

March 4, 2010

**SOUTHWEST GEORGIA FIRE CHIEF'S ASSOCIATION**

**Constitution and By-Laws**

**Preamble**

We, the members of the Southwest Georgia Fire Chief's Association, recognizing our responsibility to the communities we serve and our obligations to society in general, and with the knowledge that our profession requires the highest ideals, rules of conduct and operational standards, we hereby adopt the following principles for all our Chiefs and other Fire Officer members serving GEMA Area 2 and recommend these principles to all persons in our region:

1. We will utilize our organizational strength to achieve excellence within our profession with regard to our major goals: excellence in fire department management and outstanding firefighter performance. We pledge to understand the successful practices of fire service organizations and personnel, review lessons learned and recommend and promote improved standards, policies and procedures.
2. Recognizing the mutual dependence of all firefighting forces on each allied profession involved in public safety and with special emphasis on emergency responders, we pledge our cooperation to all organizations and individuals involved in the improvement and promotion of public safety and the welfare of the general public.
3. We will continually recognize that all professions require trained and certified personnel. We pledge to advance the management of fire departments and the science of firefighting through training courses and other methods to meet the standards of our profession.
4. Our members will neither solicit, nor accept, any gift, privilege, favor or advantage from any organization or person, which will place them under any obligation to violate a law or violate the ethics of our profession.
5. As management personnel, we will practice fairness to all members, whether career or volunteer, and only recognize those achievements that have been honestly earned by meritorious service.
6. We will continually recognize the various public agencies that have been empowered to support public safety and, to that end, we pledge our cooperation to all officials and

governmental organizations involved in the promotion of public safety and improvement to the general public's welfare.

7. We recognize our responsibility to the working press and news media of Georgia and believe these entities are important to the democratic processes of our country. Therefore, we pledge to keep the public informed of our activities and solicit public support for successful fire department endeavors. We are committed to providing information to the public regarding any act or policy detrimental to the public safety of Georgia citizens.
8. We will not allow envy, jealousy, or any other self-serving motives to interfere with the aforementioned principles as we strive to achieve all our professional goals.

## **Article I**

### Name and Purpose

#### Section I.

The name of this body will be the "Southwest Georgia Fire Chiefs Association"

#### Section 2.

The purpose for which this Association is organized is to secure a closer official relationship among firefighting officials throughout GEMA Area 2 in the State of Georgia; to secure unity of action in fire department matters; to evaluate the standard of fire departments in the firefighting profession; to generally encourage advancement and the perfection of a uniform firefighting system within the State of Georgia; to advance along all lines pertaining to the prevention and detection of fires; and to encourage membership and affiliation of members of this body with the Georgia Association of Fire Chiefs and the Southeastern Division of the International Association of Fire Chiefs.

## **Article II**

### Membership

#### Section 1.

The Association membership shall be divided into four classes: Active, Associate, Sustaining and Honorary Life.

ACTIVE MEMBERS shall consist of those persons who at the time of election to membership are Chief Officers, Directors, or any other Fire Department officer who carries the duties of a Chief Officer as determined by the Chief of his or her department of a regularly organized fire department in any municipality or county, private and government installations, paid or voluntary in the State of Georgia including public safety directors and emergency management directors, whose span of control and management includes regularly organized Fire-Rescue-EMS departments.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS shall be those members from any governmental agency allied with the Fire Service. Those persons holding an associate membership shall not have a vote and will be excluded from those meetings where only active members shall be allowed while in conference. Associate Members shall meet in separate sessions during such time and under the auspices of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall approve all Associate Members for membership. Associate Members shall pay dues but shall be ineligible to vote or hold office.

SUSTAINING MEMBERS shall be those persons specifically interested in the Fire Service and its advancement. They shall include, but not be limited to those persons involved in sales of fire apparatus, fire equipment, clothing, etc. Those persons holding a Sustaining Membership shall not have a vote and will be excluded from those meetings from which only Active Members shall be allowed while in conference. The Executive Committee shall approve all Sustaining Members for membership. Sustaining Members shall pay dues, but shall be ineligible to vote or hold office.

