

**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS
OF THE
ONONDAGA COUNTY VOLUNTEER FIREMEN’S ASSOCIATION, INC.**

DBA Onondaga County Volunteer Firefighter’s and EMS Association

Adopted 1953	Revised 2007
Revised 1991	Revised 2008
Revised 1995	Revised 2014
Revised 2001	Revised 2016
Revised 2003	Adopted 2025
Revised 2005	Revised 2026

ARTICLE I

Name

This Association shall be known and designated as the Onondaga County Volunteer Firemen’s Association Incorporated, & DBA Onondaga County Volunteer Firefighter’s and EMS Association. (OCVFA)

ARTICLE II

Mission Statement

The purpose of OCVFA is to unite all Fire, Ambulance, EMS Organizations of Onondaga and adjoining Counties and maintain a compact representative and centralized Association to consider, agree on and act in unison upon matters relating to the prevention and fighting of fires and matters pertinent thereto, the promotion of the health and welfare of its members, to sponsor fire safety education and to promulgate sociability and good fellowship among all of its members.

ARTICLE III

Membership

Section 1

Departments and Companies

- A.** All Fire, Ambulance and EMS Organizations in good standing in the Town, Village, Fire District in which they are located, may become members of OCVFA upon acceptance by the Association and payment of the annual dues as determined by the Board of Directors.

Youth Organizations

- B.** Youth in Fire/EMS Service Programs - (Rams/Explorer Post/Junior) in good standing, and payment of the annual dues for their advisor(s) and all members of such organization, shall be determined by the Board of Directors.

Individuals Becoming Members

- C.** An individual may become a member of OCVFA by being a member in good standing of any Fire, Ambulance or EMS Organization and who has paid their annual dues as determined by the Board of Directors. Individual Members in good standing shall be entitled to participate in the deliberations of this Association at all regular, annual and special meetings and shall be entitled to vote. Any member who is in arrears for the payment of dues for more than one year, or who has been disqualified by the action of the OCVFA Board of Directors, is not a member in good standing.

Life Members

- D.** Life Members shall be entitled to participate in the deliberations of OCVFA at all regular, annual and special meetings and shall be entitled to vote. Life Members shall be presented with a suitable emblem and ID card, signed by the President.

Life Members include:

- 1.** An Active Member of OCVFA, having distinguished themselves in this Association, and upon recommendation of the Resolutions Committee, may be made a Paid-Up Life Member by a two thirds (2/3) vote of the membership present at an Annual Meeting.
- 2.** Past-Presidents shall automatically become Life Members.
- 3.** The Secretary and/or the Treasurer of this Association, after serving in such a capacity for a period of five (5) years, shall automatically become a Life Member.

4. Any member of the OCVFA in good standing with twenty (20) years of Service with the OCVFA will automatically become a Life Member.
5. Any member, on account of a physical disability, and the recommendation of the Board of Directors, may be granted Life Membership by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of membership present at any regular Membership Meeting or Annual Business Meeting of this Association.

Honorary Members

- E. An Honorary Membership may be granted to a person, not an active member of this Association, who shall be duly elected to the same at a Regular Membership Meeting or Annual Business Meeting, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the membership present. The basis for election to such a title shall rest in the performance of services or acts in the interest of the Association which shall, in the opinion of the members, entitle the person to such an award. A suitable card, signed by the president, shall be presented to each person designated.

Section 2

A. Loss of Individual Membership and Reinstatement

Any member of a Fire, Ambulance and EMS Organizations, or Individual Member who has permitted their dues to fall into arrears for a period of two years, shall lose their membership in OCVFA. Such members, however, may be reinstated upon application and upon payment of all back dues and assessments.

B. Loss of Organization Membership and Reinstatement of a Ram/Explorer Post/Junior Organization

Any Ram/Explorer Post/Junior Organization that lets their dues fall in arrears for two years, such organization shall be reinstated by OCVFA upon application and payment of all back dues and assessments.

