



SOUTH CAROLINA STATE FIRE

a Division of South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation

South Carolina Firefighter Mobilization

141 Monticello Trail • Columbia, SC 29203

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MEETING MINUTES

Firefighter Mobilization Oversight Committee

Wednesday, May 27, 2026

10:00 a.m.

**141 Monticello Trail, Building 2 and Virtually
Columbia, SC 29203**

Public notice of this meeting was properly posted at the South Carolina State Fire, 141 Monticello Trail, Columbia, SC 29203 and provided to all requesting persons, organizations, and news media in compliance with Section 30-4-80 of the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act. The meeting was also held via video and teleconference.

I. Call to Order and Welcome

The meeting was posted and advertised pursuant to South Carolina laws, rules, and regulations. The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m. by Chairman Jones.

Others in attendance included Will Vaigneur (Lady's Island-St. Helena FD), Bill Hall, and Richard Gregory (SLED). State Fire and LLR employees included Amy Williamson, Brian Archibald, Joe Borelli, Jason Pope, and Laura Spivey.

A quorum was present. Chairman Jones welcomed the Committee members and guests.

II. Roll Call of Members

SC Firefighter Mobilization Committee											
P: Present V: Virtual A: Absent											
Jonathan Jones	P	Darryl Jones	P	Jamie Helms	V	Bruce Kline	P	Charlie King	P	Mark Davis	P
Melissa Potter for Kim Stenson	P	Mike Bedenbaugh	V	Phil Jolley	P	Tres Atkinson	V	Joey Tanner	A	Mark Keel	P

III. Approval of Agenda and Previous Minutes:

Mark Keel made a motion to approve today's agenda. Bruce Kline seconded. The motion carried unanimously, without discussion.

Bruce Kline made a motion to approve the February 25, 2025, minutes. Phil Jolley seconded. The motion carried unanimously, without discussion.

IV. Chairman's Remarks/Financial Update:

Chairman Jones provided a comprehensive financial update, including details on the current budget and remaining balances for non-recurring US&R funds. FY27 Budget proposal has been submitted. Non-recurring US&R and SC-TF-1 funds will likely be closed out over the next fiscal year. Non-recurring funds do not have a sunset date.

Chairman Jones updated the committee on the notification system, ReadyOp. Since the last mobilization meeting, the ReadyOp platform has been used for all notifications of firefighter mobilization requests, offers for assistance, and issuing of task orders. The platform was successfully used during a full-scale exercise in March, as well as during a mobilization in McCormick County on May 22, 2026. There will be training on ReadyOp on May 28, 2026.

Chairman Jones shared information regarding the new State Fire Operations Phone. Any mobilization requests that come in from the State Warning Point will be directed to the State Fire Operations Phone. The ReadyOp caller ID is tied to the State Fire Operations Phone number. The phone will rotate between select team members on a weekly basis to prevent it becoming burdensome on any individual.

Chairman Jones invited the committee to the State Fire Emergency Response Hurricane Coordination Meeting, which is scheduled on July 8, 2026. This year's meeting will include information on the ReadyOp platform, call-outs, and deployment documentation. The military's Lakota helicopters will not be available during this year's hurricane season. Chairman Jones will also be speaking June 23, 2026 at the County Director's workshop, at SCEMD, regarding mobilization.

**V. Mobilization Coordinator's Report
Review of Deployments and FFMOB Missions**

Chairman Jones delivered a report to the committee.
Since the previous meeting, one official mobilization has occurred:

- McCormick County High School Fire: 54 personnel, 2 apparatus from 9 counties responded, a Regional IMT and PIO requested

Charlie King reported on IMT for the McCormick Fire. Radio communication was initially difficult due to McCormick and Edgefield using a system incompatible with Palmetto 800. Continuity of operations was a big concern for county council and the school board.

Darryl Jones reported that there have been ten lightning detectors installed, by SC

Forestry, as a pilot program. Once they are functional, a grant will be requested to implement them state-wide. The ten detectors are currently installed in a roughly 40-mile hotspot. It will be open to the committee upon completion of the program's training.

