

Constitution and By-Laws

Volunteer Firemen's Association

of

CAMBRIA COUNTY & VICINITY



Last Revised: December 13, 2012

PREAMBLE

We, the various companies, comprising the Volunteer and Career Fire Departments of the County of Cambria and Vicinity, in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, United States of America have assembled, feeling the necessity of, combined action, and hereby form ourselves into an association to be called and known as the Volunteer Firemen's Association of Cambria County and Vicinity.

OBJECT

The object of this association shall be the general improvements of the firefighting service throughout the county and vicinity, to afford protection to disabled firefighters and those dependent upon them, through legislative enactment, to open discussion upon the best manner and means for the fighting of fires and their prevention, to promote the organization of fire companies and fire departments in town and villages now without such protection, to encourage fraternal friendship among firefighters, and to promote the education and the training of firefighters.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE 1 MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. The Association shall be composed of delegates duly elected each year by their respective fire organization belonging to the Association. Each company must pay the sum of Fifty (\$50.00) Dollars each year and is entitled to one (1) or two (2) or three (3) delegates each year who will be entitled to vote provided the company he represents meets the requirements set forth in Article 1 Section 10. Each fire company shall also be entitled to elect a delegate for each member in good standing that had died during the past year. Eighteen (\$18.00) Dollars fee for each additional delegate for the first year. Then these additional delegates shall pay the regular dues as set by the Association Constitution.

Section 2. Every person who has been or shall become a member of this Association shall continue to be a member as long as he/she shall pay the annual dues of Eight (\$8.00) Dollars. The money received from the members to be divided as follows:

- Three (\$3.00) Dollars to the General Fund
- Two (\$2.00) Dollars to the Death Fund
- Two (\$2.00) Dollar to the Fire School Fund
- One (\$1.00) Dollar to the Town holding the convention providing they hold a banquet , otherwise the amount remains in the General Fund.

Section 3. Any fire organization wishing to become a member of this association shall make an application in writing and pay an initiation fee of One Hundred (\$100.00) Dollars.

Section 4. For any fire organization to become a member of this association it must have been organized for at least one (1) year, have motorized firefighting apparatus, and must be a bona fide firefighting organization. Said company shall submit an application for membership to be turned over to the Application Review Committee. The committee shall submit to the Association their report at the next scheduled monthly meeting for accepting or rejecting said applicant.

Section 5. Every member of the association in good standing shall be entitled to vote. Any member of this association failing to pay his or her annual dues shall forfeit their membership and may be restored to membership only upon payment of his or her arrearages, if his or her membership has not been forfeited over a one (1) year, or by re-election as a representative delegate, provided, however that any member of this association in the armed forces of this country, who fails to pay their annual dues, shall be entitled to become a member in good standing and beneficial upon payment of their dues for the year after discharge from the armed forces.

Section 6. An elected delegate can become a member of this association in good standing with full benefits and voting privileges provided that

- A. Payment of the regular dues specified in this Constitution is made.
- B. The one (1) year probationary has been served.

Section 7. To remain in good standing and be considered beneficial all membership dues must be paid on or before July 1st. Any member not paying their dues will be considered non-beneficial until payment of said dues.

Section 8. Any company not paying dues for a period of two (2) years in succession shall receive a letter from the Association Secretary notifying them of their status. If the organization still has not paid their dues they shall be dropped and shall be permitted to be readmitted upon complying with the provisions of Article 1 Sections 3 and 4.

Section 9. A Fire Company must answer roll call in order to be considered in attendance at a meeting. The following individuals may answer roll call for a member Fire Company

- A. An association member that belongs to that Company, or
- B. An elected delegate from that Fire Company, or
- C. Any individuals who is a bona fide member of that Fire Company, provided that prior notification is given to the Secretary that he or she is representing that Fire Company. However, such person may not make a motion or vote on any issue before the Association.

Section 10. Any company not attending two (2) meetings during the year, excluding the county convention will not be seated and will be denied voting rights at the convention concluding that year.

Section 11. Honorary membership: Honorary membership shall consist of a person elected at the annual convention in recognition of some meritorious act in the interest of this association in particular or that or the fire service in general. They shall have all privileges of membership except of voting and holding office. They shall be exempted from payment of dues and shall not be entitled to death benefits herein provided for.

