

## **Fire Policy Committee Minutes February 25, 2026**

The Fire Policy Committee (FPC) of the Board on Public Safety Standards and Training (Board) held a regular meeting on February 25, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. in the Boardroom at the Oregon Public Safety Academy located at 4190 Aumsville Hwy SE, Salem, Oregon. The meeting was called to order at 09:00 a.m.

### **Committee Members:**

Chris Heppel, Oregon Fire Chiefs Association  
Mariana Ruiz-Temple (Designee Claire McGrew), Oregon State Fire Marshal  
Jack Carriger, Oregon Volunteer Firefighters Association  
Lauren Johnson (Designee Andy Ponce), Portland Fire & Rescue  
Levi Hopkins, Forest Protection Agencies  
Rose Douglass, Oregon Fire Training Association  
Andre Lindauer, Public Member  
Joseph Morneau, Oregon Fire District Director's Association  
Isaac McLennan, Non-Management Firefighter

### **Absent Members:**

Vacant, Community College Fire Programs  
Vacant, Oregon State Fire Fighters Council  
Shawn Olson, Oregon Fire Marshals Association

### **DPSST Staff:**

Kayla Ballrot, Fire Program Manager  
Brooke Bell-Uribe, Fire Certification Supervisor  
Chantel Goettsch, Fire Certification Compliance Specialist  
Madison Mancuso, Fire Program Support Specialist  
Sam Tenney, Public Information Office  
Jennifer Howald, Administrative Rules Coordinator



#### **1. Introductions**

Introductions of members were presented.

#### **2. Meeting Minutes**

Approve the November 19, 2025, Meeting Minutes.

- *Vice Chair, Claire McGrew recommended a word change in the FPC Discussion on Christopher C. Wade's case from Moral to Morale.*

- *The committee came to a consensus to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2025, FPC meeting with the recommended word change.*

**3. Discretionary Case Review Quick Sheet**

Presented by Fire Certification Supervisor Brooke Bell-Uribe.

**4. \*Steven R. Eubanks; DPSST No. 41031**

Presented by Fire Certification Compliance Specialist Chantel Goettsch.

DPSST Staff received a Law Enforcement Data System (LEDS) alert that Steven Eubanks had been arrested on August 4, 2024. DPSST staff tracked the court case and found that Steven Eubanks was convicted of and plead guilty to Fail to Perform Duties/Driver, Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 811.700, a Misdemeanor Class A in the state of Oregon on November 13, 2024. This conviction carries a sentence of which not more than one year of imprisonment may be imposed.

Due to the misdemeanor conviction which occurred in the last five years and the underlying conduct that involves destruction of property, this case requires review by the Fire Policy Committee (FPC).

**February 25, 2026 FPC Discussion**

<i>Fire Policy Committee Discussion/Consensus and Vote</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>Vote</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
The FPC came to consensus to adopt the staff report as the basis for its recommendations.			
The FPC did not identify any <b>aggravating circumstances</b> .			
The FPC identified the following <b>mitigating circumstances</b> : some FPC members also were not aware a report with law enforcement need to be made for a single car accident, his cooperation with the police, he has paid all of his court fines, he took responsibility in his letter, had good letters of support from his fire chief and other members at his fire station, and he showed no attempt of trying to hide or be deceitful about the accident.			
The FPC came to consensus that staff captured the identified aggravating and mitigating circumstances of this case.			
Andy Ponce moved that the FPC take NO ACTION against Eubanks' certification because of all the mitigating factors listed.	Jack Carriger seconded the motion.	9 ayes	Motion Passed Unanimously

**5. \*Clifton W. Booher; DPSST No. 13295**

Presented by Fire Certification Compliance Specialist Chantel Goettsch.

DPSST received a Law Enforcement Data System (LEDS) alert that Clifton Booher had been arrested on February 5, 2025. DPSST staff tracked the court case and found that on July 16, 2025, Clifton Booher was convicted of and plead no contest to Disorderly Conduct in the Second Degree, ORS 166.025, a Misdemeanor Class B in the state of Oregon. This conviction carries a sentence of which not more than one year of imprisonment may be imposed.

Due to the misdemeanor conviction which occurred in the last five years and the underlying conduct that involves violence against a person, this case requires review by the FPC.

