

OAK LEVEL VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSOCIATION AND EMERGENCY SERVICE DEPARTMENT

2019 Oak Level Road Halifax, Virginia 24558

Constitution, Rules and Regulations

Approved - November, 2003

Revised –September, 2009

Purpose: In all well regulated organizations certain rules are adopted as essential for the order and operation. Therefore, we, the members of the Oak Level Volunteer Fire Association and Emergency Service Department for the purpose of promoting these purposes for which we have united, do hereby agree to support the following articles as our rules of operation:

Article 1: *Name of the Organization*

This company is to be known as the Oak Level Volunteer Fire Association a volunteer organization, existing as a non-profit organization.

Article 2: *Purpose of the Organization*

The purpose of the organization is to

- 1 – protect life and health
- 2 – protect property
- 3 – extinguish fires

of the citizens of our Fire District and any other district that we may be called upon to assist.

Oak Level Volunteer Fire Association and Emergency Service Department Support Team

The purpose of the support team is to help provide financial support for the organization through various activities. The Oak Level Volunteer Fire and Emergency Services Department Support Team shall be treated as a separate organization with it's own rules and regulations. Its members shall not be governed by these bylaws unless such person is a member of this organization as well.

Article 3: *Membership*

The membership of the organization shall consist of persons elected into membership in the designated manner. They shall be citizens residing within the Oak Level Fire District at the time of application for membership into the organization. All new members must be at least 16 years of age. Before members can drive any of the organization's vehicles, they must be an active member, at least 21 years of age, have a valid Virginia driver's license, and complete EVOC training.

Any person desiring to join the organization must submit an application in writing. A criminal history report is required to be passed by all applicants. The submitted application will be read at the first business meeting after submitted. It will then be held for consideration for 30 days and then be voted on for acceptance at the following scheduled business meeting. The applicant must receive a 2/3rds majority of votes to be accepted. The person submitting the application will then become a probationary member for the

first 6 months. At the end of the 6-month period, he/she will be voted on again as a Regular or Junior member. All persons being voted on must leave the room so that the floor may be opened for discussion. All voting pertaining to membership will be done by secret ballot. Should the department turn down an application, the applicant must wait 6 months to reapply.

Dues of \$10.00 per year shall be imposed upon each member of the organization. The dues are to be paid by the regular November business meeting. Any person with delinquent dues as of January 1 will be removed from the roll and must submit a new application for membership. Dues for new members are to be paid on the night he / she is accepted as a probationary member. Dues are to be paid again by the November business meeting for the following year.

The members of this organization shall consist of (1) Regular Members, (2) Junior Members, (3) Honorary Members, and (4) Life Members. Members must notify the Chief, Secretary, or President within 7 days prior to or after being absent with a reason why in order to be excused. Members wishing to receive credit for attendance at fire calls must return to the station following the call. The only exception will be permission to leave from the scene of the call from the officer in charge. For Emergency Service calls, personnel need not return to the station unless directed to do so by the officer in charge of the scene.

Members are defined as follows:

A **Regular** Member must be at least eighteen (18) years of age or older and must be active in the involvement's which occur during the year.

A **Junior** member shall be between the ages of sixteen (16) and eighteen (18) and must have written consent from their parents or guardian. All Junior Members must maintain at least a C average in school to remain a member of the organization, copies of grades are to be kept on file by the secretary. Junior members are not to enter any burning structures until the fire is under control, and then only under the direct supervision of the officer in charge. Junior members are also expected to participate in the organization the same as outlined for the regular members. Junior members become regular members upon reaching eighteen (18) years of age as long as they are still active in the organization.

After a Regular Member has completed 20 years of service they will become a **Life** Member. Any member in good standing in the category of Regular Member will automatically become an **Honorary** member at the age of sixty (60).

All Regular, Honorary, and Life Members can be classified as Auxiliary Members or Firefighter/EMS Personnel. Each Firefighter/EMS Personnel is considered to be active if they attend 50% of training meetings and 50% of business meetings and 50% of fundraisers. Each Firefighter/EMS Personnel is also required to complete at least one – 16 hour training course – every other year. Each Auxiliary Member is considered to be active if they attend 50% of business meetings and 50% of fundraisers. Only active Firefighter/EMS Personnel will be issued equipment by the department.

Any member who has reason to be absent from the district for a period of more than 30

days due to business obligation, military service, or school obligations is required to advise an executive officer or secretary of their absence and they will be retained as a regular member for that period of time.