Section 12. Members-at-Large: Members-at-Large are those individuals who for any reason live out of the area or are no longer members of a fire department, can remain a Association member in good standing if they continue to pay their dues as per by-laws. The Fire Department to which the member had previously belonged can be credited with a replacement delegate at the time the person becomes a member-at-large.

ARTICLE II OFFICERS AND THEIR ELECTION

Section 1. The Officers of this Association shall consist of a President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, and Assistant Treasurer.

Section 2. The officers shall hold their respective offices for one year or until their successors shall be elected at the convention meeting of the Association by the largest number of votes cast by the members present and entitled to vote. In case of a tie for any office, it shall be re-voted until the tie is broken.

Section 3. Nominations for all offices shall be held at the June regular meeting of the Association. The Secretary shall have the ballots printed at the expense of the Association and present the ballots to the Credential Committee at the convention.

Section 4. The election of officers shall be held on the Thursday of the week of the annual convention from seven (7:00 P.M.) until eight thirty (8:30 P.M.) and shall also be conducted on the day of the annual convention meeting from eight thirty (8:30 A.M.) until ten (10 A.M.) at a site previously announced. A member who is entitled to vote shall upon registering and presenting his membership card to the Credentials Committee shall receive a ballot. The membership card will be stamped and the member, having voted, will place the ballot in the ballot box

Section 5. Should a vacancy occur in any office herein before provided for, nominations and election shall be held at the next regular meeting to fill the vacancy for the unexpired term, except in the case of the President when the First Vice President shall succeed to the office of the President. The Second Vice President will automatically move up in office. The office of the Second Vice President shall then be filled by election. In case of the First Vice President, the Second Vice President will automatically move up in office.

Section 6. The person filling the office of the First Vice President and Second Vice President shall automatically result in their progressing to the next higher office in succeeding years.

Section 7. To be eligible for office you must have four (4) county meetings from the previous year and if elected you must attend no less than (4) monthly meetings.

Section 8. If you miss a monthly meeting a valid reason must be given to be excused from the meeting, so credit can be given.

ARTICLE III ELECTION OF DELEGATES AND CONVENTION TOWN

Section 1. The delegate to the State Firemen's Convention shall be the retiring President. The alternate delegate shall be elected as the other officers. The delegate's report of the State Convention is to be given in person at the first meeting of the Association after the convention and turned over to the Association Secretary for inclusion into the Association minutes. The delegate shall receive the sum of Two Hundred Fifty (\$250.00) Dollars to cover all expenses. Failure to comply with the above provision will result in the expense money remaining in the treasury.

Section 2. The nominations and election of delegates to the Central District Volunteer Firemen's Association or any other regional fire association this Association may belong to, shall be done in the same manner as outlined for the nomination and election of officers to the Association.

Section 3. Nomination for the Convention Town shall be made by the June regular meeting of the Association. The nomination shall consist of a signed letter from the Secretary of the Fire Company attesting to the nomination and the resolution by the governing body of the political subdivision of the requesting Fire Company.

Section 4. The convention town shall be awarded by the majority of the votes cast. The vote will be in accordance with Article II, Section 4.

Section 5. The host company for the convention shall be designated two (2) years in advance thus giving the company time in which to prepare for the convention.

ARTICLE IV DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS

Section 1. The President shall preside over all meetings of the Association, whether annual, monthly, or special he or she shall sign all checks drawn on the Treasury .Call special meetings whenever he or she deem it necessary or at the request of eight (8) members of the Association stating the reason to hold a special meeting. The meeting will be held within thirty (30) days of the request. The time and location will also be announced.

Section 2. The President shall, on his election, appoint annually an Executive Committee consisting of all Past Presidents, Auditing Committee consisting of three (3) members, Law and Legislative Committee, Resolution Committee, Credential Committee, Fire Prevention Committee , Fire School Committee (Training),and any other committee deemed necessary. By virtue of the office he or she shall be an advisory on each committee. He shall have the power to appoint or remove the chairman or co-chairman of any committee this Association has.

