

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF BLAIR VOLUNTEER FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE: To minimize the loss of life and property, pain and suffering experienced by residents of the City of Blair and the Blair Rural Fire District and surrounding area due to manmade or natural cause of disaster. We will achieve this goal by providing the highest quality Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Medical Services (EMS).

Article I: NAME

The name of the association shall be Blair Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad, hereinafter referred to as “BVFD”.

Article II: PURPOSE

- Prevent, where possible, foreseeable fire, accident, medical emergency, and natural or manmade disaster incidents to carry out the mission of BVFD.
- Provide fire, accident, medical emergency, natural or manmade disaster assistance to the City of Blair.
- Advise the City of Blair City Council and Blair Rural Fire District Board to identify resources needed to maintain effective operations.
- Plan for the control and mitigation of these incidents when all efforts to prevent them fail.
- Utilize available resources in the most effective manner.
- Obtain Mutual Assistance Agreements with other jurisdictions.
- Provide training for all personnel to ensure safe and effective operations.
- Provide expertise to the City of Blair, Blair Rural Fire District, and the citizens of the community in matters of fire, rescue, natural or man-made disaster and medical emergency.

Article III: MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Blair Volunteer Fire & Rescue Department shall consist of not more than eighty (80) volunteers. New volunteers, transfers from other departments and ex-volunteers seeking reinstatement must be nineteen (19) years of age or older, reside within the two-mile jurisdiction of the City of Blair, Nebraska, and reside within the Blair Rural Fire District. Furthermore, all new volunteers, transfers from other departments, or ex-volunteers seeking reinstatement must submit an application for admission to the Membership. Upon application, all applicants must complete and pass a background check, drug testing, written examination, physical fitness examination, and interview with the Fire Chief and Fireground Officers. An applicant’s prior work experience, education, fire department experience, or rescue service may be considered by the Fire Chief prior to accepting an application for membership to the BVFD.

The Fire Chief may make recommendation to the City of Blair that an applicant be approved or denied as a member of the BVFD.

- If the Fire Chief approves the applicant, his or her name shall be forwarded to the Mayor of Blair for approval.
- If the Fire Chief denies the applicant membership, the applicant may appeal to the Blair City Council for approval to join the membership of the BVFD. Such appeal must be in writing and must be submitted within fourteen (14) days of receiving notification from the Fire Chief denying his or her application. If the Blair City Council approves the applicant by majority vote, the Mayor shall appoint the person to the Membership of the BVFD.

An applicant with felony convictions, any conviction for a crime of violence, or any conviction for sexual assault, will not be admitted to the BVFD. Any other law violations or law enforcement contact discovered on the applicant’s background check, including protection orders or harassment orders issued against him or her, may result in the applicant’s application for membership to the BVFD being denied.

The Blair City Council and Mayor of Blair reserve the right to accept or deny any application to the BVFD.

Article IV: ORGANIZATION

Section 1: Structure

BVFD will consist of Fireground Officers, Administrative Officers, and General Membership. The BVFD may be referred to as the “Membership”, which includes all current members of the BVFD.

Section 2: Officer and Organization Positions

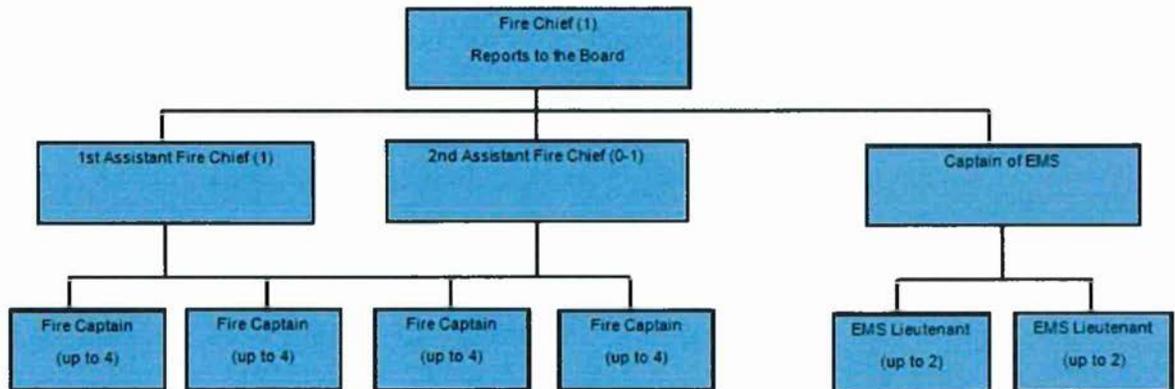
The BVFD shall consist of both Officer Positions and Organization Positions. This Constitution and Bylaws do not include any position or structure of the Blair Fire & Rescue Volunteers, a separate 501(c)(3) organization.

Section 3: Fireground Officer Positions and Chain of Command

Fireground Officer Positions

- 3.1 Fire Chief
- 3.2 Assistant Fire Chief – up to two (2) members
- 3.3 Fire Captain – up to four (4) members
- 3.4 Captain of Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
- 3.5 EMS Lieutenant – up to two (2) members
- 3.6 All other members

Chain of Command



Section 4: Administrative Officers

- 4.1 President
- 4.2 Vice-President
- 4.3 Secretary
- 4.4 Treasurer
- 4.5 Sergeant of Arms

Article V: ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

The Election of Fireground Officers and Administrative Officers will be held at the general meeting in December. Members must maintain minimum eligibility requirements for positions they hold. No member may hold more than one (1) Fireground Officer or Administrative Officer position at the same time.

