

***BYLAWS***  
***OF THE***  
***NEW JERSEY AND NEW YORK***  
***VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S***  
***ASSOCIATION, INC.***

Established: March 27, 1914

Incorporated: November 24, 1919

Revised: August 16, 2023

**PREAMBLE**

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 within the two counties.

## **Article One**

### **Name**

#### **Section 1**

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.

### **Purpose**

#### **Section 2**

The association of these companies allows for the promotion of fire safety within Bergen County, New Jersey and Rockland County, New York 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 New Jersey's and New York's Bergen and Rockland counties.

## Article Two

### Membership

#### Section 1 - Association Members

- a. Any volunteer fire company, department, or recognized and equipped Rescue Squad in Bergen and Rockland Counties shall be eligible for association membership.
- b. 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 Association membership following review and approval of the application by the Executive Board and Membership Committee.
- c. Final approval shall be granted if most of the Board of Trustees of the NJ/NYVFA are present and voting at a regular Board of Trustees meeting approves the application in addition to the Membership Committee approval required herein.

#### Section 2 - Personal Members

Any of the following persons shall be eligible for personal membership:

- a. Any firefighter or rescue squad member may apply for Personal Membership by filling out an application, which shall be reviewed by the Membership Committee.
- b. Each Personal Member shall be entitled to participate in the proceedings of the annual convention and in all meetings of the NJ/NYVFA, if Member's dues payments are current.

#### Section 3 - Life Members

- a. All Past Presidents of this Association who have served two consecutive terms shall be Life Members without further payment of dues.
- b. 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.

#### Section 4 - Process for Membership

- a. Any organization or personal member must apply through an application furnished by the NJ/NYVFA.
- b. Applications must be made in writing and must be accompanied by a payment of one (1) year dues to the NJ/NYVFA.

## Article Three

### Officers

#### Section 1 - NJ/NYVFA Officers and Specific Duties

**a. President**

The President shall:

- 1) Preside over all meetings, and at the annual convention.
- 2) Appoint all committees.
- 3) Sign checks 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.

**b. First Vice President**

The First Vice President shall:

Act as the President of the NJ/NYVFA in the event of the death, resignation, inability, or prolonged absence of the President to act upon their duties.

**c. Second Vice President**

The Second Vice President shall:

Act as the President of the NJ/NYVFA in the event the First Vice President is unable or unwilling to perform the duties ascribed to their position at any time.

**d. Secretary**

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 of Trustees and keep a record of all 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.

**e. Assistant Secretary**

The Assistant Secretary shall:

- 1) Give notice to all 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.

**f. Financial Secretary**

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 and contact information 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 Members.
- 5) Issue suitable membership cards to all classes of membership.
- 6) Make and keep a correct roll of all members of the NJ/NYVFA, which contains the names of the Organization Members, Personal Members, and Life Members.

**g. Assistant Financial Secretary**

- 1) Assist the Financial Secretary in the collection of dues.
- 2) Perform other duties of the Financial Secretary as needed.
- 3) Be bonded in an amount to be approved by the Board of Trustees and said bond to be paid by the NJ/NYVFA and shall be placed in the safe deposit box of the NJ/NYVFA.

**h. Treasurer**

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.

**i. Assistant Treasurer**

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**

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

## Article Four

### Board of Trustees

#### Section 1 - Composition-

- a. The Board of Trustees consists of a panel of no more than (10) individuals who are elected by the membership at the annual convention.
- b. A member of the Board of Trustees serves a five (5) year term.
- c. Two Trustees will be elected by the membership each year at the annual convention.
- d. At all meetings, a quorum is achieved if five or more Board Members are present. If the number of nominees exceeds the vacancies the vote will be taken by ballot.

#### Section 2 - Duties

The Board of Trustees shall:

- a. Fix the amount and approve the bonds of the Financial Secretary, Assistant 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 NJINYVFA membership, make all contracts for work to be done or supplies to be furnished.
- d. Fill in 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 Association's interests.
- g. Approve all expenditures of the NJ/NYVFA by a two-thirds vote of the Board members present.

#### Section 3 - Removal

- a. 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.
- b. A member of the Board may be removed if they fail to perform their assigned duties, are absent from 50% or more of 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 association following an investigation by the President.
- c. Any member removed in this manner will be provided with written notice of the decision, and the reasons provided by the association for this decision.
- d. Any member removed will be replaced through the procedures outlined in the Article entitled "Elections" contained herein.