Section 3. In the absence of the President, the First Vice President and the Second Vice President shall perform all duties of the President in the order of their office.

Section 4. It shall be the duty of the Secretary to:

- A. Keep a record of all proceedings of this Association
- B. Make a full report at the annual convention of its condition
- C. Make such reports as the President or the Executive Committee from time to time may require.
- D. Countersign all checks drawn on the Treasury
- E. Notify all members in good standings of all regular or special meetings.
- F. Receive all moneys paid in for dues and for company memberships and shall turn all moneys over to the Treasurer.
- G. In the absence of the Secretary the Assistant Secretary will assume all duties of the Secretary.

Section 5. It shall be the duties of the Treasurer to:

- A. Countersign all checks drawn upon the Treasury.
- B. Maintain an account of all receipts and disbursements.
- C. Make a written itemized report to the Association at its regular meeting of the financial standing of the various funds in his or her care.
- D. Give bond as may be required for the faithful performance of his or her duties, expense of same to be paid by the Association.
- E. In the absence of the Treasurer the Assistant Treasurer will assume all duties of the Treasurer.

Section 6. The Financial year of this Association shall begin on the first (1st) day of July and end one year hence.

ARTICLE V REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

Section 1. Elected officers of this Association can be removed from his or her elected office for the following reasons:

- A. Breach of trust
- B. Violation of the by-laws or the constitution
- C. Not fulfilling the duties of the elected office
- D. Failure to make deposits of money
- E. Misappropriating property of the Association
- F. Slandering of the Officers or the Association
- G. Unauthorized representation of the Association to the public or media

Section 2. The violation(s) shall be investigated by the Executive Committee. The investigation shall be complete no later than 45 days after the charges are brought forth.

Section 3. When the investigation is complete. The Executive Committee shall recommend to the President whether to retain or dismiss the Officer involved. This committee shall be made up of no less than five (5) members.

Section 4. The members of the Association has the final decision to dismiss or retain the Officer.

ARTICLE VI DUTIES OF THE COMMITTEES

Section 1. The Executive Committee shall review and investigate any complaints made about this Association. The complaint shall be signed by eight (8) members of this Association and forward to the President so action can be taken.

Section 2. It shall be the duty of the Audit Committee to exam and audit all accounts of the Association annually and present at the convention meeting the completed audit for the Association's approval.

Section 3. It shall be the duty of the Law and Legislative Committee to attend to all matters pertaining to any legislation whether federal or state, touching the interest of the members of the Association.

Section 4. It shall be the duty of the Resolution Committee to attend to all memorials of deceased members and to instruct the Secretary to mail the same to the nearest kin.

Section 5. The duties of the Credentials Committee shall be to:

- A. Make a report at the convention meeting the fire companies that are eligible to be seated for voting.
- B. Conduct the election as outlined in Article II Section 4.
- C. Maintain the security of the ballots and the ballot box for the voting sessions.

Section 6. It shall be the duties of the Fire Prevention Committee to promote fire prevention in the area covered by the Association.

Section 7. It shall be the duties of the Fire School Committee (Training) to:

- A. Work with the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy
- B. Conduct the annual Fire School
- C. Conduct various fire training programs throughout the year
- D. Establish fire training curriculum and provide qualified instructors for the same.

Section 8. It shall be the duties of the Fire School Site Committee to:

- A. Write a Standard Operating Guidelines on the use of the buildings, equipment used and stored, and the maintenance of the vehicles used at the site.
- B. To insure that all training is conducted in a safe manner so no harm will come to the students.

Section 9. Certification Committee

- A. This Committee shall have the right to collect money and fees that are incurred at the time of each certification test. A list of all money taken in for the class will be given to the Treasurer and all receipts for expenditures shall also be turned over to the Treasurer.
- B. There shall not be any person working under the age of fourteen (14) at the Fire School or any other function as an independent contractor. Anyone under the age of eighteen (18) must have working papers to be employed. All child labor laws will be complied with.
- C. If the independent contractor is over the age of eighteen (18) that person must refer to the State Administrative Manual
- D. The Chairman will be appointed by the Association President with approval by the State of Pennsylvania Fire Academy.

