



## **Northern Virginia Firefighters' Emerald Society Pipe Band**

### **General Membership Meeting**

**06 February 2019**

- I. Meeting called to order at 1915 hours by President Bill Bryce**
- II. Members in Attendance:** Board of Directors: President/Drum Major Bill Bryce, Vice President/Quartermaster/Drum Sergeant Jason Allen, Secretary/Pipe Corporal Sandy Keith, Treasurer/Pipe Sergeant Tom Clappi, Board Member at Large/Pipe Major Steve Boulton, Band Members: Pipe Major Emeritus Steve Cochran, Pipe Sergeant Emeritus Ed Snyder, Pipe Sergeant Matt Lopez, Pipe Sergeant Kevin Byrne, Drum Sergeant John Bideganeta, Drum Sergeant Lisa Heilbraun, Pipe Corporal Gary Winemiller, Pipe Corporal Mike Lacey, Pipe Corporal Pete O'Brian, Luis Santano, Jim Martin, Jonathan Day, Jim Ryan, Brian Dunn, Amy Hoffman. Tom Murphy and Tyler Steffey proxy vote and call in.
- III. Announcement from Band Instructor:** Jim Ryan given the floor by Pres. Bryce. Jim Ryan announced personal and band goals. Goals are to make sure people are at least having fun playing their instruments; this is achieved by better tuning, maintenance, and understanding of the music. Those who show up to rehearsal need and deserve to be allowed to excel beyond those who do not attend rehearsal. Those who do not come to rehearsal will be too far behind to meet the standards and will either leave the band altogether or start to make it a priority in their lives. The band honors the fallen by playing their instruments well. If members put in the time they will be 90% better than most bands currently on the streets. Jim Ryan ended with expressing how thrilled he was to be apart of the group and that he is committed to making the band better. At the end of his remarks, Pipe Corporal Gary Winemiller presented Jim Ryan with a numbered membership NVESPB badge.
- IV. Reading of Minutes**
  - A. Jonathan Day moved that the Secretary not read the minutes aloud from the previous year. Motion seconded by Jason Allen. Motion

Passed and the hard copy minutes were passed among the group.  
See Enclosure 1. 2018 Annual Membership Meeting Minutes  
Authored by Jason Allen.

- V. Pipe Major's Report:** Steve Boulton seconded what Jim Ryan stated. Members have to show up for rehearsal and events. If a member doesn't show for over a month without a valid reason, they will be moved to inactive status as described in the band by-laws. They may be moved from inactive status back to active status by the discretion of the P/M and D/M. Band leadership is going to start enforcing this in order to be fair to the members who do show up and are striving to meet band goals and standards. Enclosure 2. Pipe Major's Rules and Guidelines, dated 21Jan2019.

Those who have stated they were kicked out of the band were not. They were moved to inactive status based on lack of attendance to rehearsal and band events. The letter sent to them asks that they to come back followed by language referencing the band by-laws for attendance. Those who do not plan to return were asked to return their equipment that belongs to the band. Enclosure 3. Example of NVFESPB BoD Membership Status Letter, dated 21Jan2019.

- VI. President/Drum Major:** Bill Bryce addressed the membership status letter (Encl 3.) reiterating that it was not/not a letter of dismissal but rather informed individuals of their status as inactive based on by-laws, asked individuals to consider returning to rehearsals, and if that could not be accomplished then to return issued band gear. Further accountability issues and rumors pertaining to resignations of four band members; John Langley, Jeanine Shelley, Gene and Ruth Lastfogel was discussed. The group was reminded that the last time the Lastfogels participated in a band event was at the national Fallen Firefighters Memorial 2017 and that they did not stay for the performance, their receiving a letter for inactive status was a reasonable action by the BoD. Furthermore, the Lastfogels have not participated in the Virginia Fallen Firefighters Memorial, which is located in their home of record Richmond, Virginia, an event that would accommodate their long commute. Pres. Bryce stated that a constant observation regarding complaints is that the majority of complaints come from individuals who participate the least.

Gary Winemiller passed out copies the resignation letter of Jeanine Shelley and directed the Secretary to add the resignation letters to the minutes. Gary Winemiller opined that a better course of action than a letter would have been a face-to-face discussion with band leadership and said individuals. Pres. Bryce stated that communication has broken down between leadership and the members who have resigned and they have refused to return emails, texts or phone calls. Ed Synder, stated that band leadership needs to dig

deep and ask why individuals are leaving the band and asked what happened to the drum line. Reasons of John Langly's departure were discussed and varied from band atmosphere, learning new tunes to physical demands of band performances which Pre. Bryce and Lisa Heilbraun stated they had discussed with John Langly. Tom Clappi discussed a situation pertaining to Jeanine Shelly and the wearing of an Alexandria Volunteer Firefighter uniform at the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Fallen Firefighter Ceremony in Colorado Springs, CO in 2017. This action allegedly insulted IAFF management whom host the event and apparently brought embarrassment to NVFESPB members whom were with her. Additionally, Jeanine Shelly was allegedly cautioned by a member of a sister band, the Baltimore Fire Brigade to not wear a "volunteer" uniform for an IAFF event. Enclosure 4. Resignation Letter Jeanine Shelley, dated 30Jan2019; Enclosure 5. Resignation Letter Gene and Ruth Lastfogel, dated 30Jan2019.

