

By-Laws of the New Jersey and New York Volunteer Firemen's Association, Inc.

PREAMBLE

Article One - Name and Purpose

Section 1 - It is recognized by the volunteer fire companies of Bergen County, New Jersey and Rockland County, New York that the greater efficiency in fire suppression and prevention in these counties with an attendant benefit to the fire protection of individual communities can be gained by joining in an association of mutual need, benefit, and interest. Such association provides the member companies with support from their neighbors in the event of a major fire and enables them to determine the availability of specialized equipment with the two counties.

As well, the association of these companies allows for the promotion of fire safety within Bergen and Rockland Counties, the ability to provide training to members of the fire community and to disseminate information to benefit the health and safety of not only member companies, but the public as well. Finally, the association of companies presents the ability to provide scholarships, assistance to individual members, and to the victims of fire and disaster throughout Bergen and Rockland Counties.

Section 2 - The name of this organization is the "New Jersey and New York Volunteer Firemen's Association, Inc", herein after referred to as the NJ/NYVFA.

Article Two - Membership

The membership of the NJ/NYVFA shall be as follows:

Section 1 - Organization Members

- 1. Any volunteer fire company, department, or recognized and equipped Rescue Squad in Bergen and Rockland Counties shall be eligible for organizational membership.**
- 2. Any volunteer fire company or department or recognized and equipped Rescue Squad from a county of New Jersey or New York other than Bergen or Rockland shall be eligible for organizational membership provided that a majority of the Board of Trustees of the NJ/NYVFA present and voting at a regular Board of Trustees meeting approve the application in addition to the Membership Committee approval required herein.**
- 3. Three (3) delegates and three (3) alternates, elected by that Organizational Member yearly, shall represent each company, department or squad who is an Organizational Member.**
- 4. A two-company department shall be represented by six (6) delegates and six (6) alternates, and a department of three or more companies shall be represented by nine (9) delegates and nine (9) alternates, designated annually.**
- 5. Each delegate or alternate must be issued proper credentials certifying their position, signed by the commanding officer or President of their organization, filed with the Secretary of this Association on or before May 31 of each year to entitle these delegates and alternates to be seated at the NJ/NYVFA's annual convention.**

Section 2 - Personal Members - Any of the following persons shall be eligible for personal membership:

- 1. Any person who has served one (1) term as a delegate to the NJ/NYVFA.**
- 2. Any firefighter or rescue squad member in good standing may apply for Personal Membership by filling out an application, which shall be reviewed by the Membership Committee.**
- 3. Each Personal Member shall be entitled to participate in the proceedings of the annual convention and in all meetings of the NJ/NYVFA, provided that Member's dues payments are current.**

Section 3 - Life Members

- 1. All Past Presidents of this Association who have served two consecutive terms shall be Life Members without further payment of dues.**
- 2. Personal Members who have been in good standing for a period of twenty (20) years or more shall be granted Life Membership without further payment of dues.**
- 3. Time served as an organizational delegate or alternate only shall not accrue toward Life Membership.**

Section 4 - Process for Membership

- 1. Any organization or personal member must apply through an application furnished by the NJ/NYVFA.**
- 2. Applications must be made in writing and must be accompanied by a payment of one (1) year's dues to the NJ/NYVFA.**
- 3. All applications will be reviewed by a Membership Committee who will either approve or deny the application.**
- 4. All applications approved by the Membership Committee will be presented at a regular meeting and accepted or rejected by a majority vote of those Members present at that meeting.**

Article Three - Officers

Section 1 - NJ/NYVFA Officers and Specific Duties

- 1. President**
 - A. The President shall:**
 - 1) Preside at all meetings, and at the annual convention.**
 - 2) Appoint all committees.**
 - 3) Sign orders on the advice of the Treasurers for the payment of monies for the NJ/NYVFA after approval of the Board of Trustees.**
 - 4) Prepare and deliver an Annual Report to the Membership.**
 - 5) Call meetings of the Board of Trustees.**
 - 6) Perform other duties as may be required of the President by the NJ/NYVFA.**
- 2. First Vice President**
 - A. The First Vice President shall:**
 - 1) Function as the President of the NJ/NYVFA in the event of the death, resignation, inability, or prolonged absence of the President to act upon his duties. This will be with the approval of the Board of Trustees.**
- 3. Second Vice President**
 - A. The Second Vice President shall:**
 - 1) Function as the President of the NJ/NYVFA in the event the First Vice President is unable or unwilling to perform the duties ascribed to his position at any time.**

