

# Atlantic County Firefighters' Association

*"In Union For The Safety Of All"*



April 17, 2024

## **Call to Order**

The regular meeting of the Atlantic County Firefighters' Association was called to order at 19:35 on April 17, 2024 at the Atlantic County Anthony "Tony" Canale Fire Training Center by President Charles J. Mackintosh. The meeting was opened with a flag salute followed by an Invocation by the Chairman of the Executive Committee, Howard Berchtold. President Mackintosh then pointed out the fire exits and asked that all electronic devices be silenced. President Mackintosh welcomed all to the meeting which serves as the thirty-first annual Valor Awards presentation and the thirteenth annual recognition of firefighters with fifty or more years of active service.

## **Opening Remarks and Introduction of Host Chief**

President Mackintosh thanked the Margate City Fire Department for hosting and introduced Chief Daniel Adams. Chief Adams welcomed everyone to the annual valor awards and expressed how proud the Margate City Fire Department is to be hosting the awards for the twelfth year and thanked the elected local and county officials for supporting the fire service. Chief Adams spoke of valor and having just attended the funeral for Edwin M. "EZ-Ed" McMeekin, III earlier in the day. Ed had been a Lieutenant with the Margate City Police Department, retiring in 1994, and had been honored many years ago for rescuing two people from a fire in the city. Chief Adams then read a quote from Chief Edward F. Croker, Chief of Department FDNY 1899-1911. "I have no ambition in this world but one, and that is to be a fireman. The position may, in the eyes of some, appear to be a lowly one; but we who know the work which the fireman has to do believe that his is a noble calling. Our proudest moment is to save lives. Under the impulse of such thoughts, the nobility of the occupation thrills us and stimulates us to deeds of daring, even of supreme sacrifice." Chief Adams asked all elected officials to continue their support of the fire service and assisting them with obtaining the needed equipment. Chief Adams noted that more people are needed in the fire service, both volunteer and career. Chief Adams thanked all for attending on behalf of the Margate City Fire Department and ended his remarks by asking everyone to join him in reciting "A Fireman's Prayer".

## **In Attendance**

Roll call was taken by Secretary Robert A. Mellon who reported a quorum was present.

Total Chief/Delegate Attendance – 51 of 172      Total Member Departments/Companies Represented – 22 of 43

## **Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the minutes of the March 20, 2024 meeting, as sent to the member companies.

## **Dispensing of Business**

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to dispense with the remainder of regular business except for the paying of the bills.

## **Bills**

The list of bills was submitted by Treasurer Jaime C. Mellon and read by Secretary Robert A. Mellon in her absence. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to pay the bills from the proper funds.

## **Introduction of “Harold J. “Whitey” Swartz Valor Awards and Service Recognition”**

President Mackintosh welcomed all to the awards presentation and “50” year service recognitions. President Mackintosh reported that seven firefighters will be honored for having achieved fifty years of service. President Mackintosh thanked all valor award recipients for having the courage to do what needed to be done and then also thanked the “50” years of service recipients for having the dedication and commitment for all those years.

President Mackintosh welcomed and introduced guests; Atlantic County Commissioners: Chairwoman Maureen Kern, Vice-Chairman James A. Bertino, June Byrnes, and John W. Risley Jr.; Atlantic County Clerk Joseph J. Giraldo; Atlantic County Sheriff Joseph O’Donoghue; and Atlantic County Undersheriff Mario Suarez. Commissioner Chairwoman Maureen Kern offered words of gratitude for the fire service in Atlantic County and all the effort put into providing that service with emphasis on appreciation of those tonight being honored for valor and those having served for fifty years.

Executive Committee Chairman Howard Berchtold commented on a great attendance and noted that the classrooms were not large enough to handle the night’s crowd and the EHT Community Center was not available, but that it seemed fitting that the training backdrop provided by the engine bay helps make the room a suitable third choice. Howard reported that Richard E. “Dick” Squires, former Atlantic County Executive, had recently passed and noted that Dick was instrumental with getting the Fire Training Center deal done during by working with the Board of County Commissioners, then known as the Board of Chosen Freeholders, and EHT Chief Tony Canale to create what would become the Anthony “Tony” Canale Fire Training Center. Howard introduced the Valor Awards Committee members; 2nd Vice President Billy Merola, who served as Chairman, and Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Sandy Walczak. Howard thanked Billy and Sandy for the effort and hard work put into reviewing the valor award nominations.