ARTICLE IV

OCVFA Officers

Section 1 Executive Board

The Executive Board of the OCVFA shall consist of President, First Vice President, and Second Vice President. They are elected by ballot at the Annual Business Meeting, for a 2-year term. The Immediate Past President shall also continue to be a Executive Officer on this Board until replaced by the current President stepping down at the swearing-in of a new President.

Section 2 Board of Directors

The executive power and Management of OCVFA shall be vested in a Board of Directors, which shall consist of thirteen [13] members. Four [4] of these shall be the Executive Officers who are listed in Section 1, Executive Board of this Article. They shall hold membership on the Board of Directors during their term(s) as an Executive Officer.

There shall also be Nine [9] Regular Directors of the Board serving 3-year terms. Three [3] of the Regular Directors shall be elected by ballot at each Annual Business Meeting to ensure a continued level of experience on the Board of Directors.

Not more than Two [2] Regular Directors, from One Department, Company, or EMS Agency may serve on the Board of Directors at the same time.

Section 3 A. Appointed Officers

- 1. Secretary**
- 2. Assistant Secretary**
- 3. Treasurer**
- 4. Assistant Treasurer**
- 5. Sergeant at Arms**
- 6. Assistant Sergeant at Arms**
- 7. Chaplain**
- 8. Pub Ed/Safety Trailer Custodian**
- 9. Sports Official Chairperson**
- 10. Custodian of Sports Equipment**
- 11. Youth Program Coordinator**
- 12. Historian**

Section 4
A. Election of Officers

Candidates for an Officers Position must submit a letter to the OCVFA Steering Committee from their member organization within one month of the election stating the candidate's intent to become an OCVFA Officer and that they are a member in good standing with their home organization.

All OCVFA Elected Officers, once approved by the Steering Committee, shall be elected at the Annual Business Meeting. After opening, the polls shall remain open until all eligible members attending the Meeting, that wish to vote, have cast their ballot. The election of officers shall be by a simple majority of the votes cast.

B. Nomination of Officers

Nominations of Officers shall be presented at one meeting prior to the Annual Business Meeting. An Election Committee shall be appointed by the President. Said Committee to consist of: The Immediate Past President, and three (3) other OCVFA members. The Election Committee shall have proper ballots prepared for the Election at the Annual Business Meeting, act as tellers, and supervise all voting.

Section 5
Terms of Office

- A.** The newly elected Executive Officers of OCVFA shall be elected for a term of two (2) years and assume that office immediately following the Swearing-In Ceremony conducted at the Annual Business Meeting. Once the President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, have completed one term in their respective office, they have the option of a second two (2) year term in that office, but not to serve more than Two (2) consecutive terms in the same office.
- B.** The Regular Directors on the Board of Directors shall be elected for a term of three (3) years. Regular Directors may be re-elected for a second 3-year term.
- C.** Appointed Officers, found in Section 3 of this Article, are appointed by the President with the approval of the Executive Board. The Steering Committee will vet their appointment before they take Office. The appointed Officer serves at the pleasure of the President.

Section 6
Qualifications of Officers

- A.** Only members of OCVFA who are in good standing may run for office. To qualify for the Office of President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, the candidates must have been an active member of the Board of Directors for at least One (1) full year. Candidates for the Board of Directors shall be members of a Fire, Ambulance or EMS Organization not already represented on the Board of Directors by Two (2) regular members. Candidates also must have attended at least Fifty Percent (50%) of the regular membership meetings between the previous Convention and Nominations, unless excused by the President.

- B.** All Elected and Appointed Officers of this Association shall be required to attend at least Fifty Percent (50%) of the Regular Membership Meetings of the Association during the Fiscal years. If any Officer fails to attend the required meetings, they will automatically forfeit their office, unless excused by the President.

Section 7
Vacancies

Any Elected Officer vacancies within OCVFA shall be filled at the next Regular Membership Meeting of this Association through a recommendation from the Board of Directors and a Special Election. The Office is filled, to complete the unserved term, by a simple majority of votes cast, followed immediately by the swearing-in of the newly Elected Officer.

