

**Fire Rescue Commission Meeting
Kernersville Fire Department
1180 NC Hwy 66 South
Kernersville, NC 27284**

January 13, 2026

Members in Attendance: Chairman Harley Cook Vice Chairman Freddy Johnson
Ryan Cole Walter Gardner Mason James Cloyce Anders
Gary Whitman Andy Thomas Steve Roberson Brent Gordon
Scott Mullins Josh Smith Randy Thompson Robert Poe

OSFM Staff Present:

Kevin Gordon Chris Decker Brian Wade Joe Ramsey
Ben Smith Kyle Heuser David Morris
Kim Williams Monna Gillespie Michele Thomas

Welcome and Call to Order – Harley Cook 10:00 a.m.

Invocation – Walter Gardner

Ethics Statement – Harley Cook

Approval of agenda – Gary Whitman made a motion to approve the agenda. Robert Poe second. Motion passed.

Walter Gardner made a motion to approve October 14, 2025, minutes. Freddy Johnson second. Motion passed.

Elections – Kevin Gordon

Chair – Freddy Johnson nominated Harley Cook for Chair. With no more nominations presented. Gary Whitman made a motion to close nominations. Josh Smtih second. Harley Cook is selected as the Chair by acclamation.

Vice Chair – Ryan Cole nominated Freddy Johnson for Vice Chair. With no more nominations presented. Ryan Cole made a motion to close nominations. Robert Poe second. Freddy Johnson is selected as the Vice Chair by acclamation.

Harley Cook made the following statement:

Pursuant to North Carolina General Statutes, Section 58-78-5(a)(15), the Fire and Rescue Commission is authorized to create boards to assist in its functions and duties. One of the boards created by the Fire and Rescue Commission is the Certification Board. The membership on the Certification Board consists of one permanent member and 13-time limited members who may be removed for cause or resignation. The Fire and Rescue Commission bylaws establish time-limited membership and appointments to the Certification Board. According to the North Carolina Fire Rescue Commission bylaws, the Certification Board shall consist of one appointee by the Fire Rescue Commission Chair, one appointee by the Fire Rescue Commission Vice Chair and twelve individuals nominated and elected at a regularly scheduled and announced Fire and Rescue Commission meeting. Given a January 2026 public records request to OSFM and a recent North Carolina ethics confidential complaint, the election and appointments to the Certification Board are delayed until the next April 14, 2026, Fire Rescue Commission meeting. There will be no changes to the current representation of the Certification Board until the April 14, 2026, meeting.

Appointments

Fire and Rescue Commission

NCSFA – FRC Steven Roberson reappointed

NC Assoc Rescue FRC - Gary Whitman reappointed

NCSFRI – FRC Harley Cook reappointed

NC IAAI – FRC Andy Thomas reappointed

CFI Board

FRC appointment

Andy Thomas nominated Freddy Johnson. Second by Cloyce Anders. Motion passed.

FRC Chair Harley Cook appointment - Lee Newcomb

FRC Vice Chair Freddy Johnson appointment - Appointed Jason Davis.

NCAFC Ryan Cole nominated Kevin Waldrup. Second by Gary Whitman. Motion passed.

NCFMA Freddy Johnson nominated Buddy Thompson. Second by Cloyce Anders. Motion passed.

VSWCF Board

FRC appointment

Andy Thomas nominated Freddy Johnson. Second by Cloyce Anders. Motion passed.

FRC Chair Harley Cook appointment - Appointed Jerry Brooks.

FRC Chair Harley Cook appointment – Appointed Jackie Ireland.

FRC Vice Chair Freddy Johnson appointment - Appointed Joel Faircloth.

FRC Vice Chair Freddy Johnson appointment - Appointed Robert Poe.

NCSFA appointment

Ryan Cole nominated Andy Webster. Second by Cloyce Anders. Motion passed.

NCSFA appointment

Ryan Cole nominated Anthony Penland. Second by Freddy Johnson. Motion passed.

