

Atlantic County Firefighters' Association

"In Union For The Safety Of All"



March 18, 2026

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Atlantic County Firefighters' Association was called to order at 19:30 on March 18, 2026 at the Weekstown Volunteer Fire Company by 2nd Vice President William L. Merola, Jr.. The meeting was opened with a flag salute followed by an Invocation by Howard Berchtold. Howard took a moment to remember Bill Donath, Sgt-At-Arms, and reported that the service for him was well done with military honors as he was interred at the Veterans' Cemetery. Howard thanked Sandy Walczak for helping Bill to attend meetings over the last couple of years and asked that everyone keep Bill and his family in their thoughts. Vice President Merola then pointed out the fire exits and asked that all electronic devices be silenced.

Introduction of Host Chief

President Mackintosh introduced Chief TJ Culleney of the Weekstown Volunteer Fire Company. Chief Culleney welcomed all to Weekstown and Mullica Township.

In Attendance

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

Total Chief/Delegate Attendance – 42 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 February 18, 2026 meeting, as sent to the member companies.

Report of Treasurer

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to accept the report of the Treasurer, totaling \$99,359.91, as read by Treasurer Jaime C. Mellon.

Bank of America / Bank of America / Parke Bank / Parke Bank / Parke Bank
Checking: \$6,265.14 / Savings: \$3,023.72 / Checking: \$56,369.05 / Money Market: \$1,046.15 / CD, matures 4/5/2026: \$32,655.85

Committee Reports

Executive Committee – Chairman Howard Berchtold summarized the minutes from the meeting of the Executive Committee held on March 13, 2026, and thanked the Cardiff Vol. Fire Co. for hosting. The committee were updated on dates of upcoming 100th Anniversary events. Germania on June 6th, Pomona on October 17th, and East Vineland on October 24th. Dorothy has a housing for Squad 1272 scheduled for August 22nd. Howard reported on the financial report to the committee and read from the committee minutes. **Finance** – Kim Feinstein distributed and reviewed the report of the audit committee based on a review of the books and records submitted by Treasurer Jaime Mellon on March 3, 2026 in Somers Point. Everything was found to be in good order. Kim reviewed the five financial recommendations to complete the move to Parke

Bank, close the Bank of America accounts, and set up an investment account for better long-term earnings. First, close Bank of America Accounts. Second, open an investment account with \$10,000 initial investment. Third, plan on additional \$5,000 investment deposits annually, if possible. Fourth, Move \$25,000 from Parke Bank Checking account to the Money Market Account. Fifth, journal all 50/50 funds deposited to Parke Bank Checking. It was noted by Secretary Robert Mellon that all 50/50 funds are journaled monthly when transferring the funds to the Treasurer. There was discussion about the opening of an investment account. All agreed that everyone with a recommendation should submit it prior to the May meeting of the Executive Committee so that all options may be reviewed. Treasurer Jaime Mellon reported that the current CD will come due in April, and she will put it in the Money Market account, earning a comparable rate, for the time being. Howard Berchtold read an email from Dana McCullough, McCullough Capital and Vernon Advisors, advising on the next steps to set up the program for credit card acceptance. Howard reported that they are working towards having everything in place by the ACUA Earth Day festival where the Association will be selling merchandise and sharing information. Howard also advised that he is looking at refreshing the Association website and asked for recommendations from departments that have updated websites and who they use.” Howard reported that the new program will help with credit card acceptance, invoicing, and fundraising. The committee received an update on planned fundraising and Howard read the committee minutes report. **“Fundraising/Golf Tournament** – Howard reported that he has been speaking with Sonny McCullough recently and reported that he has offered to share contact info for people that have knowledge and experience with fundraising via golf tournaments and may be able to help the Association. President Chuck Mackintosh reported that golf tournament planning has stalled and welcomed any assistance that may get something scheduled for the fall. Chris Kislow reported that he has five of ten businesses signed up for the discount card fundraiser and that he is hoping to have all ten spots filled by May.” The committee received an update on radio communications and Howard read the committee minutes report. **“Atlantic County Radio Communications** – Howard Berchtold reported that the working group attended the February 27th meeting of the Atlantic County Mayors Association and that they will soon attend a meeting of the Atlantic County League of Municipalities in April. Howard reported that the working group presented their information seeking reduction of call taking and dispatching delays for the benefit of public safety and they had a very productive back and forth conversation with those in attendance. Howard noted that the Mayors Association did pass a resolution that should reflect their support to continue the study for centralized call taking and fire/EMS dispatch. Howard reported that the working group is willing to attend any local meetings, if invited.” Howard reported that the committee had asked the Secretary and Treasurer to step out while they discussed the annual stipends for those positions. The committee agreed to recommend a \$500 increase, from \$1,500 annually to \$2,000 annually, and that the stipend would be split evenly across the two biannual payroll cycles, July and December, instead of all paid on the December cycle. Howard reported that the committee also recommended accepting all five recommendations of the Audit Committee. First, close Bank of America Accounts. Second, open an investment account with \$10,000 initial investment. Third, plan on additional \$5,000 investment deposits annually, if possible. Fourth, Move \$25,000 from Parke Bank Checking account to the Money Market Account. Fifth, journal all 50/50 funds deposited to Parke Bank Checking. It was noted by Secretary Robert Mellon that all 50/50 funds are journaled monthly when transferring the funds to the Treasurer. The next meeting of the Executive Committee is scheduled for May 1, 2026 in Longport.