## **“50” Year Service Awards**

Chairman Howard Berchtold and President Charles J. Mackintosh presented each of the “50” Year Service Award recipients with a uniform bar, gold life member card, and certificate from the Atlantic County Firefighters’ Association. Some of the uniform bars and gold cards will be delivered later due to supply chain delays. This is the thirteenth year of the annual recognition of firefighters with fifty or more years of active service. All honorees also received recognition from the Atlantic County Board of County Commissioners and Atlantic County Executive Dennis Levinson.

### **“50” Year Service Award Recipients:**

*Richard A. Edwards, Bayview Volunteer Fire Company*  
*Claude Nelson, Farmington Volunteer Fire Company*  
*Bruce C. Jensen, Weekstown Volunteer Fire Company*  
*Thomas J. Cullen Sr., Bayview Volunteer Fire Company*  
*Richard Smith, Bayview Volunteer Fire Company*  
*Clifford C. Mosier, Germania Volunteer Fire Company*  
*Michael L. Burshtin, Richland Volunteer Fire Company* (unable to attend)

## **Valor Awards**

Chairman Howard Berchtold and President Charles J. Mackintosh presented each of the Valor Award recipients with a uniform bar and certificate from the Atlantic County Firefighters’ Association. Some of the uniform bars will be delivered later due to supply chain delays. This is the thirty-first year of the Valor Awards presentation. Recipients have included firefighters, police officers, medical personnel, and civilians. All honorees also received recognitions from the Atlantic County Board of County Commissioners and Atlantic County Executive Dennis Levinson.

Those being honored for valor are:

*Sergeant Nicholas Mangold, Egg Harbor City Police Department, Certificate of Valor Class One (unable to attend)*  
*Patrolman Matthew Rex, Egg Harbor City Police Department, Certificate of Valor Class One*  
*Patrolman Jose Rodriguez, Egg Harbor City Police Department, Certificate of Valor Class One*  
*Sergeant Mark Perna, Hamilton Township Police Department, Certificate of Valor Class One*

Howard Berchtold introduced Egg Harbor City Fire Chief Walter “Butch” Kienzle, III who then introduced Egg Harbor City Police Chief Marcella Aylwin who provided a summary of the incident on March 7, 2023. Egg Harbor City Police were dispatched to the 200 block of London Avenue for the report of a knife wielding subject locked in an upstairs bedroom of a group home where the sight and smell of smoke was also reported. Sergeant Nicholas Mangold, Patrolman Matthew Rex, Patrolman Jose Rodriguez, and Sergeant Mark Perna, Hamilton Township Police Department, encountered a 54-year-old female holding a knife in the room where flames and smoke were visible. They successfully disarmed the subject and brought her down the stairs to safety. The subject was medevaced to Temple Burn Center. Chief Marcella Aylwin noted that the training of the officers and the excellent relationship with the Egg Harbor City Fire Department contributed to the positive outcome. Chief Aylwin thanked Egg Harbor City Mayor Dr. Lisa Jiampetti for her support of the departments and Hamilton Township Police Chief Gregory Ciambrone.

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*Captain Vernon Cruse, Atlantic City Fire Department, Certificate of Valor Class One*  
*Firefighter Ronald Laielli, Atlantic City Fire Department, Certificate of Valor Class One*

Howard Berchtold introduced Atlantic City Deputy Chief Thomas Cullen, Jr. who provided a summary of the incident on December 29, 2023. Atlantic City Fire Department Ladder 1 responded (along with two Engines, a Rescue, and other units) to an eighteen person boarding home with fire and smoke conditions on the third floor. Captain Vernon Cruse and Firefighter Ronald Laielli were assigned to complete a primary search on the third floor. Captain Cruse and Firefighter Laielli heard faint signs of a victim on the third floor and had to pass the fire room with near zero visibility, high heat, and without the protection of a handline. They located a conscience male victim in a bedroom past the fire room. With conditions deteriorating within the bedroom, they determined that they would need to remove the victim via one of the windows. They were able to lower the victim from the third-floor window down approximately twelve feet to crew members on an adjacent roof.