VI. SC-TF1 and SC-HART Update

Brian Archibald delivered a comprehensive report to the committee.

- 86 team members went to the March mobilization exercise in Charlotte.
 - Four of the five metrics for the three-year USAR team evaluation criteria were met during the exercise.
- Currently have 165 members on the roster; 60 additional members being onboarded
- 80-hour FEMA Structural Collapse Technician course completed
- NFPA rope operations course completed
- 10 members completed a swift water class at the National Whitewater Center
- 9,529 total hours of training since the previous meeting
- HART completed training at Donaldson Center

VII. SC-IST (Palmetto IST) Update

Chairman Jones provided a report to the committee.

Since the previous meeting:

- The IST participated with SC-TF1 for the March mobilization exercise.
- Seven members of the IST deployed to the Honolulu Emergency Operations Center, in Hawaii for two weeks. FDNY IMT deployed 14 people near where flooding and mudslides were occurring.
 - Travel challenges- the team was unable to book flights/hotel rooms due to the CG's office being closed over the weekend. P-cards were not able to be turned to emergency status until Monday. (Mark Keel suggested increasing the spending limit of the P-Card to assist with delay of the CG's office turning on emergency status.)
 - Initially deployed to help with recovery. After two additional storms landed, the team transitioned to response effortlessly. Assisted with pre-positioning resources.
 - Two hours of sensitivity training completed. The team helped with whatever was needed. The approach of 'humble entry' built trust between our team, Honolulu Emergency Operations staff, and the FDNY IMT.
- Amy Williamson represented SC-IST at the FDNY's IMT annual team meeting.
- The IST manager position will be posted soon.

VIII. Old Business

Chairman Jones updated the committee that the next step in implementing the Incident Management Qualification System Guide is distributing it to the regional IMTs.

Recommended meeting over the next quarter to discuss and finalize the guide. The goal will be to have the guide ready to adopt by next meeting in August for All Hazard IMTs. The first step the governance committee will need to consider for state qualification is historical

recognition, in order to establish already qualified individuals. Charlie, Matt Rhoton, and Emily Joyce recently completed position task books. Darryl Jones suggested an existing guide for recognition of prior learning.

IX. New Business

Chairman Jones provided a comprehensive update to the committee regarding the status of financial reimbursement for prior deployments dating back to 2020. All previous deployment reimbursement packages will be submitted by end of June. A tracking system for paperwork has been put in place to streamline future deployment reimbursements. Sponsoring Agency Leadership Meeting regarding reimbursement requirements is scheduled in July.

Mark Keel reported on the K-9 program. The first human remains detection dog is available when needed.

Chairman Jones updated the committee on the status of the Emergency Response Chief, and ERTF Training Manager positions.

Chairman Jones queried the committee regarding the request for FFMOB from a non-government agency. The committee unanimously agreed local/county government needs to make the request in order to move resources.

Darryl Jones reported a significant fire season for Forestry this year. With airtankers, at least 477 homes have been saved. A three-year contract has been written with the airtankers. A full-time drone coordinator has been hired; he will be available to other agencies when needed. Working on hiring a meteorologist in the next fiscal year, specifically for forecasting fire weather/fire behavior. Some larger dozers have been moved from coast to midlands. Supplemental funding has allowed Forestry to order additional large bulldozers, with four in service and five more coming. Obtained funding to reestablish fire breaks. Wildfires are getting worse due to climate change. Continued funding is important for future operations.

Mark Keel provided an update on the Bell 412. Bell is providing training on the 407 and 412 for new pilots. SLED also has drones available. Palmetto 800 towers are in the budget.

X. Next Meeting and Adjournment

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for August 26, 2026, in the State Fire Marshal's conference room, in Columbia. There will be a virtual option.

Bruce Kline made a motion to adjourn. Mark Keel seconded. The motion was carried unanimously without discussion. The meeting was adjourned at 11:49 a.m.