Atlantic County Fire Training Advisory Board – Howard Berchtold reported that the next meeting of the fire training advisory board is scheduled for April 20, 2026 at the training center. Howard reported that Jacob Ruga will be taking the seat previously held by Chris Tilley. All other fire service representatives will remain the same. Howard reported that the county will be filling a vacant county representative seat by appointing Sean Macri since he works for the county.

Training – Howard Berchtold reported that the roof prop has been installed and that the instructors are training on the use of it. Howard noted that they will try to set up a demonstration for the County Commissioners and thank them for the funding. Howard noted that Director Brian Middleton was unable to attend the meeting and read the training report from the minutes of the Executive Committee. **“Training** – Director Brian Middleton reported that the Firefighter I is going well, and they are splitting the Firefighter I class on Sundays, with an AM group and a PM group, due to the class size. Brian reported that future Firefighter I and Firefighter II classes will have their schedules reorganized to meet the new 5th edition requirements and that the instructors have completed their train-the-trainer classes to teach the new edition. Brian reported that the RIC class scheduled for June is now full and that he is working on scheduling one more RIC challenge exam for late May. There are also ICS300 and ICS400 classes scheduled in May. ICS300 will be at the training center and ICS400 will be at Atlanticare. Both are daytime classes. Brian reported that the new nozzles have been delivered with only a couple of items still outstanding.”

Health and Wellness – Howard Berchtold noted that Secretary Robert Mellon has shared some very good health and cancer information via email and thanked him for the updates.

Fire Coordinator – Fire Coordinator Clyde W. “Chip” Stockton Jr. reported he recently met with the Deputy Fire Coordinators in East Vineland. They discussed the radio talkgroups and communication differences and issues when working with Gloucester County. Chip reported on recent incidents including a boat fire in Longport and a structure fire in Weymouth

Township. Chip reported that both Tender Task Force trailers are getting new tires. Chip provided an update about the state foam takeback program and there was a discussion about foam that is in the onboard tanks of apparatus. Chip reported that the state would like all departments that missed registration for the current foam takeback program to take an inventory of their foam on hand and register for a possible future round. Chip reported that Port Republic will host a Tender Task Force Alpha (TTF-A) meeting on March 26th and that they will start planning for a drill.