NCAREMS appointment

Gary Whitman nominated Jerry Bradshaw. Second by Roert Poe. Motion passed.

NCAREMS appointment

Gary Whitman nominated Josh Shumate. Second by Freddy Johnson. Motion passed.

Location of FRC meetings

April FRC meeting will be held in Fayetteville, NC

July FRC meeting will be held in Kernersville, NC

October meeting will be held in Asheville, NC

Board Reports

Certification Board – Joel Faircloth

Standing Committee Reports – None

Validation Committee Reports –

Technical Rescuer – Task book for collapse is complete and the one for Machinery is being developed. This will soon be completed, and the qualified instructors will be notified. Once these are complete, work will begin on Wilderness. The boat operator developed is proceeding and will be piloted soon. Flood water will be added to the boat operator course. Both courses will be run at the Emergency Training Center.

Haz-Mat – All updates have been completed, instructors have been qualified, and these programs went live on January 01, 2026.

FLSE – Updates continue and the new program will go live July 01, 2026.

Driver Operator – Updates continue and the new program will go live July 01, 2027.

Firefighter – Updates continue and the new program will go live July 01, 2027.

Fire Instructor/Officer – Will begin soon and the new program will go live January 01, 2027.

Commission Meeting Report –

Staff updates – Joe Ramsey has joined OSFM as a Certification Specialist and will be serving Region 3 and Region 2-west.

Old Business – None

New Business –

Asheville Fire Department – Requested the additional of five TR programs: Surface water, Swift water, Wilderness, Trench, and Confined Space. Approved

The CB requested Staff look at the delivery agency moratorium and report back to the CB in March 2026.

RIT/BES – OSFM Staff recommended that RIT qualification become a field-delivered qualification, to include an exam and skills; to match other field-delivered qualifications. Approved.

Recognition of Jim Hanline – The CB, and OSFM Staff, recognized Jim Hanline for his 38-years of service to the Certification Board.

Closed Session –

The closed session dealt with an incident that occurred at WPCC on October 12, 2025. This incident became known through a reported injury (this injury was a life-threatening incident which occurred in a water rescue course).

Freddy Johson asked the Certification Board to look at the firefighter certification block format.

Robert Poe asked about the removal of knives from the water course. Kevin Gordon advised staff working on the use of knives and what options are available.

VSWCF – Cloyce Anders

There have been no premiums for the last four years. Departments should still budget for the premiums in case the premiums are required. Cloyce reviewed the financials. The cost of claims is going up. Sedgewick is doing a good job managing the fund.

Certified Fire Investigator Board – Freddy Johnson

Meetings are being moved back by one month. Items for review have been put in your packets. Freddy asked that those items to be reviewed so that a vote can be made at the April FRC meeting.

In 2025 the CFI reviewed 46 applications. 43 approved and 4 denied.

New Business

NEIRS Update – Monna Gillespie

FEMA will decommission the NFIRS system on January 31, 2026. Data from 2012 to present will be available in the Image Trend system. NEIRS went live for everyone January 1, 2026. Image Trend allows access to NFIRS data and run reports.

Kyle Heuser

No change. We are waiting on the Omnibus Bill to pass giving the Fire and Rescue Commission statutory authority.

Agency Reports

OSFM – Brian Taylor

Mike Williams has retired. Brian Wade has been promoted to his position. Kevin Gordon has been selected as the interim Division Chief.

Davey Summey is retiring in March.

OSFM staff will be meeting with the Gen Gov group on February 3rd to discuss our budget requests. A mini budget provided OSFM with an HR and Budget position.

OSFM Brian Wade – Joe Ramsey has been hired as a Certification Specialist.

OSFM Kevin Gordon – The Instructor Qualification process is changing slightly. Firefighter Qualifications will be offered five times a year. 1 in each certification region. Written Qualifications will be offered 20 times a year. Field Qualification delivery will remain the same. CFI exams will be given after the CFI meetings. They will be delivered in three regions, East, Piedmont and West.

