

# ERIE COUNTY FIRE ADVISORY BOARD – MEETING MINUTES

<b>MEETING DATE:</b>		September 25, 2025	
<b>LOCATION:</b>		Eric County Training and Operations Center	
<b>CALL TO ORDER:</b>		18:02	
<b>PLEDGE OF ALLEGIENCE:</b>			
<b>ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS:</b>	PRESENT:	Jennifer Andres, Andrew Beehler, James Gajewski, Kevin Herzog, Scott Kuhlmeier, Doug Lahnen, Dan Nash, Scott Plecha, Bob Rackl, Peter Spilsbury, Chris Couell, Joleen Schlossin	
	ABSENT:	Matthew Coons, Shad Garner, Mike Griffin, Paul Gorczyca, Kevin Jewett, Eric Karcher, William Renaldo, Garrett Wynn, Michael Zekas	
	EXCUSED:	Roger Brennan, Jack Chiappone, Jim Guy, Ron Endle, Tom Morris	
<b>INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:</b>	Jim McCullough Ryan Schneggenburger – Chief of Kenilworth Fire Company – wanted to address the board in reference to his fire company’s two denied nominations for the EC Wall of Honor and the Wall of Honor committee’s selection criteria. (See attached letter). There was discussion on this matter and a motion to support the Wall of Honor committee’s decision to deny the two Kenilworth appointments to the Wall at this time was made by Peter Spilsbury. The motion was seconded by Dan Nash and approved by all.		
<b>APPROVAL OF LAST MEETING:</b>	DATE OF LAST MEETING:	7/31/25	
	MOTION BY:	Jim Gajewski	
	SECOND BY:	Scott Plecha	
	APPROVED:	Approved by all	
<b>REPORT OF OFFICERS:</b>			
CHAIRMAN:	No Report		
CO-CHAIR:	No Report		
SECRETARY:	No Report		
TREASURER:	+\$22 from meeting, \$118.92 total		
<b>REPORT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES:</b>			
COMMISSIONER:	No Report		
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Still working on Draeger Building. Requests for bids to do the pier work going out soon.</li><li>2. Training – Smokedivers, Women’s, and Junior’s programs all were very successful. We will be doing them again next year. Looking for sponsorship ideas to help with outside costs of these programs.</li><li>3. Fire Engine – We are looking into the possibility of obtaining an engine to dedicate use here at the Fire Academy. We reached out to Springville on the one they are selling. Asked about the possibility of the Village donating it if they don’t receive appropriate bids.</li><li>4. The EC Fire District Officers Association has decided to purchase 4 new smoke machines to donate to the Fire safety Division for use in our training classes.</li><li>5. Old Tower update – The company doing the feasibility study has just about completed their inspection. We’re hoping to get a report soon. They state it’s looking pretty good so far.</li><li>6. The Cheektowaga burn building is in pretty rough shape. Over the past 8 years, we have put effort into the 2 burn rooms. These were the focal points of heaviest use, and most needed care. Our staff did a walkthrough this week and made a list of every issue we found. Mostly issues due to age and rotting of components from exposure to weather and training use. We found many issues with door frames and hinges, windows, roof deterioration, and floor issues. We are gathering parts now to fix what we can such as doorknobs, insulation panels, wall panels, ceiling panels, standpipes, hinges, and patching up holes found in floors and roof areas. Once we fix what we can, we will have to get an inspection from Fire Facilities contractors to see what else we can do to protect this building and get more years of training from it. More to come on this issue.</li><li>7. Safer Grant application – Recruitment &amp; retention. Notified yesterday that we won the grant and will receive \$75,000.</li><li>8. J-Fire program is doing well. We did 3 Juvenile Firesetting Screening Interventions this month. We did the fire safety &amp; prevention education with all 3 as well.</li><li>9. Division Staff are currently working with the County Executive’s office to produce “Fire-Safety” short videos to be aired during fire prevention month.</li></ol>		