NJ State Firemen’s Assn. – Executive Committeewoman Cindy Badger reported on changes to the federal Public Safety Officers’ Benefits (PSOB) and Public Safety Officers’ Educational Assistance (PSOEA) Programs. For FY2026, the one-time lump sum PSOB death and disability benefit is \$461,656, and the PSOEA monthly benefit for a student attending an educational institution full time is \$1,574. Two provisions in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026 (P.L. 119-60), enacted on December 18, 2025, extended PSOB eligibility to retired public law enforcement officers with personal injuries caused by targeted attacks due to their prior law enforcement service and created presumptive eligibility for public safety officers with certain cancers linked to exposure to carcinogens. Cindy provided an update from NJSFA on the supplemental healthcare, supplemental relief and special relief expenses over the past few years. Cindy reported on a recent meeting of NJSFA officers and NJ State Senator Anthony Bucco concerning NJ State Firemen’s Home funding. Cindy reviewed some proposed budget and expansion numbers from the home and noted that it may affect NJSFA program funding.

NJ Firemen’s Home – Oscar Dutch, Atlantic County Board Manager, reported on the NJ statutory rules establishing the funding of the home. Oscar reported that a committee has been looking at capital improvement of the home over the last two years and reviewed a plan for \$14 million to be allotted, or financed for across ten years, for a 2.5-to-3-year project for capital improvements to include transitioning to all single occupancy rooms. There was much discussion about the plans and the finances. Oscar reported that the NJ State Firemen’s Home 2026 Golt Outing is scheduled for June 16th.

Atlantic County Firefighters’ Death Benefit Fund Assn. – Cindy Badger reported that the next meeting of the ACFDBFA will be 7:00 PM on May 28, 2026 at the Bargaintown Fire Company.

Atlantic County Fire Chiefs’ Association – Butch Kienzle reported that the next meeting of the Atlantic County Fire Chiefs’ Association will be 8:00 PM on April 8, 2026 at the Scullville Volunteer Fire Company.

Harold J. “Whitey” Swartz Valor Awards and Service Recognition – Billy Merola reported that the committee submitted a report of the finalized valor awards to association officers for the presentation in April. There are seven valor awards to be presented. Howard Berchtold reported that there are seven to be recognized for having achieved fifty years of service. Howard, on behalf of the Officers and the Executive Committee, thanked all that served on the Valor Committee. The committee was tasked with tightening the guidelines and conducting comprehensive reviews of the nominations submitted over several meetings to finalize the awards. Billy Merola thanked all members of the committee for their hard work and reported that the next meeting of the committee will be scheduled for late spring or early summer to continue reviewing and clarifying the nomination guidelines. Howard Berchtold reminded everyone of the hard cutoff for all valor nominations, and service recognition, to be submitted by January 31st for the April presentations.

Communications

There were no communications to report.

Deferred Business

There was no deferred business to act upon.

New Business

Howard Berchtold reported that the NJ Firemen’s Home has their annual golf tournament scheduled for June and that the association is a regular sponsor at the bronze level.

Motion was made, seconded, and carried to sponsor the New Jersey Firemen’s Home 2026 Golf Outing at the bronze level with a \$200.00 donation.

Howard Berchtold reported that the Association normally purchases flowers, or sends a donation, to remember an Officer that passes while in office. Howard requested that a donation be made to the Estell Manor Volunteer Fire Company, in lieu of flowers, in memory of Sgt-At-Arms William Donath.

Motion was made, seconded, and carried that a \$200 donation be made to the Estell Manor Volunteer Fire Company, in lieu of flowers, in memory of Sgt-At-Arms William Donath.

Motion was made, seconded, and carried to increase the annual stipend for both the position of Secretary and the position of Treasurer from the current \$1,500 paid at the second annual payroll in December to a total of \$2,000 each which is to be paid, split evenly, twice per year during the biannual payroll cycles, which are currently July and December, as recommended by the Executive Committee.

Motion was made, seconded, and carried to accept the report of the Audit Committee as recommended by the Executive Committee.

Motion was made, seconded, and carried to accept the five recommendations of the Finance/Audit Committee as recommended by the Executive Committee. First, close Bank of America Accounts. Second, open an investment account with \$10,000 initial investment. Third, plan on additional \$5,000 investment deposits annually, if possible. Fourth, Move \$25,000 from Parke Bank Checking account to the Money Market Account. Fifth, journal all 50/50 funds deposited to Parke Bank Checking.

