

**New Castle County Fire Service Strategic Planning Committee**  
**Wednesday, February 25, 2026, at 2:00pm**  
**Location: Government Center – Executive Conference Room**  
**87 Reads Way, New Castle, DE 19720**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Present Voting Members (In-Person or Virtual):** Co-Chairman Kenny Dunn, Co-Chairman Dennis Godek, Dave Del Grande, Bruce Pinkett, Joe Day, Councilman Brandon Toole, Councilman Kevin Caneco, Kevin Cowperthwait, Gordon Edwards, Fran Williams, Dan Burris, Lynn Wells and John Adams.

**Non-Voting Members present:** Staff Person Stephanie Warren, County Solicitor Karen Sullivan, and members of the public.

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

- a. The meeting was called to order at 2:14pm by Co-Chair Dennis Godek.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

- a. Meeting Minutes from February 11, 2026, were reviewed and discussed.
- b. **Motion:** To approve the minutes of the February 11, 2026, meeting:
  - i. Moved by: Gordon Edwards
  - ii. Second by: Bruce Pinkett
  - iii. Vote: In favor – Unanimous, Opposed – None.
  - iv. Motion carried

**3. Comprehensive Deployment and Operational Study (RFP Process)**

- a. The Committee reviewed documents developed at the previous meeting, including materials provided by Stephanie. The primary focus is a Comprehensive Deployment and Operational Study, as recommended in the FACETS Report.
- b. Co-Chair Kenny Dunn outlined the anticipated Request for Proposal (RFP) process:
  - i. County will draft the RFP outlining scope, deliverables, and timeframes.
  - ii. The RFP will be issued through the County Procurement Office.
  - iii. A pre-bid meeting will be conducted.
  - iv. Proposals will be reviewed by a selection committee.
  - v. A vendor will be selected, and contract negotiations will follow.
  - vi. Council approval may be required depending on cost thresholds (estimated threshold discussed at approximately \$50,000).



- viii. Legal council suggested that financial sustainability is central to system viability and could appropriately be included in the operational study.
- ix. Members agreed billing operations and broader EMS revenue policy are separate considerations and should be clearly distinguished if included in the study.
- h. Fire Service designee for RFP development – the Committee will recommend that the fire service appoint a designee to work with the County in developing the RFP for the operational study. Discussion clarified that:
  - i. The designee will likely be from fire service leadership.
  - ii. The Committee will vote to formally approve the recommended designee at the next meeting.
  - iii. The designee will report back to the Committee.
  - iv. **Motion:** The Committee will recommend that the fire service appoint a designee to work with the County in developing the RFP for the operational study.
    - 1. Moved by: Gordon Edwards
    - 2. Seconded by: Fran Williams
    - 3. Vote: In favor – Unanimous, Opposed – None.
    - 4. Motion carried.
- i. Timeline Considerations
  - i. Ensuring study completion aligns with the Committee deadlines.
  - ii. Incorporating firm deliverable timelines in the RFP.
  - iii. Understanding shorter deadlines may increase study costs.
  - iv. Allowing flexibility within procurement of professional services.

#### **4. Delaware Volunteer Firefighters Association (DVFA) Update**

- a. The Co-Chair reported that leadership met with executive leadership of the Delaware Volunteer Firefighters Association (DVFA):
  - i. DVFA President will appoint a committee of nine members (three from each county).
  - ii. The purpose is to improve coordination between counties and State level initiatives.
  - iii. This may support future State legislative efforts.

#### **5. Public Comment**

- a. Chief Michael Edwards (Elsmere Fire Company) raised concern regarding whether fire companies should financially contribute to the study if the County is willing to fund it, especially when fire companies are requesting additional financial support. Chief Edwards also mentioned the financial

impact of the proposed State House Bill 236 regarding 20-year pension plan, which may significantly increase company contributions.

- b.** Committee response to Chief Edwards' public comments were:
  - i.** The Committee's authority is limited to the Executive Order and county matters.
  - ii.** Pension legislation falls under State level authority and DVFA jurisdiction.
  - iii.** Fire Service participation in funding the study ensures representation in the process.
  - iv.** No specific budget line currently exists for the study.
  - v.** The county will make efforts to support necessary procurement.
  - vi.** Final decisions depend on proposal pricing.

## **6. Adjournment**

- a.** Meeting adjourned at 2:52pm.