ARTICLE V

Section 1 Duties of Officers

A. President

The President is the Chairman of the OCVFA Board of Directors. He/she shall preside over all meetings of this Association, preserve order, and shall decide all points of order and debate. The President shall attest all orders on the treasury that have been audited and allowed by this Association. The President shall call special meetings whenever he/she shall deem them necessary. The President shall appoint the Standing Committees and their Chairperson, in the manner prescribed in this Constitution (Article VII, Section 1A), and shall also appoint all other OCVFA committees not provided for in this Constitution. The President also presides over the meetings of the Executive Board, and the Board of Directors. The President shall submit a written report at the Annual Business Meeting. The President shall be bonded for a sum concurrent with OCVFA funds. The bond shall be paid for by the Association.

B. First Vice President

The First Vice President shall assist the President in any way that he/she may direct. In the absence of the President, the First Vice President shall preside and do all the acts that the President is required to perform. In case of death or inability of the President to serve, the First Vice President shall serve as President until the next Annual Business Meeting. The First Vice President shall monitor the Public Education/Safety Trailer and Tow Vehicle condition and follow up on any problems with the Public Education/Safety pursuant to (Article V, Section 1, Subdivision M). He/she is also a member of the OCVFA Steering Committee. The First Vice President shall submit a written report at the Annual Business Meeting.

C. Second Vice President

The Second Vice President shall assist the President and the First Vice President in any way they may direct, and in the absence of the First Vice President, take over all his or her duties. The Second Vice President is also a member of the OCVFA Steering Committee. The Second Vice President shall submit a written report at the Annual Business Meeting.

D. Immediate Past President

The Immediate Past President assumes this position on the Executive Board when a new President is sworn in. The Immediate Past President is the Chairperson for the OCVFA Awards Committee and a member of the Election Committee and the Steering Committee. He/she is the OCVFA Delegate to the State Convention. He/she will also submit a written report at the Annual Business Meeting. The Immediate Past President shall be bonded for a sum concurrent with OCVFA funds. The bond shall be paid for by the Association.

E. Executive Board

The Executive Board consists of the Executive Officers found in Article IV, Section 1, and they assist the President in the selection of OCVFA Appointed Officers, Standing Committee Chairpersons and Committee members. They are an advisory resource to the President.

F. Board of Directors

The Board of Directors shall have general charge of the affairs and property of the OCVFA and shall have power and authority to enforce all the rules and regulations of the Association. This Board shall be responsible for the committee acting in the name of the Association and accountable for the activities and expenditures by these committees. The Board of Directors may act on matters pertaining to the Association without the consent of the monthly meeting but is directly responsible to the Association for its actions. The minutes of the Board of Directors' Meetings shall be read at the next regular Association meeting. The Board shall recommend to the membership, for their approval by special election, at the next Regular Membership Meeting, a nominee to fill a vacancy in the Association. They shall also have the power to investigate and try charges against any member or officer, and if found guilty, shall have the power to fine, suspend, or expel such member or officer. The President of the Association shall act as Chairperson of this Board. A Majority of the Members of the Board shall have the power to instruct the President to call special meetings. The Board shall hold meetings at such places and times that the Chairperson may direct. Directors must attend 50% of all the Regular Membership Meetings and the Board of Directors Meetings, unless excused by the President.

G. Secretary

The Secretary shall keep a complete record of all proceedings of the Association and the Board of Directors receive and answer all communications pertaining to the Association, send notices of the Association and Directors meetings. The Secretary shall collect all monies due OCVFA and give them to the Treasurer. The Secretary shall receive a receipt from the Treasurer for each amount received and keep a correct account of the monies. The Secretary shall maintain the records and yearly certifications required for: OCVFA Vehicles, the Fire Safety Trailer and the Sports Trailer. The Secretary will make reports as the President and Board of Directors may from time to time require, and make a full report at the Annual Business Meeting of the Association Membership. The Secretary shall be bonded for a sum concurrent with OCVFA funds. The bond shall be paid for by the Association.