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS shall be any Active Member of the Association as defined in Article 11, who shall be honorably retired or honorably severed from active firefighting service after at least five (5) years as a member in good standing of this Association. This honor is automatically bestowed on the member upon notification to the Association, and he or she shall be exempt from the payment of dues and shall be eligible to vote but not to hold office, and shall otherwise retain all the privileges of an Active Member.

#### Section 2.

- A. Any person who is desirous of becoming an Active, Associate or Sustaining member of the Association shall file an application with the Secretary, giving his or her name, position, residence, and department name.
- B. Upon receipt of any application (except Honorary), the Secretary shall refer the same to the Executive Committee, who shall make the necessary inquiry as to his, or her, qualifications and personal fitness for membership. After such investigative inquiry, the Executive Committee may admit all qualified persons.

### **Article III**

#### Officers

#### Section 1.

The officers of the Association shall be elected from the Active Membership in good standing and shall consist of President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, all of whom shall hold their respective offices for a period of two (2) years, or until their successor shall be elected or qualified.

#### Section 2.

All of the said officer positions shall be nominated and elected in the following manner. The positions of President, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, and Secretary, will be voted on in all ODD calendar years. The positions of 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President and Treasurer will be voted on in all EVEN calendar years. All voting will take place

by ballot voting, at the monthly meeting in the month of May, by a majority vote of the members present and qualified to vote. The officers so elected shall be installed and take office at an appropriate time and place designated by the Executive Committee, but no later than the next upcoming meeting.

Section 3.

At the time of their elections, candidates for office in the Association shall be voting members as defined in Article II, Section 1.

Section 4.

There may be an official office of the Chaplain. This position will be an appointed position. The appointment shall be made after a recommendation to or from the Executive Board and a majority "Yea" vote of the members of the Board.

Section 5.

There may be an official office of Parliamentarian. This will be an appointed position. The appointment shall be made by the President and shall be a non-voting member of the Executive Committee.

## **Article IV**

### Duties of the Executive Officers

Section 1. (President)

- A. Shall be the official representative and spokesman for the Association.
- B. Shall serve as Chairman of the Executive Committee.
- C. Shall preside at meetings of the Association and the meetings of the Executive Committee.
- D. Shall appoint all committees including those not provided for in the Constitution and By-Laws.
- E. Shall sign as such officer all checks and papers executed by or on behalf of the Association requiring the signature of such officer.
- F. Shall receive and lay before the members in their meetings and at other such times being necessary, the reports of the Executive Committee, Officers, and Committees and generally do and perform duties pertaining to his office as required of him by the Constitution and By-Laws.
- G. Shall be an ex-officio member of all committees with the right to vote.

Section 2. (1st Vice President)

- A. In the absence of the President or inability of the President to perform all duties of his or her office, the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President shall be directed to assume the duties of the President.
- B. Shall assist the President in every way possible to assist the President in his or her duties.
- C. In case of death, resignation, or inability of the 1st Vice President to serve, the 2nd Vice President shall be directed to assume all of the duties of the 1st Vice President.
- D. In addition to all other duties required by the President, the 1st Vice President shall perform such duties as may be required of him or her by the policy direction of the Executive Committee.

Section 3 (2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President)

- A. Shall assist the President and 1st Vice President in conducting the business and policies of the Association.

- B. In absence or inability of the President and 1st Vice President, he or she shall immediately be directed to assume all of the duties and responsibilities of the President.
- C. In case of death, resignation, or inability of the 1st Vice President to serve, the 2nd Vice President shall be directed to assume all of the duties of the 1st Vice President.
- D. In addition to all other duties required by the President, the 2nd Vice President shall perform such other duties as may be required of him or her by the Association in conference assembled or by policy direction of the Executive Committee.