All elections of the Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chiefs, Fire Captains, Captain of EMS, and EMS Lieutenant must be approved by the Mayor and City Council for appointment. The Mayor and City Council reserve the right to reject the appointment of any “elected” person as a Fireground Officer.

All elections of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Sergeant of Arms must be approved by the Mayor and City Council for appointment. The Mayor and City Council reserve the right to reject the appointment of any “elected” person as an Administrative Officer.

Any person elected by the Membership as an Administrative Officer or elected as a Fireground Officer and appointed by the Mayor with City Council approval, shall take said elected office commencing on January 2nd.

Article VI: GOVERNING RULES

All meetings of the BVFD will be conducted according to the most current edition of the Robert’s Rules of Order.

Article VII: MEETINGS

Meetings held by the BVFD include an annual meeting, regular meeting, special meetings, fire and rescue drills. All Meetings shall be posted in a manner to notify all members of the meeting date, location, and time. Annual Meetings shall be posted no less than thirty (30) days prior to the Annual Meeting. All Regular Meetings shall be held on the first Thursday of each month. Regular Meetings shall be posted no less than seven (7) calendar days before said meeting. All Special Meetings require the entire membership be notified of said hearing by posting at all fire stations and email notification. Special Meetings shall require at least seventy-two (72) hour notice to the membership before the Special Meeting.

Article VIII: QUORUM

A quorum shall be a simple majority of all members. There must be a quorum present to hold a meeting and vote on matters presented to the membership.

Article IX: ADOPTION AND RATIFICATION OF CONSTITUTION

Section 1: Quorum; Must be present to vote

A quorum of the Membership must be present in order to adopt or ratify a Constitution of the BVFD. A member must be present to vote.

Section 2: Voting Eligibility

Current and new members off probation are eligible to vote on the adoption or ratification of the Constitution of the BVFD.

Section 3: Vote to Adopt or Ratify; Approval by Blair City Council

A vote to adopt or ratify the BVFD Constitution can be held at an annual, regular, or special meeting of the Membership. A two-thirds approval vote of eligible members present is required before the Constitution may be adopted or ratified by the Membership. If the Membership adopts or ratifies the Constitution, then the entire Constitution (as adopted and/or ratified) must be forwarded to the City Council for its approval. No Constitution or Constitutional amendment will be effective until after the City Council approves said Constitution.

Article X: MEDICAL DIRECTOR

BVFD will maintain a Medical Director as required by Nebraska State EMS regulations.

Article XI: OTHER POSITIONS WITHIN THE BVFD

Other positions may include Department Photographer, Department Chaplain, and/or other positions as defined in the Bylaws.

Article XII: BVFD SERVICE AWARD PROGRAM

The Blair Volunteer Fire and Rescue Volunteer Service Award Program will be maintained according to the applicable Nebraska Statutes and Federal law. The Service Program Committee will consist of Vice President, Fire Chief, Captain of Emergency Medical Services, City Administrator, and City Treasurer.

The Service Program Committee will meet a minimum of twice annually to review the program investments, make changes to investment strategy, approve annual eligibility list and allocation of new funds to eligible participants, and approve request of retiring participating members for distribution of vested funds.

BYLAWS

Chapter 1: STRUCTURE OF THE ORGANIZATION (ADMINISTRATION)

1.0 Executive (Administrative) Officers

The Executive Officers shall consist of the President, Vice-president, Secretary, Treasurer, and Sergeant of Arms. Executive Officers are responsible for the administrative functions of the BVFD.

1.1 President

There shall be one (1) member elected President of the BVFD. To be eligible for such office a member shall have five (5) years of service on the BVFD. It shall be the duty of the President to:

- Preside at all business meetings of the Department, maintain order therein, and be governed by parliamentary usages.
- The President shall call special meetings when required by the good of the Department.
- The President shall decide all questions and appoint all committees not otherwise provided for in these Bylaws.
- The President may be required to perform other duties from time to time as prescribed by the Fire Chief.
- President position reports to the Fire Chief and serves as a member of the appeals board for disciplinary action.

1.2 Vice-President

There shall be one (1) member elected as Vice-President of the BVFD. To be eligible for such office a member shall have five (5) years of service on the BVFD. The duties of the Vice-President shall be:

- Perform the duties of the President in the absence of the President.
- Serve as a member of the Election Committee.
- Vice-president position reports to the President and serves as a member of the appeals board for disciplinary action.

1.3 Secretary

There shall be one (1) member elected as Secretary of the BVFD. To be eligible for such office a member shall have three (3) years of service on the BVFD. Duties of the Secretary are as follows:

- Keep an accurate account of the proceedings of all meetings of the department and keep them permanently on file. Ensure that copies of the previous month's meeting minutes are distributed at each month's meeting.
- The Secretary of the Department shall, on April 1st and October 1st, each year file a certified copy of the Department Roster, with the Clerk of the District Court of Washington County, Nebraska, the City Clerk of Blair, and Secretary of Blair Rural Fire Board.
- Keep an accurate list of members who have left the Department and are eligible for invitation to the annual Old Timer's meeting. Send invitations out to past members four (4) to six (6) weeks prior to annual Old Timer's meeting.
- Secretary will serve as Department Treasurer in their absence. Secretary position reports to the department President and serves as a member of the appeals board for disciplinary action.