**November 19, 2025 FPC Discussion**

<i>Fire Policy Committee Discussion/Consensus and Vote</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>Vote</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
The FPC came to consensus to <b><i>NOT</i></b> adopt the staff report and asked DPSST Staff to request the Strangulation Kit. This case will be reviewed with the addition of the new information at the February 2026 FPC meeting.			

The Fire Policy Committee (FPC) reviewed the following case for Clifton Booher on November 19, 2025. After review and discussion, the committee unanimously voted to not adopt the Staff Report and return it to DPSST Staff with instructions to find further information regarding the Strangulation Kit noted in the police report. DPSST staff have completed this research and will present the case again including the requested information as part of the relevant circumstances for consideration.

**February 25, 2026 FPC Discussion**

<i>Fire Policy Committee Discussion/Consensus and Vote</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>Vote</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
The FPC came to consensus to adopt the staff report as the basis for its recommendations.			
The FPC identified the following <b>aggravating circumstances</b> : a minor was involved in this incident, and that due Booher’s lengthy fire service career he has a higher level of responsibility in high stress situations.			
The FPC identified the following <b>mitigating circumstances</b> : the family dynamic can be overwhelming at times, the sacrifices he has made to make the situation better for himself and the others in his family, he has taken steps to correct the situation, he acknowledges the situation was went too far, he had good letters of support, his conviction was disorderly conduct and not strangulation, he has no marks on his 27- year career, no noted employment issues and his promotion to captain show responsibility and ability to lead, he			

has given verbal mitigation two times, and has demonstrated he holds the trust of the department and community.			
The FPC came to consensus that staff captured the identified aggravating and mitigating circumstances of this case.			
Jack Carriger moved that the FPC take NO ACTION against Booher's certification because of all aggravating and mitigating factors listed.	Andy Ponce seconded the motion because the mitigating factors outweigh the aggravating factors.	9 ayes	Motion Passed Unanimously

**6. \*Kyle C. Clark; DPSST No. 44945**

Presented by Fire Certification Compliance Specialist Chantel Goettsch.

DPSST Staff received an application for a certification for Kyle Clark on July 14, 2025. During routine background and criminal history check on applications for certification, DPSST staff found that Clark had criminal convictions in his history. On December 11, 2020, Clark plead guilty to Harassment, ORS 166.065(3), a Misdemeanor Class B, in the state of Oregon. On May 18, 2021, Clark plead guilty to Driving Under the Influence of Intoxicants, ORS 813.010(4), a Misdemeanor Class A, in the state of Oregon. On August 12, 2021, Clark plead guilty to Assault in the Fourth Degree, ORS 163.160(2), a Misdemeanor Class A in the state of Oregon. On January 24, 2025 Clark plead guilty to Criminal Driving While Suspended or Revoked, Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 811.182( 4), a Misdemeanor Class A, in the state of Oregon. These convictions carry a sentence of which not more than one year of imprisonment may be imposed.

This case requires review by the Fire Policy Committee (FPC) because these convictions occurred within the last five years and involve violence against a person, dishonesty or deceit and destruction of property.

**February 25, 2026 FPC Discussion**

<i>Fire Policy Committee Discussion/Consensus and Vote</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>Vote</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
The FPC came to consensus to adopt the staff report as the basis for its recommendations.			
The FPC identified the following <b>aggravating circumstances</b> : this is repetitive behavior, the violation of his probation, he attempted to hide and/or shift blame onto others, the violence on individuals, there is money still due to the courts, appears to have broken public trust due to being dishonest and deceitful, divergent of the integrity and trust of fire agencies.			
The FPC identified the following <b>mitigating circumstances</b> : some instances happened prior to him becoming affiliated with the agency.			
The FPC came to consensus that staff captured the identified aggravating and mitigating circumstances of this case.			

<p>Rose Douglass moved that the FPC take ACTION against Clark’s certification because through the aggravating circumstances he does not appear to uphold the integrity and values the fire service and FPC stands for.</p>	<p>Andy Ponce seconded the motion because he believes the aggravating circumstances cannot be overcome.</p>	<p>9 ayes</p>	<p>Motion Passed Unanimously</p>
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**7. \*Proposed Rule Changes for OAR 259-009-0005, OAR 259-009-0062, and OAR 259-009-0065**

Presented by Administrative Rules Coordinator, Jennifer Howald.