Membership activity will be evaluated every 6 months (July / January) by the Chief, President, and Board of Directors of the department, to determine the participation levels of the members. Members who are not actively participating in the activities of the department shall be notified at either the following business meeting or by letter. Members will be placed on probation for 6 months if participation is below what is defined as active for 2 consecutive 6-month periods. If after the next 6-month probation period for participation is below what is defined as active, the said member shall be dismissed from the department. Any member unable to attend regular monthly trainings or business meetings must notify the Chief and/or President so that make ups can be scheduled. Any matter of a member being convicted of criminal activity will be brought before the Grievance Committee. The Grievance Committee will notify the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors and Grievance Committee shall meet together to discuss and vote on any action to be taken against the member involved. A 2/3rds majority vote shall be required for any action against the member involved. The decision will be final. Any dismissal from the organization will require that all equipment issued to them by the organization be returned to the organization.

All members of the organization are expected to dress in an appropriate manner for any function when representing the organization, and conduct themselves in a professional manner or in an appropriate manner, so as to be a positive reflection on the organization. Failure to adhere to this code of conduct will result in a 6 month probation period from the organization. A second occurrence of the same failure of adherence to this code of conduct will result in the member being dismissed from the organization.

Members are expected to participate on committees, which they are appointed to. All such activities shall be considered towards the active participation requirements.

Article 4: *Election of Officers*

All officers nominated for office are to be eighteen (18) years of age, a non-probationary member, and an active member. They must also have at least one year of service.

In October of each year at the regular business meeting, nominations for officers will be presented by the Board of Director's.

The Board of Director's shall contact all candidates to insure each candidate will accept the office(s) he/she is nominated for.

During the regular October business meeting the nominations for the offices will be read, and any other nominations accepted from the floor. A nomination will require a second to be considered a candidate. No other nominations will be accepted after the October business meeting except for cases of offices with no candidates.

All active members may run for as many offices as he / she is nominated for. Voting shall take place one office at a time. Voting will be done for Chief, Assistant Chief, President,

and Vice President first. Once it is announced who has received the most votes for Chief and Assistant Chief, those officers are then ineligible for any other office with the exception of Chaplain, Parliamentarian, and Chief Engineer. Once it is announced who has received the most votes for President and Vice President, those officers are then ineligible for any other offices with the exceptions of Chaplain, Chief Engineer, Fire Captain, Fire Lieutenants, Emergency Service Captain, and Emergency Service Lieutenants.

The nominations for offices will be posted in the Fire Department until the regular November business meeting, at which time the election of officers will be done by secret ballot. There will be one ballot passed out during the November business meeting (Junior members and any member on probation will not receive a ballot). This ballot will have all of the offices and the nominated members listed. Each voting member is to mark one candidate per office and return the ballot. The ballots will be collected and counted by the Board of Directors present. Any active member (not including Junior members) not on probation may vote by absentee ballot by presenting a ballot to a member of the Board of Directors by the start of the November business meeting. The Board of Directors will announce the results after the count has been completed.

The President will complete a ballot and give it to the Board of Directors before the votes are counted, but it will not be opened to be counted unless there is a tie, then his/her vote will be considered the tie breaking vote.

The executive officers of the organization shall consist of the following and shall serve a one year term: (no limit on terms you can serve, except rotation of (1) Board of Director's.

- President
- Vice-President
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- Parliamentarian
- Chaplain
- (5) Member Board of Directors

The line officers of the organization shall consist of the following: All line officers must be active Firefighter/EMS Personnel.

- Chief - elected
- Assistant Chief - elected
- Chief Engineer – to be appointed by the Chief
- Fire Captain – to be appointed by the Chief
- Lieutenants – to be appointed by the Chief
- Emergency Service Captain - elected
- Lieutenants – to be appointed by the EMS Captain

When a vacancy occurs in any of the elected officers' positions, a successor shall be elected by the Board of Directors, as soon as possible.

Article 5: *Duties of the Executive Officers: Executive officers should be present at all business meetings unless excused.*

President -

Preside at all meetings of the organization and to preserve order

Shall meet with the Chief and Board of Directors every 6 months to evaluate participation levels of members.

Shall appoint all committees not named by the organization

Call special meetings when necessary, or at the written request of seven (7) members of the organization

Shall run all Criminal History Reports on all applications. If at the President's discretion, the report is clear of any charges that may affect the applicant's service with the department, the President shall destroy the report and note on the application the report was clear. This information shall remain confidential to the President only. If at the President's discretion, there is something that needs to be discussed on the report, the President shall meet and discuss the report with the Board of Directors. The President shall destroy the report after meeting with the Board of Directors and information shall remain confidential between the President and the Board of Directors. The President shall then report a pass or fail on the application.

Shall remain neutral until called on for discussion or for a vote on the issue being discussed.

Vice President

In the absence of the President to perform his/her duties

Assist the President when called upon

Secretary

To keep all minutes and records, valuable papers, etc.

Receive and disperse to the designated personnel for appropriate action all correspondence, keeping a copy of business letters in a permanent, up-to-date file, for reference.

Organization of the nomination ballots

May appoint an Assistant Secretary who will work with them and share any duties/responsibilities of the secretary when the secretary is not present.