- Serve as a member of the Election Committee.
- Secretary shall be responsible for annually maintaining and certifying eligibility list for the City of Blair Volunteer recruitment and retention program per the program requirement to City Clerk not later than December 1st of each year.
- Secretary shall further be responsible for annually notifying members of their eligibility for State of Nebraska income tax service credit and forwarding eligibility letters for such tax credit to Mayor by January 30 of each year for signature and certification.
- Secretary shall also maintain all training and certification records for all members.
- Secretary shall verify all persons running for election for Fireground Officer positions meet the minimum eligibility and training requirements.

1.4 Treasurer

There shall be one (1) member elected as Treasurer of the BVFD. To be eligible for such office a member shall have three (3) years of service on the BVFD. Duties of the Treasurer are as follows but not limited to:

- Collect all money due this organization.
- Pay all bills approved by the proper officers and the Department at regular meetings.
- Keep an accurate account of all money received and disbursed by the Department and give an account of the treasury status at each monthly meeting.
- Furnish the County Clerk or the City Clerk any financial information requested, as per State laws.
- Treasurer will act as Department Secretary in their absence and assist the Secretary as requested.
- Treasurer position will report to the President and serves as member of the appeals board for disciplinary action.

1.5 Sergeant of Arms

There shall be one (1) member elected as Sergeant of Arms of the BVFD. To be eligible for such an office member, member shall have served three (3) years on the BVFD Sergeant of Arms shall be responsible to the Department President and responsible, but not limited to the items listed below:

- Shall be responsible to answer all telephone calls at meeting, keep general order at meetings preventing disruption of meeting operations.
- Remove member(s) from meeting who are disruptive or failing to follow directions from meeting chair.
- Participate in elections as identified in these Bylaws.
- Serve as a member of the Election Committee.
- Managing Class A, B, and C uniforms for all members of BVFD aligning with fire service operations.
- The Sergeant of Arms will report to the President and serves as a member of the appeals board for disciplinary action.

Chapter 2: STRUCTURE OF THE ORGANIZATION (FIREGROUND OFFICERS)

2.0 Fireground Officers

Fireground Officers are responsible for the day-to-day operations and oversight of the Fire Department and EMS. BVFD offices shall be filled in accordance with the number and eligibility requirements listed below.

All elections of the Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chiefs, Fire Captains, Captain of EMS, and EMS Lieutenants must be approved by the Mayor and City Council for appointment. The Mayor and City Council reserve the right to reject the appointment of any “elected” person as a Fireground Officer.

Any person elected by the Membership as a Fireground Officer and appointed by the Mayor with City Council Approval, shall take said elected office commencing on January 2nd.

Membership may waive the training, years of service and eligibility requirements of Fireground Officers with two-thirds approval of the membership.

2.1 Fire Chief

There shall be one (1) member elected as Fire Chief of the BVFD. To be eligible for such office, a member shall have served ten (10) years on a fire department with two (2) years prior experience as Assistant Fire Chief for BVFD. Prior to the election for Fire Chief, a candidate must complete Firefighter I, Incident Command System Training, and the National Incident Management System Training. Any Fire Chief elected by the Membership and appointed by Mayor shall serve a two (2) year term as Fire Chief.

The Fire Chief shall be responsible for, but not limited to, the responsibilities listed below:

- Responsible for the operation of the Fire and Rescue Squad.
- Supervision and control of department members during the time they are on duty.
- Assume command and maintain control of personnel and equipment at an alarm.
- Maintain control of department equipment and property.
- See that all department property and equipment is properly cared for and kept in proper working order.
- Recommend needed equipment to the Mayor, City Council and Rural Fire Board.
- Develop operational procedures for the Fire Department.
- Attend meetings with the governing Fire Board and City Officials when necessary.
- Assign operational duties to subordinate personnel when necessary.
- The Fire Chief shall report to Mayor, Blair City Council, and the Blair Rural Fire Board.

2.2 Assistant Fire Chief

There shall be up to two (2) members elected as Assistant Chiefs of the BVFD. To be eligible for such office, a member shall have served seven (7) years on a department, with two (2) years prior experience as Fire Captain with the BVFD. Prior to the election for the Assistant Fire Chief, a candidate must complete Firefighter I and National Incident Management System Training. Incident Command System Training must be completed within one (1) year. Any Assistant Fire Chief elected by the Membership and appointed by Mayor shall serve a two (2) year term as Assistant Fire Chief.

One Assistant Fire Chief shall be elected as a First Assistant Fire Chief and a second Assistant Chief shall be elected as the Second Assistant Fire Chief. They shall be responsible for, but not limited to the responsibilities listed below:

- Report to the Fire Chief.
- Attend all meetings with the governing board and any other meetings as required by the Fire Chief.
- Assist the Fire Chief with day to day operations of the BVFD.
- Have a working knowledge of all firefighting procedures and equipment used by BVFD.
- First Assistant Chief shall assume command of all fire personnel and equipment when the Chief is not present.
- Second Assistant Chief shall assume command of all fire personnel and equipment when both the Chief and First Assistant Chief are not present.

