

Wake County Fire Commission
Rules of Procedure

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I. Name

The name of this board appointed to serve the Wake County Board of Commissioners shall be referred to as the Wake County Fire Commission (hereinafter referred to as the Fire Commission).

II. Mission

1. The mission of the Fire Commission shall be to make formal recommendations to the Wake County Board of Commissioners on fire protection and emergency services delivery.
2. The roles of the Fire Commission as approved by the Board of Commissioners are:
 - A. Reviewing and making recommendations on operating budget requests
 - B. Reviewing and making recommendations on CIP budget requests
 - C. Developing and implementing firefighter and volunteer incentive retention and recruitment programs
 - D. Making recommendations to the Board of Commissioners for continuing improvement of the fire protection system. Develop a method of communication to the Board of Commissioners.
 - E. Reviewing ISO and consultants reports and taking action for improvement as deemed necessary
 - F. Enforcement of all service district operational regulations and guidelines for the Wake County fire protection service district

III. Membership and Composition

1. As approved by the Board of Commissioners, the structure of the Fire Commission is:
 - A. Board of Commissioner member (1)
 - B. Representatives of fire service planning and service regions (4)
 - C. President of Wake County Firefighters' Association (1)
 - D. Public consumers (5)
 - E. County staff (non voting)
 - F. Representatives of municipalities participating in Fire Protection Service District (1 seat per each participating municipality)
2. The Wake County Board of Commissioners shall make all primary and alternate appointments to the Fire Commission. All appointments shall comply with established rules and procedures of the Board of Commissioners.
3. Any person appointed by the Board of Commissioners to fill an unexpired term shall be appointed to serve the duration of the term.

A. Chair

1. The Fire Commission will elect a Chair annually from among the voting membership.
2. The position of Chair shall be a voting position. The role of the Chair shall be to guide the Fire Commission as it carries out its various roles. The Chair will keep the Fire Commission members focused and offer advice as needed.
3. The Chair will serve as the presiding officer of Fire Commission meetings.
4. As presiding officer, the Chair shall have the following powers:
 - To rule motions in or out of order, including any motion offered for obstructive or other purposes.
 - To determine whether a speaker has gone beyond reasonable standards of courtesy in his/her remarks.

- To call a brief recess at any time.
5. A decision by the presiding officer under any of the powers listed may be appealed to the Fire Commission upon motion of any member. Such a motion is in order immediately after a decision under those powers is announced and at no other time. The motion, if timely made, may not be ruled out of order.

B. Vice-Chair

1. The Fire Commission will elect a Vice-Chair annually from among the voting membership.
2. The position of Vice-Chair shall be a voting position.
3. The role of the Vice-Chair shall be to serve as the presiding officer of the Fire Commission in the absence of the Chair.
4. While serving as the presiding officer, the Vice-Chair shall have the same powers as the Chair.

C. Fire Service Positions

1. Each fire service planning and service region shall elect two representatives from each region. One representative shall be identified as the primary representative to the Fire Commission. The second representative shall be identified as the alternate representative. The primary representative shall serve for a period of two years.
2. Should an appointed region representative's status within his region or fire department change, the fire service region may make a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners that the appointee be removed from the Fire Commission and request that another region representative be appointed to the Fire Commission.
3. The President of the Wake County Firefighters' Association shall receive an automatic appointment to the Fire Commission.
4. The appointed term of the President of the Wake County Firefighters' Association shall coincide with the President's tenure as President of the Association. Should the President be replaced by another member of the Firefighters' Association, the Board of Commissioners shall appoint the person serving as President of the Association to the Fire Commission.
5. The President of the Wake County Firefighters' Association shall recommend an alternate representative for appointment.

D. Citizen Appointees

1. The Wake County Board of Commissioners shall appoint five citizens to serve on the Fire Commission. Each appointment shall be for a two-year term.

E. Commissioner Appointee

1. The Wake County Board of Commissioners shall appoint a member to serve as the Board of Commissioner appointee to the Fire Commission.

F. Municipal Representatives

1. Municipalities that elect to join the Fire Protection Service Tax District shall receive one seat on the Fire Commission.