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*Assistant Chief Dennis C. Sharpe, Farmington Volunteer Fire Company, Unit Citation*  
*Captain Wm. McFarland, Farmington Volunteer Fire Company, Unit Citation*  
*Lieutenant Tyrell Edwards, Farmington Volunteer Fire Company, Unit Citation*  
*Firefighter Brandon Parker, Farmington Volunteer Fire Company, Unit Citation (unable to attend)*  
*Chief Gill Zonge, Cardiff Volunteer Fire Company, Unit Citation (unable to attend)*  
*Assistant Chief Wm. Danz, Cardiff Volunteer Fire Company, Unit Citation (unable to attend)*  
*Captain JJ Fricano, Cardiff Volunteer Fire Company, Unit Citation*  
*Lieutenant Richard King, Cardiff Volunteer Fire Company, Unit Citation*  
*Firefighter J. Armstrong, Cardiff Volunteer Fire Company, Unit Citation*  
*Firefighter R. Bannon, Cardiff Volunteer Fire Company, Unit Citation*  
*Firefighter G. Levens, Cardiff Volunteer Fire Company, Unit Citation*  
*Firefighter Ray Micholotti, Cardiff Volunteer Fire Company, Unit Citation*  
*Firefighter Ron Poley, Cardiff Volunteer Fire Company, Unit Citation*  
*Firefighter Michael Rinehart, Cardiff Volunteer Fire Company, Unit Citation*  
*Assistant Chief Will Hancock, Bargaintown Volunteer Fire Company, Unit Citation*  
*Officer Nathan Lahr, Egg Harbor Township Police Department, Unit Citation*  
*EMT Jasmine Martinez, Egg Harbor Township EMS, Unit Citation*  
*EMT Timothy Jackson, Egg Harbor Township EMS, Unit Citation*

Howard Berchtold introduced Farmington Assistant Chief Dennis Sharpe who provided a summary of the incident on June 24, 2023. Farmington, Cardiff, and Bargaintown Volunteer Companies, along with Egg Harbor Township Police and Egg Harbor Township EMS, responded to the Atlantic County Utilities Authority (ACUA) for an industrial accident. An employee of the ACUA had attempted to clear a jam on a large mulching machine when a steel grate fell, fractured his leg, and trapped him in a precarious position on the top of the ten-foot-tall machine. The successful removal of the victim

required a large team of responders to care for the victim and execute the rescue. The elevated platform on Tower 15 and a stokes basket were utilized to lower the victim to the ground.

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*Chief Joseph Kaspar, Minotola Volunteer Fire Company, Unit Citation*  
*Deputy Chief Louis Nardone, Minotola Volunteer Fire Company, Unit Citation*  
*Captain Mark Dixon, Minotola Volunteer Fire Company, Unit Citation*  
*Captain Dominick Pace, Minotola Volunteer Fire Company, Unit Citation*  
*Firefighter James Abba Jr., Minotola Volunteer Fire Company, Unit Citation*  
*Firefighter Anthony Abriola, Minotola Volunteer Fire Company, Unit Citation*  
*Firefighter Kevin Chapman, Minotola Volunteer Fire Company, Unit Citation*  
*Firefighter Richard Crowell, Minotola Volunteer Fire Company, Unit Citation*  
*Firefighter Robert LaPorta, Minotola Volunteer Fire Company, Unit Citation*  
*Firefighter Steven LaPorta, Minotola Volunteer Fire Company, Unit Citation*  
*Firefighter Justin Lilla, Minotola Volunteer Fire Company, Unit Citation*  
*Candidate Firefighter Joseph D'Alessandro III, Minotola Volunteer Fire Company, Unit Citation*  
*Candidate Firefighter Caleb Dixon, Minotola Volunteer Fire Company, Unit Citation*  
*Candidate Firefighter Sophia LaPorta, Minotola Volunteer Fire Company, Unit Citation*  
*Candidate Firefighter Joshua Martinez, Minotola Volunteer Fire Company, Unit Citation*

Howard Berchtold introduced Minotola Chief Joseph Kasper who introduced Deputy Chief Louis Nardone who provided a summary of the incident on August 3, 2023. Deputy Chief Nardone first asked for a moment of silence for the four victims who could not be saved. Minotola Volunteer Fire Company, along with mutual aid companies, responded to the report of a building explosion with multiple entrapments. Incident Command was established with a report of a fully involved residential structure with collapse. Two victims were medevaced and four victims were unaccounted for. The Atlantic City Bomb Squad was on location and firefighting operations were suspended multiple times so that they could mitigate explosives still present. Once the scene was deemed safe, firefighting and recovery operations continued and utilized many responders from multiple agencies. The bodies of the missing victims were recovered with the last one being recovered in the afternoon the next day. Chief Kasper thanked past Buena Borough Mayor David Zappariello for his support.

