



New Hampshire Fire &
Emergency Medical Service
Committee of Merit

BY-LAWS

Revised August 8, 2024

INTRODUCTION

The Fire Service Awards Program was started in 1987. Funded by a bequest from the estate of Paul W. Sypek, a communications operator of the Concord Fire Department, who felt that many outstanding acts of heroism, courage, and performance, beyond the call of duty were going unrecognized in the State of New Hampshire.

Paul's Will created a committee composed of members of the fire service to seek nominations, and provide recognition, in the forms of awards, to any firefighters in the State whose actions were deemed to be above and beyond the call of duty.

Since 1987, the program has been administered under the auspices of the Bureau of Fire Standards & Training, and many firefighters have been given the recognition they deserve.

During 1991, the committee members reorganized onto a private, nonprofit organization, now known as the New Hampshire Fire Service Committee of Merit. Our organization has been endorsed by the New Hampshire Division of Fire Services, the New Hampshire Fire Chiefs Association, and the New Hampshire Fire Instructors & Fire Officers Association, to name a few.

The Committee of Merit was established to assure the permanent continuation of the program, through our bylaws, and to assure that all aspects of the fire service in New Hampshire would continue to receive representation on the Committee. We represent Full-time, Call, Volunteer, and State firefighters. The Committee is funded entirely through donations.

During the planning stages of the 2005 Awards ceremony, the Committee recognized that the exceptional activities of the emergency medical services in the state would be an appropriate addition to the annual recognition ceremony. The Bureau of Emergency Medical Services, under the Division of Fire Standards and Training & Emergency Medical Services (8/00), have presented annual statewide awards since 1996, and the merger of these two entities was coordinated and implemented by the Committee.

The fall 2005 Awards night was the first of many cooperative events created to recognize the natural union of these emergency services and the outstanding contributions that the Fire Service and Emergency Medical System of this state give to the residents and visitors of New Hampshire.

*"COWARDS DIE MANY TIMES BEFORE THEIR DEATHS.
THE VALIANT NEVER TASTE OF DEATH BUT ONCE..."*

SHAKESPEARE

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND HISTORY**

- Section 1. The name of the organization shall be the New Hampshire Fire and Emergency Medical Service Committee of Merit.
- Section 2. The purpose of the New Hampshire Fire and Emergency Medical Service Committee of Merit, as stated in the last Will and Testament of Paul W. Sypek, was to establish fire service heroism awards program for the State of New Hampshire.
- Section 3. In his will, the following were designated as the Awards Committee: Alan Sypek, Michael Carrier, Robert Petrin, Rodney Towne, and Wayne DiGeronimo; hereafter known as the “original committee.” These members are either family or work related. Administrative support was to be provided by the Bureau of Fire Standards & Training.
- Section 4. Funding for the Awards Program was provided for by a donation from Paul’s estate, and contributions from friends and relatives.

ARTICLE II **BY-LAWS AMENDMENTS**

- Section 1. Any proposed amendments to the By-Laws by any member of the Committee shall require written notification to all Committee members at least 30 days prior to a meeting. Any amendments to the By-Laws shall require a two-thirds majority vote of the Committee at a meeting.

ARTICLE III **QUORUM**

- Section 1. A quorum shall consist of six (6) voting Committee members.

ARTICLE IV **ANNUAL MEETING**

- Section 1. The date of the annual meeting shall be set by the committee who shall also set the time and place.

ARTICLE V **COMMITTEE OF MERIT MEMBERSHIP**

- Section 1. The Committee of Merit shall consist of the following members:

By Last Will and Testament

Deputy Chief Alan Sypek, Londonderry Fire Department
Lt. Michael Carrier, Londonderry Fire Department
Battalion Chief Robert Petrin, Concord Fire Department
Firefighter Rodney Towne, Hudson Fire Department, formerly employed by the
Bureau of Fire Standards & Training
Firefighter/Paramedic Wayne DiGeronimo, Concord Fire Department

A representative of the New Hampshire Fire Chiefs Association

The Director of the State of New Hampshire Division of Fire Standards and
Training & Emergency Medical Services, or designee

The Director (State Fire Marshal) of the State of New Hampshire Division of Fire
Safety, or designee

A representative of the Professional Firefighters of New Hampshire

A volunteer or call Fire Chief Officer appointed by the Committee of Merit

A representative of the Fire Instructors and Officers Association of New
Hampshire

A representative of the Fire Prevention Society/New Hampshire Chapter of the
IAAI

A representative of the New Hampshire State Firemen's Association

A representative of the New Hampshire Emergency Dispatcher's Association

A representative of the Bureau of Emergency Medical Services

A representative of the NH Department of Natural and Cultural Resources;
Division of Forests and Lands.