H. Assistant Secretary

The Assistant Secretary shall assist the Secretary in any way he/she may direct and assume all the Secretary's duties during his/her absence, and any other duties, as directed. The Assistant Secretary shall be bonded for a sum concurrent with OCVFA funds. The bond shall be paid for by the Association.

I. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall receive all monies belonging to the Association from the Secretary, giving a receipt for all monies received; pay all bills; and issue all necessary checks ordered by the President, when countersigned by authorized officer. The Treasurer shall keep an accurate account of all receipts and disbursements, sign all checks, and submit the Corporation's Books immediately for auditing, when called upon by the Auditing Committee to do so. The Treasurer shall handle all floral funds, pay all bills out of the fund after they are approved by the designated person of the Department from which the bill was received. The Treasurer shall be bonded for a sum concurrent with the amount of funds of the OCVFA, and this bond shall be paid for by the Association.

J. Assistant Treasurer

The Assistant Treasurer shall assist the Treasurer in any way he/she may direct and assume all the Treasurer's duties during his/her absence and any other duties, as directed. The Assistant Treasurer shall be bonded for a sum concurrent with OCVFA funds. The bond shall be paid for by the Association.

K. Sergeant at Arms

The Sergeant at Arms shall oversee the American Flag, OCVFA County Banner, County Flags, flagpole and rests. They will maintain order at the meetings, lead the Pledge to the Flag, and any other duties as requested by the President.

L. Assistant Sergeant at Arms

The Assistant Sergeant at Arms shall assist the Sergeant at Arms in any duties that he/she does and perform the Sergeant at Arms duties in his/her absence.

M. Chaplain

The Chaplain, who is appointed by the President, has duties that include, but are not limited to:

- Being a pastoral presence to the firefighters and their families.
- Conducting invocation/benedictions at Association functions; Celebrating religious ceremonies.
- Providing confidential care for those struggling with issues of crisis, loss and/or stress.
- Visiting firefighters and members who are sick or hospitalized.
- Praying for the members of, and the services provided by the Association.

- Willing to listen to the problems and concerns within the Association and to share the grief, sorrows and joys, both individually and collectively.

N. Public Education/Safety Trailer Custodian

The Public Education/Safety Trailer Custodian, who is appointed by the President, shall have jurisdiction over the Safety Trailer and Tow vehicle owned by OCVFA, See that the Safety Trailer and Tow Vehicle are maintained in proper working order, and report directly to First Vice President any problems, be responsible for getting Agreements for Public Education Trailer & Hold Harmless Form signed by the user. The signed copies are sent to the OCVFA Secretary for filing.

O. Sports Custodian

The Sports Custodian, who is appointed by the President, is to have jurisdiction over all sports equipment owned by OCVFA. The Custodian is to see that all insurable equipment is properly insured, that it is kept in good condition, and is properly stored. Anyone wishing to use this equipment must first obtain permission from the Board of Directors and must file a Hold Harmless Agreement with the Sports Custodian. The Hold Harmless Agreement must be filed with the Association Secretary.

P. Sports Officials Chairperson

The Sports Officials Chairperson will preside over all meetings of the Sports Teams, preserve order and shall decide points of order and debate, coordinate the duties of the other Sports Officials. The Chairperson will submit to the OCVFA General Membership any proposed changes to the Sports Rules and Regulations approved by the sports teams.

Q. Youth Program Coordinator

The Youth Program Coordinator, who is appointed by the President, is responsible for coordinating youth events and supporting youth programs in Onondaga County volunteer fire departments, and EMS organizations, with the purpose of fostering future fire and EMS 1st Responders.

R. Historian

The President shall appoint one of the OCVFA members as the Historian. The Historian duties shall be to keep and preserve the complete history of the Association.

ARTICLE VI

Expenditures

Section 1 Operating Expenses

Operating Expenses of OCVFA shall be authorized and controlled by the Board of Directors. This is done by way of developing a budget to be shared with the general membership at three Membership Meetings before the beginning of the fiscal year, for the purposes of transparency, comment and input.