G. County Staff

Staff of the Wake County Department of Public Safety - Fire/Rescue Services Division shall serve as non voting staff to the Fire Commission. The role of the county staff shall be to provide administrative support to the Fire Commission.

H. Action for Nonattendance

Should any appointed member of the Fire Commission, other than alternate appointees, miss three inexcusable meetings within a calendar year, the Fire Commission shall make a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners that the appointee be removed from the Fire Commission and that a new person be appointed to fulfill the unexpired term of the original appointee.

IV. Meetings

The Fire Commission shall meet as needed to accomplish its mission as designated by the Chair. Each Fire Commission member is responsible for attending all regular Fire Commission meetings.

A. Regular Meetings

The Fire Commission shall hold a regular meeting on the third Thursday of each alternating month, or in accordance with another schedule approved by a majority of the Fire Commission. The meetings will be conducted at the Wake County Commons Building. The Fire Commission may hold regular meetings at other convenient places at the direction of the Chair.

B. Special Meetings

The Chair may call for a special meeting if the Chair determines that delaying Fire Commission consideration of an issue would be contrary to public interest.

C. Cancellation and Rescheduling of Meetings

The Chair may cancel or reschedule a scheduled regular meeting upon determining that there will be no business for the Fire Commission to consider at that meeting, or that so many members have indicated their probable absence at the meeting that a quorum will not be present.

D. Meeting Notice - Regular Meetings

A current schedule specifying the time, date and place of the Fire Commission's regular meetings for the calendar year will be kept on file with the Clerk to the Board of Commissioners. Any revision to the schedule will be sent to the Clerk at least seven calendar days before the first meeting to be held under the revised schedule.

E. Meeting Notice - Special Meetings

For any Fire Commission meeting to be held at a time or place other than those shown on the filed schedule of the Fire Commission's meetings, a written notice of the date, time, place and purpose will be sent to the Clerk to the Board of Commissioners at least three calendar days before the meeting.

F. Meeting Cancellations

For cancellations of any meeting, all Fire Commission members will be notified at least 24 hours before the scheduled meeting time. Fire Commission members may be notified via phone, fax, e-mail or in writing. In addition, written notice will be sent to the Clerk to the Board of Commissioners at least 24 hours before the scheduled meeting time.

G. No Notice - Continuation of Recessed Meetings

If the Fire Commission recesses a regular or special meeting for which proper notice was given, after the Chair has announced in open session the time and place at which the meeting will be continued, no further notice need be given for the continued meeting.

H. Meeting Agenda

1. The agenda should be prepared to achieve two functions:
 - Focus the Fire Commission by determining what issues will be considered at the meeting and what order each issue will be considered.
 - Serve as a guide to the public as to what issues will be considered at the meeting.
2. The Chair has the authority to determine the content and order of the agenda for Fire Commission meetings. The Chair will advise the Wake County Fire/Rescue Director as to the content and order of the agenda.
3. At least seven calendar days before the Fire Commission's next scheduled meeting, the Fire/Rescue Director will prepare the meeting's agenda.
4. Any Committee Chair who wishes to make a committee report, or any Fire Commission member who wishes the Fire Commission to consider a particular issue should the notify the Chair well in advance to ensure adequate time to include the request in the content and order of the agenda.
5. At least five days prior to the next scheduled meeting, the Fire/Rescue Director will send each Fire Commission member a meeting agenda and all materials related to items on the agenda.

I. Quorum

1. A simple majority of the full membership of the Fire Commission will constitute a quorum of Fire Commission members. A quorum is required to transact any Fire Commission business other than to adjourn.
2. The Chair may not call a meeting to order until such time as a quorum is present unless, after waiting a reasonable time past the meeting's scheduled starting time, the Chair determines that there is no hope of obtaining a quorum. In that case, the Chair will call the meeting to order, note the lack of a quorum, and adjourn the meeting.
3. If a quorum ceases to be present at any time during a meeting, the Chair will note the lack of a quorum, order the cessation of business, and adjourn the meeting.