#### Section 4 (Secretary)

- A. Shall generally do and perform the duties, which usually pertain to his or her office, or may be directed of him or her by the Officers and Executive Committee.
- B. Shall attend all meetings of the Association and of all standing committees and keep full minutes of the proceedings and actions taken. He or she shall cause to be prepared and issued to members, and to all others whom he or she may be directed by the Executive Board, a complete report to each meeting. He or she shall employ, with the consent of the Executive Committee, such assistance as deemed necessary to discharge the duties of his or her office.

#### Section 5 (Treasurer)

- A. Shall at each meeting submit to the Association a statement of the work of his or her office for the preceding month, and also submit a report of the financial condition of the Association. He or she shall, by and with the consent of the Executive Committee, select a chartered bank(s) in which the funds of the Association shall be deposited subject to such safeguards as the Executive Committee demand. Shall also work as the financial officer of the Association, and oversee all collection of funds, accounts receivable, donations, and other income, which may come to the Association. Semi-annually, the Treasurer shall audit the financial books of the Association and report findings to the Executive Committee.
- B. Shall sign as such officer on proper warrants, such checks and papers executed on behalf of the Association as may be required by the Executive Committee.

#### Section 6. (Chaplain)

- A. It shall be the responsibility of the Chaplain of the Southwest Georgia Fire Chiefs Association to lend spiritual guidance to the members of the Association. It shall also be his or her responsibility to prepare appropriate memorial services in memory of those members who have passed away during the preceding year.

#### Section 7. (Parliamentarian)

- A. The Parliamentarian shall function under the direction of the Executive Committee to ensure that the business of this Association is carried out utilizing proper procedures.

## **Article V**

### Executive Committee Association Expenses

#### Section 1. Executive Committee/Executive Board

- A. There shall be an Executive Committee, which shall consist of the President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Immediate Past President. The Executive Committee shall transact the business of the Association and shall exercise the jurisdiction and authority over all standing and special committees, and may require a report of their activities at any time. It may interpret the provision of the Constitution and By-Laws.
- B. A simple majority shall constitute a quorum for transaction of business at all meetings in the Executive Committee.
- C. The Executive Committee shall supervise and control all expenditures of the Association though the adoption of a purchasing policy. It shall have the authority to make reasonable allowances for expenses incurred by the officers and members in the transaction of business on behalf of the Association.
- D. For the purpose of orderly administration and supervision, the Executive Committee shall carry out other duties assigned by the President.
- E. The Executive Committee shall have the receipts and disbursements of the Association audited by a committee appointed by the President at least once every 6-months. It may employ a qualified auditor to audit the books of the Association when deemed necessary.
- F. Nothing in the above section shall be construed as prohibiting the Executive Committee, in the case of extraordinary emergency, from changing the place or time of the meeting.
- G. The Executive Committee shall direct the Secretary to publish to the membership such reports and papers, as it deem important.
- H. The Executive Committee shall establish the order of business to be followed during all meetings. In all other cases, Roberts Rules of Order shall govern the proceedings.

#### Section 2. (Association Expenses)

- A. No officer or member of the Association shall incur any expense in the name of the Association without approval of the Executive Committee except that, in case of emergency, the President is empowered to authorize the expenditures of sufficient funds to meet the emergency.

**Article VI**

Committee on Resolutions

Section 1.

- A. The Committee on Resolutions shall approve and submit to the Association all resolutions pertaining to business of the Association or on any subject affecting the welfare of the members of the Association. Any member desiring to present a resolution shall first refer it to the Resolution Committee.

**Article VII**

Committee on Nominations and Elections

Section 1.

- A. The Committee on Nominations and Elections shall consist of three (3) Active Members of the Association and shall be appointed by the President.

**Article VIII**

Committee on Membership

Section 1.

- A. The Committee on Membership shall promote membership and maintain records of members and pertinent information support of the association's member communication program.

**Article IX**

Auditing Committee

Section 1.

- A. The Auditing Committee shall be appointed by the President when deemed appropriate; and shall report its findings to the members during the regular business session of the October and March meetings.

