

**CONSTITUTION  
AND  
BY-LAWS**

OF THE

**CAHOKIA VOLUNTEER  
FIRE DEPARTMENT**

ST. CLAIR COUNTY, ILLINOIS

Last revision, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2004

# REVISIONS AND UPDATES TO CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF THE CAHOKIA VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

## ARTICLE 1

This organization shall be known as the Cahokia Volunteer Fire Department of Cahokia, Centreville Township, County of St. Clair, State of Illinois.

## ARTICLE 2

**Section 1.** The object of this organization shall be to protect life and property from the devastation of fire and promote fire prevention.

**Section 2.** To gather information concerning the working of various apparatus, appliances and methods used in the extinguishment of fires.

**Section 3.** To form an organization to promote the best interest of the membership of the Department and the welfare of the community.

## ARTICLE 3

**Section 1.** The membership of this Department shall consist of fifty (50) Regular Members who shall be of good moral character, have a minimum age of eighteen (18) and a maximum age of forty-five (45) upon submission of their application, and be in a physical condition acceptable by the Board of Directors. There may be an unlimited number of Associate Members from each firehouse having the same qualifications. Previous experience in this or any other fire service related organization shall be considered by the Board of Directors for exemption.

**Section 2.** Honorary Members may be appointed after displaying an unprecedented devotion to our Department in the form of many hours of service given, services provided, etc., with a motion from the body and a second and subsequent majority of the Regular Members present. These appointees will have no direct fire service activities or be allowed to vote.

## ARTICLE 4

**Section 1.** The elected officers of the Department shall consist of President, Vice-President, Financial Secretary, Recording Secretary, and Directors (three from each house). No Officer shall be permitted to hold more than one elected office.

**Section 2.** Elective offices of President, Vice-President, Financial Secretary, and Recording Secretary shall be for a term of two (2) years with the President and Vice-President, Financial Secretary and Recording Secretary to be elected in the odd numbered years. Directors are to be elected for a term of three (3) years, one director from each house to be elected each year.

**Section 3.** The Positions of Chief and Assistant Chiefs shall be appointed by the Fire District Trustees as directed in the Handbook for Trustees of Illinois Fire Protection Districts and by the rules and regulations set forth by the Trustees.

## ARTICLE 5

**Section 1.** Under the proper order of business at the November meeting, the Chair shall announce that the nominations for election of officers shall be opened. The Chair shall then proceed in the order named in Article 4, Section 1. Nominations for each office will be open for not less than one (1) minute. During the nominations, only Regular Members may nominate or be nominated. Nominees may accept only one nomination.

**Section 2.** The Recording Secretary shall furnish for the December meeting a printed ballot showing each candidate and the office for which that candidate is running. The election of officers at the December meeting shall be by ballot from Regular Member only, with Fire Department personnel only in attendance.

Each Regular Member unable to attend the December meeting shall have the right to vote an absentee ballot, which must be picked up from the Recording Secretary, which shall be marked, placed in an envelope, sealed, signed across the seal, and returned to the Recording Secretary at that time.

**Section 3.** A special Election shall be held to fill any vacancy of an elected office with an unexpired term of more than six (6) months.

## ARTICLE 6

**Section 1.** At the first Regular Meeting in January, the President shall announce that he or she is ready to install the newly elected officers. In the event that the incumbent President is re-elected, a District Trustee shall swear him or her in, followed by the President swearing-in the other newly elected officers.

**Section 2.** To the Officers installed: *“You have been chosen by your brother Members to a high and honorable position in this Department. Raise your right hand and repeat after me, using your name where I use mine.”*

*“I ..... in the presence of the Members here assembled, do solemnly and sincerely promise and declare that I will honorably and faithfully perform, to the best of my ability, the duties of the Office to which I have been elected, to the faithful performance of all which I pledge my sacred honor.”*

**Section 3.** Initiation of the new Regular Members (obligation, by the President), *“Raise your right hand and repeat after me using your name where I use mine.”*

*“I ..... in the presence of Almighty God and the Members of the Cahokia Volunteer Fire Department here assembled, do of my own free will and accord, solemnly promise and declare that I will faithfully discharge the duties of my obligation and will comply with the Constitution and By-Laws of this Fire Department and will always be loyal thereto.*

*That I will never wrong or defraud this organization or a Member thereof, to permit any wrong to be done either, if in my power to prevent it. Should my affiliation with this Fire Department cease in any way, I will consider this pledge as binding outside this Department as though I remained a Member of same. All this I promise and pledge upon my honor as a true Firefighter and citizen of the United States of America.”*

## ARTICLE 7

**Section 1.** The Department shall hold its' regular meetings on the second Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. Board meetings shall be held on the fourth Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. When the regular or board meeting falls on a holiday, the meeting will be held on the preceding Thursday. Nomination of officers will be at the regular meeting in November, election to be at the regular meeting in December, and installation of officers will be at the regular meeting in January.