J. Conduct of Meetings

1. In accordance with the State's open meeting law, all official meetings of the Fire Commission will be open to the general public and any person is entitled to attend.
2. An "official" Fire Commission meeting is any gathering together of, or simultaneous communication between, a majority of Fire Commission members for the purpose of considering the public business of the Fire Commission. A purely social gathering or communication does not constitute an official meeting.
3. As presiding officer, the Chair may take whatever action is necessary to provide opportunity for discussion on issues, focus comments and discussion on issues being considered, ensure orderly meetings, and ensure the efficient and effective disposition of issues before the Fire Commission.

4. At the time the meeting is scheduled to begin, or at some reasonable waiting time thereafter if a quorum is not initially present, the Chair will call the meeting to order and announce which members are absent.
5. The Fire Commission should conduct business in accordance with the distributed agenda.
6. Any voting member of the Fire Commission may make a motion.
7. A substantive motion is out of order while another substantive motion is pending.
8. A motion shall be adopted by a simple majority of the votes cast, unless otherwise required by the laws of North Carolina.
9. After a motion is made, the Chair shall state the motion and then open the floor for debate. The Chair shall preside over the debate according to the following general principles:
 - The maker of the motion is entitled to speak first.
 - A member who has not spoken on the issue shall be recognized before someone who has already spoken.
 - To the extent possible, the debate shall alternate between proponents and opponents of the motion.
10. A motion that is defeated may be renewed at any later meeting unless a motion to prevent reconsideration has been adopted.
11. The introducer may withdraw a motion at any time before it is amended or before the Chair puts the motion to a vote, whichever occurs first.

K. Minutes

1. The minutes of the Fire Commission's meetings represent the official record of the Fire Commission's discussions and actions.
2. Staff of the Wake County Department of Public Safety - Fire/Rescue Division will prepare minutes for Fire Commission meetings. The minutes will state which members were present and which members were absent.
3. The minutes will briefly summarize the content of each item before the Fire Commission, state who made and seconded motions, and record the votes on each item.
4. Fire Commission meeting minutes will be on file within the office of the Wake County Fire/Rescue Division and may be inspected by any person at all reasonable times.

V. Committees

A. Standing Committees

1. The Fire Commission will consist of standing committees as recommended by the Chair and approved by the Fire Commission.
2. The purpose of the Fire Commission's committees is to develop and submit proposals and recommendations to the Fire Commission in respective subject areas.
3. No committee may mandate or implement a proposal or recommendation until the Fire Commission approves that proposal or recommendation.
4. Voting members of each committee will be appointed as provided for in Section V.B.

B. Standing Committee Appointments

1. The Chair shall make appointments for voting members to Standing Committees.
2. Each committee is composed of one voting member and one alternate member from each of the four Wake County Fire Service Regions.

3. A Standing Committee Chairperson will be appointed by the Fire Commission Chair, to manage the activities of the Standing Committee. The appointed Standing Committee Chairperson may be a fire service representative from any region.
4. No person can serve on more than two committees.
5. Each fire department can be represented by no more than one (1) voting member on each Standing Committee.
6. Citizens may be representatives on established Standing Committees.

C. Standing Committee Procedures

1. The Chair of the Standing Committee will supervise the meetings and all minutes and agendas.
2. The Chair of the Standing Committee will only cast a vote if there exists a tie.
3. Agendas are to be sent to all Wake County Fire Chiefs, Fire Commission members, and each voting member and alternate at least two (2) days prior to a meeting. Final meeting minutes are to be distributed to the same persons listed above within 1 week of a committee meeting.
4. A Standing Committee quorum will consist of a majority of the members (including the Chairperson).

D. Select Committees

If the Fire Commission proposes to refer an issue to a committee for further review but the issue is not within the purview of one of the standing committees, the Fire Commission may refer it to a select committee appointed for a particular purpose. If the Fire Commission makes such a referral, the Chair will appoint members of the select committee.

VI. Amendment of the Rules

These rules may be amended at any regular meeting or at any properly called special meeting that includes amendment of the rules as one of the stated purposes of the meeting, unless a rule of the Wake County Board of Commissioners provides otherwise. Adoption of the amendment shall require an affirmative vote equal to a quorum.