4. Secretary

A. The Secretary shall:

- 1) Keep a complete record of the proceedings of all meetings and conventions of the NJ/NYVFA.**
- 2) Keep a complete record of the proceedings of any committee whenever requested to do so by that committee or by the Board of Trustees.**
- 3) Attend meetings of the Board and keep a record of all of their proceedings.**
- 4) Receive, file, and answer all communications pertaining to the business of the NJ/NYVFA and keep a record thereof.**
- 5) Make an annual report to the NJNYVFA and reports on a regular basis to the President.**

5. Assistant Secretary

A. The Assistant Secretary shall:

- 1) Give written notice to all delegates and Members as to the time and place of each meeting and the annual convention.**
- 2) In the absence of the Secretary, shall perform those duties outlined for the Secretary.**

6. Financial Secretary

A. The Financial Secretary shall:

- 1) Collect all dues and pay the same to the Treasurer, taking the receipts of such.**
- 2) Keep a complete roll of paid and unpaid dues for all Members.**
- 3) Be Bonded in an amount to be approved by the Board of Trustees, and said bond be paid by the NJ/NYVFA and shall be placed in the safe deposit box of the NJ/NYVFA;**
- 4) Prior to the annual convention, prepare a roll of eligible delegates and Members.**
- 5) Issue suitable membership cards to all delegates and classes of membership.**
- 6) Make and keep a correct roll of all members of the NJ/NYVFA, which contains the names of the delegates and alternates of the Organization Members, Personal Members, and Life Members.**

7. Treasurer

- A. The Treasurer shall:**
- 1) Safely keep all monies and other property belonging to the NJ/NYVFA, and be responsible, therefore.**
 - 2) Pay out monies by order and authority given to him by the NJ/NYVFA or the Board of Trustees.**
 - 3) Make a Treasurer's report at each meeting of the NJ/NYVFA, providing an itemized statement of receipts and disbursements, along with the vouchers of each.**
 - 4) Make all payments by check signed by the Treasurer and co-signed by the President.**
 - 5) Be Bonded in an amount to be approved by the Board of Trustees, and said bond be paid by the NJ/NYVFA and shall be placed in the safe deposit box of the NJ/NYVFA.**

8. Assistant Treasurer

- A. The Assistant Treasurer shall:**
- 1) Perform any of the duties of the Treasurer when called upon to do so by the NJ/NYVFA or the Board of Trustees.**
 - 2) Be Bonded in an amount to be approved by the Board of Trustees, and said bond be paid by the NJ/NYVFA and shall be placed in the safe deposit box of the NJ/NYVFA.**

Section 2- General Duties

- 1. All Officers of the NJ/NYVFA shall at all times perform such other and further duties as the Organization shall direct by vote at any regular or special meeting.**
- 2. All Officers must, at the expiration of their term of office, immediately turn over to their successors, or a receiver designated by the Board of Trustees, any and all records, books, papers, documents, monies, or property which has come into their possession as Officers of the NJ/NYVFA.**

Article Four - Board of Trustees

Section 1 - Composition

- 1. The Board of Trustees will be made up of a panel of ten (10) individuals who are elected by the membership at the annual convention.**
- 2. A member of the Board of Trustees serves a five (5) year term.**
- 3. Two Trustees will be elected by the membership each year at the annual convention.**
- 4. At all meetings, a quorum is achieved through the presence of five or more Board Members.**

Section 2 - Duties

- 1. The Board of Trustees shall:**
 - A. Fix the amount and approve the bonds of the Financial Secretary, Treasurer, and Assistant Treasurer.**
 - B. Publish the proceedings of each annual convention.**
 - C. Transact all business of the NJ/NYVFA requiring action between regular meetings and, with the consent of the NJ/NYVFA, make all contracts for work to be done or supplies to be furnished.**
 - D. Fill any vacancy occurring in the offices of the NJ/NYVFA.**
 - E. Have the power to call a special convention, through the President, whenever the Board deems necessary.**
 - F. Make an annual report to the NJ/NYVFA and shall look after the organization's interests.**
 - G. Approve all expenditures of the NJ/NYVFA by a two-thirds vote.**