NCSFA – Barry Overman

Ed Brinson retired December 31, 2025.

Rosters are due Thursday January 15th. NCSFA staff will call departments who have not submitted their rosters. Cancer benefits have paid out to 24 eligible applicants. VFIS is doing an excellent job handling the process. Requests for relief fund use have increased. Scholarships applications opened on January 1st. May 20th is Firefighter Legislative Day.

NC Association of Rescue and EMS – Joel Faircloth

Rosters are due January 15th. Scholarships are open from January 1 through March 31, 2026. Rescue School is April 17 through April 19, 2026, in Jefferson.

NCAFC – Ryan Cole

Fire Preventions School is March 16 through March 20, 2026.

Mid-Winter Conference is May 12 through May 15, 2026, in Concord.

NCCCS – Michael Caviness

President Cox is retiring. Fall Regional Directors' Meetings went well. OSFM and directors help with the meetings.

NC EM – J. R. Griffin

Operations Section Updates

- Budget spend down.
- REP Program now in Operations Section / Emergency Services Branch
- Filling vacancies.

Upcoming Trainings

Eastern Branch AHIMT Academy

- January 20 – 23

WLEO Course

- January 26 – 30

MSAR Courses

- January 16 – 18
- February 27 – March 1

- March 13 - 15

NCHART Training

- February 18 – 19

- March 25 - 26

Upcoming Meetings

SERC

- January 23rd @ 1000

Hazmat Sub-Committee

- January 28th @ 1300

SWR TAG

- January 28th @ 0900

USAR TAG

- January 29th @ 0830

NCRRT TAC

- January 29th @ 1030

NCSFRI – Ben Hess

Jim Hanline retired. Ben will retire February 7.

NC PFFP – Scott Mullins

On December 23, 2025, the Heros Act was enacted.

NC Department of Labor – Mike Say

- There has been no new activity on the proposed Emergency Responder standard from Federal OSHA. The latest window to provide comments and feedback on the proposed standard ended in early January 2025, and there have been no new actions taken to report.
- Federal OSHA continues to work on their Heat Stress standard. The latest window to provide comments and feedback on the proposed standard ended in July 2025. OSHA is currently reviewing the comments and working on revising their proposed standard. No word on when the next draft of the proposed standard will be published.

- In North Carolina, Commissioner of Labor Luke Farley has established the Commissioner’s Heat Stress Advisory Council, a new advisory body designed to strengthen worker protections and address heat-related illness and injury in the workplace. The Heat Stress Advisory Council will serve as a collaborative forum bringing together representatives from diverse industries and disciplines, including one from the Professional Fire Fighters & Paramedics of North Carolina (Scott Mullins). Council members will share expertise and provide recommendations to improve heat safety standards in North Carolina workplaces. The Council’s work will focus on reviewing existing laws, evaluating current regulations, and advising on potential policy improvements—all with the goal of protecting workers from preventable injuries and unsafe conditions.
- If there are any additional questions, they can let Mike know and we can respond to the commission.

NCOEMS – David Ezzell

Staffing Changes

- Doug Bullins, CRO Logistics Specialist
- Anthony Davis, CRO Manager
- Chuck Lewis, WRO Manager
- David Ezzell, Assistant Chief
- EMS Expo Conference
 - May 1-6
 - Benton Convention Center, Winston Salem
 - Registration Open Now
- EMS Administrator's Conference
 - Wilmington NC, March 4-6
 - Ballast Hotel
- OEMS Table Top Exercises
 - Lead by Kimberly Clement and HPP Team
 - 10 Sites Across NC, Beginning April
- Rules Update

- Currently up for re-adoption
- No changes at this time
- Will re-evaluate once this set is re-adopted
- Measles
 - Guidance sent out to EMS agencies
 - Cases growing

Ryan Cole asked for an update for online viewing of the FRC and Board meetings. This should be available for the April meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kim Williams