Three members at large who shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the
Committee.

Section 2. The Secretary and Treasurer, if not representatives of the above organizations,
shall be considered members-at-large, and shall be appointed by the Committee of
Merit.

Section 3. Alternates may be appointed by the above organizations and shall have no voting
powers except in the absence of the voting member from that organization.

ARTICLE VI
COMMITTEE OF MERIT OFFICERS

- Section 1. The Committee of Merit shall have a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, a Secretary, and a Treasurer.
- Section 2. The Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, the Secretary, and the Treasurer shall be elected for a two-year term. Elections will be held every January of odd number years.
- Section 3. At least one month before January meeting shall be called by the Chairman for the purpose of nominations.
- Section 4. Officers shall be elected by majority vote.
- Section 5. The Chairman shall replace a vacancy to serve the remainder of the term of the vacant position.

ARTICLE VII **POWERS**

- Section 1. The Chairman shall preside over all meetings, shall have the authority to call meetings, and shall be responsible for the conduct of routine business.
- Section 2. The Committee shall have the right to authorize expenditures of funds necessary to conduct the awards program.
- Section 3. The Chairman shall have the authority to sign contracts approved by a majority vote of the Committee.
- Section 4. The Vice-Chairman shall have the same powers as the Chairman during the absence of the Chairman and shall assist the Chairman with the conduct of business.
- Section 5. The Secretary shall be responsible for the minutes of the meetings, shall be responsible for all correspondence, and shall keep written documentation on all Committee activities
- Section 6. The Treasurer shall be responsible for all funds of the Committee, shall give a financial report at each meeting, and shall complete all requirements of the Internal Revenue Service. The Treasurer shall be bonded.

ARTICLE VIII **MEETINGS**

- Section 1. Meetings shall be held as needed or designated by the Chairman, and upon the request of a majority of the Committee members, such meeting shall be called by the Chairman.
- Section 2. No business may be conducted at a meeting unless a quorum is present.

ARTICLE IX
REPLACEMENT OF MEMBERS

Section 1. With the exception of the “original” members, members shall serve at the pleasure of their respective organizations so long as they actively participate on the Committee. The Committee reserves the right to request a replacement in the event of non-participation of an organization’s representative.

Section 2. The original Committee members designated in the Last Will and Testament of Paul Sypek shall serve until death, resignation, or non-participation in two consecutive awards programs.

Section 3. The following procedure shall be used for their replacement:

Alan Sypek

Shall be replaced by a Communications Operator.

Michael Carrier

Shall be replaced by a member of the Londonderry Fire Department, appointed by the Chief of the Londonderry Fire Department.

Robert Petrin

Shall be replaced by a member of the Concord Fire Department, appointed by the Chief of the Concord Fire Department

Rodney Towne

Shall be replaced by a member of the volunteer fire service.

Section 4. There shall be no more than two representatives from any one fire department.

Section 5. When a member is to be replaced, the Committee of Merit shall submit a request, in writing, to the appropriate agency, requesting the name of the replacement member.

ARTICLE X
ASSISTANTS

Section 1. Assistants to aid in conducting the awards program shall be appointed by a majority vote of the Committee. Assistants shall have no voting powers unless they are duly appointed committee members as outlined in Article IX.

Section 2. Assistants may be compensated at an amount as determined by a vote of the committee for duties as assigned by the committee.

Section 3. Committee members are eligible to serve in the role of an Assistant as defined above.

ARTICLE XI

FINANCES

- Section 1. The Committee of Merit shall maintain an account set up to disburse and receive monies.
- Section 2. Contributions shall be solicited by the Committee, from private sources, for the continuance of the awards program.
- Section 3. It is not the intention of this program to seek funds from the State of New Hampshire.
- Section 4. A financial report shall be prepared each year by the Treasurer.
- Section 5. There shall be an annual audit in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices.
- Section 6. The provisions for disposition of the corporate assets in the event of dissolution of the corporation are: All monies to be turned over to the NH Police, Fire and EMS Foundation, PO Box 520 Epping, NH 03042.