**Section 2.** A special meeting may be called by the President or by a petition of five (5) Regular Members, notice to be served by the Recording Secretary to all Members of such meeting.

**Section 3.** A quorum at any regular or special meeting shall be President or Vice-President and three (3) Directors who may transact business, and a majority of those present shall govern. In event the President or Vice-President are absent, four (4) Directors must be present, one (1) shall act as Chairman, to be chosen by the Directors present.

**Section 4.** A quorum at any regular or special board meeting shall be the President or Vice-President and three (3) Directors who may transact business.

## **ARTICLE 8**

### **Application For Membership**

**Section 1.** All applications are to be discussed and acted upon by the Board of Directors.

**Section 2.** Upon acceptance of the application by the Board of Directors, the new applicant shall be assigned to his or her respective firehouse, put on a check crew and call list by his or her Assistant Chief. He or she will be notified by the Board of Directors whether his or her application has been accepted or rejected. The applicant will be eligible for Associate Membership six (6) months from the date his or her application is accepted. Associate Members will be eligible for Regular Membership not less than ninety (90) days after he or she is accepted as an Associate Member, and has been checked out on all Department equipment and approved by the Assistant Chiefs.

**Section 3.** A reasonable amount of inquiry shall be made by the Board of Directors as to the moral character and honesty of the applicant. Further investigation shall consist of a check made by the Cahokia Police Department to establish if said applicant has a record of an unreasonable amount of arrests.

**Section 4.** Upon acceptance by the Board of Directors, a notice giving the applicant's name, address, and telephone number shall be posted in the firehouse.

**Section 5.** Any new applicant shall have a telephone and a permanent address before his or her application will be accepted. A new applicant shall live within the Fire District, North Dupo, Sauget or Cahokia proper. Any member living outside the Fire District shall not have voting rights, hold an elected office or hold an Officer's position within the Cahokia Volunteer Fire Department. Members residing outside of the Fire District will be eligible for appointed or assigned duties by either the Chief or Board of Directors. Anyone, who moves outside the prescribed boundaries is not eligible for membership.

**Section 6.** Members must upgrade their driver's license to comply with whatever is current by Illinois Vehicular Law before being eligible to be elevated to Associate Member.

**Section 7.** Members shall acquire a dress uniform within ninety (90) days after being elevated to Regular Member. Work uniforms, if desired, shall be purchased at their own expense.

**Section 8.** Blue lights are not to be installed on/in personal vehicles until being elevated to Associate Membership.

**Section 9.** All members will sign for and be personally responsible for all equipment issued to them by the Fire Department.

## **ARTICLE 9**

The constitution and By-Laws may be revised at any time deemed necessary by the Department Membership, for this purpose a Committee may be appointed at any Regular Meeting. The revised portion of the Constitution to be presented and read to the Membership at three (3) Regular Meetings, without any exceptions, there they shall be adopted by the membership and become the Constitution of the Department.

## **ARTICLE 10 Special Committees**

**Section 1.** Special Committees shall be appointed by the President consisting of Regular and/or Associate Members, to hold office until said duty is complete or committee is abolished by the President.

At all committee meetings a majority of the committee shall constitute a quorum, and a majority of said quorum shall determine all questions pertaining to said committee. All such committees shall meet at such time and place as may be designated by the Chairman of the committee, and the committee shall make a report to the Department in person from time to time.

All committee reports to be turned in within a reasonable period of time, if not, the President shall appoint a new committee.

**Section 2.** A Special Committee may be appointed upon any item of business. Such committees shall automatically be discharged when such business has been completed and a final report made to the Department, filed with the Recording Secretary and a record made of such discharge.

**Section 3.** When Members are appointed to any committee by the President, the Regular Member first named shall be Chairman of said committee.