- A.** An unplanned expenditure, or proposed unplanned expenditure, up to the sum of Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500.00), other than the operating expenses of this Association, may be approved by a majority vote of the Board of Directors and then reported at the next regular Membership Meeting of the Association.
- B.** Any unplanned expenditure, or proposed expenditure, above the sum of money over Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500.00) must be presented by the Board of Directors, and then voted upon by the members present at the next Regular Membership Meeting of the Association. In this regard, the Annual Business Meeting shall hold the same status as a Regular Membership Meeting.

Section 2 Special Operating Expenses

Special Operating Expenses of the OCVFA shall be authorized and controlled by the Board of Directors. Examples are:

- A.** Secretary – the Secretary will receive an approximate reimbursement of expenses as determined by the Board of Directors.
- B.** Treasurer - the Treasurer will receive an approximate reimbursement of expenses as determined by the Board of Directors, and
- C.** Public Education Trailer Custodian - Public Education Trailer Custodian will receive an approximate reimbursement of expenses as determined by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE VII

Section 1 Standing Committees

A. List of Committees

The President shall appoint the following Standing Committees, their Chairpersons and Committee Members, at the first (1st) Regular Membership Meeting following the Annual Business Meeting.

1. Audit Committee
2. Awards Committee
3. Banquet Committee – Installation
4. Banquet Committee - Past Presidents
5. Budget Committee
6. Constitution & By-Laws Committee
7. Convention Committee Long-Range
8. Election Committee
9. Fire Prevention Committee
10. Firefighter Memorial Service Committee
11. Fundraising Committee
12. Historical Committee
13. Legal Aid Advisory Committee
14. Legislative Committee
15. Membership Committee
16. Parade Convention Committee
17. Parade Judges Committee
18. Public Education Trailer Committee
19. Resolutions Committee
20. Scholarship Committee
21. Sports Committee
22. Steering Committee
23. Tournament Committee (Golf & Bowling)
24. Ways & Means Committee
25. Youth Committee

B. Eligibility

Only OCVFA members, who are in good standing, may serve on Association committees.

C. List of Representatives

The following is a list of Representatives that work with OCVFA in accomplishing the Association's Mission (Article II)

1. (CNYFA) Central New York Firefighter's Association Representative
2. (Coalition) OCVFA, OCFCA, CRFDA, and OCFPA Representatives
3. (CRFDA) Central Region Fire Districts Association Representative
4. (FASNY) Firefighter's Association of the State New York Representative
5. (LAOCVFA) Liaison to Ladies Auxiliary Representative
6. (NYS AFC) New York State Association of Fire Chiefs Representative
7. (NCNYVFA) Northern Central New York Volunteer Firemen's Assoc Rep
8. (OCAD) Onondaga County Ambulance Directors Representative
9. (OCFAB) Onondaga County Fire Advisory Board Representative
10. (OCFCA) Onondaga County Fire Chiefs Association Representative
11. (OCFPA) Onondaga County Fire Police Association Representative
12. (OCOEM) Onondaga County Office of Emergency Management Rep
13. (OCSO) Onondaga County Sheriff's Office Representative
14. (YFESP) Youth Fire/EMS Service Programs Representative

Section 2 Steering Committee

A. The Steering Committee will consist of:

1. Any member of OCVFA holding an elected office or appointed position in **FASNY, CNYFA or NCNYVFA**.
2. The President, the First Vice President, and the Second Vice President of this Association.
3. The Immediate Past President of this Association, and
4. Three (3) OCVFA members to be appointed by the President.

B. The duties of the Steering Committee shall be:

1. Keeping an active list of candidates available to fill any elected office or committee position in **FASNY, CNYFA, NCNYVFA, OCVFA**.
2. Review candidates for **FASNY, CNYFA, NCNYVFA, and OCVFA**.
3. This Committee meets once in the fall, and once in the spring, to review the OCVFA candidates list for all offices. If more meetings are necessary, they will be scheduled by the Committee Chairperson.

ARTICLE VIII

Meetings

Section 1 Executive Board Meetings

The Executive Board Meetings of OCVFA shall be called by the President as needed.