Jim Ryan, hypothetically asked the group, if the board would have sent out a letter three months before changes would anything have changed? Further stating that no one will put himself or herself in a bad light in front of other band members or bands, accountability is the reoccurring theme. Mike Lacy, reminded everyone that "you joined the band, the band didn't join you" and internal standards for attendance are reasonable. John Day stated that life situations for everyone change over time and there is nothing wrong with that. You cannot save everyone nor can force people to do anything.

Ed Snyder and Gary Winemiller, addressed the Chincoteague parade in December 2018 and stated that exclusion of individuals of the band from the parade was inappropriate especially since the band banner was carried in that parade. Jason Allen stated that he had indeed only asked members whom he felt that he could rely on whom knew the tunes and would be available for the event. The event was on behalf of a request by his mother and the first time Chincoteague had ever had a Pipe Band in their Christmas Parade. His intent was not to insult members of the band but rather to field the best band for the performance. Louis Santano, stated Jason Allen was doing right by his mother however, we should be doing right by everyone and for every gig. Furthermore, Louis Santano stated he had observed leadership of this band has a lot of passion however; leadership should also set the tone of how we treat each other in the band.

Pres. Bryce addressed the upcoming fundraiser for 6 April 2019 at Patriots Pub and Grill Fairfax, VA, and informed the group that only two people who are no longer in the band are the only people who have volunteer to help with the logistics of putting on the event. Pres. Bryce admitted that he did not set a good example during the meeting by cursing and talking over people. However, he wanted everyone to know that he loved the band and the leadership of the band were not out to punish members but rather reward those who show up to rehearsal and are dedicated. A follow-up email

with identified functions for the fundraiser would be forthcoming for volunteer opportunities at the fundraiser.

**VII. Vice President/Quartermaster:** See Enclosure 6. NVFESPB Uniform Inventory. Matt Bickert's friend has a drum that belongs to the band, John Bideganeta is trying to get the drum back from the individual.

- A. **Uniform Committee:** Gary Winemiller, stated a revised Uniform manual is forthcoming and will be posted to the website by Jim Kraftchak. The updates will require new photos. Individuals need to stick to the standards outlined in the manual to many extra pieces are showing up at performances.
- B. **Band Manager:** Lisa Heilbraun, stated that the band played several events last year but unfortunately had to cancel a few. Some people are not using TeamSnap, which assists leadership in making decisions for band availability for events. The group was reminded to check their TeamSnap App settings to make sure they are getting the proper notifications.

**VIII. Treasurer:** See Enclosure 7. Treasurer Report. Treasure took proxy votes for Tom Murphy and call in vote for Tyler Steffey during the election of new BoD officers.

**IX. Member at Large:** The band will strive to do more open rehearsals and fund raisers in the coming year.

**X. Secretary:** Sandy Keith announced that he will be moving to Germany for three to five years for work and will be stepping down as Band Secretary. A form thank you letter was generated but not agreed upon in the previous year. Donations should always be acknowledged with a thank you letter. See Enclosure 8, Draft thank you form letter.

**XI. New Business:**

- A. Plan for the fundraiser 06 April 2019 at Patriots Pub and Grill. Members encouraged to begin acquiring items for the silent action.
- B. A motion was unanimously passed to start the process to amend the by-laws in order to allow emeritus members to refrains from having to pay annual dues but allowed to keep voting privileges. Emeritus members will always be allowed to donate to the band.

**XII. Nominations for Officers:**

- A. President
  - I. Mike Lacey Elected by ballot
  - II. Matt Lopez
  - III. Bill Bryce

- B. Vice President
  - I. Matt Lopez Elected by ballot
  - II. Steve Boulton
- C. Secretary
  - I. Jim Kraftchak Elected by ballot
  - II. Jim Ryan
- D. Treasurer:
  - I. Tom Clappi Nomination closed
- E. Member at Large
  - I. Jim Ryan Elected by ballot
  - II. Steve Boulton
  - III. Jim Martin

**XIII.** Meeting adjourned at 21:00 hours.

**XIV. Enclosures:**

1. 2018 Annual Membership Meeting Minutes Authored by Jason Allen.
2. Pipe Major's Rules and Guidelines, dated 21Jan2019
3. Example of NVFESPB BoD Membership Status Letter, dated 21Jan2019
4. Resignation Letter Jeanine Shelley, dated 30Jan2019
5. Resignation Letter Gene and Ruth Lastfogel, dated 30Jan2019
6. NVFESPB Uniform Inventory
7. Treasurer Report
8. Draft thank you form letter