2.3 Captain of EMS

There shall be one member elected as Captain of EMS. To be eligible for such office, a member shall have served seven (7) years of service on a rescue squad with two (2) years prior experience as a Rescue Lieutenant with the BVFD. Captain of EMS must complete Incident Command System Training within one (1) year. Any Captain of EMS elected by the Membership and appointed by Mayor shall serve a two (2) year term as Captain of EMS.

The Captain of EMS shall be responsible for, but not limited to the responsibilities listed below:

- Report to the Fire Chief.
- Make recommendations to the Fire Chief of any needed equipment.
- Act as liaison for the Blair Fire Department with hospital directors, boards, and Department Medical Director.
- Assume command of rescue personnel and equipment during rescue alarms.
- Develop and maintain operational procedures for the Rescue Squad.
- Maintain all medical, exposure, and accident records for the BVFD.
- Maintain records of EMS members licensure and certifications.
- Develop and maintain EMS protocols in coordination with Medical Dir. & Fire Chief.
- Develop and assess competency of members to practice at level certification.
- Maintain proficiency tests for EMS operations.
- The Captain of EMS must maintain EMT certification.

2.4 Fire Captain:

There shall be up to four (4) members elected as Fire Captains of the Blair Fire Department. To be eligible for such office, a member shall have served five (5) years of service on the BVFD. Prior to the election for the Fire Captain, a candidate must complete Firefighter I. Any Fire Captain elected by the Membership and appointed by Mayor shall serve a two (2) year term as Fire Captain.

The Fire Captain shall be responsible for, but not limited to, the responsibilities listed below:

- Report to the Fire Chief and Assistant Chief(s).
- Assume command of all fire personnel and equipment in the absence of a superior officer.

- Have a working knowledge of all firefighting procedures and equipment used by the BVFD.
- Attend Incident Command System Training and any other training as required by a superior officer.

2.5 EMS Lieutenant:

There shall be up to two (2) members elected as EMS Lieutenants of the BVFD. To be eligible for such office, a member shall have served four (4) years on the BVFD with two (2) of those years as an EMS provider on the Blair Rescue Squad. The EMS Lieutenant must be EMT certified and maintain the EMT certification in good standing. Any EMS Lieutenant elected by the Membership and appointed by Mayor shall serve a two (2) year term as EMS Lieutenant.

The EMS Lieutenant shall be responsible for, but not limited to, the responsibilities listed below:

- Report to the Fire Chief and Captain of EMS.
- Assume command of rescue personnel and equipment during rescue alarms in the absence of a superior officer.
- Responsible for training on and maintaining all EMS equipment on unit and stock supplies.
- Work with Captain of EMS to order supplies/equipment for Rescue Squads and Rescue Boat.

Chapter 3: LIMITATION ON OFFICES AND VACANCIES

3.1 Holding multiple officer positions

No member may hold more than one (1) Fireground Officer or Administrative Officer position at the same time.

3.2 Resignations and Vacancies

If any officer resigns, dies or is removed from office and a vacancy occurs for any Fireground Officer or Administrative Officer position, then the Membership shall vote on that person's vacancy within sixty (60) days. Any Fireground Officer such elected shall be approved by the Mayor and Blair City Council prior to taking office.

Chapter 4: REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

4.1 Fire Chief

The Fire Chief may be removed from office by the Mayor with City Council approval. All grievances, complaints, or concerns regarding the Fire Chief shall be forwarded to the City of Blair designee for handling human resource matters. The City of Blair designee will investigate grievances, complaints, or concerns regarding the Fire Chief and may make recommendation for suspension or removal of the Fire Chief. However, the Mayor, with City Council approval, shall make the final decision regarding any suspension or removal of the Fire Chief.

4.2 All other Executive (Administrative) or Fireground Officers

Any other Executive or Fireground Officer may be removed from his or her elected position according to the same procedure outlined in “Discipline and Impeachment” contained in these Bylaws.

Chapter 5: COMMITTEES

5.1 Standing Committees, Special Committees, and Ad-Hoc Committees

The BVFD may form Standing Committees, Special Committees, and Ad-Hoc Committees to carry out the functions of the BVFD.

5.2 Standing Committees

The Standing Committees include, but are not limited to: Auxiliary Lunch, Awards Banquet, Election Committee, Employer Appreciation, Family Christmas Party, Fire Prevention, Old Timer’s Luncheon, Pancake Feed, Retention and Recruitment, Technology Committee, Scholarship Committee, Street Dance, Fund Drive.

5.3 Service Award Program

The Service Award Program was established and will be maintained pursuant to Nebraska Statutes, Federal law, and as adopted by the City Ordinance of the Blair City Council. The Service Program Committee will consist of Vice President, Fire Chief, Captain of Emergency Medical Services, City Administrator, and City Treasurer.

The Service Program Committee will meet a minimum of twice annually to review the program investments, make changes to investment strategy, approve annual eligibility list and allocation of new funds to eligible participants, and approve request of retiring participating members for distribution of vested funds.

