

FIRE SERVICE TRAINING

REPORT OF THE
VIRGINIA ADVISORY LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

To

THE GOVERNOR

And

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
Department of Purchases and Supply
Richmond
1967

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Richmond, Virginia, July 28, 1967

To:

HONORABLE MILLS E. GODWIN, JR., *Governor of Virginia*
and
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA

Since World War II, the increase in the Nation's population and the growth of the larger urban areas have caused new attention to be focused on fire fighting and fire prevention. In 1940 the country's population was 131 million and in 1950 increased to almost 151 million, an approximate increase of 20 million. In 1960, the population was 179,323,175. Thus, in a 20-year period the United States' population increased almost 50 million persons. During this 20-year period, World War II occurred and deprived the population of many commodities they wished to purchase. The end of the War was a signal for an increasing demand for new products and the population increase has caused this demand to continue.

Building has also boomed as new houses are needed, new living areas for the houses and new factories to produce the manufactured goods demanded. Commodity production has spurred research to develop new products and processes, thus creating tremendous headaches for fire chiefs, fire marshals and building inspectors. In the past most industrial plants were located in municipalities where workers and necessary facilities were available. Today, plants are everywhere, including rural areas where few people live. The population explosion has encircled most cities with satellite communities where commuters can get to and from work. Usually, these communities are protected by volunteer fire departments which frequently are hard-pressed to meet the demands by urbanites now living in the country or suburbs.

During normal working hours there are seldom enough available firemen to properly man apparatus and during evening hours there is a surplus of men, whose hearts are willing, but know-how weak. Fire service has attempted to correct this situation by sponsoring training programs but lack of funds and personnel make this inadequate.

Because of transportation convenience, super markets and shopping centers have cropped up in rural areas and volunteer fire chiefs find themselves faced with buildings of tremendous size, constructed in a somewhat dubious manner and rarely constructed as model fire safety edifices. More than often, they are erected in areas where the water supply is inadequate and a fire prevention code is lacking or, if present, is inadequate. The erection of industry in such areas further complicates this picture. The volunteer fire fighter, originally constituted to handle an occasional residential fire, now faces fires in shopping centers, bowling alleys, churches, schools, farmers' markets and factories abounding with dangerous electrical and chemical equipment. Added to this, is the constant transit on the highways of large trucks carrying highly combustible and explosive material.

This is the National picture and Virginia follows the National trend. In 1940, Virginia's population was 2,667,773, in 1950, 3,318,680 and in 1960, 3,966,949, an increase in 20 years of 1,299,176. Compact areas in Alexandria, Arlington and Fairfax and Norfolk, Richmond and, others have followed the National trend of suburbia. In 1966, insurance companies alone in Virginia paid fire losses totaling \$16,727,952.00, plus uninsured losses in unknown amounts. In 1966, 186 citizens died as a result of fire. In Virginia there are 377 volunteer fire departments. Most factories have fire brigades and 11 United States military camps have fire units.

Development of new fire fighting techniques and equipment to meet the increasing fire hazards have made it necessary that the modern fire fighter be a highly skilled technician. To meet this need it is obvious that the training of both permanent fire fighting personnel and volunteer firemen is essential. The larger departments conduct training schools, but much difficulty is encountered by the smaller units, especially the volunteer groups, in trying to secure instruction.

Recognizing the need to survey what fire service training is and what should be available, the Governor, Mills E. Godwin, Jr., in a letter to the Virginia Advisory Legislative Council dated January 3, 1967, stated in part as follows:

"Representatives of the Virginia State Fire Chiefs Association have discussed with me on several occasions a suggestion for the creation of a Fire Service Training Division, possibly under the State Department of Education in facilities owned or controlled by the State.

"Recognizing the importance of trained manpower in meeting the demands of present-day fire fighting, I respectfully request the Virginia Advisory Legislative Council to undertake a study of this question and to make a report to the Governor and the General Assembly by November 1, 1967."

