARVFA | ● A.J. Gary, ADEM | ○ Vacant Position, APFF |
| ○ Brian Dunavan, AAFC | ○ Marty Hamrick, APFF | ○ Jason Wills, AFMA |

Others Present:

- | | |
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| ○ Louis Eckelhoff, State Fire Service Coordinator | ● <i>Denotes ex officio members</i> |
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Meeting called to order by Chairman Brad Hardin at 10:09 am.

Previous Minutes

Keith Hillman noted that the June 3 minutes incorrectly showed him as absent. Motion to approve June 3 minutes as amended was made by Brandon Taylor, seconded by Brad Moore and passed unanimously.

A motion to approve the minutes for the July 22 & July 29 special meetings was made by Brad Moore, seconded by Keith Hillman and passed unanimously.

Arkansas Division of Emergency Management Report:

State Fire Marshal John Hogue reported that the state had recorded 38 fire fatalities so far this year. Thirty-four of the deaths were the result of residential fires. Additionally, there has been one fireworks-related fatality. To date, \$78,775 has been collected in fireworks permit fees. Work continues on updating the State Fire Marshal's website. The office is also working on a spreadsheet to track fire fatalities, whether the Arkansas State Police was requested & and whether ASP responded. Work also continues on the update to the state fire code, including the code governing fireworks, which is based on the 2006 edition of NFPA 1123.

Louis Eckelhoff, State Fire Service Coordinator, reported that he has received 870 Act 833 applications with 752 certified so far. The Department of Finance and Administration has distributed \$4,807,684. No distributions have been made since June as the DFA has been working to update vendor bank account information. The next distribution is expected in September.

Arkansas Department of Agriculture Report:

Kathryn Mahan-Hooten, Rural Fire Protection Administrator, presented her report on property and equipment acquired from federal surplus and distributed to fire departments in the state.

During the period of June 2026 through August 2026, the division received 87 warehouse items valued at \$16,516.24. Items received included tarps and field packs. The division received \$409,378 worth of large equipment, which included two truck tractors and 10 generators. Equipment distributed to fire departments included one brush truck, 26 generator sets, one cargo trailer, one pumper fire truck, and a 2002 Ford F-350. The value of all property distributed was \$589,101.33.

During that same period, the Forestry Division conducted 19 wildland training courses with 338 students in attendance from 131 fire departments. Five interest-free revolving fund loans totaling \$54,293.51 were provided to five fire departments. Two refurbishment grants to cover repairs and refurbishment costs of FFP and FEPP equipment going out to fire departments were issued for \$19,867.33. Five state contract sales of three water skid units and two foam skid units were made totaling \$81,360. Six RFP state grants were issued totaling \$15,556.19. The 2026 Rural Fire Show will be held on Saturday, October 3 at the Conway Expo Center.

The total assistance provided by the Rural Fire Protection program to fire departments across the state during this time was \$695,334.60.

Arkansas Fire Training Academy Report:

Arkansas Fire Training Academy Director Grant Warner provided a report on items of interest at the academy. From January 1 through August 31 of this year, 11,141 firefighters have registered for courses, and 9,402 firefighters have completed courses totaling 26,944 hours in 1,258 classes, with a total of 2,847 IFSAC seals issued.

Director Warner reported that the academy continues to experience problems with the elevator in the dormitory. After an apparent lightning strike, a \$15,000 control board was damaged. The board is no longer being manufactured, which is causing additional delays in the repair. Additionally, two air-conditioning units in the dormitory went down, causing damage to the first floor that required the flooring to be removed. The repair cost was \$12,000. If the flooring is replaced, there will be an additional cost.

Director Warner said he would be seeking input from the Training Committee regarding curriculum for a Fireground Support Person, a role recently created in NFPA 1010 for personnel who are not Firefighter I certified but assist departments in non-hazardous areas.

Committee Reports:

FIRE PREVENTION COMMITTEE – Bed Hammond reported that the Fire Prevention Committee will soon meet to review pending grant applications. Additionally, they will work to update the grant application and two-year review form. There is also a need to make the grant rules easier to locate on the website. Louis Eckelhoff reported that he had approximately 1,100 smoke detectors on hand, with authorization to spend \$10,000 to obtain more.

FIREFIGHTER CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE – Michael Cossey reviewed the proposed Board rule that was developed by the committee during its meeting earlier this summer. This proposal will be forwarded to the Board's new Assistant Attorney General, when appointed, for review and guidance in the promulgation process.

ACT 833 COMMITTEE – Bo Higginbotham reported that the committee has not met recently. The Board discussed the need to delay the grant program while waiting for the pending Board rule that would establish ISO Class 8 as the minimum standard for the Act 833 program.

TRAINING COMMITTEE – Travis Dover discussed the recent request by the Arkansas Water Safety & Emergency Training Foundation for Act 833 approval for instructor-led training courses. Members of the Board were requested to submit any questions they have about the training or curriculum to Louis Eckelhoff for follow-up. The training committee will meet virtually on Tuesday, October 13 at 10 am to discuss the curriculum for Support Person as included in NFPA 1010.

Unfinished Business:

FIRE DEPARTMENT CLASSIFICATION & CERTIFICATION – Chairman Hardin reported that the draft Board rule for the classification and certification of fire departments was still undergoing review by the Governor's Office. It will be requested that ADEM Director AJ Gary inquire as to the status of the draft in an effort to ensure that it can be reviewed and approved by January 1, 2027, so that it can be implemented on January 1, 2028.

Adjournment:

Brad Moore made a motion to adjourn, which passed by unanimous consent at 11:22 AM.