Chapter 6: MEETINGS

6.1 Meeting Postings

Meetings held by the BVFD include an annual meeting, regular meeting, special meetings, fire and rescue drills. All Meetings shall be posted in a manner to notify all members of the meeting date, location, and time. Annual Meetings shall be posted no less than thirty (30) days prior to the Annual Meeting. Regular Meetings shall be held on the first Thursday of each month. In the event a Regular Meeting cannot occur on the 1st Thursday of the month, then the Regular Meeting shall take place on the following Monday. Regular Meetings shall be posted no less than seven (7) calendar days before said meeting.

6.2 Special Meetings

All Special Meetings require the entire membership be notified of said meeting by posting at all fire stations and email notification. Special Meeting shall require at least seventy-two hours’ notice to the membership before the Special Meeting.

6.3 Meeting Minutes

Minutes of all meetings shall be prepared by the Secretary, or the designee if the Secretary is absent. All minutes shall be submitted in draft form to Membership within three (3) weeks of the date the meeting was held. Final drafts of the minutes shall be approved at the next meeting of the BVFD. The approved minutes shall be certified by the Secretary and placed permanently on file in the department records.

6.4 Fire and Rescue Drills

Fire and Rescue Drills will be held on the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and/or 5th Thursday of the month. Notification of Drills indicating the date, time, and place of the drill shall be posted in a manner to notify all members of the drills. All notification of drills shall be posted no later than seven (7) days before the drill.

Chapter 7: QUORUM

There must be a quorum present to hold a meeting and vote on matters presented to the membership. A quorum shall be a simple majority of all members.

Chapter 8: VOTING

8.1 Quorum

A quorum of the Membership must be present to Adopt or Ratify the Bylaws of the BVFD. A member must be present to vote.

8.2 Voting Eligibility

Current and new members off probation on the active duty roster are eligible to vote on the adoption or ratification of the Constitution of the BVFD or other matters before the department.

8.3 Vote to Adopt or Ratify the Bylaws; Approval by Blair City Council

A vote to adopt or ratify the BVFD Bylaws can be held at an annual, regular, or special meeting of the Membership. A two-thirds approval vote of eligible members present is required before the Bylaws may be adopted or ratified by the Membership. If the Membership adopts or ratifies the Bylaws, then the entire Bylaws (as adopted and/or ratified) must be forwarded to the City Council for its approval. No Bylaws or Bylaws amendment will be effective until after the City Council approves said Bylaws.

8.4 Voting on Other Matters

All other matters (other than matters concerning the Constitution and Bylaws), may be approved by a majority of eligible members present.

8.5 Procedure for Voting: Elections, Constitution, or Bylaws (Secret Ballot)

All elections for Administrative or Fireground Officers, Constitution, or Bylaws, shall be conducted by secret ballot. If a motion to request a secret ballot vote for any other matter is passed and seconded, then the matter shall be voted on as outlined in this paragraph. Secret ballots shall be cast on paper by roll call in a private location and secured by the election committee. Ballots shall be brought in front of the membership and counted verbally and publicly by the President, then tallied by the Secretary. The results, including the count of votes, as to whether the matter passed or failed, or who was elected, shall be disclosed to the Membership. Additional voting procedures are found in the BVFD Elections SOG.

8.6 Procedure for Voting: All Other Matters

Voting on any other matter before the BVFD shall be by VOICE or by SHOW OF HANDS, as the presiding officer may elect, unless a ROLL CALL with SECRET BALLOT is requested by any members or by the presiding officer.

Chapter 9: MEMBERSHIP OF BVFD

9.1 Application Requirements

Applicants must complete the following requirements:

- a. Complete application packet
- b. Medical examination and drug testing by designated agency
- c. Physical fitness and agility test performed
- d. Written examination
- e. Criminal background check as required by the City of Blair
- f. Complete interview with the Fire Chief and Fireground Officers
- g. Be approved by the Fire Chief and/or Mayor with approval of City Council

9.2 Application Requirements for EMS Positions Only

Applicants fully-trained in a medical field; or who are trained as an Emergency Medical Responder, or equivalent level, or above; who wish to join BVFD as EMS personnel only, may apply to join the department. Acceptance to the Membership is subject to the same application requirements as outlined in Section 9.1 above.

9.3 When New Applications are Accepted

Applicants will be accepted on an ongoing basis throughout the year.

9.4 Joining the BVFD

If an applicant is accepted as outlined in 9.1 and 9.2 above, they shall be recognized as a BVFD Candidate for a 3-month period. Candidate requirements include:

- a. Attend business meetings and drills of the BVFD with one excused meeting absence and two excused drill absences.
- b. Respond to calls in a support function only per the candidate response SOG.
- c. Assist in other non-response functions of the department at the request of the Administrative or Fireground Officers.

At the end of that 3-month Candidacy at the next business meeting of the BVFD membership will vote with a simple majority to accept the Candidate as a probationary member. Should candidate be approved for probationary volunteer they shall:

- d. Respond to calls per the BVFD probationary response SOG.
- e. Comply with all other requirements of membership as set forth in BVFD Standard Operations Guidelines.
- f. Comply with any other rules and regulations governing the BVFD, and compliance with all reasonable orders and requests made by the Fire Chief and Officers of the Department, in performance of their official duties.