Pursuant to this request, the Council appointed one of its members, Honorable Tom Frost of Warrenton, a member of the House of Delegates and Chairman of the Council, to be Chairman of a Committee to study this problem and make a preliminary report to the Council. The following were selected as members of this Committee to serve with Mr. Frost: E. E. Willey, member of the Senate, Richmond; H. E. Bailey, Secretary, Virginia State Firemen's Association, South Hill; E. B. Bayne, Fire Chief, Virginia Beach; E. L. Brower, Town Manager, Warrenton; Russell M. Carneal, member of the House of Delegates, Williamsburg; Joseph H. Clements, Fire Chief, Arlington County, Arlington; Clay A. Easterly, Fire Chief, Martinsville; Eldred H. Hendricks, Director of Conferences and Institutes, University of Virginia, Charlottesville; Julian F. Hirst, City Manager, Roanoke; E. W. Jayne, Deputy Fire Chief, Alexandria; Albert R. Miller, Warrenton and C. Sutton Mullen, Jr., State Fire Marshal, Richmond.

The Committee met, organized and selected Senator Willey as Vice-Chairman. G. M. Lapsley and Frank R. Dunham served as Secretary and Recording Secretary, respectively, to the Committee.

The Committee held a public hearing in Richmond on May 11, 1967, at which those interested were requested to present their views. In addition, the Committee secured information from Rexford Wilson, Director, Fire Service Extension Department, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland and D. Keith Phillippe, North Carolina Fire Service Training, Raleigh, North Carolina, who appeared before the Committee and discussed the fire service training programs of their states.

After consideration of all the information presented to the Committee, a report was made to the Council.

After carefully considering the Report of the Committee, the Council presents its findings and makes the following recommendations:

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the State Board of Education embark upon the development of a program of uniform fire service training sufficient to meet the needs of the paid and volunteer fire departments throughout the State.
2. That there be created an Advisory Committee on Fire Service Training to the State Board of Education to consist of seven persons appointed by the Governor, to be charged with developing, planning and putting into effect such a uniform fire service training program.
3. That an appropriation of \$25,000 for each year of the ensuing biennium be made to the State Department of Education for the implementation of the program and the assembling of an adequate staff to put it into effect.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

In considering these recommendations, we should first look at the history of fire service training in the State and the facilities presently available therefor. In 1940 the State Department of Education began a program of fire training and employed one fire training specialist. This program resulted from a request by the Virginia State Firemen's Association and the Virginia State Fire Chief's Association. This one instructor devoted his full time to giving instruction, upon request, in fire fighting methods to volunteer firemen in various sections of the State. During 1958, requests for additional such training necessitated the employment of an additional fire training instructor on a full-time basis. Presently, one of the instructors works in the eastern part of the State and the other in the western part. The dividing line is from Bath County through Appomattox and Mecklenburg Counties.

The Board of Education with the help of the communities has conducted State-wide schools at South Boston and Staunton annually and has held schools in Williamsburg. These have been well attended. More recently, regional and local schools have been developed and held in various sections of the State. During 1967, 194 such schools were held and 4,126 persons from 286 separate fire companies received instruction. In addition, men from 19 industries attended.

Obviously, with such a large number of persons desiring to receive fire service training, the activities in which the two staff members of the Department are able to participate are wholly inadequate, as is the budget devoted to this purpose, which amounted to approximately \$16,000.00 from State funds during the current fiscal year. Additionally, \$14,000.00 is paid part-time instructors from State, federal and local funds.

As can be seen, since 1940 the State program while functioning efficiently within its limitations, has not expanded materially. Today there is a great demand for expansion of programs on the officer training level which deal with the scientific principles of fire and fire fighting. The present programs concentrate on the fundamentals of fire fighting but there is a lack of instruction in the causes of fire, the means of prevention and the administration and leadership. From necessity, fire fighters must

first be taught the rudimentary principles of how to fight a fire. Today this field has been well covered and through local interest more information is demanded on the science of fire and fire fighting.

Our neighboring states of Maryland and North Carolina have found it highly rewarding to develop programs on a much more elaborate scale and we feel that, considering the steadily increasing hazards from fire as the State becomes more urbanized and the danger to life and property involved, a similar program is amply justified in Virginia.

We are not at this time in a position to delineate specifically the details of the program which we feel Virginia should have. Nor do we think that a full-fledged program could be initiated immediately and be wholly successful. The programs in Maryland and North Carolina have been developed over a number of years and are working satisfactorily now but we are advised that the authorities in those states feel that a gradual approach leads to a more satisfactory long-run accomplishment.

On the other hand, we are strongly of the opinion that a beginning should be made and for this reason we recommend the creation of an Advisory Committee on Fire Service Training, which would consist of persons who are knowledgeable both in the special field of fire fighting and in the techniques of fire service training. We further recommend a modest appropriation to the State Department of Education with the expectation that with the experience which the Vocational Education Department staff now has, the know-how which would be contributed by the proposed Advisory Committee and the cooperation of fire departments throughout the State, which has been noteworthy in the limited activities conducted by the Department in the past, a program can in a reasonably short time be put into effect which will furnish to the thousands of firemen throughout the State, training of the caliber which they need and earnestly desire.

