

# ERIE COUNTY FIRE ADVISORY BOARD – MEETING MINUTES

<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	May 28, 2026		
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Erie County Training and Operations Center		
<b>CALL TO ORDER:</b>	18:01		
<b>PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:</b>			
<b>ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS:</b>	<b>PRESENT:</b>	Ronald Endle, James Guy, Kevin Herzog, Douglas Lahnen, Dan Nash, Robert Rackl, Carraugh Nowak, Chris Couel, Joleen Schlossin Webex Attendance: Jennifer Andres, Eric Karcher, Scott Kuhlmeier, Thomas Morris, Scott Plecha	
	<b>ABSENT:</b>	Andrew Beehler, Jack Chiappone Jr., Shad Garner, Paul Gorczyca, Michael Griffin, Kevin Jewett, William Renaldo, Peter Spilsbury Jr., Garrett Wynn, Robert Zacher, Michael Zekas	
	<b>EXCUSED:</b>	James Gajewski, Mark Mendola	
<b>INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:</b>			
<b>APPROVAL OF LAST MEETING:</b>	<b>DATE OF LAST MEETING:</b>	3/26/26	
	<b>MOTION BY:</b>	Dan Nash	
	<b>SECOND BY:</b>	Ron Endle	
	<b>APPROVED:</b>	Approved by all	
<b>REPORT OF OFFICERS:</b>			
<b>CHAIRMAN:</b>	Reminder to all that July's meeting will be at South Line for the summer picnic. An email will go out a week or so ahead of time to get a head count.		
<b>CO-CHAIR:</b>	No Report		
<b>SECRETARY:</b>	No Report		
<b>TREASURER:</b>	+ \$37 this meeting, \$211.92 total		
<b>REPORT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES:</b>			
<b>COMMISSIONER:</b>	No Report		
<b>DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:</b>	See attachment		
<b>DEPUTY FIRE COORDINATOR:</b>	No Report		
<b>ASST. FIRE COORDINATOR:</b>	No Report		
<b>REPORT OF COMMITTEES:</b>			
<b>CANCER SCREENING:</b>	Ron - screening program available to all firefighters looking for esophageal cancer. There are guidelines that must be met. Chris has been given the information and looking to maybe set up a presentation. Maybe combine this with a presentation from Roswell and Mark Mendola.		
<b>EC FAIR:</b>	Tom – no EC entity can be involved in the fire truck pull. It could still potentially happen, but another organization would have to sponsor it. For fair volunteers, there will be more specific requests for help. See attachment regarding the daily Firefighter Honoree ceremony		
<b>LEGISLATIVE:</b>	Dan – inquired about potentially inviting EC legislature to the board meetings. Per Carraugh, the board cannot directly reach out to the legislators, it needs to go through the proper channels. She will reach out or give the contact information to Dan.		
<b>LINE OF DUTY DEATH:</b>	Chris – Ron dropped off the information on a flash drive and Chris will work with Jennifer on getting it on the website		
<b>RADIO:</b>	Bob – Just received Kevin Hughes contact information and will reach out to schedule a meeting to include Peter Spilsbury as well		
<b>TRAINING:</b>	No Report		
<b>WALL OF HONOR:</b>	Jim – nomination period ends 5/31/26. Currently there are 4 letters. Some committee members did not receive the information, so Joleen will send out all letters again. The committee will meet 6/25/26 at 6 pm at the ECTOC. Per Chris, there is money to get more plaques for the Wall. To update and digitalize the Wall of Honor book, we are waiting for funding for that. Need to work on getting the Wall of Honor information to a flash drive to take to the fair to display on a TV screen.		
<b>REPORT OF BOARDS:</b>			
<b>ERIE COUNTY FIRE CHIEFS MUTUAL AID ORG.:</b>	Dan - Met in May at Grand Island. Next meeting is September 21 <sup>st</sup> at East Seneca		