	<p>10. Terrorism Awareness classes are available and take about 2.5 hours to complete. Makes a nice cold weather drill with State course credit, CME credit, and you can offer drill credit as well.</p> <p>11. We are planning the Firefighter Seminar Series for 2026. Wednesday nights @ 18:30. If anyone has ideas for topics or speakers, please let us know. The first Wednesday in January is on the 7<sup>th</sup>. That will be our Officer Orientation night.</p> <p>12. October 3<sup>rd</sup> is a scheduling meeting with the state for upcoming state fire classes.</p>
DEPUTY FIRE COORDINATOR:	No Report
OTHER:	
<b>REPORT OF COMMITTEES:</b>	
CANCER SCREENING:	No Report
DRILL TOWER:	No Report
FIRE PREVENTION:	No Report
LINE OF DUTY DEATH:	No Report
BUDGET PLANNING & WALL OF HONOR:	Changes to the Wall of Honor procedures will go into effect for the 2026 selection process. The updated procedures will be posted to website soon. The president of Reserve Fire will be coordinating with Bob Kaminski on Mike Kluck's nomination to the Wall by the Buffalo Airport Fire Dept.
<b>REPORT OF BOARDS:</b>	
ERIE COUNTY FIRE CHIEFS MUTUAL AID ORG.:	Doug - Next meeting will be the third Monday in November at Lancaster.
ERIE COUNTY VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION:	No Report
ERIE COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT OFFICERS ASSOCIATION:	Jim McCullough – Next meeting will be the third Wednesday in December at North Evans.
ERIE COUNTY FIRE POLICE ASSOCIATION:	No Report
DISASTER ADVISORY BOARD:	No Report
EMS ADVISORY BOARD:	No Report
BUFFALO FIRE DEPT:	No Report
LACKAWANNA FIRE DEPT:	No Report
ERIE COUNTY HAZMAT:	Jim Gajewski – One new truck came in and is partially outfitted.
<b>OLD BUSINESS:</b>	-
<b>NEW BUSINESS:</b>	-
<b>GOOD OF THE ORGANIZATION:</b>	-
<b>NEXT MEETING DATE:</b>	12/4/2025, Wall of Honor ceremony 10/23/25 at 6pm
<b>NEXT WORKSHOP DATE:</b>	-
<b>ADJOURNMENT:</b>	18:46, motion by Scott Plecha, seconded by Scott Kuhlmeier
<b>MINUTES RECORDED BY:</b>	J. Schlossin
<b>MINUTES SUBMITTED BY:</b>	J. Schlossin

ERIE COUNTY FIRE ADVISORY BOARD SIGN IN AND CONTACT SHEET								
MEETING:		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REGULAR <input type="checkbox"/> SPECIAL	DATE: 9/25/2025		LOCATION:		FTA	
Name	Board Appointments	# of Terms	Expiration Date	Phone #	Email	Signature	ABSENT	EXCUSED
1 Andres, Jennifer		1st	12/31/2026	716-908-4446	Jenniferandres919@gmail.com			
2 Beehler, Andrew		2nd	12/31/2025	716-954-9712	andrewbeehler@gmail.com			X
3 Brennan, Roger		2nd	12/31/2026	716-525-6617	firesafetyguy72@gmail.com			X
4 Chiappone Jr., Jack		2nd	12/31/2026	716-628-5458	ichiappone813@gmail.com			X
5 Coons, Matthew		1st	12/31/2026	716-462-7978	mdcoons9@gmail.com			
6 Endle, Ronald		2nd	12/31/2025	716-479-4186	ronfirellc@aol.com			X
7 Gajewski, James		4th	12/31/2025	716-864-6748	commjim10@yahoo.com			
8 Garner, Shad		2nd	12/31/2026	716-984-6928	seabass126@yahoo.com			
9 Gorczyca, Paul		3rd	12/31/2025	716-866-1634	gork315@gmail.com			
10 Griffin, Michael		4th	12/31/2026	716-714-9772	opie652@gmail.com			
11 Guy, James		2nd	12/31/2025	716-544-0327	jhguy@verizon.net			X
12 Herzog, Kevin	Co-Chair	4th	12/31/2026	716-725-2984	kherzog@twindistrict.com			
13 Jewett, Kevin		2nd	12/31/2025	716-512-9054	kevin.jewett@erie.gov			
14 Karcher, Eric		4th	12/31/2026	716-697-1395	ek7166971395@aol.com			
15 Kuhlmeier, Scott		4th	12/31/2025	716-861-7933	scott.kuhlmeier@erie.gov			
16 Lahnen, Douglas		4th	12/31/2026	716-864-2240	delahnen@gmail.com			
17 Morris, Thomas		1st	12/31/2026	716-491-1979	eastaurorafire@gmail.com			X
18 Nash, Dan		1st	12/31/2025	716-870-9056	nashd2237@gmail.com			
19 Plecha, Scott		3rd	12/31/2025	716-909-4206	s.plecha@yahoo.com			
20 Rackl, Robert	Chair	4th	12/31/2025	716-341-3716	rwrackl@gmail.com			
21 Renaldo, William		2nd	12/31/2026	716-860-4093	wren713972@aol.com			
22 Spillsbury, Jr., Peter		4th	12/31/2025	716-583-0183	pspillsbury@wsfd5.com			
23 Wynn, Garrett		3rd	12/31/2025	716-570-2209	gwynn@ucrestfire.org			
24 Zekas, Michael		2nd	12/31/2025	716-984-3606	michael.zekas@erie.gov			
<i>GUEST - J. M. Nickols</i>								
Neaverth Jr., Dan	Commissioner DHSES			716-983-6080	daniel.neaverth@erie.gov			
Nowak, Carraugh	Special Assistant to DHSES			716-858-4595	carraugh.nowak@erie.gov			
Couell, Chris	Deputy Commissioner			716-481-7970	christopher.couell@erie.gov			
Doll, Alexander	Deputy Fire Coordinator			716-228-2822	alexander.doll@erie.gov			
Torre, Jonathon	Assistant Fire Coordinator				jonathon.torre@erie.gov			
Schlossin, Joleen	Scribe			716-681-7111	joleen.schlossin@erie.gov			