In addition, such a program when put into operation in time will effect a State-wide saving in the lowering of insurance rates and a substantial decrease in fire losses. Thus, the State and citizens will prosper from such a program.

We recommend that the proposed Advisory Committee on Fire Service Training consist of seven persons appointed by the Governor. This should be a group large enough to give representation to the more important interests involved yet not so large as to impair efficiency of its operations. The composition of the Committee should be left to the discretion of the Governor rather than specified in the statute; however, we would think it probable that he would find it desirable to have representatives of the Associations of trained fire fighters, the insurance business, industry generally, and the field of education.

We do not feel competent to specify with particularity the form which the Fire Service Training Program should take. This might depend on many things such as the availability of competent instructors, the number of persons desiring to avail themselves of the training, and the location and availability of suitable facilities. It would probably be desirable to provide both the basic training, which all fire fighters should have, and the more advanced training which would be desirable for officers of fire fighting companies. An expansion of the program of the Community Colleges might be appropriate. Coordination of the program with the fire prevention and inspection, and arson schools which have been conducted by the State Fire Marshal is a possibility. These details can be worked out in the planning stage and experimental programs might be instituted. When the time arrives for the preparation of the budget for the biennium 1970-72,

the State Department of Education should be in a position to present to the Legislature a detailed plan for the provision of fire service training and we feel that the working out of these details can safely be left in the hands of the State Board of Education, with the aid of the counsel of the Advisory Committee which we propose.

Proposed legislation to carry out the recommendations of the Council is attached to this Report.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We express our appreciation to the members of the Committee for the great amount of time and effort which they gave to this study. We also express our appreciation to all who afforded the Committee the benefit of their knowledge and views both at public hearings and in conference.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Frost, Chairman
Charles R. Fenwick, Vice-Chairman
C. W. Cleaton
John Warren Cooke
John H. Daniel
J. D. Hagood
Charles K. Hutchens
J. C. Hutcheson
Garnett S. Moore
Lewis A. McMurrin, Jr.
Sam E. Pope
Arthur H. Richardson
William F. Stone
Edward E. Willey

A BILL To amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Title 22 a chapter numbered 15.2, consisting of §§ 22-330.12 through 22-330.16, creating an Advisory Committee on Fire Service Training in the Department of Education; fixing the number and terms of the Committee membership, the duties of Committee and other related matters.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia :

1. That the Code of Virginia be amended by adding in Title 22 a chapter numbered 15.2, consisting of §§ 22-330.12 through 22-330.16.

§ 22-330.12. An Advisory Committee on Fire Service Training consisting of seven members and hereinafter called "the Committee," is created in the Department of Education to consult and advise with the State Board of Education.

§ 22-330.13. The members of the Committee shall be appointed by the Governor for terms of four years each, beginning on July first of the year of appointment; provided, however, no person shall be eligible to serve for or during more than two successive four-year terms; but after the expiration of the remainder of an unexpired term to which appointed, two additional four-year terms may be served by such a member if appointed thereto. The Governor in making appointments to the Committee shall select persons knowledgeable in the techniques of fire fighting and fire service training in addition to such other fields of interest as he deems appropriate. An appointment to fill a vacancy shall be for the unexpired term.

§ 22-330.14. The members of the Committee shall receive a per diem of twenty-five dollars for each day of attendance on meetings of the Committee and shall be reimbursed for their necessary and actual expenses incurred in the performance of their duties hereunder, the same to be payable out of funds of the State Department of Education.

§ 22-330.15. The Committee shall elect its chairman and may elect one of its members as its secretary. The Superintendent of Public Instruction, with the advice of the Committee, may employ an executive secretary for the Committee who may receive such salary as is authorized by the State Board of Education, payable out of funds appropriated to it. The Committee shall meet not less than four times each year, and may meet oftener upon the call of the chairman or any four members.

§ 22-330.16. The Committee shall confer and advise with the State Board of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction upon the development and institution of a program of State fire service training to meet the needs of the State.

2. There is hereby appropriated to the Department of Education the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars per year for each year of the biennium beginning July 1, 1968 for carrying out the provisions of this act.