ERIE COUNTY VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION:	Kevin – had their meeting and now off for the summer
ERIE COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT OFFICERS ASSOCIATION:	Kevin/Dan – rescheduling the Autism Awareness class, possibly for October.
ERIE COUNTY FIRE POLICE ASSOCIATION:	No Report
DISASTER ADVISORY BOARD:	Carraugh – Big Boy steam train will be coming through the county June 8-10 and there is some concern that this will be a big draw
EMS ADVISORY BOARD:	No Report
BUFFALO FIRE DEPT:	No Report
LACKAWANNA FIRE DEPT:	No Report
ERIE COUNTY HAZMAT:	Chris – been busy with calls. Hazmat teams in the county are doing excellent with working together
<b>OLD BUSINESS:</b>	-
<b>NEW BUSINESS:</b>	Kevin – resignation letter from Matthew Coons. Motion to accept by Dan Nash, seconded by Doug Lahnen, approved by all
<b>GOOD OF THE ORGANIZATION:</b>	Scott Kuhlmeier- J-Fire, 6 cases YTD Carraugh – put in a capital project to the county last year for upgrades and expansion to the training academy. June 12 <sup>th</sup> , they'll be doing a walk through for a needs assessment. And then hopefully put in another capital project and hope that it will get approved. Put in for v fire grant for the tower and a safer grant potentially for wellness. Chris – the vending machines at the academy are going to be replaced by a Marketplace, which will offer more options.
<b>NEXT MEETING DATE:</b>	07/30/26
<b>ADJOURNMENT:</b>	19:08, motion by Ron Endle, seconded by Dan Nash
<b>MINUTES RECORDED BY:</b>	J. Schlossin
<b>MINUTES SUBMITTED BY:</b>	J. Schlossin

# **Erie County Fire Safety Division Updates**

## **May 2026**

### **1. Training Engine Acquisition**

The Erie County Fire Safety Division is actively attempting to acquire an engine for training purposes. We are currently seeking a donated apparatus to help reduce some of the burden associated with New York State classes that require apparatus support.

### **2. Expanded NYS Stipend Program**

The New York State Stipend Program has been expanded to include the following courses:

- Firefighter 2 — \$500
- Fire & Emergency Services Instructor 1 — \$500
- Fire Officer 2 — \$500
- Firefighter: Self Rescue — \$250
- FAST/RIC — \$250

Any firefighter who completed these courses between August 31, 2023, and the present is eligible for the stipend. Chiefs are encouraged to complete and submit the appropriate paperwork as soon as possible.

### **3. Updated Live Fire Training Policy**

The Erie County Fire Safety Division has updated the Live Fire Training Policy, which had not been revised since 2002. The new policy is compliant with NFPA 1403 and outlines requirements related to facial hair and weather conditions for go/no-go live fire training decisions.

Our office will fully support any instructor who determines that a firefighter is unfit to participate in burn building operations due to facial hair concerns. A prior fit test does not guarantee a proper fit on the day of training. All firefighters participating in live fire training must be clean shaven in accordance with OSHA regulations.

### **4. Firefighter Readiness and Hydration**

Departments are reminded to ensure their firefighters are physically prepared for live fire training. Proper hydration should begin at least one to two days prior to training. This applies to both live fire training drills and New York State classes requiring firefighters to operate in full turnout gear and SCBAs.

## **5. OFPC College Credit Initiative**

The Fire Safety Division is currently working in partnership with SUNY Erie Community College and the Office of Fire Prevention and Control (OFPC) to assign college credit to OFPC courses moving forward.

We believe education is paramount to the success of all firefighters and want to ensure their training can contribute toward future academic and career opportunities. This initiative will take time to finalize due to the administrative processes involved.

## **6. Erie County Mutual Aid Plan Update**

The Erie County Mutual Aid Plan has been updated in accordance with New York State Law, which requires review and revision every five years.

The updated plan is currently under review by the County Attorney's Office and, once approved, will be distributed to all fire departments for signatures.