ARTICLE XII **AWARDS PROGRAM**

- Section 1. The Committee of Merit shall meet annually to consider nominations for Fire Service Awards. The EMS Annual Awards Committee shall receive and vote on nominations separately from the Committee of Merit and shall work under the By-Laws outlined in Article XVII and XXII.

ARTICLE XIII **ELIGIBILITY**

- Section 1. Eligibility to receive a Fire Service Heroism Award is limited to the following:
- a. Employees of fire/rescue services adopted by a municipality under RSA 154:1, EMS providers adopted by a municipality, State or county fire departments.
 - b. Employees of the State of New Hampshire, Division of Fire Standards & Training and Emergency Medical Service,
 - c. Employees of the State of New Hampshire, Division of Fire Safety (Office of the State Fire Marshal).
 - d. Employees of the State of New Hampshire, Division of Forests and Lands, Bureau of Forest Protection.

- e. In the interests of promoting and recognizing the concept of an integrated response to emergencies, Certificates of Meritorious Service may be awarded to other agencies or their members, if in the opinion of the Committee the agency or member contributed by their actions to the outcome of an incident in which a Fire Service Award was granted.
 - f. The Committee reserves the right to make awards to both Fire Service and non-Fire Service personnel who in the opinion of the Committee have contributed to the mission of the Fire Service in a non-heroic fashion, including community service.
- Section 2. The word “employee” shall include volunteer, call, or full-time career members of the above organizations.

ARTICLE XIV
NOMINATIONS

- Section 1. Every Fire Chief or Department Head of the organizations listed in Article VIII shall receive a notification requesting nominations from the Committee of Merit, during the month of December of each calendar year for incidents that occurred between January 1 and December 31 of that calendar year. The request for nominations shall also be advertised as determined by the committee.
- Section 2. January 31 shall be the deadline for the submission of nominations to the Committee of Merit for the previous calendar year.
- Section 3. Nominations will be accepted from anyone, must be signed by the sponsor originating the nomination, and must include the sponsor’s name, address, and phone number. As soon as possible after a nomination is received, the Secretary shall notify the Chief, or Department Head, that an employee or member of their department or agency has been nominated for an award or for an award nomination for an individual from another department or agency if the incident occurred in their jurisdiction.
- Section 4. The Committee of Merit reserves the right to grant awards for incidents where no nominations are received, when, in the opinion of the Committee, the actions of personnel at that incident so warrant. This shall include incidents from the past, and shall be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Section 5. Full documentation, if available, shall also be submitted with each nomination; to include signed statements from witnesses, newspaper clippings, videos, etc. Nominations shall be submitted to the Committee of Merit.

ARTICLE XV
CONSIDERATION OF NOMINATIONS

- Section 1. The Chairman shall call a Committee meeting during the second week of February

of the year following the close of nominations, for the purpose of considering nominations. Nominations may be considered and acted upon at any meeting of the committee.

- Section 2. The Committee shall review and discuss all nominations carefully. If the Committee feels that insufficient information exists for any of the nominations, the Committee may make a request to the sponsor for further information or investigation. A Committee member or members may be appointed by the Chairman to follow up on specific nominations.
- Section 3. The Committee shall vote, by simple majority, on each nomination, to determine whether an award is warranted, and the classification of the award. The Committee is not mandated to issue awards each year.
- Section 4. If a Committee member is nominated for an award, he/she shall be replaced by an Assistant/Alternate for the vote.
- Section 5. For those nominations where the Committee feels no award is warranted, a letter shall be written to the sponsor, thanking them for their nomination, and explaining that the nomination does not meet the criteria for an award.
- Section 6. The names and honors to be accorded to nominees shall not be released publicly. Similarly, all deliberations of the Committee and all written or other materials shall remain confidential until the time of presentation.