Bills

The bills, totaling \$10,748.37, were read by Treasurer Jaime C. Mellon. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to pay the bills from the proper funds.

Bills --- Chase Credit Card - \$3,507.37 (credit card) / DiVal Safety Equipment - \$6,811.00 (equipment) / NJ Firemen's Home - \$200.00 (Bronze Sponsor Golf Tournament) / Estell Manor Vol. Fire Co. - \$200.00 (in lieu of flowers, memory of Sgt-At-Arms William Donath) / McCullough Capital - \$30.00 (monthly fee, financial services)

Good of the Order

Butch Kienzle reported that Quincy Jones, Section Forest Fire Warden NJFFS, is battling cancer and that a GiveInKind page has been created to assist, and that Section Wardens also have fundraiser t-shirts available.

Howard Berchtold inquired if any companies have information on vendors or places to donate old but usable equipment and to contact him as South Egg Harbor has some retired airpacks that may be donated.

Chip Stockton reported that Germania Vol. Fire Co. has 100th Anniversary Challenge Coins available.

Thank you to the Weekstown Volunteer Fire Company for hosting the evening and providing refreshments.

Adjournment

Benediction was conducted by Howard Berchtold. There being no further business at hand, the meeting was adjourned at 20:50. The next regular meeting is scheduled to be held at 19:30 on April 15, 2026 at the Anthony "Tony" Canale Fire Training Center and hosted by the Margate City Fire Department. This meeting will include the "Harold J. "Whitey" Swartz Valor Awards and Service Recognition" program. Class-A uniforms are requested.

Attested:

Robert A. Mellon, Secretary

Fire Department/Company/Association Events

Fri. Mar. 27, 2026	17:00	Hammonton VFC Sta. 2	14th Annual Firehouse Fish Fry Dinner
Sat. Apr. 11, 2026	15:00	Oceanville VFC	Baked Ham or Fried Oyster Dinner *DRIVE-THRU/TAKEOUT ONLY
Sat. May 2, 2026	13:00	Castaway Cove, Ocean City Boardwalk	Presale Wristband Benefits Bayview VFC Aux. *Must be purchased in advance (13:00-16:00)
Sat. May 9, 2026	15:30	Port Republic VFC	Roast Beef Dinner (15:30 - 19:30) *DRIVE THROUGH ONLY
Sat. Jun. 6, 2026	13:00	Germania VFC	Germania Vol. Fire Co. 100th Anniversary Celebration
Sun. Jun. 7, 2026	12:00	Dorothy VFC	69th Annual Chicken BBQ (12:00 - 18:00)
Wed. Jun. 10, 2026	18:00	Smithville Inn, Smithville	Beef & Beer to Benefit Oceanville VFC
Tues. Aug. 11, 2026	19:00	Egg Harbor City VFD	New Jersey Firemen's Association Atlantic County Caucus
Sat. Aug. 22, 2026	13:00	Dorothy VFC	Housing - Squad 1272 *Judging 11:00, Parade Start 13:00
Fri. Sep. 18, 2026	08:00	Wildwood	Five Mile Beach Vol. Firemen's Assoc. hosts NJ Fire Expo (Tents & Exhibits)
Fri. Sep. 18, 2026	11:00	Wildwood Convention Center	New Jersey State Firemen's Association Annual Convention & Memorial Service (Reg. 07:00-11:00)
Sat. Sep. 19, 2026	07:00	Wildwood Convention Center	New Jersey State Firemen's Association Annual Convention (Voting Only 07:00-11:00)
Sat. Sep. 19, 2026	08:00	Wildwood	Five Mile Beach Vol. Firemen's Assoc. hosts NJ Fire Expo (Tents & Exhibits)
Sat. Sep. 19, 2026	14:00	Wildwood	Five Mile Beach Vol. Firemen's Assoc. hosts NJ State Firemen's Convention Parade
Sat. Sep. 26, 2026	18:30	Dorothy VFC	5th Annual Designer Bag Bingo (Doors Open 17:00)
Sat. Oct. 17, 2026	11:00	Pomona VFC	Pomona Vol. Fire Co. 100th Anniversary Celebration
Sat. Oct. 17, 2026	15:30	Port Republic VFC	Roast Beef Dinner (15:30 - 19:30) *DRIVE THROUGH ONLY
Sat. Oct. 24, 2026		East Vineland VFC	East Vineland Vol. Fire Co. 100th Anniversary *Details TBD
Sat. Nov. 14, 2026	15:00	Oceanville VFC	Baked Ham or Fried Oyster Dinner