Several updates were made to the liability section, as the previous plan conflicted with VFBL and the New York State Mutual Aid Plan. The revised plan is now aligned with both VFBL and New York State standards to eliminate potential issues should an accident occur during mutual aid operations.

## **7. UTV/ATV Training Requirements**

UTV/ATV classes are currently posted on the training schedule.

All participants must submit an Erie County Training Authorization Letter (TAL) — not a New York State TAL. A fillable TAL form is available within each class posting on the training schedule.

Completed TAL forms must be emailed to [TAL@erie.gov](mailto:TAL@erie.gov) prior to the training date. No student will be permitted to participate without a valid TAL on file.

## **8. Department Information Survey**

The Fire Safety Division will be distributing a department information survey later this year. The survey will request updated information regarding:

- Apparatus inventory
- Department capabilities
- Firefighter training levels
- EMS certification levels

A similar survey was conducted in 2023, and it is important to keep this information current.

The survey will help ensure:

- Appropriate training is being delivered throughout the county
- Training locations and frequency are meeting departmental needs
- Accurate department capability information is available during large-scale incidents requiring countywide mutual aid

## **9. NFPA 1010 Firefighter 1 Changes**

There has been a change to NFPA 1010 (Standard on Professional Qualifications for Firefighters).

Operating an air-monitoring instrument is now a mandatory core competency for all individuals certified at Firefighter 1.

JPR 6.3.21 now requires Firefighter 1 personnel to demonstrate competency in operating a multi-gas meter, including understanding the readings displayed and determining the appropriate actions based on those readings.

## **10. NYS DOH CO Meter Requirements**

As many departments are aware, the New York State Department of Health has updated its policies to require all EMS response vehicles to be equipped with a carbon monoxide (CO) meter.

We are also advising departments that some commercial EMS agencies have begun requesting fire departments respond for CO readings when EMS crews are on scene alone for “general illness” calls.

## **11. Erie County EMS ALS Coordinator**

For those who may not yet be aware, Erie County EMS has appointed a new ALS Coordinator.

Eric Conley has assumed the position and brings more than 30 years of combined EMS and fire service experience to the role.

## **12. Beyond the Smoke: Fire Behavior and Firefighter Survival**

The Fire Safety Division is developing a new class, “Beyond the Smoke: Fire Behavior and Firefighter Survival.” This program will focus on improving firefighter knowledge and survivability during rapidly changing fire conditions.

This class should be offered in late spring or early summer. Departments are encouraged to take advantage of this training opportunity to further enhance firefighter safety and operational awareness.

### **13. UBMD Firefighter Cognitive Study**

The Erie County Fire Safety Division, in partnership with the University at Buffalo School of Public Health and Health Professions, is participating in an important research study on firefighter cognitive performance during active fireground operations.

This physician-led study will help develop data used nationwide to reduce firefighter injuries and line-of-duty deaths.

Firefighters operate under extreme stress while managing multiple critical tasks at once. When cognitive load becomes too high, decision-making can suffer — leading to serious injuries or worse.

This study will evaluate how stress impacts memory and cognitive function, helping improve training and safety across the fire service.



## NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Holly Smyczynski • Marketing & Communications • (716) 818-2007 • [hollys@ecfair.org](mailto:hollys@ecfair.org)  
Erie County Agricultural Society • 5600 McKinley Parkway • Hamburg, New York • USA • 14075  
Website: [ECFair.org](http://ECFair.org)

# Firefighter and Flag Retreat Honoree Nominations Now Open

## *Celebrate Those That Serve Your Community*

May 28, 2026

**HAMBURG, NEW YORK** – The Erie County Fair is now accepting nominations for two special recognition programs celebrating individuals who serve their communities and country. Community members are encouraged to nominate deserving firefighters, veterans, and active-duty military personnel to be honored during the 2026 Erie County Fair. Nominations are open now through July 15 at [ECFair.org](http://ECFair.org). The two ceremonies are:

- **Daily Firefighter Honoree Ceremony**
- **Daily Flag Retreat Ceremony**

The Fair's annual **Firefighter Honoree Ceremony** recognizes active, retired, and/or junior firefighters who demonstrate exceptional commitment to public service and community involvement. One firefighter will be recognized daily during a 6 p.m. ceremony outside the Firemen's Building. The ceremony includes special recognition and a live performance by the Erie County Fair Pepsi All-Star Band and each honoree is presented with a custom wooden American flag and a celebratory gift from Budweiser.