9.5 Membership Levels

a) Cadet

- a. BVFD may allow 14–19-year-olds to enroll as Cadets per the Cadet Program and under the review of the Cadet Advisors. When the Cadet Advisors feel appropriate to do so, a Cadet may be promoted to Senior Cadet. Senior Cadets shall have the responsibilities of Candidates per section 9.4 above, with the exception that Senior Cadets are not required to attend any business meetings. Senior Cadets are also exempt from training requirements during the school year.

b) Probationary and EMS Licensure

- a. All new candidates of the BVFD shall be subject to a probationary period for a minimum of six (6) months. The probationary period shall end only upon successful Firefighter 1 certification and/or completion of the BVFD Firefighter JPRs. If, during that probationary period the candidate fails to meet the member requirements of the BVFD, the probationary member may be terminated.
- b. Requirements for probationary candidates are listed in the BVFD Standard Operating Guidelines. If the probationary member completes the new member requirements outlined above and also completes the requirements found in the BVFD Orientation Manual and BVFD Standard Operating Guidelines, the Fire Chief may recommend the candidate's name to the Mayor to move from probation to Firefighter member status of the BVFD.
- c. All Firefighter members of BVFD shall attain EMR or EMT state licensure. FF/EMR members will be capped at 25% of membership of the BVFD (1 FF/EMR for every 3 FF/EMTs). EMR licensure must be attained within 3 years of completion of the Probationary period (or adoption of these bylaws). EMT licensure (or above) shall be attained within 5 years of completion of Probationary period (or adoption of these bylaws). It is not necessary to attain EMR licensure prior to EMT licensure.

c) Active Duty Roster

- a. An Active-Duty Roster member would be considered a member that actively responds to training, meetings, and call responses as outlined in Chapter 10.

d) Medical Leave

- a. Members who have recently had surgery, an injury, or diagnosed with a medical condition preventing them from achieving the requirements to be an active-duty member can submit to the President to be placed on Medical leave. Their request must be dated and entered into the member's personnel file.
- b. The members will remain on the roster, retain all department issued equipment and will be marked as on medical leave. The member's status in reference to voting will be based off what the status was prior to going on medical leave. (Example, if members were in good standing they would remain in good standing, if members were delinquent they would remain delinquent)
- c. The member will not be allowed to respond to calls and the calls that come in while he/she is on leave will not count against their percentage for their quarterly percentage and performance.

- d. The members will be allowed to attend trainings, meetings, and events however not participate in physical activities.
 - e. The member may terminate their medical leave at any time to the President in form of a medical note from a physician stating they are cleared for normal duty in the position they held prior to their leave - Firefighter/EMT, Firefighter, or EMT.
 - f. The request to be placed on medical leave must have a start date and not to exceed 18 months.
 - g. If the member remains on medical leave after 18 months, the member is to discuss future membership status with BVFD fireground and administrative officers.
- e) Lifetime Member
- a. Any member who accumulates twenty-five years of service to the BVFD or reaches the age of 65, shall be allowed to enter into lifetime membership status.
 - b. A lifetime membership has the same privileges as a current member with the exception to the following:
 - i. No requirement to attend any meetings or trainings
 - ii. No call responses required
 - iii. Voting rights remain the same except for when it comes to fireground officers, of which would be voted on by active-duty membership.
 - c. Each lifetime member shall be entitled to receive from this department their years of service award as they continue to serve in this position.
 - d. To enter this status the member will resign from active duty and automatically be placed into this status.
 - e. Lifetime Members are eligible to begin drawing their State Service Award upon reaching the age of 65 and entering into the Lifetime Member status.

Chapter 10 MEETING ATTENDANCE, TRAINING, AND CALL RESPONSE

Meetings, training, and call requirements per years of service are outlined to meet departmental operations. Attendance at all meetings and drills is encouraged to remain well trained as a member of BVFD. Members not attending minimum meeting, training, and response requirements may be disciplined or terminated pursuant to Chapter 14 of these Bylaws – “Discipline and Impeachment”.

10.1 Minimum meeting and training requirements are:

- a. Probationary under one (1) year: attend all meetings and drills for the first year, with eight (8) total excused absences permitted for the year.
- b. One (1) to ten (10) years of service: One (1) business meeting, two (2) rescue drills, and four (4) fire drills per quarter.
- c. Eleven (11) to twenty (20) years of service: One (1) business meeting, two (2) rescue drills, and three (3) fire drills per quarter.
- d. Twenty-one (21) to thirty-five (35) years of service: One (1) business meeting, two (2) rescue drills, and two (2) fire drills per quarter.
- e. Thirty-five (35) plus years of service: Two (2) business meetings, four (4) fire drills per year.

10.2 Minimum Call Requirements:

- a. All members on the active-duty roster respond to a minimum of 5% of calls in the fiscal year

10.3 Fireground Officer Call Response Requirements

Because effective leadership and guidance is needed for all members of the BVFD, an elected Fireground Officer shall be required to attend more than the minimum call responses listed above. In addition to the minimum meeting, training, and call response attendance policies outlined above, any elected Fireground Officer shall attend a minimum of 10% of **all** call responses for the entire BVFD fiscal year.