Section 3 - Removal

- 1. A member of the Board of Trustees may be removed by a motion of the President of the NJ/NYVFA, with approval of two-thirds of the members of the Board of Trustees at a regular board meeting.**
- 2. A member of the Board can be removed if they fail to perform their assigned duties, are absent from six (6) or more meetings of the Board or the NJ/NYVFA during a fiscal year or are found to have acted in a manner that would be detrimental to the organization.**
- 3. Any member removed in this manner will be provided written notice of the decision, and the reasons provided by the organization for this decision.**
- 4. Any member removed will be replaced through the procedures outlined in the Article entitled "Elections" contained herein.**

Article Five - Elections

Section 1 - General Provisions

- 1. All Officers shall be elected at the annual convention and shall hold office until the next annual convention or until their successor is elected.**
- 2. Two Trustees of the Board of Trustees shall be elected at each annual convention to hold office for five years.**
- 3. The President of the NJ/NYVFA shall not be eligible for immediate re-election after he has served two consecutive one-year terms.**
- 4. All Members who are currently up to date with their dues may run for a position in the NJ/NYVFA.**
- 5. Voting shall take place at the annual convention. All Members and delegates who are current with their dues may vote on any of the positions up for election.**
- 6. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected.**
- 7. Voting will be done by secret ballot. Tabulations will be done by the exiting Assistant Secretary. If the exiting Assistant Secretary is running for a position in the current election, the Board of Trustees will select an alternate tabulator to tabulate the votes in that election.**

Section 2 - Special Elections

- 1. Vacancies in any office of the NJ/NYVFA caused by death, resignation, or removal may be filled by a majority vote of those present at a regular meeting of the Board of Trustees, or at a special meeting convened for this purpose.**
- 2. Anyone elected to a position due to vacancy will serve from that date until the next annual convention.**

Article Six - Meetings

Section 1 - The NJ/NYVFA Officers shall meet monthly. There will be an annual convention in June for all Members and Delegates. The NJ/NYVFA shall also meet in special session at the call of the President, or as provided for in the Emergency Bylaws. There shall be monthly meetings of the General Membership during the months of September, October, November, January, February, March, April, and May(if needed) and June (after the convention if needed). The time and location of the meetings are to be announced in the Signal, at General Membership meetings and on the NJ/NY VFA Web Site.

Section 2 - The Secretary shall provide notice of all regular or special meetings of the NJ/NYVFA of at least one week in advance of the meeting.

Article Seven - Committees

Section 1 - The President shall have the power to appoint all committees.

Section 2 - The standing committees of the NJ/NYVFA shall include:

- 1. Auditing Committee**
 - A. The Auditing Committee shall:**
 - 1. Consist of four members appointed by the President serving four-year terms. There will be one new member appointed each year.**
 - 2. Examine the books, accounts, and vouchers of the Association annually and as often as directed by the President.**
 - 3. Prepare an audit report for publication at the September Board meeting.**
 - 4. The Fiscal year is to be determined between the Treasurer and the Accounting Agency with the approval of the Trustees.**
- 2. Legislative Committee**
 - A. The Legislative Committee shall:**
 - 1. Consist of two members, appointed by the President, with one residing in Bergen and one residing in Rockland County.**
 - 2. Investigate and report on current legislative initiatives in New Jersey and New York that could affect the NJ/NYVFA**

3. **Membership Committee**
 - A. **The Membership Committee shall:**
 1. **Be comprised of the Financial Secretary, and one (1) officer each from Bergen and Rockland Counties.**
 2. **Find appropriate means to increase the membership of the NJ/NYVFA.**

4. **Law Committee**
 - A. **The Law Committee shall:**
 1. **Consist of four (4) members of the Board of Trustees, two (2) each from Bergen and Rockland Counties.**
 2. **Consist, if desired, of an additional two (2) members who are practicing attorneys. Any Attorney fees would have to be approved by the Board of Trustees.**

5. **By-Laws Committee**
 - A. **The By-Laws Committee shall:**
 1. **Consist of four (4) members appointed by the President yearly at the reorganization meeting.**
 2. **Consider motions made by Members to alter, amend, or repeal any By-Law of the NJ/NYVFA.**
 3. **Present reports to the Board of Trustees on a regular basis regarding these motions and provide recommendations to the Board of Trustees on specific motions.**
 4. **Prepare notice for the General Membership of any meeting of the By-Laws Committee of at least five days, in writing.**