**Background:**

On November 13, 2025, the NFPA Airport Task Force convened at DPSST to review and discuss the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1010: Standard for Professional Qualifications for Firefighters, 2024 Edition, specifically focusing on Airport Firefighter content (Chapters 4 and 8). Currently, the Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) related to NFPA Airport Firefighter qualifications references the 2019 Edition of the NFPA 1003 standard.

To consolidate and simplify its professional qualification standards, the NFPA has combined several standards into the new NFPA 1010 standard. This updated standard now encompasses NFPA Firefighter (NFPA 1001), NFPA Apparatus-Driver/Operator (NFPA 1002), NFPA Airport Firefighter (NFPA 1003) and NFPA Marine Firefighting for Land Based Fire Fighters (NFPA 1005). To ensure each certification area receives the attention it deserves during the review process, DPSST staff chose to establish separate task forces for each topic. The goal of the NFPA Airport Firefighter Task Force was to evaluate the currently adopted standard and compare it to the 2024 Edition of NFPA 1010.

As a result of their work, the Task Force emphasized the importance of Oregon’s fire service maintaining alignment with the most current NFPA standards and recommended adopting the 2024 Edition of NFPA 1010 (Chapters 4 and 8) into OAR.

**Recommendations:**

The Task Force made the determination to adopt the 2024 Edition of NFPA 1010 (Chapters 4 and 8) into OAR to maintain consistency with other standards and to uphold the professionalism of having national standards for the Oregon fire service to attain and maintain.

The Discussion on the transition to NFPA 1010 from NFPA 1003 included the following:

- The transition from NFPA 1003 to NFPA 1010 will include a general requirements chapter (Chapter 4). This chapter applies to all certification levels outlined in NFPA 1010 and sets foundational expectations.
- NFPA Airport Firefighter will continue to require candidates to meet the requirements in chapters 4 (General) and 7 (Firefighter II).
- The name has been changed from NFPA Airport Fire Fighter to NFPA Airport Firefighter to align with other NFPA Firefighter changes.
- The majority of changes were semantical in nature and would not have great impact on training and certification requirements.
- The following JPRs were deleted:
  1. 4.1.1.1 Duties. These requirements shall be divided into three major duties: response, fire suppression, and rescue.
  2. 4.1.1.2 Function. The primary function of the Airport Fire Fighter shall be to execute fire suppression and rescue activities.
  3. 4.1.2 Occupational Safety and Health. The job performance requirements of this chapter shall be accomplished in accordance with the requirements of the authority having jurisdiction and NFPA 1500.
- No other significant changes were identified by DPSST Staff or the Task Force.

For the minutes of the November 13, 2025 NFPA Airport Firefighter Task Force please see Appendix A.

- *Rose Douglass moved to recommend that the Board adopt the recommendations provided by the NFPA Airport Firefighter Task Force. Jack Carriger seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*
- *The FPC came to consensus to affirm the fiscal impact statement presented by staff.*
- *Andy Ponce moved to recommend the board approve the filing of proposed rule changes for OAR 259-009-0005, OAR 259-009-0062, and OAR 259-009-0065. Claire McGrew seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

## **8. Request for Fire Policy Committee Review of Fire Certifications**

Presented by Fire Certification Supervisor Brooke Bell-Uribe.

The Board on Public Safety Standards and Training (BPSST) originally adopted Oregon-specific fire certification standards in 1997, establishing 11 standards and roughly 26 certification levels in administrative rule. In 2004, following a transition to Division 9, the program shifted to nationally recognized NFPA standards, expanding to 14 standards and more

than 34 certification levels. Over time, DPSST has continued to align with national standards, moving away from Oregon-specific requirements except when no national standard exists.

Currently, DPSST maintains 12 NFPA standards, 1 NWCG standard, and 2 Oregon-specific standards, guiding a total of 78 certification levels—significantly higher than the national average of about 20 levels. While standards and certification levels have historically been adopted based on perceived needs within the Oregon Fire Service, there is no formal process for validating these needs. DPSST is presently updating NFPA 1010, which consolidates several earlier standards, and is preparing to review additional NFPA, NWCG, and Oregon-specific standards as part of the regular five-year update cycle.