ACFFA Meetings

Atlantic County Firefighters' Association

Wed. Apr. 15, 2026	19:30	Anthony "Tony" Canale Training Center (Host -Margate FD)	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting and Annual Valor Awards Presentation
Wed. May 20, 2026	19:30	Bayview VFC	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Jun. 17, 2026	19:30	East Vineland VFC	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Jul. 15, 2026	19:30	Linwood FD	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Aug. 19, 2026	19:30	Cologne VFC	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Sep. 16, 2026	19:30	Hammonton VFD Sta. 2	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Oct. 21, 2026	19:30	Port Republic VFC	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Nov. 18, 2026	19:30	Somers Point VFD Sta. 1	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Dec. 16, 2026	19:30	Scullville VFC	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting
Wed. Jan. 20, 2027	19:30	Egg Harbor City VFD	Hosting ACFFA Annual Reorganization Meeting and Annual Memorial Service
Wed. Feb. 17, 2027	19:30	Longport VFD	Hosting ACFFA Monthly Meeting

Atlantic County Firefighters' Association - Executive Committee

Fri. May 1, 2026	19:30	Longport VFD	Hosting ACFFA Executive Committee Meeting
Fri. Jul. 10, 2026	19:30	Somers Point VFD Sta. 1	Hosting ACFFA Executive Committee Meeting
Fri. Sep. 4, 2026	19:30	Absecon VFD	Hosting ACFFA Executive Committee Meeting
Fri. Oct. 30, 2026	19:30	South Egg Harbor VFC	Hosting ACFFA Executive Committee Meeting
Fri. Jan. 8, 2027	19:30	Pomona VFC	Hosting ACFFA Executive Committee Meeting (Annual Reorganization)

Other Atlantic County Organization Meetings

Atlantic County Fire Training Advisory Board

Mon. Apr. 20, 2026	19:00	Anthony "Tony" Canale Training Center	Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Training Advisory Board
Mon. Jul. 20, 2026	19:00	Anthony "Tony" Canale Training Center	Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Training Advisory Board
Mon. Oct. 19, 2026	19:00	Anthony "Tony" Canale Training Center	Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Training Advisory Board
Mon. Jan. 11, 2027	19:00	Anthony "Tony" Canale Training Center	Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Training Advisory Board

Atlantic County Fire Chiefs' Association

Wed. Apr. 8, 2026	20:00	Scullville VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Wed. May 13, 2026	20:00	Northfield VFD	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Wed. Jun. 10, 2026	20:00	Collings Lakes VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Wed. Jul. 8, 2026	20:00	East Vineland VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Wed. Aug. 12, 2026	20:00	Laureldale VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Tues. Sep. 9, 2026	20:00	Nesco VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Wed. Oct. 14, 2026	20:00	Estell Manor VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Tues. Nov. 10, 2026	20:00	Bayview VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
Wed. Dec. 9, 2026	20:00	Sweetwater VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
-----	-----	-----	-----
Tues. Jan. 26, 2027	20:00	Absecon VFD	Hosting Meeting of Atlantic County Fire Chief's Association
February 2027-----	-----	-----	NO MEETING-----

Atl. Co. Firefighters' Death Benefit Fund Assoc.

Thurs. May 28, 2026	19:30	Bargaintown VFC	Hosting Meeting of Atl. Co. Firefighters' Death Benefit Fund Association
Thurs. Aug. 27, 2026	19:30	Somers Point VFD Sta. 1	Hosting Meeting of Atl. Co. Firefighters' Death Benefit Fund Association
Thurs. Nov. 19, 2026	19:30	***TBD***	Hosting Meeting of Atl. Co. Firefighters' Death Benefit Fund Association