Section 3 - Financing of Committees

1. **The Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer of the NJ/NYVFA shall function as Treasurer of all Committees and Sub-Committees.**
2. **Any Committee which incurs a monetary cost of doing its work shall present, at the next meeting of the Board of Trustees, a report in writing of their expenditure, along with their receipts for reimbursement and/or accounting purposes.**

Article Eight - Annual Convention

Section One - General Provisions

1. **The General Convention of the NJ/NYVFA shall take place each year during the first week in June.**
2. **The convention shall include a business session on Friday Evening at 8:00PM and may include a parade or any other function endorsed by the Executive Board on the Saturday afternoon following the convention.**
3. **A convention site will be requested two years in advance at an annual convention. If no offer is made for a convention site at a convention, a proposal can be brought and voted upon at a General Meeting.**
4. **A proposed convention site vote will take place upon notice to the General Membership by the Secretary.**

5. If no site is forwarded by the Membership, the Board of Trustees may choose a place for the convention. Notice of their decision will be provided to the General Membership with at least three months' notice prior to the convention.
6. If the annual convention must change its date, the Board of Trustees is vested with this power, and will provide three months' notice to the General Membership of this change.

Article Nine - Dues

Section One - General Provisions

1. Dues are to be paid on or after January 1 each year.
2. The Financial Secretary is responsible for maintaining the rolls of Members and their dues status.
3. Any delegate or Personal Member whose dues are unpaid after May 31 of any calendar year shall be considered delinquent and will be deprived of his or her vote and participation at the annual convention and any subsequent meetings until and unless such dues have been paid in full.
4. If a Member is in arrears for a period of two years, they will have notice mailed to them by the Financial Secretary demanding payment within thirty (30) days. Failure of the member to satisfy his or her obligation will result in that member being dropped from the membership rolls of the NJ/NYVFA.
5. No member may be reinstated until all monies for the two (2) years of arrears are paid to the NJ/NYVFA and a vote is taken by the General Membership regarding the reinstatement.

Section Two - Dues Amounts

1. Organizational Members' dues shall be \$25.00 for a single company, \$50.00 for a two-company department, and \$75.00 for a department consisting of three or more departments.
2. Individual Companies shall have the option to join separately for \$25.00 per company.
3. Personal Member dues shall be \$10.00 per year.
4. Life Members do not pay annual dues.

Article Ten - Order of Business at Meetings

Section 1 - The order of business at a regular meeting shall be:

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Pointing out of Exits**
- 3. Invocation**
- 4. Salute to the flag**
- 5. Roll Call of Officers**
- 6. Introduction of Host Officers**
- 7. Reading and Adoption of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting(s)**
- 8. Communications and Bills**
- 9. Officer Reports**
- 10. Board of Trustee Reports**
- 11. Past Presidents Reports**
- 12. Sergeant-at-Arms Reports**
- 13. Regular Committee Reports**
- 14. Special Committee Reports**
- 15. Introduction of Guests**
- 16. Unfinished business**
- 17. New business**
- 18. Good and Welfare of the Association**
- 19. Call for Vote of Thanks to the Host**
- 20. Adjournment**

Section 2 - The order of business at a special meeting shall be:

- Call to Order.**
- Salute to the flag.**
- Specific matter of business to be discussed or acted upon.**
- Adjournment.**

Article Eleven- Amendments

- 1. Any proposed change must be presented in writing at a regular meeting and be presented to the By-Laws Committee for review.**
- 2. The Board of Trustees, working with the By-Laws Committee, will bring any recommended amendment to the general membership. If approved or rejected by two-thirds 2/3 of the Board of Trustees, then the Board will give their report to the membership at the next regular membership meeting.**
- 3. These by-laws may be amended at any regular or special meetings of the NJ/NYVFA on an affirmative or negative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members attending. If adopted, the change shall take effect immediately.**

Article Twelve - Dissolution

Section 1: This organization may be dissolved at any meeting by written or printed ballots of two-thirds of the members present voting in favor if notice and purpose of such meeting is signed by at least fifty (50) percent of the active members of the NJ/NYVFA. Notice shall have been mailed to each person entitled to vote at least twenty (20) days previous thereto and shall have been published three (3) weeks successively; once each week in a newspaper circulating in Bergen County, New Jersey and Rockland County, New York. Notice of dissolution shall forthwith be filed with the Secretary of the State of New Jersey.