**Article X**

Dues

Section 1.

- A. Dues for membership are indicated in the By-Laws, Article I, Sections 1 and 2.

# BY-LAWS

## Article I

### Dues and Membership Requirements

#### Section 1.

- A. The annual dues for Active and Associate members shall be \$10.00, which shall become due at the time of initiation, and thereafter due on or before January 1" of each year. Honorary Life members shall pay no dues.
- B. The annual dues for sustaining members shall be \$200.00, which shall become due at the time of initiation, and thereafter on or before January 1" each year.

#### Section 2.

- A. A member must have a current membership in place for him or her to participate in Association business or functions.
- B. Any member who resigns from his or her respective department with charges against him or her pending or who is dismissed, or who resigns from his or her department for cause shall likewise be dismissed as a member of this Association.

#### Section 3.

- A. As per the terms of the Constitution, the following committees are established and shall be appointed at the pleasure of the President. (Note: The President may name such other committees from time to time as he or she thinks necessary and those committees shall coincide with his or her term of office.)

- |                                      |                          |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Nomination and Election Committee | 3. Resolutions Committee |
| 2. Membership Credential Committee   | 4. Audit Committee       |

#### Section 4.

- A. Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be held at such time and place as the President may designate. The President upon request of a majority of members may call special meetings thereof.

#### Section 5.

- A. The Committee on Nominations and Elections shall present their report during the April regular meetings, giving a complete list of the nominations for the elective officers of the Association. Where the Committee on Nominations deems it in the best interest of the Association to nominate two or more members for any office, they may so report in order that the choice may be decided by ballot of regular May business meeting. Nominations from the floor shall require the nominee's concurrence in writing or his or her verbal concurrence from the floor at the time of nominations. After calling 3 times for further nominations, the presiding officer shall declare the nominations closed.

#### Section 6.

- A. Any nominee who desires to withdraw his or her name may do so at the time of nomination, but shall not make any address nor request his or her sponsors to support any other candidate.

Section 7.

- A. Only one (1) nominating speech or statement of endorsement shall be permitted by or for each candidate. Such speech shall not exceed 3 minutes.

Section 8.

- A. For any office for which there is only one nomination, the presiding officer shall instruct the Chairman of the Committee on Nominations and Elections to cast a ballot for such nominee, and shall declare such nominee elected.

Section 9.

- A. For all offices for which there are two or more nominees nominated, the Committee on Nominations and Elections shall cause to be prepared, printed ballots, showing the names of the nominees and the office for which they are nominated. Only active members, duly registered by the regular May meeting and qualified to vote, may cast their ballots. After this time, the polls shall be declared closed and the committee on Nominations and Elections shall count the ballots and immediately report to the assembled body.

Section 10.

- A. In the election of officers, the candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected. In the event of a tie vote, the voting on the second ballot shall be confined to the nominees so tied. The second ballot shall take place as soon as possible and shall be subject to the same procedure as on the first ballot.

Article 11

Rules of Order

Section 1.

- A. The presiding officer shall preserve order and decorum and shall take no part in debates while he or she is presiding. He or she shall decide all questions of order without debate. The presiding officer may state his or her reasons for the decision given and shall put the question as follows: "shall the decision of the chair be sustained?" A two-thirds majority of those voting shall be necessary to reverse the decision of the chair.

Section 2.

- A. Every member, when he or she speaks or offers a motion, shall rise in his or her place, state his or her full name and name of department, and respectfully address the presiding officer; and when he or she has finished speaking, shall at once resume his or her seat. When speaking, he or she shall confine his or her comments to the question under debate.

Section 3.

- A. The consideration of any proposed amendments to the Constitution, By-Laws, or Rules of Order, of which notice has been given at a regularly scheduled meeting, shall not be acted upon until the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Section 4.

- A. All amendments, alterations or revisions of any part of the Constitution, By-Laws, or Rules of Order shall take effect upon their adoption unless otherwise provided for.