- *Rose Douglass moved to recommend DPSST develops a task force/committee of various fire service members to review the list of fire certification and develop a process for the introduction of new certifications and the removal of fire certifications within the DPSST system. DPSST Staff are to report back at the May 2026 meeting with further information or recommendations of what those task force(s) might look like. Jack Carriger seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

**9. \*Michael Merlino – Battalion Chief, Sutherlin Fire Department, Fallen Fire Fighters Memorial Wall Nomination**

Presented by Fire Certification Supervisor Brooke Bell-Uribe.

Sutherlin Fire Department Battalion Chief Michael Merlino passed away from Thyroid cancer on August 9, 2025. This case is unique as his diagnosis was designated as not occupationally related by the State of Oregon Workers' Compensation Board. The main argument being that Thyroid Cancer is not cancer or the throat. In reading the attached documentation you will see reference to a similar case (Paul Bieker) who died of Thyroid cancer and his claim was initially denied for the same reason, however Bieker's case was appealed and determined that the initial denials should be set aside. Due to his declining health Merlino ultimately settled his case rather than appeal the outcome. After his death an application for benefits came before the DPSST Public Safety Memorial Fund Board who reviewed the case materials and approved his application for benefits.

- *Andy Ponce moved that the committee approve adding Michael Merlino to the Oregon Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial Wall. Chair Chris Heppell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

**10. \*Paul J. Bieker – Retired Captain, Portland Fire & Rescue, Fallen Fire Fighters Memorial Wall Nomination**

Presented by Fire Certification Supervisor Brooke Bell-Uribe.

Paul Bieker's case was discovered when reviewing the Public Safety Memorial Fund Board benefits application documents for Michael Merlino. Bieker's case was referenced for consideration because Bieker had been diagnosed with Thyroid Cancer and had been denied twice by the Workers Compensation Board but ultimately these denials were appealed

and set aside. Bieker was diagnosed with Thyroid Cancer in November of 2022, he died from this cancer on April 14, 2023.

- *Andy Ponce moved that the committee approve adding Paul J. Bieker to the Oregon Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial Wall. Rose Douglass seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

#### **11. \*Ruben Gonzalez Romero – Firefighter/Sawyer, TJ Forestry Contracting LLC., Fallen Fire Fighters Memorial Wall Nomination**

Presented by Fire Certification Supervisor Brooke Bell-Uribe.

Firefighter/Sawyer Ruben Romero Gonzalez was serving as a Sawyer on a fire crew and actively involved in suppression of the Bivens Creek Fire in Montana when he suffered from a cardiovascular event. Medical assistance and resuscitation attempts were unsuccessful, and Romero passed away on August 24, 2025.

- *Jack Carriger moved that the committee approve adding Ruben Gonzalez Romero to the Oregon Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial Wall. Andy Ponce seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

#### **12. Agency Updates**

Presented by DPSST Director Phil Castle.

- There is more fire activity going on at DPSST's campus. We facilitated ladder truck training for the first time on this campus and now we have a fire classroom.
- OVFA tentatively happening at DPSST in 2027.
- We are all still waiting to see what comes out of Short Session in regards to all state agencies budgets.
- We have been directed to carry on with our learning management system project. We are currently at the beginning stages and have a project manager in place.
- DPSST received bond funding for our deferred maintenance to help update some needed maintenance around campus.

Presented by Fire Program Manager Kayla Ballrot.

- Kayla shared that Fire Certification processed 6,513 certifications in total in 2025. Over that 6,513 620 of those were FFI and 586 of those were FFT2 (the top two certifications of 2025.) Additionally, 3,427 PAF's processed. DPSST Fire Training staff taught 271 classes with a total of 3,914 students. Including the 271 taught by staff, 317 classes total were provided with DPSST's services reaching 4,677 students across the board. 68 of those happened on DPSST's campus.
- With the partial government shutdown 2026 Winter Fire School (Feb. 22-23,2026) was cancelled. The Fire Program will work to reschedule these when they are back. We did still put on our Support Person class as well as Vehicle Extrication taught by our DPSST

trainers.

- Save the date for the Fallen Fire Fighters Memorial will be happening on campus on June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026 at 0100.

**13. Next Fire Policy Committee Meeting – May 27, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.**

Meeting is adjourned at 11:00 a.m.