**Section 4.** The President shall be a Member of each committee and try to attend meetings whenever possible.

**Section 5.** All committees shall meet once a month, unless tabled by a vote of the Members of the committee.

## **ARTICLE 11 Retirement**

**Section 1.** Any retired Member of this organization shall be subject to all rules, regulations, and By-Laws which may govern active Members of this organization. Disciplinary action to be by the majority vote of the Board of Directors.

**Section 2.** Any Member with ten (10) years of active service may be granted a retirement membership by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

**Section 3.** Retired Members shall turn in all fire fighting equipment. In return for a Membership Badge, he or she will receive a badge reading "Retired Firefighter", also he or she will be able to keep his her firehouse key and attend all social functions.

**Section 4.** Retired Members will retain all Department privileges with the exception that they will not be allowed to vote in the election of officers or issues concerning the operation of the Department.

**Section 5.** Retired Members retaining dress uniforms will be allowed to wear them to Fire Department functions, but must maintain or replace them at their own expense.

## **ARTICLE 12**

### **Duties of Officers**

**Section 1.** It shall be the duty of the Chief to be present at all fire whenever possible, to have full supervisory authority over the Department at all times. When on duty, he or she shall give orders to his or her subordinate officers and see that all orders are dispatched and executed punctually. The Chief shall have the authority to suspend any Member for failure to comply with any lawful command or Department rule and regulation until the next Board Meeting, and such suspension shall be reported to the President and Board of Directors promptly. The Chief shall have authority to appoint Training Officer(s), Arson Investigators and Inspectors. All appointments shall be subject to the majority approval of the Board of Directors. The Chief shall see that records of all fire statistics occurring within the Fire District are kept and on file, (i.e. truck response reports, State fire reports, personnel records, training, etc.).

**Section 2.** It shall be the duty of the Chief or Assistant Chiefs to set the date and time for all drills and instructions. He or she shall appoint subordinate officers to instruct the Members on various evolutions or fire extinguishment and kindred subjects. The Chief or Assistant Chiefs shall be in charge of instructions.

**Section 3.** The Chief shall make or cause to be made inspections of all places of business, places of recreation and schools in the district. The Member responsible for said inspections shall make a report and file it with the Department as often as the Chief may deem necessary. The Chief shall make a report at all regular meetings of all fires in the past month, report to be filed in his or her office. The Chief shall have the power to make any purchases for emergencies.

**Section 4.** It shall be the duty of the Assistant Chiefs to assist the Chief in the discharge of his or her duties at all fires, to assume the duties of the Chief and perform his or her functions of every character during the absence or disability of the Chief. He or she shall have the power to make purchases for the maintenance of the building and equipment, as needed. All other purchases to be made by the Board of Directors. Assistant Chief shall present in writing to the Board of Directors all information in regards to all new applicants or other Members in reference to training, work crews or problems he or she may be having with Members or applicants. The Assistant Chief shall be responsible for maintaining an orderly Fire Station. The Assistant Chief shall appoint one (1) Captain and as many Lieutenants that corresponds with at least the number of Work Crews assigned to each Fire Station with the approval of the Chief.

**Section 5.** The President shall see that all administrative business is punctually dispatched and executed by all administrative officers. The President shall appoint each subordinate officer, including Chaplain, to serve in whatever category he or she sees fit to benefit and ensure proper operation of the Fire Department. The President shall have the authority to suspend any administrative officer for failure to perform duties of his or her office in a timely manner. The suspension shall be until the next Regular Board Meeting. Such suspension shall be reported to the Chief and the Board of Directors. The President shall chair all Regular, Board and special meetings, and on appearance of a quorum, proceed to dispatch all proper business. The President shall appoint all committees and be a Member of same. The President shall fill all vacancies of elected officers with terms less than six (6) months, subject to Majority approval of the Board of Directors.

**Section 6.** It shall be the duty of the Vice-President in the absence of the President to preside over meetings and perform his or her functions of every character. He or she shall occupy the chair when an appeal is made by a Member.

**Section 7.** It shall be the duty of the Recording Secretary to keep a full record of business transacted such as minutes of regular meetings, board meetings, and special meetings. He or she shall read and answer all communications. A copy of all minutes to be posted in each fire house (not including discussion of applications).

