

# BY-LAWS OF THE HAMPSHIRE COUNTY FIRE DEFENSE ASSOCIATION

ADOPTED SEPTEMBER 24, 1987  
AMENDED APRIL 14, 2005  
AMENDED OCTOBER, 2009  
AMENDED MARCH, 2013  
AMENDED FEBRUARY, 2014  
AMENDED MAY, 2015  
AMENDED JANUARY, 2017  
AMENDED MARCH, 2017  
AMENDED APRIL, 2017

## **ARTICLE 1- NAME**

- Section 1: This organization shall be known as the Hampshire County Fire Defense Association.
- Section 2: The purpose of this organization is to promote cooperation and assistance between fire departments in the preservation of life and property.
- Section 3: This organization will further provide training opportunities both for the new recruits and seasoned personnel; develop regional mutual aid; access to County Fit Tester and Hose Tester. This organization will also provide information relating to EMS, Hazmat and any other information that is pertinent to the membership.

## **ARTICLE 2-MEMBERSHIP**

- Section 1: This organization comprises all municipalities and fire districts in Hampshire County and any and all fringe communities that so desire to become members.
- Section: Applications for membership shall be submitted to the Secretary and referred to the Board of Officers who shall act on same and make their report at the next regular meeting.
- Section 3: Each department with paid-up dues is entitled to become a member. The Chief shall be voted in by a majority vote and shall be entitled to one vote upon acceptance. The Chief may appoint one alternate officer from his community. In the absence of the Chief, the Alternate may cast one vote for the community. Alternates will remain the same until such time the Chief appoints another member from his community to serve as the Alternate. The intent is to have consistency in membership and not have a different alternate member at each meeting.
- Section 4: The alternates have the right to be recognized to speak at all meetings but cannot vote if the Chief is present.
- Section 5: Any active Chief Officer, who retires from active duty, has been a member of this organization for three years, minimum two years as Chief, one year as alternate, and is in good standing, shall thereafter become a life member. Life members will have no voting privileges and are NOT required to pay dues.

Section 6: Applications for Associate Membership shall be submitted to the Secretary and referred to the Board of Officers of the Association, to approve or deny the application and shall make their report at the next regular meeting. Associate membership is limited to utility companies that service Hampshire County and any State agency that directly supports the fire service. Associate members shall have no voting rights and shall not be subject to annual dues.

### **ARTICLE 3- DUES**

Section 1: Membership dues are established per the following tiered system:

Population under 5,000- \$600  
Population between 5001-10,000- \$1,000  
Population between 10,001-20,000- \$1,400  
Population between 20,001 or greater- \$1,800

per community and may be changed in accordance with Article 9, Section 1

Section 2: Dues will be for the period from July to June 30 of each year, with billing to be made in or on July 1.

Section 3: Whenever any member Community shall fail to pay their dues on or before September 30, they shall be notified by mail of their indebtedness to the Association and if not paid within thirty (30) days of said notice, the Treasurer shall so report to the Board of Officers. The Board of Officers shall drop the Community from the roll of the Association until such time payment is received. Communities dropped for failure to pay shall lose all privileges and resources of this Association.

### **ARTICLE 4- OFFICERS**

Section 1: The officers shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer elected at the Annual Meeting. All Alternate Members are not eligible to hold officer positions.

Section 2: Special or Standing Committees shall be appointed by the President or at the request of the organization by a majority vote at any meeting. Committee membership is limited to one member per community. Alternate Members may serve as members of committees but cannot serve as Committee Chairman.

Section 3: There shall be an Auditing Committee of two members appointed annually by the President.

Section 4: There shall be a Nominating Committee of three members appointed annually by the President.

Section 5: The President shall be an ex-officio member of all committees.

Section 6: To be considered for any committee or position, a member must have attended 50% of the previous ten (10) meetings.

- Section 7: There shall be a representative nominated and endorsed by the membership to FCAM Board of Directors appointed annually by the President. If the representative misses 50% of the regularly scheduled meetings without being excused by the President, they shall be removed.
- Section 8: There shall be a representative nominated and endorsed by the membership to the WMFCA Board of Directors appointed annually by the President. If the representative misses 50% of the regularly scheduled meetings without being excused by the President, they shall be removed.
- Section 9: There shall be two (2) members nominated and endorsed by the membership to the District 4 Hazmat Team Steering Committee and Technical Rescue Team Steering Committee appointed annually by the President.

#### **ARTICLE 5- OFFICER'S DUTIES**

- Section 1: It shall be the duty of the President to preside at all meetings.
- Section 2: It shall be the duty of the Vice-President to act in the absence of the President.
- Section 3: It shall be the duty of the Secretary to keep a record of all meetings: make reports thereof: dispense meeting minutes to the membership within 2 weeks of the monthly meetings.
- Section 4: It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to keep accurate records of all monies received and spent and to send invoices for the next year's assessment on July 1. The Treasurer will also report out during the monthly meetings on the revenues and expenditures of the Association for the prior month(s). The Treasurer will also report out during the monthly meetings on the status and balances of all accounts held by the Association.
- Section 5: The Assistant Treasurer shall perform these duties in the absence of the Treasurer.
- Section 6: It shall be the duty of the Board of Officers (President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer) to meet at the call of the President and act upon all matters pertaining to the organization, and make a report of their actions at the next meeting. The Board of Officers shall be responsible to develop and present an annual budget to the membership at the May meeting to be voted on for the next fiscal year.
- Section 7: It shall be the duty of the Auditing Committee to audit the books of the Treasurer just prior to the Annual Meeting and report their findings and recommendations at the next meeting.
- Section 8: It shall be the duty of the Nominating Committee to present the new slate of officers for the coming year, to be acted upon at the Annual Meeting.
- Section 9: It shall be the duty of the FCAM representative to report on any matters pertaining to this organization.
- Section 10: It shall be the duty of the WMFCA representative to report on any matters pertaining to this organization.

