



Minutes of the 2016 VEMA Annual Membership meeting, held Thursday March 31 at the Newport News Marriott, Newport News. The meeting was called to order at 12:20 pm by Michelle Oblinsky, VEMA President, who presided. In attendance were 127 Virginia Emergency Management Association Members.

Michelle Oblinsky reported on the status of the organization, including an overview of the financial position, membership benefits, strategic plan, the website, legislative updates, the symposium and the VEMA newsletter.

Columbia Southern made a special presentation about the newly formed partnership between VEMA and Columbia Southern, citing new and exciting educational opportunities for both.

Sara Ruch, Past President, conducted the 2016 nominations and elections for VEMA. She reminded everyone that nominees shall be elected by majority vote of Association Members qualified to vote at the time of the Annual Meeting. When a nominee for a specific office does not receive a majority of the votes cast for that office, a run-off election shall be immediately conducted between the two nominees receiving the greater number of votes. No member or delegate may cast an absentee ballot. After such announcement, she informed the membership that the following individuals would be running for the corresponding offices. She additionally asked for nominations from the floor. After receiving no nominations from the floor, the membership elections proceeded.

- o Candidate for President: Michelle Oblinsky
- o Candidates for 1st VP: Walter English
- o Candidates for 2nd VP: Robert Foresman
- o Candidate for Secretary: Cheryl Elliott
- o Candidate for Treasurer: Jennifer Maul and James Keck

Under the Secretary's Report, Cheryl Elliott moved that the membership accept the Minutes of the March 19, 2015 Annual Membership Meeting as previously distributed on the VEMA website. The motion was seconded by Walter English. The Motion passed unanimously.

Under the Treasurer's Report, Jennifer Maul moved that the membership accept the VEMA financial position as of February 29, 2016, reflecting a checking account balance of \$198,572.60, a Money Market Account balance of \$50,172.22, and five CD's totaling \$65,163.69. Additionally she moved that the minutes reflect that the monthly audits of books continue to show we're in a solid financial position and the books are in good condition. The motion was seconded by Jeff Fletcher. The motion passed unanimously.

Bo Keeney presented the Executive Director's report, providing an overview of organizational activities. He commented on the history of VEMA over the last three-five years, noting that VEMA attendance, the financial prosperity, membership and member benefits have all increased. He highlighted some of the recent VEMA successes; including but not limited to, a new strategic plan, an all-time high in membership, creation of code of ethics and anti-trust policies, a new comprehensive membership/database system, revised constitution/bylaws and better relationships with VDEM. Finally, He made special note to thank the volunteers of VEMA and VEMS. Under additional committee reports, the audit committee and legislative committees commented on their recent activities. The audit committee noted that they would be requesting funding in the next year's budget for an outside review of the VEMA books by an independent CPA. This will be done in addition to the audit committee's monthly review of the VEMA books. The committee reaffirmed that the review of the VEMA books continue to be

in good financial shape. The legislative committee commented on the need for greater involvement from the membership but that VEMA is headed in a proper direction to become more legislatively involved. The committee noted that the Keeney Group provides free legislative monitoring services. Finally the committee noted that they will begin to look towards the 2017 Virginia General Assembly to develop a legislative priority list.

Under New Business Walter English and Bo Keeney presented a comprehensive review of the new Association Management Software System. This new system will serve as the website, database and convention registration system for VEMS. This new system will allow for expanded member benefits and communication. Each member was urged to update their member profile and utilize the member website on a regular basis.

Motion on behalf of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee to approve the revised VEMA Constitution and Bylaws as presented.

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### **Proposed VEMA By-Laws Change - Please Review**

The following By-Laws proposal will be presented to the VEMA membership at the 2016 Annual Meeting. Please review the proposed changes.

#### **ARTICLE 10 - AMENDMENT OF BY-LAWS**

These By-Laws may be amended by an e-mail poll of Board of Directors members requesting their vote or at a meeting of the Board of Directors provided that a majority of the Board of Directors members respond in favor to the e-mail or are present at the meeting; and the full Association regular membership are notified of such amendments not less than thirty (30) days prior to the Board of Directors e-mail vote or meeting so comments can be made if so desired. Notification may be made to the membership by posting the information for thirty (30) days on the Association website and by e-mailing information to members thirty (30) days in advance of any vote.

Proposed Change:

#### **ARTICLE 1 - MEMBERSHIP**

New Section - "G"(g) Code of Ethics:

The Virginia Emergency Management Association (VEMA) Code of Ethics must be upheld by all individuals that are VEMA Members. The promise to uphold the Code signifies the assumption that the emergency manager will act prudently and responsibly beyond the requirements of laws and codes.

Maintenance of public trust and confidence is central to the effectiveness of the emergency management profession. The members of VEMA reflect the spirit and proper conduct dictated by the conscience of society and commitment to the well-being of all. Members shall conduct themselves so as to maintain confidence in their position and conduct themselves in a manner as to give clear impression that they cannot be improperly influenced in the performance of their official duties. The members abide by the association's core values of respect, commitment and professionalism.