Section 2 Board of Directors Meetings

The regular monthly Board of Directors Meetings of OCVFA shall be at the day and time designated by the President.

Section 3 Annual Business Meeting

- A.** At the Annual Business Meeting, a formal written request to the host of the Annual Convention of this Association shall be sent to the Secretary and voted on by a majority of members at any Regular Membership Meeting or Annual Business Meeting and may be scheduled for more than one year in advance. It shall be held between the beginning of the month of May and before Labor Day.
- B.** The Annual Convention shall not be held on major holidays, such as Memorial Day or July 4th.
- C.** Failure to hold an annual convention at the time designated in this Constitution shall in no way result in the dissolution of this Corporation.

Section 4 Regular Membership Meetings

The Regular Membership Meeting of OCVFA shall be held the third Wednesday of the month, except for the June meeting, which may be held the second Wednesday of the month when necessary, so as not to conflict with the State Chief's Convention. The meeting will be at a place from which an invitation has been received from a department or company and has been accepted at the Annual Business Meeting. Regular Membership Meetings will be held in September, October, November, January, February, March, April, May, and June.

Section 5 Committee Meetings

All OCVFA committee meetings shall be held at a place and time designated by that Committee Chairperson. The Committee Chairperson is responsible for notifying the Committee members and the President of such meetings.

Section 6 Quorum

At the meetings: Regular Membership, Annual Business, or special meetings of this Association, twenty (20) dues paying members shall constitute a quorum. For all board meetings a majority of board members shall constitute a quorum.

For the purposes of quorum, electronic presence such as: Zoom, Microsoft Meeting, or other recognized audio/video service, shall constitute attendance. The Secretary shall make note of “electronic” attendees for general attendance records.

Section 7 Time of Meetings

Regular Membership Meetings of this Association shall be called to order at 7:30 p.m. Annual meetings shall be called to order at a time announced by the Host Department with the approval of the OCVFA Officers.

Section 8 Meetings During Declared Emergencies

In the event that a State of Emergency is declared by either a Federal, State or Local Government authority, which may impact the business of the OCVFA, the Board of Directors will institute the following actions:

1. OCVFA Board of Directors will notify all member departments or companies via e-mail that the Regular Membership Meeting will be held on an accessible audio/video platform, such as Zoom, Microsoft Meeting or other recognized audio/video service.
2. Every reasonable attempt will be made to notify OCVFA members of the change for the Meeting.
3. Attendance on the audio/video platform will be considered as participating in the OCVFA Meeting and the name of the attendee will be noted as attending for the general attendance records.
4. In the event the Meeting does not have a quorum present, it will be a decision of the Board of Directors to continue the Meeting and conduct the necessary business of OCVFA. To proceed with the business of the Association, a 2/3 majority of the Board must agree to the temporary change in the quorum rule.

ARTICLE IX

Order of Business (Annual Business Meeting)

Meeting called to order
Pledge to the Flag
Invocation
Address of Welcome
Response to Address of Welcome
Nominations of Officers
Election of Officers
Presentation of Bills
President's Report
Vice-President's Report
Treasurer's Report
Secretary's Report
Report of the Chair for the Fundraiser
Report of Committees
Benevolent Collection
Communications
Unfinished Business
New Business
Resolutions
Swearing in of newly elected officers
Invitation for Next Convention and Monthly Meetings
Benediction
Adjournment

ARTICLE X

Delegates

Section 1 State Delegate

The Delegate to the State Convention shall be the Immediate Past President of this Association, and the alternate shall be the newly elected President at the Annual Convention.

ARTICLE XI

Rules of Order

Section 1

Every member, when he or she speaks, shall rise and address the Chairperson, giving their name and the name of their department or organization.

Section 2

When two or more members rise at the same time, the Chairperson shall name the one to speak first.

Section 3

A member called to order shall immediately sit down unless permitted to explain by the Chairperson.

Section 4

If any member demands it, the count of the ayes and nays shall be taken and entered upon the minutes of the meeting.

