



South Carolina Volunteer Strategic Assistance Fire Equipment Program

V-SAFE Panel Meeting Minutes Nov. 18, 2024 at 11 a.m.

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.

NOTE: These minutes are a record of the motions, official actions taken by the Panel, and a brief summary of the meeting.

I. Call to Order and Welcome: Chairman Randy Arant

The meeting was posted and advertised pursuant to all South Carolina laws, rules, and regulations. Chairman Arant called the meeting to order at 11 a.m.

II. Roll Call of Members

The following panel members were present (see below), and a quorum was established. Additionally, LLR employees George Stapleton, Susan Duncan, Michelle Stanly, and Amy Williamson were present.

V-SAFE Panel Members									
Jonathan Jones	P	Randy Arant	V	Barry McRoy	V	Vacant (at large)		Brad Hart	V
Bill Dunlap	P	Steve Arsenault	V	Randy Swinton	A	Dennis Jackson	V	Thomas Rivers	V

P: Present V: Virtual A: Absent

III. Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Chief Dennis Jackson made a motion to approve the agenda. Chief Thomas Rivers seconded. Motion carried unanimously without discussion.

Chief Thomas Rivers made a motion to approve October 14, 2022 minutes. Chief Dennis Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously without discussion.

IV. Introduction of Grant Administrator

Chief Jonathan Jones introduced Susan Duncan as the Grant Administrator effective July 1, 2024, and Michelle Stanly as the new Administrative Coordinator effective Nov. 4, 2024.

V. Review of Grant Activity

Susan Duncan provided a grant activity report to the Panel. Since 2017, almost \$20 million has been awarded to predominately volunteer SC fire departments. Departments receiving funds are often reminded of upcoming due dates. Regarding the:

- 2022 grant cycle, one final report remains to be submitted.
- 2023 grant cycle, out of 379 departments, 93 percent of departments have submitted a final report.
- 2024 grant cycle, 63 percent (245 out of 391 departments) have submitted a final report.

Regarding the direct deposit process, out of 391 awards in 2024, only 99 departments utilized direct deposit. Staff is working to educate and encourage department chiefs to increase that number next year.

Chief Jones provided a funding update and stated approximately \$5.4 million is available for the 2025 grant period.

Susan Duncan shared five desk audits have been successfully completed and, going forward, any asset purchased with V-SAFE funding that has a serial number is being collected in the department's report.

VI. Old Business

None

VII. New Business

a. Revision of previously established audit process

Chief Jones shared a need to update the grant auditing process.

A motion was made by Chief Dennis Jackson to revise the previously established audit process (10 percent of total and VSAFE Panel members) to remove the requirement to automatically audit peer review panel members and establish a minimum of five audits per quarter. Chief Barry McCroy seconded. Motion carried unanimously without discussion.

The result is 20 audits per year. If a department is delinquent in reports, an additional audit may be necessary.

b. Authority to approve grant amendments

Chief Jones reminded the Panel that the State Fire Marshal currently has the authority to approve any grant amendments. He requested that the task be transferred to the Grant Administrator.

A motion was made by Chief Barry McCroy to authorize the Grant Administrator to approve any future grant amendment requests. Chief Dennis Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously without discussion.

Susan Duncan shared a need to revise the upcoming 2025 grant cycle.

The 2024 Notice of Intent was open 60 days and the application process 30 days. Since more time is needed to assist customers during the application process, it is recommended that during the 2025 grant cycle that the Notice of Intent be open 30 days starting Dec. 11, 2024. The application process will open Jan. 27, 2025, for 45 days (closing March 13, 2025). This allows time for the last quarterly deposit (March 30) and provides staff one month to review applications and any outstanding reports, and submit the file to Finance for check disbursement.

Chief Jones recommends the Panel to meet, at a minimum, in November of each year.

VIII. Adjournment

Chief Dennis Jackson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Chief Tommy Rivers seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously without discussion.

The meeting adjourned at 11:37 a.m.