Violations to the Code of Ethics may result in the following sanctions:

1. Private Censure: A letter to the member in violations indicating the violation of the Code of Ethics, that VEMA disapproves of such conduct, and that if it is reported in the future, it may be cause for additional sanctions.
2. Expulsion: A revocation of membership privileges.
3. Membership Bar: A prohibition against reinstatement of membership. For the specific provisions see VEMA Code of Ethics document.



## VIRGINIA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

4461 Cox Road, Suite 110 • Glen Allen, VA 23060

P: 804-643-0080 • F: 804-643-0311

[www.vemaweb.org](http://www.vemaweb.org)

### VEMA CODE OF ETHICS

The Virginia Emergency Management Association (VEMA) Code of Ethics must be upheld by all individuals that are VEMA Executive Board Members upon being sworn in. The promise to uphold the Code signifies the assumption that the emergency manager will act prudently and responsibly beyond the requirements of laws and codes.

Maintenance of public trust and confidence is central to the effectiveness of the emergency management profession. The members of VEMA reflect the spirit and proper conduct dictated by the conscience of society and commitment to the well-being of all. Members shall conduct themselves so as to maintain confidence in their position and conduct themselves in a manner as to give clear impression that they cannot be improperly influenced in the performance of their official duties. The members abide by the association's core values of respect, commitment and professionalism.

#### Respect

- Respect for supervising officials, colleagues, associates and VEMA members. Comply with all laws and regulations applicable to our purpose and position and responsibly and impartially apply them to all concerned.
- Respect fiscal resources by evaluating organizational decisions to provide the best service or product at a minimal cost without sacrificing quality.
- Prevent all forms of mismanagement of association funds by establishing and maintain strong fiscal and management controls, and by supporting audits and investigative activities.
- Members who serve in multiple roles- being involved with multiple associations- should avoid participating in matters that create the appearance of a conflict of interest.

#### Commitment

- Commit to continuous improvement by fairly administrating the affairs of our positions by fostering honest and trustworthy relationships.
- Commit to enhancing stewardship of resources and the caliber of service we deliver while striving to improve the quality of life in the communities we serve.
- Respond to inquiries with answers that are complete, clear and easy to understand.

#### Professionalism

- Promote professionalism to ensure public confidence in emergency management.
- Recognize and support the general membership's right to know the Boards' business.
- Exercise compassion, benevolence, fairness and optimism
- Seek no favor; believe that personal aggrandizement or profit secured by confidential information or by misuse of public time is dishonest
- Members should not directly or indirectly solicit any gift or accept or receive any gift--whether it be money, services, loan, travel, entertainment, hospitality, promise, or any other form--under the following circumstances: (1) it could be reasonably inferred or expected that the gift was intended to influence them in the performance of their official duties; or (2) the gift was intended to serve as a reward for any official action on their part. (The guideline is not intended to isolate members from normal social practices where gifts among friends, associates and relatives are appropriate for certain occasions).

#### Rules and Reporting Ethics Violations

When becoming aware of a possible violation of the VEMA Code of Ethics, members are encouraged to report the matter to the VEMA Executive Director. In reporting the matter, members may choose to go on record as the complainant or report the matter on a confidential basis.

The Executive Director will convene an ethics panel of three members to investigate the matter of violation. This Committee will be responsible for fact finding to address the complaint of a violation in code. The Executive Director and Committee has 60 days from the date of a complaint to issue a decision on the matter. Each finding must be supported and relevant evidence which has been made available to the person in question for review.

Upon finding a violation, sanctions may be imposed on the member, The following factors may be considered when imposing a sanction: nature of violation, prior violations by the same individual, willfulness of the violation and any other factors which bear upon the seriousness of the violation.

The following sanctions may apply:

1. Private Censure: A letter to the member in violations indicating the violation of the Code of Ethics, that VEMA disapproves of such conduct, and that if it is reported in the future, it may be cause for additional sanctions.
2. Expulsion: A revocation of membership privileges.

3. Membership Bar: A prohibition against reinstatement of membership.

Criminal Charges: upon receiving documented evidence that a member has been found guilty after trial by a judge or jury of criminal conduct, which constitutes a violation in the VEMA Code of Ethics and occurred while a member, the Executive Director shall immediately issue a notice of expulsion to that member.

A member who has been expelled from membership under these rules may apply for reinstatement to VEMA only after a period of (2) years from the date of expulsion. A written request must be sent to the Executive Director for a reinstatement review and reasons for consideration. This will be further reviewed by the Executive Board with whom a determination will be made.

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The motion was seconded by Ken Rudnicki. The motion passed unanimously.

Michelle Oblinsky called Sara Ruch back to the podium to announce the results of the elections. Sara announced that the following individuals had been elected and will be installed at the annual banquet.

- o President: Michelle Oblinsky
- o 1st VP: Walter English
- o 2nd VP: Robert Foresman
- o Secretary: Cheryl Elliott
- o Treasurer: Jennifer Maul

Michelle Oblinsky asked the membership if there were any additional motions, inquires, or issues to come before the general membership. No additional requests were received.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Michelle Oblinsky at 1:04 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cheryl Elliott, VEMA Secretary