Section 2: Upon dissolution of the New Jersey/New York Volunteer Firemen's Association, Inc, the Board of Trustees shall satisfy the liabilities and distribute the assets of the Company in accordance with the following priority:

- (1) Payment and discharge of all liabilities and obligations of the corporation.**
- (2) Compliance with all conditions of any tax exemption applicable to the organization.**
- (3) Return, transfer or conveyance of all assets received and held by the NJ/NYVFA upon condition that the assets are returned, transferred, or conveyed upon dissolution of the corporation.**
- (4) Transfer or conveyance of all assets received and held by the NJ/NYVFA subject to limitations permitting their use only for charitable, religious, eleemosynary, benevolent, educational or similar purpose but not held upon condition set forth in paragraph three (3) above, to one or more domestic or foreign corporations engaged in activities substantially similar to those of the dissolving corporation, or if applicable, to a receiver to be held for the benefit of the public and for use in accordance with the limitations, or pursuant to a Court Order.**
- (5) Distribution of all assets required by the Company's certificate of incorporation or by-laws to be distributed to the members in the manner so specified.**
- (6) Disposition of all other assets. All remaining assets after the payment of outstanding debts shall be divided equally between the New Jersey State Firemen's Home and the New York State Firemen's Home.**

Article Thirteen - Emergency By-Laws

Section One - Due to the nature of firefighting and the world that we live in, there could arise situations where the hierarchy of the NJ/NYVFA will be compromised due to national emergency, local emergency, or tragedy. The purpose of Emergency By-Laws for the NJ/NYVFA is provide alternative guidelines to the Membership in the event a national or local catastrophe causes disruptions in the proper workings of the organization.

Section Two - The Emergency By-Laws will not be utilized unless one of the following occurs:

- 1. A National Emergency/Catastrophe is declared by the President of the United States.**
- 2. The local authorities declare a Local Emergency or Catastrophe.**
- 3. Some Event of Importance, which is determined by the Board of Trustees and Officers, occurs.**
- AND**
- 4. The NJ/NYVFA is affected in a serious manner, which would severely impair its ability to operate.**

Section Three - If an Event causes the Emergency By-Laws to be utilized:

- 1. Any Officer or Trustee of the NJ/NYVFA may call an Emergency Meeting of the Membership.**
- 2. Notice of the Meeting will be made through all available means, including telephone, email, radio band, or newspaper.**
- 3. At least twenty-four (24) hours' notice must be given regarding an Emergency Meeting.**
- 4. The meeting location will be at the Police and Fire Academy in Mahwah, New Jersey if practicable. If the Academy is unusable, the meeting location will be at the discretion of the individual calling for the meeting.**

Section Four - Emergency Meetings

- 1. Any decisions made at an Emergency Meeting will only remain in effect until a General Meeting of the organization may be called.**
- 2. All decisions made at an emergency meeting need the approval of two-thirds (2/3) of the individuals attending the meeting.**
- 3. The highest-ranking Officer present at the meeting will preside. If no Officers are present, the most tenured Trustee will preside.**
- 4. At the Emergency Meeting, the members attending will determine whether the Emergency Powers must be implemented. A two-thirds (2/3) vote for use of the Emergency Powers will be necessary to enact them.**
- 5. The Emergency Powers will end at the next General Meeting of the organization unless a vote is taken to extend the powers.**

Section Five - Emergency Powers

- 1. The Emergency Monetary Power allows any Officer of the NJ/NYVFA to have signatory power over the monies of the organization. This allows banking, the making of checks, and financial responsibility to continue in the event the Treasurer is unable to perform these tasks. Any use of the Emergency Monetary Power will be reviewed by the Auditing Committee after the lifting of the Emergency Powers and a report will be compiled and distributed to the General Membership.**

Article Fourteen- Roberts Rules

- 1. Any subject referred to the Executive Board, which is not covered by these by-laws shall be acted upon according to Roberts Rules Of Order or the Statutes of the State of New Jersey.**

These by-laws were adopted at the SEPTEMBER 28, 2007 meeting of the New Jersey/New York Volunteer Fireman's Association.