Section 5

Any member may be dismissed from the Association by the Board of Directors for conduct unbecoming a member at any function of this Association.

Section 6

Any person participating in any function of this Association and conducting themselves in a manner unbecoming a member, may be barred from all functions of this Association for a period of one year by the Board of Directors.

Section 7

Each Department or Company shall be responsible for the conduct of all people participating from their Department or Company.

Section 8

Unless previously stated in this Constitution and Bylaws, the meetings of OCVFA shall be conducted and controlled in the manner set down in the Parliamentary Procedure designed in Roberts Rules of Order.

ARTICLE XII

Awards and Recognitions

Section 1

A. Onondaga County Volunteer Firefighter's and EMS Association (OCVFA)

Meritorious Awards. It is highly desirable that there should be uniformity and certainty in estimating the degree of risk undertaken by an OCVFA member, to entitle the member to a merit rating in any of the three grades enumerated. A meritorious act involves a risk above the ordinary, since the Firefighter's and EMS responder task is inherently fraught with danger. This should be particularly kept in mind when multiple recommendations are forwarded for the same operation. The relative peril to each member involved must be carefully evaluated to properly award the deserving. In awarding ratings, the following classifications are established:

- **Class I.** To entitle a member to a rating in this class, the act under consideration should involve a degree of danger properly characterized as Extreme Personal Risk.
- **Class II.** To entitle a member to a rating in his class, the act under consideration should involve a degree of danger characterized by a Great Personal Risk.
- **Class III.** To entitle a member to a rating in this class, the act under consideration should involve a degree of danger characterized as an Unusual Personal Risk.
- **Certificate of Merit.** To entitle a member to a rating in this class, the act under consideration should involve an act worthy of recognition, but which is not readily applicable under the above classes.

B. Civilian Certificate of Merit. This entitles a civilian to this Award. The act under consideration should involve personal bravery, or initiative and capability.

C. Award applications are available at the: Association Website - www.OCVFA.org, the Association Secretary, or the Awards Committee Chairperson. The application must be signed by the Chief or Assistant Chief and returned postmarked by March 15th annually.

Section 2 Annual Awards

A. Bill Barden Award

1. Given to a member who promotes OCVFA and encourages membership in the Association. They go above and beyond to help OCVFA and/or Fire or EMS Services in the County.
2. Must be an OCVFA member in good standing.
3. Award Committee to evaluate all potential candidates.
4. The Immediate Past President will sit as the Chairperson of the Awards Committee, which consists of 2 at-large OCVFA members. They will meet one (1) month prior to the Installation Banquet to evaluate all the Award candidates and give the Award Winner results to the President.
5. This Award will be given annually with presentations being made following the OCVFA Installation Banquet or at the September Regular Membership Meeting.
6. There is a Traveling Plaque associated with this Award that is given to the current recipient Host Fire Department, Fire Company or EMS Agency for display. It consists of the names and years of previous recipients of the Bill Barden Award.

B. Clive Belge Award

1. Given to a member who is an unsung Hero for Accomplishments & Service to OCVFA and/or County Fire Department. Someone who does a lot of behind the scenes work without recognition.
2. Must be an OCVFA member in good standing.
3. Award Committee to evaluate all potential candidates.
4. The Immediate Past President will sit as the Chairperson of the Awards Committee, which consists of 2 at-large OCVFA Members and one [1] Lyncourt Fire Department member. They will meet one (1) month prior to the Installation Banquet to evaluate Award Candidates and give the Award Winner Results to the President.
5. This Award will be given annually, with presentations being made following the OCVFA Installation Banquet or at the September Regular Membership Meeting.
6. There is a Traveling Plaque associated with this Award that is given to the current recipient's Host Fire Department, Fire Company or EMS Agency for display. It consists of the names and years of previous recipients of the Clive Belge Award.