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*Chief Levon Clayton, Longport Volunteer Fire Department, Unit Citation*  
*Assistant Chief Bruce Funk, Longport Volunteer Fire Department, Unit Citation*  
*Acting Captain Thomas Kresz, Longport Volunteer Fire Department, Unit Citation*  
*Acting Captain Dante Vespertino, Longport Volunteer Fire Department, Unit Citation (unable to attend)*  
*Captain Patrick Armstrong, Longport Volunteer Fire Department, Unit Citation*  
*Firefighter Joseph Dougherty, Longport Volunteer Fire Department, Unit Citation (unable to attend)*  
*Lieutenant Mike McGrath, Longport Beach Patrol, Unit Citation*

Howard Berchtold introduced Longport Chief Levon “Lefty” Clayton who provided a summary of the incident on August 18, 2023. Longport Volunteer Fire Company and Longport Beach Patrol, along with additional agencies, responded for a male in cardiac arrest on a boat in the Seaview Marina in Egg Harbor Township. All responders worked together to successfully provide CPR and AED shocks to the patient while removing him from the open rear deck of a boat that limited the number of responders providing immediate care. The patient was transported to Atlanticare Regional Medical Center Mainland Campus for treatment before being released home.

### **Good of the Order**

Howard Berchtold spoke about the importance of our dispatchers and noted that National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week runs from April 14<sup>th</sup> until April 20<sup>th</sup>. Howard asked for a round of applause to honor our dispatchers and call-takers.

Howard Berchtold reminded everyone of the importance of learning CPR/AED and training to recognize opioid overdoses, applying emergency action steps, and providing nasal Naloxone (Narcan) administration. Training courses are available for first responders and the public.

Thank you to the Margate City Fire Department and FMBA Local 41 for hosting the evening and providing the refreshments.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business at hand, the meeting and awards presentation was adjourned at 20:45. The next regular meeting is scheduled to be held at 19:30 on May 15, 2024 in Germania, Galloway Township.

Attested:

Robert A. Mellon, Secretary

**Fire Department/Company/Association Events**

Sun. Apr. 28, 2024	09:00	4 Polhemustown Rd, Allentown, NJ 08501	NJ Fire Museum 4 <sup>th</sup> Annual Swap Meet (09:00 - 15:00)
Sat. May 18, 2024	15:30	Port Republic VFC	Roast Beef Dinner (15:30 - 19:30) *Drive Through Only
Sun. May 19, 2024	08:00	Somers Point VFD Sta. 2 Ladies Auxiliary	Breakfast (08:00 - 12:00)
Sun. Jun. 2, 2024	12:00	Dorothy VFC	67th Annual Chicken BBQ (12:00 - 18:00)
Mon. Jun. 10, 2024	-----	Elwood VFC	Father's Day Sweepstakes Drawing
Sat. Jun. 22, 2024	11:00	Somers Point VFD Sta. 2 Ladies Auxiliary	Sub Sale (11:00 - 14:00)
Sat. Jul. 20, 2024	21:30	Hammonton VFD Sta. 2	"Backyard Oasis" Raffle Drawing at Mt. Carmel Festival
Sun. Jul. 21, 2024	08:00	Somers Point VFD Sta. 2 Ladies Auxiliary	Breakfast with Santa (08:00 - 12:00)
Fri. Aug. 9, 2024	18:00	Atlantic County 4H Fairgrounds, Rt. 50	ACFFA at 75th Annual Atlantic County 4H Fair w/ Fire Prevention Booth & Apparatus Display
Sat. Aug. 10, 2024	13:00	Atlantic County 4H Fairgrounds, Rt. 50	ACFFA at 75th Annual Atlantic County 4H Fair w/ Fire Prevention Booth & Apparatus Display
Tues. Aug. 13, 2024	19:00	Egg Harbor City VFD	New Jersey Firemen's Association Atlantic County Caucus
Sun. Aug. 18, 2024	10:00	Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center, Millville, NJ	43 <sup>rd</sup> Annual Fire Muster & Firefighters' Family Day presented by Glasstown Antique Fire Brigade
Sat. Sep. 7, 2024	12:00	Oceanville VFC	Oceanville Vol. Fire Co. 100th Anniversary Celebration (Noon-5PM) (Rain Date - Sep. 8th)
Sep. 9 - 15, 2024	varies	Yankee Stadium, New York	New York Yankees - First Responders Appreciation Week
Fri. Sep. 13, 2024		Wildwood Convention Center	New Jersey Firemen's Association Annual Convention
Sat. Sep. 14, 2024		Wildwood Convention Center	New Jersey Firemen's Association Annual Convention
Sun. Sep. 15, 2024	08:00	Somers Point VFD Sta. 2 Ladies Auxiliary	Breakfast (08:00 - 12:00)
Sat. Sep. 28, 2024		Northfield VFC	Northfield Vol. Fire Co. 100th Anniversary Celebration
Sat. Oct. 5, 2024	17:30	Somers Point VFD Sta. 2 Ladies Auxiliary	Jersey Shore Medium
Sat. Nov. (TBD), 2024	11:00	Somers Point VFD Sta. 2 Ladies Auxiliary	Sub Sale (11:00 - 14:00)
Sat. Nov. 9, 2024	15:00	Oceanville VFC	Baked Ham or Fried Oyster Dinner
Sun. Dec. 1, 2024	08:00	Somers Point VFD Sta. 2 Ladies Auxiliary	Breakfast with Santa (08:00 - 12:00)