**Section 8.** It shall be the duty of the Financial Secretary to collect all money due to the Department, to deposit and keep correct records and account of same, and to pay all authorized bills. He or she shall also make a monthly report at the regular meeting of all receipts and disbursements, keep and file all transactions and communications for future reference. It shall be the duty of the Financial Secretary to keep a record of all Fire Department insurance. He or she shall make out and sign all checks, countersigned by the President or Vice-President. The Board of Directors of the Fire Department may audit the Financial Secretary's books or cause to be audited by any service they deem necessary, at any time. He or she shall be bonded prior to taking office in sufficient amount to protect funds on hand at all times. The premium on said bond shall be paid by the Fire Department. Bond to be approved by the Board of Directors and placed in the safety deposit box along with titles, deeds and all other irreplaceable Fire Department papers.

**Section 9.** The Board of Directors shall have full Administrative authority over all Department functions (except those covered by the Chief). This shall include the dispatch of all personnel matters. Directors shall have the authority to make all purchases for the Department (except those covered by Sections 3 and 4 of this Article). Directors shall have the power to make purchases not exceeding \$1,500.00 and shall approve or reject payment of bills. Directors shall approve or reject all applications for membership. Directors shall hold hearings regarding conduct, morale of membership, and take any action necessary to insure proper function of the Department. They are custodians of all realty belonging to the Department and are to see that same is properly maintained. They shall see that the Chief maintains functioning fire inspection, investigation units, and training.

## **ARTICLE 13**

### **Penalties**

**Section 1.** Any Member who shall absent him or herself from three (3) consecutive Regular Meetings and/or Work Meetings (unless he or she presents, in writing or in person, an excuse acceptable to the majority of the Board of Directors) will be expelled from the Department. In order to be excused from a Regular Meeting, a Member must contact one of the following Officers: President, Chief or one of the Assistant Chiefs.

**Section 2.** Any Member who displays a lack of interest may be dismissed by the Board of Directors of the Fire Department.

**Section 3.** Any Member who leaves the Fire Department for any reason, shall immediately return all Fire Department property issued to him or her or make monetary restitution for same or suffer criminal prosecution.

## **ARTICLE 14**

### **General Rules and Regulations**

**Section 1.** The term "Member" when used in the following rules, shall cover all personnel, regardless of position held.

**Section 2.** It shall be the duty of every Member of the Department to acquaint him or herself with all matters contained in these rules and regulations, in any matters relating to his or her duties and become familiar with the Laws and Ordinances, Rules and General Orders relating to the Department. It shall be a rule of this Department that at no time shall a Member of the Department be permitted to ride on the equipment other than in a normally accepted manner. Any Member driving a fire truck shall obey all traffic laws, and only Members are allowed on the apparatus.

**Section 3.** There shall be by majority vote of the Board of Directors, a set of General Orders to govern the day to day operation of the Department. Each new order must be approved by the Board of Directors. All orders will be posted in each Fire station. Any Member who violates a General Order may be subject to suspension by the Chief or immediate dismissal by the Board of Directors.

**Section 4.** Insurance and Liability. The Department shall not be responsible for any injury, loss of time due to injury, only so far as may be covered by the Departments blanket accident insurance policy.

**Section 5.** When a motion is made and passed, it may not be overturned for a period of one (1) year unless it is in violation of law or inadequate information was presented.

**Section 6.** Any fire fighter who damages or loses eyeglasses or dentures shall have them repaired or replaced by the Department. Full documentation of the occurrence must be received by the Command Officer within forty-eight (48) hours of the incident before any action will be taken by the Board of Directors for expenditure.

**Section 7.** Only Regular Members are allowed to vote in elective offices or any issues concerning the operation to the Fire Department.

**Section 8.** Only Regular and Retired Members are entitled to wear a Firefighter's uniform.

**Section 9.** Any Member before going on a leave of absence must turn in all Fire Department equipment during absence shall not have the privilege of voting in the election of Elective Officers or any issue concerning the operation of the Fire Department.

**Section 10.** All Firefighters must respond to at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the reported fires in a response year. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action according to the appropriate Standard Operating Procedure. A response year is from December 1<sup>st</sup> through and including November 30<sup>th</sup> of the following year.

**Section 11.** In the event of a death of a Member, Retired Member, Auxiliary Member, Cadet Member, or the immediate family of same, a Memorial Bible shall be presented to the nearest relative or Member of the Department. The immediate family will include parents, spouse and children, parent-in-laws, and the Firefighter's siblings.

These By-Laws may be in force from the date of their adoption, and any and all alterations or amendments to these By-Laws of this Department shall be in force from the date of the adoption of such amendments, alterations, and new By-Laws. Any problems or questions arising, not covered by these By-Laws, shall be remedied by the majority vote of the Board of Directors, and with the approval of the Membership.