Chapter 11: MEMBERSHIP DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 11.1** It shall be the duty of active members, on the alarm of fire, to report at once to the fire station and assist in getting the firefighting apparatus to the fire. If the equipment has gone, to go at once to the fire and report to the Fire Chief or Incident Commander and not leave the scene without permission from the same and obey all orders from their superior Officers to the best of their ability.
- 11.2** Members at response scenes shall conduct themselves in an orderly manner, avoiding the useless destruction of property and may be liable to expulsion.
- 11.3** It shall be the duty of all members to attend meetings, training and calls. It shall be the duty of all members to meet at a minimum, the meetings, training, and call responses as outlined in Chapter Ten, above, according to his or her years of service with the BVFD or elected position.
- 11.4** Fire Chief or their designee will verify members are trained on operation of Fire/Rescue apparatus before they can independently operate.
- 11.5** Roll call shall be taken at all drills. All members are expected to participate during department drills. Members are responsible to submit call response forms, sign training rosters, and submit outside education/training certificates as apply.
- 11.6** No member, at any time, shall be directly involved in response to a call while under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.
- 11.7** Each member accepts full responsibility and the code of ethics inherent to this public service which includes respect of each patient or family's privacy and shall comply with all HIPPA regulations. No member shall disclose any aspect of a call response or patient in question to any other person other than department members.
- 11.8** Courtesy, cooperation, and respect will be displayed to department members, legal personnel, law enforcement officers, nurses, doctors, and the public at all times.
- 11.9** Complaints
 1. Complaints against a member of the volunteer fire department must be submitted in writing, dated and signed by the individual making the complaint. This written complaint must be given to the Fire Chief or Fire Ground Officer within 72 hours of the event so that they may initiate an investigation into the matter.

2. The Fire Chief or Fire Ground Officer will conduct a thorough investigation into the allegations brought against the member in question. This investigation may involve speaking to witnesses, reviewing any applicable documentation, and gathering all relevant information to determine the validity of the complaint.
3. If, after completion of the investigation, the allegations against the member are found to be true, appropriate disciplinary actions will be taken. These actions may range from verbal warnings to suspension or expulsion from the volunteer fire department, depending on the severity of the misconduct.

It is important for all members of the fire department to follow this process in the event that a complaint is brought against a fellow member. By upholding these procedures, we can ensure the integrity and professionalism of our department while maintaining a safe and productive working environment for all members.

Chapter 12: SPECIAL BVFD APPOINTMENTS

12.1 Medical Director

There shall be one (1) person appointed as the Medical Director of the BVFD in accordance with the Nebraska State Statutes. This position will be selected by the Captain of EMS and Fire Chief who will then be presented to the BVFD membership for final approval. The Medical Director's name shall be forwarded to the Mayor and Blair City Council.

The duties of this position shall be but not limited to:

- a. Oversee and approve all protocols of the rescue squad.
- b. Be present at four (4) BVFD rescue squad trainings per year.
- c. Acts as liaison between the Captain of EMS and hospital.
- d. Invited to all BVFD awards events.
- e. Work with the Captain of EMS to develop and monitor all call review process.
- f. Coordinate with the Captain of EMS and hospital emergency department staff to develop and monitor a call review system to monitor the treatment given by the BVFD rescued personnel.
- g. Medical Director will not have any voting rights, any open positions on the BVFD, or be eligible for any benefits offered to members through the BVFD.
- h. All services given to the BVFD will be volunteered with no compensation provided.
- i. Medical Director will not be allowed to attend any business meetings.

12.2 Photographer

There shall be one person appointed as the BVFD Photographer. This position will be selected by the Fire Chief who will then bring to the BVFD membership for final approval.

The duties of this position shall be not limited to:

- a. Allowed to be present at any training, department function, or emergency scene for the BVFD with approval of scene Incident Commander for only purpose of taking pictures or video.
- b. All pictures and videos must first be approved by the Fire Chief, or designee, before any publishing, distribution, or any method of processing to view contents.
- c. Photographer is responsible for their own safety at any scene. They will by no means be covered under the BVFD, City of Blair, or Blair Rural Fire District Insurance.

- d. Photographer will not have any voting rights, any open position on the BVFD, or be eligible for any benefits offered to members through the BVFD.
- e. All services given to the BVFD will be volunteered with no compensation provided.
- f. Photographer will not be allowed to attend any business meetings.

12.3 Chaplain

There shall be one person appointed as the BVFD Chaplain. This position will be selected by the Fire Chief or designee who will then be presented to the BVFD membership for final approval.

The duties of this position shall include but not limited to:

- a. Required to make four drills per calendar year.
- b. May be called on to meet with families of victims or crew members at the hospital/station after difficult calls.
- c. Would be available to call upon any member for personal issues that a member may have.
- d. The Chaplain will operate with the understanding that anything revealed during an incident is confidential and may not be discussed outside of the department membership.
- e. Chaplain will not have any voting rights, any open position on the BVFD, or be eligible for any benefits offered to members through the BVFD.
- f. All services given to the BVFD will be volunteered with no compensation provided.
- g. Chaplain will not be allowed to attend any business meetings.

Chapter 13: BUSINESS / FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

Administrative positions will maintain operations at all business meetings and related to general operations of the BVFD. All records will be maintained by appropriate offices in accordance with regulations. Fireground Officers will maintain fire and EMS records as required by State, Federal, and local Regulations.