In addition, the Erie County Fair will continue the **Flag Retreat Ceremony**, honoring veterans and active military personnel during a patriotic daily ceremony held at 6:30 p.m. in Slade Park. The ceremony features members of the US Army formally lowering the American flag courtesy of ACE Flags, and presented to the day's honoree, accompanied by the anthem, military medley,

and other patriotic selections performed by the Erie County Fair All-Star Band. Flag Retreat honorees will also receive a commemorative gift from Yuengling.

Honorees for both programs will receive recognition during their ceremony, four Fair admission passes, a Strates Shows Midway FunCard, and \$20 in meal vouchers.

Twelve individuals will be selected for each ceremony, with one honored each day. Selections for both recognition programs will be made by a committee based on nominees' service, leadership, character, and impact on their communities.

The Erie County Fair will also host dedicated celebration days during the Fair:

- **Firefighters Day- Friday, August 14**

Free admission and a \$10 voucher to firefighters and auxiliary members (with valid ID). The evening will conclude with the Erie County Volunteer Firemen's Association Memorial Service at 7 p.m. outside the Firemen's Building.

- **Veterans Day- Sunday, August 16**

Free admission and a \$10 voucher to active military, veterans, and auxiliary members with (valid ID). Special programming will include a Veterans Catholic Mass and Veterans Recognition and featuring a ceremonial enlistment of military recruits.

Guests are also encouraged to visit the Military Corridor near Gate 4 during the Fair, featuring displays and engagement opportunities with military organizations and recruiters.

Submit a detailed nomination to recognize your favorite hero today at [ECFair.org](http://ECFair.org)!

### **About the Erie County Fair**

The Erie County Fair is produced by the Erie County Agricultural Society, a private, not-for-profit membership organization established in 1819. It is recognized as the oldest civic institution in Western New York. The Society's mission is to connect communities through agriculture, education, and entertainment.