## Article Five

### Elections

#### Section 1 – General Provisions

- a. All officers shall be elected at the annual convention and shall hold office until the next annual convention or until their successor is elected.
- b. Two Trustees of the Board of Trustees shall be elected at each annual convention to hold office for five years.
- c. The President of the NJ/NYVFA shall not be eligible for immediate reelection after they have served two consecutive, one year terms, unless the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President and 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President are unable or unwilling to serve as President and no former President is willing to serve a one year term.
- d. All Members who are currently up to date with their dues may run for a position in the NJ/NYVFA.
- e. New members in good standing and who have attended 50% of the general meetings in a fiscal year are eligible to be nominated for an office of the association.
- f. Voting shall take place at the annual convention. All members who are current with their dues may vote on any of the positions up for election.
- g. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected.
- h. Voting will be done by secret ballot. Tabulations will be done by the Elections Committee exiting.

#### Section 2 - Special Elections

- a. 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.
- b. Anyone elected to a position due to vacancy will serve from that date until the next annual convention. If no member wishes to run for election, the President has the power to appoint a member until the next annual election.

## **Article Six**

### **Meetings**

#### **Section 1**

The NJ/NYVFA Officers shall meet monthly prior to the General Meeting. There will be an annual convention in June for all Members. 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/NYVFA Web Site.

#### **Section 2**

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

## **Article Seven**

### **Committees**

#### **Section 1**

The President shall have the power to appoint and is a member of all committees. The standing committees of the NJ/NYVFA shall include:

#### **Section 2 The Auditing Committee**

Auditing Committee shall:

- a. Consist of four members appointed by the President serving four-year terms. There will be one new member appointed each year.
- b. Examine the books, accounts, and vouchers of the Association annually and as often as directed by the President.
- c. Prepare an audit report for publication at the September Board meeting.
- d. The Fiscal year is to be determined between the Treasurer and the Accounting Agency with the approval of the Trustees.

#### **Section 3 - Legislative and Regulatory Committee**

The Legislative Committee shall:

- a. Consist of two members, appointed by the President with one residing in Bergen County, New Jersey and one residing in Rockland County, New York.



- b. Investigate and report on current legislative initiatives in New Jersey and New York that could affect the NJ/NYVFA.

#### **Section 4 - Membership Committee**

The Membership Committee shall:

- a. Be comprised of the Financial Secretary, and one (1) member each from Bergen County, New Jersey and Rockland County, New York.
- b. Find appropriate means to increase the membership of the NJ/NYVFA.

#### **Section 5 – Law Committee**

The Law Committee shall:

- a. Consist of four (4) members of the Board of Trustees, two (2) each from Bergen County, New Jersey and Rockland County, New York.
- b. 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.

#### **Section 6 - By-Laws Committee**

The By-Laws Committee shall:

- a. Consist of at least four (4) members appointed by the President yearly at the reorganization meeting, including the Vice Presidents.
- b. Consider motions made by Members to alter, amend, or repeal any By-Law of the NJ/NYVFA.
- c. 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.
- d. Prepare notice for the General Membership of any meeting of the By-Laws Committee of at least five days, in writing.

#### **Section 7 - Finance Committees**

The Finance Committee shall:

The Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer of the NJ/NYVFA shall act as Treasurer of all Committees and Sub-Committees.

- a. 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.

#### **Section 8 – Fundraising Committee**

The Fundraising Committee shall:

- a. Consists of at least three (3) members
- b. Research possible fundraising events for the association
- c. Provide a report on the progress of their research to the Executive Board at monthly meetings.
- d. Obtain necessary permits for approved fundraising events.

## **Article Eight**

### **Annual Conventions**

#### **Section 1- General Provisions**

- a. The General Convention of the NJ/NYVFA shall take place each year during the first week in June.
- b. The convention shall include a business session on Friday Evening at 8:00 PM and may include a parade or any other function endorsed by the Executive Board on the Saturday afternoon following the convention.
- c. 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.
- d. A proposed convention site vote will take place upon notice to the General Membership by the Secretary.
- e. 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.
- f. If the annual convention must change its date, the Board of Trustees is vested with this power, and will provide three-month notice to the General Membership of this change.

## Article Nine

### Dues and Death Benefit Program

#### Section 1 - General Provisions

- a. Dues are to be paid on or after January 1 each year.
- b. The Financial Secretary is responsible for maintaining the roles of Members and their dues status.
- c. Any Personal Member whose dues are unpaid after April 1 of any calendar year shall be considered delinquent and will be deprived of his or her vote, all benefits, participation at the annual convention, and any subsequent meetings until and unless such dues have been paid in full.
- d. If a member is in arrears, they will have a notice mailed to them by the Financial Secretary requesting payment within thirty (30) days. Failure of the member to satisfy his or her obligation by July 1 will result in that member being dropped from the membership rolls of the NJ/NYVFA.
- e. Any member dropped from the rolls may reapply as a new member.

#### Section 2- Dues Amounts

- a. Organizational Member dues shall be \$35.00 per company per year...
- b. Personal Member dues shall be \$20.00 per year.
- c. Life Members do not pay annual dues.