Treasurer

To receive all moneys belonging to the department and to pay out to the appropriate agencies for the proper operations of the department.

Make all deposits of the organization to the designated banking facilities

To make a full and complete financial statement at each meeting

To prepare an annual report to be presented at the end of the year

Board of Directors

To handle any emergency business that may occur

Suppress all turmoil and disorder within the organization

Has the responsibility of seeing that the affairs of the organization remain in good order and to protect the interest and status of the members

The collection and counting of the nomination and election ballots, and announcing the new officers

Shall meet with the Chief and President every 6 months to evaluate participation levels of members.

Chaplain

Offer an invocation at all administrative meetings and at other times as requested by the president or chief

Keep the membership informed of sickness, death, and needs of the organization's members

Parliamentarian

Be well versed in the Constitution and Rules of the Oak Level Volunteer Fire and Emergency Service Department

Serve as an advisor to the presiding officer and membership at meetings concerning the Organization's Rules and Robert's Rules of Order

Article 6: *Duties of Line Officers*

In the absence of the Chief the order of command will be the Assistant Chief, Captain, Lieutenants. The ranking officer shall have all the authority and powers of the Chief and be in absolute command.

Chief

Has command over the organization and all other persons who may be present at the scene of a fire.

Controls the operations of the organization, apparatus, and of all others for the purpose of extinguishing the fire and preventing its spreading; removing items from buildings on fire or in danger thereof and guarding the same

Exercise the authority as conferred on him/her for the general supervision and charge of all

equipment of the organization - make sure equipment is kept in good serviceable condition

Can call out the organization for practice at such times as he/she may deem proper to insure the quality of training needed

Perform such duties as are usually incumbent on the commanding officer of a fire department

Holds office until his/her successor is duly elected

Shall select and award the Chief's Award at the Christmas banquet

Shall meet with the President and Board of Directors every 6 months to evaluate participation levels of members.

Assistant Chief

Serve in the absence of the chief and perform the duties of the chief

Carry out duties and responsibilities asked of him/her by the chief

Fire Captain

Oversee all fire fighting operations as requested by senior officers

Oversee Fire training and maintain training records on members to be given to the Secretary to be kept in the members' training files.

Shall select and award the Fireman of the Year Award at the Christmas banquet

Fire Lieutenants

Perform the duties outlined to him/her by senior officers

Emergency Service Captain

Oversee all Emergency Medical Services operations

Develop standard operation policies for Emergency Service

Oversee Emergency Service training and maintain training records on members to be given to the Secretary to be kept in the members' training files.

Shall select and award the First Responder of the Year Award at the Christmas banquet

Emergency Service Lieutenants

Perform the duties outlined to him/her by the Emergency Service Captain

Chief Engineer

Oversee the vehicles and equipment on the vehicles of the organization

Report the condition, repair, and replacement needs, methods of repair, and cost appraisals at each regular meeting

Article 7: *Duties and Rules of Membership*

When an alarm is sounded it shall be the duty of each member to proceed to the scene of the fire or emergency service call with all of the necessary equipment. The member arriving first at the scene shall assume command until an officer of the organization arrives and takes over command.

It shall be the imperative duty of each member of this organization to conduct himself at all times, and discharge his/her duties at and about a call, or any other activity at which they are representing the organization, so as not to reflect discredit on the organization.

It shall be the first duty of all members to obey all commands of their officers while on duty, unless such commands are clearly unsafe.

Article 8: *Meetings (held at the Oak Level Fire Department)*

Business meetings will start at 7 PM on the fourth Tuesday of each month

Fire Training will start at 7 PM on the second Tuesday of each month

Emergency Service Training will be at 7 PM on the first Tuesday of each month.

Meetings are subject to change by the Fire Captain, Emergency Service Captain, or a membership vote.

Article 9: *Committees*

Grievance Committee – shall consist of five (5) active members that are not on the Board of Directors – appointed by the president for a term equal to the president’s term of office to handle all violations and grievances that may from time to time occur within the organization. The findings of this committee shall report, together with recommendation, to the Board of Directors for final action. The decision of the Board of Directors shall be final.

Article 10: *Resignations*

The resignation of a member will not be accepted while he/she is under charges of violating any of the rules of this organization nor while he/she is in possession of any property belonging to the organization.

Article 11: *Violations*

Any member who willfully damages anything pertaining to the equipment or of the organization, or altering, defacing or damaging any property of the organization, or belonging to members of the organization shall be called before the grievance committee.

Any member that uses inappropriate language or reports under the influence of intoxicants at the fire department or at any emergency or while representing the organization in any capacity will be dismissed from the scene/station, at the discretion of the Fire Chief or other officer of the organization and shall be called before the grievance committee.