ARTICLE XVI **PROGRAM ARRANGEMENT**

- Section 1. The awards ceremony shall be held at a time and place voted on by the committee.
- Section 2. Those designated to receive one of the Fire Service awards, along with their Fire Chief or department head and the individual who nominated the recipient, shall receive adequate written notice to appear for the ceremony, but shall not be told specifically what award is being given.
- Section 3. Those designated to receive one of the EMS Annual Awards, along with the department head and the individual who nominated the recipient, shall be notified of the award and be given ample notice so as to make arrangements to appear for the ceremony.
- Section 4. Procedures and protocol for the awards ceremony shall be established by the Committee of Merit in conjunction with the representative from the EMS Annual Awards Committee.

ARTICLE XVII **AWARDS CATEGORIES AND CRITERIA**

Section 1. The Fire Service and EMS Award categories and criteria shall be specified by the specific committee's policies.

ARTICLE XVIII

EMS ANNUAL AWARDS COMMITTEE STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND HISTORY

Section 1. The purpose of the New Hampshire EMS Annual Awards is to recognize exceptional individuals and groups that are involved in the state's emergency medical services system. The Bureau of Emergency Medical Services started the EMS Annual Awards in 1996.

Section 2. This first award, the Pamela Mitchell/Richard Connelly Memorial EMS Achievement Award was presented in memory of these two EMS Providers killed in the line of duty in 1978.

Section 3. In the six years following the introduction of this award, four additional annual awards were created, specific history, criteria and purpose for these awards shall be specified by the EMS Annual Awards Committee policy.

ARTICLE XIX

EMS ANNUAL AWARDS COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. The EMS Annual Awards Committee shall consist of the following members:

- a. The Chairman of the EMS Medical Control Board, or designee,
- b. The Chairman of the NH Emergency Medical and Trauma Services Coordinating Board, or designee,
- c. The Chief of the Newington Fire Department, or designee
- d. The owner, or designee, from Boundtree Medical Supply Inc.,
- e. The Chief of the Bureau of Emergency Medical Services, or designee.
- f. One representative from the Bureau of Emergency Medical Services.
- g. A representative from the New Hampshire Association of Emergency Medical Technicians.
- h. A representative from the New Hampshire Ambulance Association.
- i. Three members at large.

ARTICLE XX

EMS ANNUAL AWARDS COMMITTEE QUORUM

Section 1. A quorum shall consist of four voting Committee members. No business may be

conducted at a meeting unless a quorum is present.

ARTICLE XXI
EMS ANNUAL AWARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL MEETING

- Section 1. The annual meeting of the EMS Annual Awards Committee shall be held the second week of February prior to the awards ceremony and will be called in order to review nominations and make final decisions on the award recipients.
- Section 2. The final recipients name, once decided, shall be forwarded to the Committee of Merit for inclusion in the awards ceremony within 5 working days of the final decisions.

ARTICLE XXII
NOMINATIONS

- Section 1. Nominations for the EMS Annual Awards shall be opened each year and will be accepted from anyone. Each nomination must be complete and submitted on the approved nomination form, signed by the sponsor. Documentation relating to the nominee and related events shall also be submitted with the nomination form. The completed form and associated documentation must be received by the posted deadline.
- Section 2. If the Committee feels that insufficient information exists for any of the nominations, the Committee may make a request to the sponsor for further information or investigation. A Committee member or members may be appointed to follow up on specific nominations.
- Section 3. The EMS Annual Awards Committee reserves the right to grant awards to any of the nominees after careful review and discussion has been completed.

ARTICLE XXIII
CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- Section 1. All committee members shall avoid conflicts of interest and shall not participate in any matter in which they, or their spouse or dependents, have a private interest which may directly or indirectly affect or influence the performance of their duties. Any possible conflict of interest on the part of any member of the committee, officer or employee of the Corporation, shall be disclosed in writing to the committee and made a matter of record through an annual procedure and also when the interest involves a specific issue before the committee. Where the transaction involving a committee member, trustee or officer exceeds five hundred dollars (\$500) in a fiscal year, a two-thirds vote of the disinterested committee members is required. The minutes of the meeting shall reflect that a disclosure was made, the abstention from voting, and the actual vote itself. Every new member of the committee will be advised of this policy upon entering the duties of his or her office, and shall sign a statement acknowledging, understanding of and agreement to this policy. The Board will comply with all requirements of New Hampshire law in this area and the New Hampshire requirements are incorporated into and made a part of this policy statement.