## **ARTICLE 6-MEETINGS**

- Section 1: Regular meetings shall be held on the second Thursday for the months of January, February, March, April, May, June, September, October, November and December, with the Annual Meeting held in September before the regular monthly meeting. Notice of the time and place of the next meeting shall be sent to all members by the Secretary at least 1 week prior to the meeting.
- Section 2: Meeting times may be changed by a majority vote of the members.
- Section 3: Special meetings may be called at any time by the President or by written request of five (5) or more members of the Association. Business at Special Meetings shall be limited to the subjects stated by the President in calling the meeting or by the members who in writing requested the meeting for the stated purpose(s). At least three (3) days written or verbal notice to all members is required for a Special Meeting.
- Section 4: The President may make a regularly scheduled meeting for active members only, with twenty-four( 24) hours notice.
- Section 5: When a vote of the body is required and there is no quorum or when an urgent approval for expenditures is needed the President may conduct a vote by electronic means. The results of said vote will be entered into the minutes of the next meeting of the Association.
- Section 6: If an officer of the Association misses five (5) meetings per fiscal year they shall be removed from office, unless excused by the President. If the officer of the Association is the President, they also shall be removed, unless excused by the Executive Board.

## **ARTICLE 7-QUORUM**

- Section 1: Five (5) members of the Association shall constitute a quorum at any meeting. In the absence of a quorum, a lesser number can adjourn the meeting. Alternates cannot be counted if the Chief is present.
- Section 2: Each member community present at a meeting shall have one (1) vote. A majority of those present and voting is required for the adoption of any motion or resolution except for the amendment of these By-Laws, which is covered under Article 9.

## **ARTICLE 8- ORDER OF BUSINESS AT MEETINGS**

- Section 1: Annual Meeting
1. Report of Nominating Committee
  2. Report of Audit Committee
  3. Election of Officers
  4. Change of Officers and proceed with Regular Meeting

Section 2: Regular Meetings

1. Meeting called to order by President
2. Minutes of last meeting
3. Treasury report
4. Old business
5. Reports of Committees:
  - A. Radio
  - B. Training
  - C. EMS
  - D. Mutual Aid
  - E. By-Law
  - F. Hazmat
  - G. Fit-test
  - H. Special Committees
  - I. FCAM
  - J. MCVFA
  - K. TECHNICAL RESCUE TEAM
  - L. WMFCA
  - M. S.A.F.E Trailer
  - N. M.E.M.A
  - O. Eversource
  - P. MSP
  - Q. DCR
  - R. DFS
6. New Business
7. Good and Welfare
8. Time and Location of next meeting

Section 3: Any Committee wishing to present at the meeting shall sign in on the monthly meeting agenda prior to the start of business. In the event unforeseen items of importance to the organization arise, they can be added under new business.

**ARTICLE 9- AMENDMENTS AND ADDITIONS**

Section 1: These By-Laws may be amended, added to or corrected at any Regular Meeting of the Association or at any Special Meeting called in accordance with these By-Laws for that purpose. The Secretary shall send or make available a written copy to each member of the proposed amendment or changes to these By-Laws at least ten (10) days prior to the date of the meeting.

Section 2: Amendment of these By-Laws requires a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the Association members present and voting.

## **ARTICLE 10-CODE OF ETHICS**

- Section 1: If charges are brought forward regarding a Code of Ethics violation by a member Chief, the following procedure is recommended; The member bringing the charges forward shall ask the President to go into an active member only session to discuss allegations. The minutes of the active members only session shall be recorded but not added to the official minutes of the meeting. After hearing the allegations, the President shall cause an investigation to be carried out by members of the Executive Board. After the investigation is completed the Executive Board shall determine the appropriate action to take. In the event that the Code of Ethics violation by a member Chief holds the position of Association President, the Executive Board shall assume all aforementioned duties of this section.
- Section 2: We shall be dedicated to the concepts of effective fire protection by responsible fire chiefs and we believe that professional management is essential to the achievement of this objective. We pledge ourselves to advance the science of the fire service through training courses and other methods to meet the proper requirements of our profession.
- Section 3: We recognize that the most important function of local fire departments is to serve the best interests of the community.
- Section 4: We shall be dedicated to the highest ideals of personal character, honor and integrity in all public and personal relationships in order that fire chiefs may merit the respect and confidence of the community.
- Section 5: We shall handle all matters in our best judgment so that fairness and impartiality govern our decisions.
- Section 6: We shall observe all of the provisions of the Constitution of the United States, the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and all applicable local statutes.
- Section 7: We shall make known the risks to be anticipated, should the fire chief's professional recommendations be disregarded by others.
- Section 8: We shall recognize the professional competence and the mutual dependence of all fire chiefs and we pledge cooperation to those professionals and agencies concerned with the improvement of fire protection.
- Section 9: We shall never intentionally injure or embarrass the reputation or position of another fire chief. We shall strive to protect and maintain the integrity of the fire service and our fellow fire chiefs.