ARTICLE VII POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Section 1. A candidate may pass out political information before or after a meeting but not during the meeting.

Section 2. A candidate may address the members at a meeting. They may speak no longer than 10 minutes. If the candidate wishes they can wait until the meeting is over and talk with the members.

ARTICLE VIII FIRE ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER

Section 1. To be eligible to be nominated for the position for a Fire Advisory Board Member to represent the County Association; one shall be an active member of the County Association by attending a minimum of four (4) meetings within a fiscal year. This number of meetings shall also be for any elected office this Association has.

Section 2. The Association shall elect one (1) representative to the Fire Advisory Board every year, for which they will serve a two year term. The Association shall also appoint the 1st Vice President to the Fire Advisory Board every year, for which they will serve a two year term which will include their term as Association President. This will be in conjunction with the By-Laws of the Fire Advisory Board.

Section 3. The representatives from the County Association that will serve on the Fire Advisory Board shall function in the best interest to the Association. They shall request input from the membership on matters concerning the Association and member companies. This may be done at Association meetings or by written survey.

Section 4. Members of the Board shall give a report at the next regular meeting of the Association following the Fire Advisory Board meeting.

Section 5. Any elected representative that cannot serve their full term, the President shall appoint a new representative from the association membership at large to fill the term as described in Section 1.

Section 6. The term of all Fire Advisory Board Members shall begin January 1st and end the December 31st consisting of a two year term. Newly elected and appointed Members as described in Section 2, shall assume their duties on January 1st after being elected and/or appointed to follow suit with the Fire Advisory Board By-Laws.

ARTICLE IX FIRE SCHOOL SITE DIRECTORS

Section 1. The Board of Directors shall have full authority to operate and maintain the site and to develop policy, rules and regulation for the use of the Fire School Site.

Section 2. The Board of Directors shall consist of nine (9) elected members of the Association.

Section 3. Nominations and elections for Directors shall take place annually in the same manner as prescribed for the election of the Officers of the County Association. All nominees must be members in good standing of the Association. Every year three (3) Directors shall be elected for a three (3) year term. The three (3) persons receiving the highest votes shall be declared the winner. In case of a tie vote, it shall be re-voted until the tie is broken.

Section 4. The term of all Directors shall begin September 1st and end the following August 31st of their respective terms. The newly elected Directors shall assume their duties on September 1st. The fiscal year of the Fire School Site Directors shall be the same as that of the County Association.

Section 5. In case of a vacancy of a Director, an election will be held to fill the vacant position.(As provided in Article II, Section 5.) In case of a vacancy of the Chairperson the Vice Chairperson will assume the Chairperson position.

Section 6. Any Director refusing to perform his duties and for misconduct will be removed from office.

Section 7. Five (5) members of the Board shall constitute a quorum for transaction of business.

ARTICLE X POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE SITE DIRECTORS

Section 1. It shall be the power of the Site Directors to:

- A. Prepare and enforce ground rules for the use of the site
- B. Hire any help that is deemed necessary for the operation and maintenance of the site.
- C. Make necessary purchases or designate those who can, for the operation and maintenance of the site.
- D. To create and enforce the Standard Operating Guidelines for the Fire School Site. Make changes in the S.O.G. when it is for the improved operation of the site.

Section 2. It shall be the duties of the Site Directors to:

- A. Operate and maintain the site
- B. Keep strict account of all transactions connected with the site.
- C. Give a report at a regular scheduled Association meeting on any activity, transactions, or expenditures.
- D. Bring before the Association request for expenditures for improvement and developments costing over Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500).

ARTICLE XI FIRE SCHOOL SITE EMERITUS

Section 1. Qualifications to become a Site Emeritus is four (4) terms or twelve (12) years as a Site Director.

Section 2. A member having qualified for the position shall send a letter to the Fire School Site Chairman of the desire to be a Site Emeritus.

Section 3. The Site Emeritus shall serve as long as the person wishes or until the person submits a letter of resignation.

Section 4. The Site Emeritus will automatically be on the Fire School Training and Fire School Site Committees.

Section 5. The Site Emeritus shall have the right to vote on all matters pertaining to Fire Training and the Fire School Site.