#### Section 3 – Death Benefit

- a. The NJ/NYVFA has established a Death Benefit Program to assist deceased member beneficiaries.
- b. Members in good standing are eligible to apply for the death benefit provided by the association.
- c. To participate in the Death Benefit Program Members must complete the Death Benefit Application available on the NJ/NYVFA website or from the Association Financial Secretary.
- d. The Member must be in good standing and dues fully paid up at the time of their death. Death benefits are available after the member completes 5 years of membership.
- e. Only beneficiaries indicated on the application shall be eligible to receive the death benefit.
- f. Benefit pay outs are distributed in a tiered system. Beneficiaries of Members for greater than 5 years up to 10 years receive \$250.00 of Members for greater than 10 years up to 15 years will receive \$500.00 of Members for greater than 15 years up to 20 years will receive \$750.00. Life Members will receive \$1000. 00..

## Article Ten

### Order of Business at meetings

#### Section 1

The order of business at a regular meeting shall be:

- a. Call to Order
- b. Pointing out of Exits
- c. Invocation
- d. Roll Call of Officers
- e. Salute to the flag
- f. Introduction of Host Officers
- g. Reading and Adoption of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting(s)
- h. Communications and Bills
- i. Officer Reports
- j. Board of Trustee Reports
- k. Past Presidents Reports
- l. Regular Committee Reports
- m. Special Committee Reports
- n. Introduction of Guests
- o. Unfinished business
- p. New business
- q. Good and Welfare of the Association
- r. Sergeant of Arms Reports
- s. Call for Vote of Thanks to the Host
- t. Adjournment

#### Section 2

The order of business at a special meeting shall be:

- a. Call to Order.
- b. Salute to the flag.
- c. Specific matters of business to be discussed or acted upon.
- d. Adjournment.

## **Article Eleven**

### **Amendments**

#### **Section 1 – Bylaw Changes**

- a. Any proposed change must be presented in writing at a regular meeting and be presented to the By-Laws Committee for review.
- b. The Board of Trustees, working with the By-Laws Committee, will bring any recommended amendment to the general membership. If approved 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.
- c. These by-laws may be amended at any regular or special meetings of the NJ/NYVFA on an affirmative 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 provided that 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 and 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:

- a. Payment and discharge of all liabilities and obligations of the corporation.
- b. Compliance with all conditions of any tax exemption applicable to the organization.
- c. 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.
- d. 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.

- e. 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.
- f. 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 1**

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 to provide alternative guidelines to the Membership in the event a national or local catastrophe causes disruptions in the proper workings of the organization.

#### **Section 2**

The Emergency By-Laws will not be utilized unless the NJ/NYVFA is affected in a serious manner, which would severely impair its ability to operate and one of the following occurs:

- a. A National Emergency/Catastrophe is declared by the President of the United States.
- b. A Local Emergency or Catastrophe is declared by the local authorities.
- c. Some Event of importance, which is determined by the Board of Trustees and Officers, occurs.

#### **Section 3**

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

- a. Any Officer or Trustee of the NJ/NYVFA may call an Emergency Meeting of the Membership.
- b. Notice of the Meeting will be made through all available means, including telephone, email, radio band, or newspaper.
- c. At least twenty-four (24) hours' notice must be given regarding an Emergency Meeting.
- d. The meeting will be at a location or by a means deemed appropriate.

#### **Section 4 - Emergency Meetings**

- a. Any decisions made at an Emergency Meeting will only remain in effect until a General Meeting of the organization may be called.
- b. All decisions made at an emergency meeting need the approval of two thirds (2/3) of the individuals attending the meeting.
- c. The highest-ranking Officer present at the meeting will preside. If no Officers are present, the most tenured Trustee will preside.
- d. At the Emergency meeting the members attending will determine whether the Emergency Powers must be implemented.

- e. A two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote is required to approve and enact the Emergency Powers.
- f. The Emergency Powers will end at the next General Meeting of the organization unless a vote is taken to extend the powers.

**Section 5 - Emergency Powers**

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

**Any subject referred to by 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.**

New Jersey and New York Firemen’s Association By-Laws Revisions.

March 25, 1983

Another copy not dated.

January 1996

Another copy just saying 2006

**Last revised August 16, 2023. The Committee is:**

President: Bryan Hennig  
 1st Vice President: Anthony (Tony) Chiodo  
 2nd Vice President: Richard Neerhout  
 Chairperson: Jeffrey Guenther  
 Past President: Roy DeYoung Jr  
 Past President: Peter DeVries  
 Trustee: Gary Cerbasi  
 Trustee: Jerome (Jerry) Richardson

**Assistance by:**

Past President: Stan Kufel  
 Past President: William (Bill) Drew  
 Financial Secretary: John Schwedhelm  
 Treasure: George Saigh  
 Trustee: Gerard (Jerry)Naylis  
 Attorney William (Bill) Quirk