Chapter 14: DISCIPLINE AND APPEAL PROCESS

- 14.1** No Member shall be removed, suspended, demoted, or discharged, or anyway disciplined, except for good cause.
- 14.2** Disciplinary action may be applied in a progressive manner including the following:
 - 1. Verbal Warnings
 - 2. Written Reprimands/Warnings
 - 3. Suspension(s)
 - 4. Demotion
 - 5. Removal or Discharge

Verbal Warnings and Written Reprimands/Warnings cannot be appealed. All other actions can be appealed, unless Member is in probationary status. Verbal Warnings and Written Reprimands/Warnings can be issued by any Fire Chief, Fire Ground Officers or the Police and Fire Committee.

- 14.3** Cause for Disciplinary Action. Any non-probationary member may be suspended, demoted, or removed/discharged for any of the following reasons:
1. Incompetence, inefficiency, or inattention to or dereliction of duty;
 2. Failure to adhere to the required calls, meetings or trainings outlined in the Bylaws;
 3. Failure to adhere to the membership duties and responsibilities;
 4. Dishonesty, prejudicial conduct, immoral conduct, insubordination, discourteous treatment of the public or a fellow member, any act of omission or commission tending to injure the public service, any willful failure on the part of the member to conduct himself or herself, or any willful violation of the rules and regulations adopted by these bylaws;
 5. Any other act or failure to act which, in the judgment of the Police and Fire Committee is sufficient to show the offender to be unsuitable and unfit person to be a member of the department.
- 14.4** Prior to any suspension, demotion, or removal/discharge being issued, the Police and Fire Committee or their designee must investigate the matter. Before issuing any discipline, the City Administrator and City Attorney must be consulted by the Police and Fire Committee. If the Police and Fire Committee issues discipline that may result in suspension, demotion or removal, the Police and Fire Committee shall issue a written decision to the Member notifying him/her of what discipline, if any, is being given and the reasons for his or her decision.
- 14.5** The member wanting to appeal the decision of the Police and Fire Committee to suspend, demote, remove or discharge shall within ten (10) business days of the notice of action by the Police and Fire Committee file a request to appeal to the Fire Department Appeals Board. The Appeals Board shall within five (5) business days of receiving the notice of appeal schedule a hearing to consider said appeal. Hearing shall not be held later than ten (10) calendar days from date giving notice. Within five (5) calendar days of the hearing the Board shall notify the member of his/her decision.
- 14.6** The member wanting to appeal the decision of the Police and Fire Committee and Board to suspend, demote, remove or discharge shall within ten (10) business days of the notice of action by the Police and Fire Committee file a request to appeal to the Mayor with the City Clerk. The Mayor shall within five (5) business days of receiving the notice of appeal schedule a hearing to consider said appeal. Hearing shall not be held later than ten (10) calendar days from date giving notice. Within five (5) calendar days of the hearing the Mayor shall notify the officer of his/her decision. The Mayor may uphold the decision of the Police and Fire Committee and Board, alter the decision, or vacate said decision of the Police and Fire Committee and Board. If the Mayor vacates the Police and Fire Committee and Board's decision the member shall be reinstated.
- 14.7** If a member of the Blair Volunteer Fire Department is facing a pending criminal court action, the following procedures will be followed:
1. The member must notify the Fire Chief within 24 hours of being charged with a criminal offense. Failure to do so may result in further disciplinary action.
 2. The member may be placed on administrative leave pending the outcome of the court action. During this time, the member will not be allowed to participate in any department activities or respond to calls.
 3. The member will be required to turn in their department key, pager, and will be removed from the "who is responding" app. This is to ensure the safety and confidentiality of department operations.

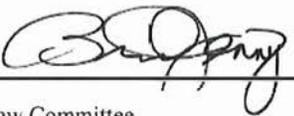
4. Depending on the outcome of the court action, the member will either be reinstated as a member of the department or permanently removed. Serious offenses may result in permanent removal, while lesser charges may allow for reinstatement after a period of probation or other disciplinary measures.

It is essential that all members of the volunteer fire department adhere to these bylaws and cooperate fully with any investigations or legal proceedings. Any violations of these procedures may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination from the department.

Chapter 15: RESIGNATIONS

Members may resign from the Department at any time. Member will submit a letter of resignation to the Fire Chief and return all department issued uniforms, equipment, and keys.

Date Approved: 6/9/25

Brenda Jenny: 
Secretary/Chair of By-Law Committee

Bylaws History and Version Control (sorted newest to oldest)

Version	Reason for Change (High-Level Summary)	Date Approved by Blair City Council
2025.01	2025 redraft following approvals at the June Business meeting (6.9.25)	6.24.25
2024.02	2024 Redraft following meeting with Bylaw and Police/Fire Committees (9.6.24)	10.22.24
2024.01	2024 Redraft following direction/meeting with Bylaw and Police & Fire Committees	9/10/23
2023.02	2023 Redraft following 2.15.23 meeting with Bylaw and Police & Fire Committees	2/28/23
2023.1	2023 Redraft from motions made at 1.5.23 meeting	Not approved
2018.1	2018 Redraft	12/11/2018