**ACFFA Meetings**

**Atlantic County Firefighters' Association**

Wed. May 15, 2024	19:30	Germania VFC	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Jun. 19, 2024	19:30	Collings Lakes VFC	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Jul. 17, 2024	19:30	Linwood FD	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Aug. 21, 2024	19:30	Laureldale VFC	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Sep. 18, 2024	19:30	Hammonton VFD Sta. 2	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Oct. 16, 2024	19:30	Port Republic VFC	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Nov. 20, 2024	19:30	Somers Point VFD Sta. 1	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Dec. 18, 2024	19:30	Cardiff VFC	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Jan. 15, 2025	19:30	Egg Harbor City VFD	Hosting ACFFA Annual Reorganization Meeting and Annual Memorial Service
Wed. Feb. 19, 2025	19:30	Longport VFD	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting

**Atlantic County Firefighters' Association - Executive Committee**

Fri. May 3, 2024	19:30	Longport VFD	Hosting ACFFA Executive Committee Meeting
Fri. Jul. 5, 2024	19:30	Somers Point VFD Sta. 1	Hosting ACFFA Executive Committee Meeting
Fri. Sep. 6, 2024	19:30	Absecon VFD	Hosting ACFFA Executive Committee Meeting
Fri. Nov. 1, 2024	19:30	South Egg Harbor VFC	Hosting ACFFA Executive Committee Meeting
Fri. Jan. 3, 2025	19:30	Pomona VFC	Hosting ACFFA Executive Committee Meeting (Annual Reorganization)

**Other Atlantic County Organization Meetings**

**Atlantic County Fire Training Advisory Board**

Mon. Jul. 15, 2024	19:00	Anthony "Tony" Canale Training Center	Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Training Advisory Board
Mon. Oct. 21, 2024	19:00	Anthony "Tony" Canale Training Center	Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Training Advisory Board
Mon. Jan. 13, 2025	19:00	Anthony "Tony" Canale Training Center	Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Training Advisory Board

**Atlantic County Fire Chiefs' Association**

Wed. May 8, 2024	20:00	Northfield VFD	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Wed. Jun. 12, 2024	20:00	Collings Lakes VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Wed. Jul. 10, 2024	20:00	East Vineland VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Wed. Aug. 14, 2024	20:00	Laureldale VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Tues. Sep. 10, 2024	20:00	Nesco VFC ***Moved to Tuesday	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Wed. Oct. 9, 2024	20:00	Estell Manor VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Wed. Nov. 13, 2024	20:00	Bayview VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Wed. Dec. 11, 2024	20:00	Sweetwater VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
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Tues. Jan. 28, 2025	20:00	Absecon VFD	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
February 2025-----	-----	-----	NO MEETING-----

**Atl. Co. Firefighters' Death Benefit Fund Assoc.**

Thurs. Jul. 25, 2024	19:30	Absecon VFD	Hosting Meeting of Atl. Co. Firefighters' Death Benefit Fund Association
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Thurs. Jan. 23, 2025	19:30	Bayview VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atl. Co. Firefighters' Death Benefit Fund Association
Thurs. Jul. 24, 2025	19:30	Somers Point VFD Sta. 1	Hosting Meeting of Atl. Co. Firefighters' Death Benefit Fund Association