**ERIE COUNTY FIRE ADVISORY BOARD SIGN IN AND CONTACT SHEET**

MEETING:		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REGULAR <input type="checkbox"/> SPECIAL	DATE: 5/28/2026		LOCATION:		FTA		
	Name	Board Appointments	# of Terms	Expiration Date	Phone #	Email	Signature	ABSENT	EXCUSED
1	Andres, Jennifer		1st	12/31/2026	716-908-4446	<a href="mailto:Jenniferandres919@gmail.com">Jenniferandres919@gmail.com</a>			
2	Beehler, Andrew		3rd	12/31/2027	716-954-9712	<a href="mailto:andrewbeehler@gmail.com">andrewbeehler@gmail.com</a>			
3	Chiappone Jr., Jack		2nd	12/31/2026	716-628-5458	<a href="mailto:jchiappone813@gmail.com">jchiappone813@gmail.com</a>			
4	Endle, Ronald		3rd	12/31/2027	716-479-4186	<a href="mailto:ronfirellc@aol.com">ronfirellc@aol.com</a>			
5	Gajewski, James		5th	12/31/2027	716-864-6748	<a href="mailto:commjim10@yahoo.com">commjim10@yahoo.com</a>			
6	Garner, Shad		2nd	12/31/2026	716-984-6928	<a href="mailto:seabass126@yahoo.com">seabass126@yahoo.com</a>			
7	Gorczyca, Paul		4th	12/31/2027	716-866-1634	<a href="mailto:gork315@gmail.com">gork315@gmail.com</a>			
8	Griffin, Michael		4th	12/31/2026	716-714-9772	<a href="mailto:opie652@gmail.com">opie652@gmail.com</a>			
9	Guy, James		3rd	12/31/2027	716-544-0327	<a href="mailto:jhguy@verizon.net">jhguy@verizon.net</a>			
10	Herzog, Kevin	Chair	4th	12/31/2026	716-725-2984	<a href="mailto:kherzog@twindistrict.com">kherzog@twindistrict.com</a>			
11	Jewett, Kevin		3rd	12/31/2027	716-512-9054	<a href="mailto:kevin.jewett@erie.gov">kevin.jewett@erie.gov</a>			
12	Karcher, Eric		4th	12/31/2026	716-697-1395	<a href="mailto:ek7166971395@aol.com">ek7166971395@aol.com</a>			
13	Kuhlmeiy, Scott		5th	12/31/2027	716-861-7933	<a href="mailto:scott.kuhlmeiy@erie.gov">scott.kuhlmeiy@erie.gov</a>			
14	Lahnen, Douglas		4th	12/31/2026	716-864-2240	<a href="mailto:delahnen@gmail.com">delahnen@gmail.com</a>			
15	Mendola, Mark		1st	12/31/2028	716-445-3301	<a href="mailto:mamendola388@gmail.com">mamendola388@gmail.com</a>			
16	Morris, Thomas		1st	12/31/2026	716-491-1979	<a href="mailto:eastaurorafire@gmail.com">eastaurorafire@gmail.com</a>			
17	Nash, Dan		2nd	12/31/2027	716-870-9056	<a href="mailto:nashd2237@gmail.com">nashd2237@gmail.com</a>			
18	Plecha, Scott		4th	12/31/2027	716-909-4206	<a href="mailto:s.plecha@yahoo.com">s.plecha@yahoo.com</a>			
19	Rackl, Robert	Co-Chair	5th	12/31/2027	716-341-3716	<a href="mailto:rwrackl@gmail.com">rwrackl@gmail.com</a>			
20	Renaldo, William		2nd	12/31/2026	716-860-4093	<a href="mailto:wren713972@aol.com">wren713972@aol.com</a>			
21	Spilsbury, Jr., Peter		5th	12/31/2027	716-583-0183	<a href="mailto:pspilsbury@wsfd5.com">pspilsbury@wsfd5.com</a>			
22	Wynn, Garrett		4th	12/31/2027	716-570-2209	<a href="mailto:gwynn@ucrestfire.org">gwynn@ucrestfire.org</a>			
23	Zacher, Robert		3rd	12/31/2027	716-863-1388	<a href="mailto:bobjr@zacherelectric.com">bobjr@zacherelectric.com</a>			
24	Zekas, Michael		3rd	12/31/2027	716-984-3606	<a href="mailto:michael.zekas@erie.gov">michael.zekas@erie.gov</a>			
	Neaverth Jr., Dan	Commissioner DHSES			716-983-6080	<a href="mailto:daniel.neaverth@erie.gov">daniel.neaverth@erie.gov</a>			
	Nowak, Carraugh	Special Assistant to DHSES			716-858-4595	<a href="mailto:carraugh.nowak@erie.gov">carraugh.nowak@erie.gov</a>			
	Couell, Chris	Deputy Commissioner			716-481-7970	<a href="mailto:christopher.couell@erie.gov">christopher.couell@erie.gov</a>			
	Doll, Alexander	Deputy Fire Coordinator			716-228-2822	<a href="mailto:alexander.doll@erie.gov">alexander.doll@erie.gov</a>			
	Torre, Jonathon	Assistant Fire Coordinator				<a href="mailto:jonathon.torre@erie.gov">jonathon.torre@erie.gov</a>			
	Schlossin, Joleen	Scribe			716-681-7111	<a href="mailto:joleen.schlossin@erie.gov">joleen.schlossin@erie.gov</a>			

Webex:  
 Jennifer Andres  
 Scott Plecha  
 Thomas Morris  
 Scott Kuhlmeiy  
 Eric Karcher