To: Fire Advisory Board  
From: Chief Ryan Schneggenburger, Kenilworth Fire Company  
Subject: Concerns Regarding the Wall of Honor Selection Process

Good evening members of the Fire Advisory Board,

My name is Ryan Schneggenburger, and I currently serve as Chief of the Kenilworth Fire Company, located in the Town of Tonawanda. I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you this evening regarding several concerns I have with the Wall of Honor nomination process and the operation of the sub-committee overseeing it.

In 2024, I submitted a nomination for Ray Powers, a longtime member who served Kenilworth in various leadership capacities — fire-line officer, company officer, and commissioner. Ray also played a significant role beyond our company, particularly in Town-wide Fire Prevention efforts, where he successfully advocated for annual funding from the Town.

Despite this substantial record, Ray's initial nomination was denied. It wasn't until his instrumental role in donating Thermal Imaging Cameras for Kenilworth came to light that the decision was reversed and he was rightfully placed on the Wall. This sequence raises a concern: Was Ray's inclusion truly based on his broader contributions, or was it only reconsidered due to an equipment donation?

This year, I submitted two additional nominations — individuals who, while they may not have served on outside committees, have each contributed over 50 years of exceptional service and dedication to Kenilworth while serving various leadership capacities such as fire-line officer, company officer, and commissioner. Their work has been critical to the success of specialized operations, including the implementation and use of Kenilworth's old Rescue 7 and current Squad 4, both of which house one of two onboard cascade and rehab systems in Erie County outside of the City of Buffalo.

Shortly after submission, I was informed by the sub-committee chair that these nominations were denied due to a lack of narrative and insufficient justification beyond years of service. However, it was later discovered that not all submitted materials had been reviewed, despite being included in the original packet. After resubmitting and clarifying the relevance of their service — particularly in accordance with Execution of Inclusion Process- Bullet 3 — both nominations were again denied.

During a private meeting with members Jim, Kevin, Doug, Alex, and myself, it was revealed that the written criteria (particularly Selection Criteria, Bullet 2) were not being interpreted consistently. In that same meeting, I observed a nomination authored by a current sub-committee member — a situation that, on its face, appears to involve a conflict of interest. It is concerning that a voting member would be permitted to participate in a process involving their own nomination submission.

Even more troubling, when I asked for clarification about past nominations (such as Ray's involvement in funding efforts), I was told that similar details from current nominees were "irrelevant" — despite such points being previously deemed critical for approval. This inconsistency raises questions about fairness and transparency.

According to the documented process under "*Notification of a Declined Nomination*", the sub-committee is required to "notify the Fire Advisory Board in writing that based on material presented, the committee does not recommend inclusion of the subject nominee and provide a complete explanation of their findings and conclusion."

This process was not followed in my case. Again, nor did I receive the required written explanation outlining specific deficiencies or absent materials. Instead, I was informed only that the nominations "did not meet the criteria" — a vague and insufficient justification, particularly after revisions were made with assistance from experienced individuals.

I am raising these concerns not just on behalf of myself, but on behalf of all departments and members who may be subject to unclear standards, shifting expectations, or uneven application of the rules. The process must be fair, transparent, and unbiased. Nominees who meet the published criteria — especially after feedback, revisions, and clarification — deserve serious and consistent consideration.

I respectfully request that the Fire Advisory Board as a whole review the current nomination process, including:

- Interpretation and consistency of the selection criteria.
- The role and impartiality of sub-committee members.
- Whether proper documentation and explanation protocols are being followed.

I appreciate your time and attention to this matter and welcome the opportunity to answer any questions or provide further documentation in support of my concerns.

Sincerely,  
Ryan Schneggenburger  
Chief, Kenilworth Fire Company