C. The Carson Sikora Youth of the Year Award

1. The Award shall be given on the merits of both firematic and non-firematic activities and/or other actions making the person worthy of this Award.
 - a. Other actions may be construed as outstanding service to the Fire Service, EMS Agency, Community, Church and School, etc.
 - b. Outstanding leadership in the Explorer Post or Junior Department Ram or other Youth group.
 - c. This Award shall be open to members of the Explorer Post, Junior Fire Dept, Ram or other Youth Group.
2. Only one name may be submitted on each application. If there are several people nominated for the Award, each name must be submitted on a separate application, setting forth the part each performed.
3. A letter addressed to the Youth Committee setting forth therein, in detail, a story or history of the deed(s) of the named nominee. The letter is to be signed by the Advisor, Chief, President or Director of the nominating Fire/EMS Service. The letter to be acknowledged by the Youth Committee by May 15th.
4. The Award will be given annually by the Awards Committee, with presentations being made at the OCVFA Installation Banquet or the next Regular Membership Meeting.
5. The award will be a plaque, a certificate of award, and a medal to the recipient, and a Traveling Plaque for display at the current Award Winner's sponsoring Agency.
6. The Youth Committee shall submit their recommendations as to who, in their opinion, should receive the Carson Sikora Youth of the Year Award to the Awards Committee before May 31st. The President of OCVFA shall then give final approval on the recommendation submitted by the Youth Committee.

Section 3 OCVFA Recognitions

A. Red Jacket Awards

1. Presented to a Recipient based on the recommendation of the Chief or President of the requesting fire department, fire company, or the Director of the requesting EMS agency.
2. The host fire department, fire company or EMS agency requesting, must be a dues paying member in good standing with OCVFA. The Award Recipient does not have to be a member of OCVFA.
3. The host fire department, fire company or EMS agency, will submit a biographical resume of the recipient to the Awards Committee for preparing the Proclamation for OCVFA President's signature and then presented to the recipient.
4. The Red Jacket Award Proclamation will be presented to the Recipient by a member of the OCVFA Executive Board, a Director or a Past President, at a time and place chosen by the host fire department, fire company or EMS agency. The Award will be a Proclamation and a gift.
5. The host fire department, fire company or EMS agency will receive a Red Jacket Award Plaque for display of the name(s) of their member(s) who have received a Red Jacket Award.
6. There is a limit of two (2) Red Jacket Awards per year for each fire department, fire company, or EMS agency.

B. Proclamations

1. OCVFA may present a Proclamation and/or Plaque to recognize a fire department, fire company, EMS agency, or individual member attaining a 25-year anniversary increment(s). The receiving fire department, fire company, EMS agency, or individual member must be a dues paying member in good standing with OCVFA.
2. OCVFA may also present a Proclamation and/or Plaque to recognize a fire department, fire company, EMS agency, or individual(s) for an outstanding achievement on behalf of OCVFA.
3. The Awards Committee will prepare the Proclamation and/or Plaque and submit it to the President for signature.

C. Certificates

1. OCVFA may present a Certificate to recognize a fire department, fire company, EMS agency, Individual Organizations, or Individual(s) for an outstanding achievement on behalf of OCVFA.
2. The Awards Committee will prepare the Certificate(s) and submit them to the President for signature.

ARTICLE XIII

Amendments

Section 1

OCVFA shall have the power to amend this Constitution and Bylaws provided the proposed amendment:

- A. is submitted, in writing, by the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, and
- B. is read at two previous Membership Meetings, and
- C. at least ten (10) days before the voting meeting which is to consider the change, each department, company, and EMS agency is notified, by USPS mail, email or any electronic way of disseminating information, that the Bylaws are to be amended, and
- D. two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members in good standing, present at the voting meeting, are in favor of the proposed change(s).

Section 2

All precedent Bylaws heretofore established by this Association are hereby repealed.

I, Judy Strazzere, Secretary, do hereby certify this document to be a true and accurate copy of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Onondaga County Volunteer Firefighter's and EMS Association.

Judy Strazzere
OCVFA Secretary
Elbridge, New York

Warren R. Darby
OCVFA President
Brewerton, New York

Adopted - April 16, 2025
Revised – April 15, 2026