ARTICLE XII ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

Section 1. A failure to hold any convention meeting at the time designated in the Constitution shall in no way constitute a dissolution of this Association.

Section 2. The regular meeting of the Association shall be held on the fourth Thursday of each month, except the months of July, August, November, and December. In December the meeting shall be held on the second Thursday due to the conflicts of the holidays.

Section 3. All meetings will be held at 7:00 P.M.

Section 4. The convention shall be the first meeting of the new fiscal year.

Section 5. A photo identification card and the Association membership card shall be required when there is a secret ballot.

ARTICLE XIII DEATH BENEFITS

Section 1. The amount of benefits shall be Two Hundred Seventy Five (\$275.00) Dollars as long as any money remains in the Death Fund. The amount of benefits are subject to change by a majority vote according to the Constitution.

Section 2. The proper Officers of this Association are authorized to write a check on the Death Fund payable to the beneficiary named by the assured as soon as notification of death is given. A member in good standing upon his death is only entitled to **one death benefit**.

ARTICLE XIV AMENDMENTS

Section 1. This Association shall have the full power at any time to alter, amend or revise this Constitution and By-laws. All amendments to the Constitution and By-laws shall be presented in writing, signed by five (5) members in good standing at any regular meeting of the Association.

Section 2. The amendment(s) will be presented and read at the first meeting.

Section 3. It shall lay over and be reread by the Association Secretary at the following monthly meeting.

Section 4. Before the third monthly meeting in which the amendments(s) will be voted on by secret ballot the Secretary will send a letter to all member companies with a copy of the amendment(s) and stating the time and location of the vote.

Section 5. A photo identification card and the Association membership card must be presented in order to obtain a ballot.

ARTICLE XV ENFORCEMENT OF CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

Section 1. At the adoption of this Constitution and By-laws of the Volunteer Firemen's Association of Cambria County and Vicinity, all former Constitution, By-laws and rules or copies thereof, are here by declared null and void.

ARTICLE XVI DISSOLUTION

Section 1. Upon the dissolution of this Association, the Officers shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all the liabilities of the Association, dispose of all the assets of the Association in such manner, or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, religious, or scientific purposes as shall at the time qualify as an organization or organizations under Section 501 (C) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or corresponding provisions of any future United States Internal Revenue Law) as the Officers shall determine. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by the Court of Common Pleas of Cambria County in which the principal office of the Association is then located exclusively for such purposes as said court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

ARTICLE XVII NON-DISCRIMINATION

Section 1. The Volunteer Firemen's Association of Cambria County and Vicinity will accept members into this organization regardless of sex, race, national origin, religion or age. (As provided in Article I, Section 1, Membership.)

ARTICLE XVIII CONVENTION DATES

Section 1. The Cambria County firemen's convention can be conducted from the first day of July until the end of August of any year. During that time the host department may conduct a four (4) to eight (8) day convention of their choice. The mandatory firemen's games during the convention must be pumping contest, bucket brigade and battle the barrel. Additional events can be approval of the rules committee.

BY-LAWS

1. The presiding officer shall preserve order and decorum. All questions of order shall be decided by him subject to an appeal to the Association.
2. Every member, when they speak, shall be standing in his or her place, addressing the presiding officer, giving his name and company.
3. When two (2) or more members shall rise at once the presiding officer shall name the member who shall speak first.
4. A member called to order shall immediately sit down unless permitted to explain to the Chair. If there be no appeal, the decision shall be conclusive.
5. The current edition of “Roberts Rule of Order “ and any special rules and regulations adopted by this Association shall be the rules and regulations governing this Association.
6. Seven (7) Member Companies of the Association in good standing shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.
7. The President shall receive One Hundred Fifty (\$150.00) Dollars for the faithful performance of these duties. Upon retiring the President shall also receive a Life Membership which exempts him or her from all dues and entitles him or her to full privileges as an Association Member.
8. The Secretary shall receive Five Hundred Fifty (\$750.00) Dollars for the faithful performance of these duties.
9. The Treasurer shall receive Five Hundred Fifty (\$750.00) Dollars for the faithful performance of these duties.

Revised December 13, 2012