Members dismissed from the department shall return all property belonging to the organization within ten (10) days or legal steps shall be taken to recover it.

Article 12: *Rules of Order*

Only one member shall be entitled to the floor during discussions

Every member desiring the privilege of the floor shall obtain permission of the presiding officer before taking the floor

No question can come before the organization unless declared open for discussion by the presiding officer

All questions, unless otherwise decided by the Rules, shall be settled by a majority vote.

When a motion is properly made before the organization, it must be disposed of before another can be entertained.

Where not otherwise stated, Robert's Rules of Order will be the accepted guidelines.

Article 13: *Amendments to Rules*

No amendments or alterations shall be made to this code of rules except in writing at a regular business meeting.

The amendment/alteration will be submitted to the Board of Directors for consideration and recommendation.

The Board of Directors will report at the next regular meeting, and then the amendment/alteration may be acted upon

It will take a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of those present at the business meeting for adoption or changes to these rules.

Article 14: *Order of Business*

Call to Order

Roll call

Reading of minutes of previous meeting

Report of Treasurer

Old Business

Reports of Committees

New Business

Applications of Membership

Adjournment

Article 15: *New Member Requirements*

Training shall consist of 6 months probation and a trainee must:

Show proper operation of all pieces of equipment
(applies to Firefighter/EMS Personnel only)

Exhibit proper attitude and cooperation with all members

A trainee shall attend all meetings and trainings **(trainings apply to Firefighter/EMS Personnel only)** the same as required for regular members

Article 16: *Impeachment of Officers*

Any officer of the organization may be impeached for the abuse of his/her authority or misconduct in his/her office.

A three-fourths (3/4) vote of active members at a regular business meeting is required.

The charge against him/her must be made in writing and filed with the Board of Directors.

It must be signed by at least three names of active members

It must be filed with the Board of Directors at least one (1) month before any vote can be taken upon it

A copy of the said charge must be served upon the officer to be impeached by the Board of Directors at least two (2) weeks before such a vote shall be taken

Article 17: *Disbandment*

The organization shall not be disbanded except by three-fourths (3/4) vote of the entire active membership of the organization.

A published or served notice shall be given of the meeting for the purpose of disbandment at least one month before said vote is to be taken

A copy of the notice or publication shall be delivered to the Clerk of the County at least thirty (30) days prior to the taking of the vote to disband.

In the event of disbandment of the Oak Level Volunteer Fire and Emergency Service Department all of the fire apparatus and equipment used in connection with the organization shall be turned over to the County without charge.

Article 18: *Terms of Officers*

All line and executive officers will serve a term of one (1) year. With no limits to consecutive years.

Installation of Officers

The outgoing president or designated official of the organization will install the new executive and line officers.

They will be installed at the December Christmas Banquet.

The Service of Installation:

Out-going President or designated official: “You have been elected as an officer in the Oak Level Volunteer Fire/Emergency Service Department. It is an honor and a responsibility to serve your friends and companions in the organization’s activities. Will you serve in your office to the best of your knowledge and ability and will you uphold a high standard for us to follow?”

Officers: “I do accept the honor and responsibility as an officer in the Oak Level Volunteer Fire/Emergency Service Department. I will do all in my knowledge and ability to keep this community service organization in it’s most efficient and functional condition. I hereby pledge myself to the duties of this office I have accepted as outlined in the Constitution Rules and Regulations. I also, pledge myself to my fellow members and ask their support.”

Out-going President: “We, the members of this organization appreciate your accepting this honor and responsibility. We will support you in office in whatever ways we can.”

Out-going Chaplain: offer a prayer of dedication

Article 19: *Pledge of Membership*

Every member of the organization shall subscribe to the attached pledge of service:(to be kept on file)

Article 20: *Equipment*

Any equipment entrusted to a member for his/her use should be kept as though said equipment was purchased by him/her. Any member that has any equipment entrusted to him/her shall read and sign the loan agreement:(to be kept on file)

Oak Level Volunteer Fire Department

2019 Oak Level Road Halifax, Virginia 24558

Equipment Loan Agreement

I _____ agree that: Upon my lack of participation, or if my work or health situation should change as to impair me from participating in the organization's meeting, training, and fund raising projects, or if I am dismissed from the organization, it is my understanding that I will turn in any equipment that was issued to me within 10 days.

Signed _____ Date _____

Oak Level Volunteer Fire Department

2019 Oak Level Road Halifax, Virginia 24558

Pledge of Membership

I _____ in accepting a position in The Oak Level Volunteer Fire and Emergency Service Department, hereby pledge myself to abide by the Constitution, Rules and Regulations of said organization, and hereby promise to obey all orders of the chief or other officers in anything pertaining to the work of said organization (as long as my safety is not in jeopardy). This pledge shall stand good until my resignation has been submitted and accepted.

Signed _____ Date _____