



U.F.B.A

UNITED FIRE BRIGADES'
ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND

MINUTES

**Minutes of the 146th Annual General Meeting of the United Fire Brigades' Association (Inc)
held at Te Pae Conference Centre, Christchurch and Live Streamed via the UFBA Website
Friday 1 November 2024**

Apologies:

The following apologies were received:

LHM Sandy Lawson

LHM Peter Lockery

LHM Don Roper

Past President Peter Guard

LHM Peter Drummond

Past President Erick Speck

Past President Max Robinson

Past President Graeme Booth

Past President Ray Topia

The President of the UFBA Warren Maslin welcomed dignitaries, past presidents, life honorary members, delegates and observers.

Following a Karakia by DCFO Ahron Eastall, the UFBA Board Chair officially declared open the 146th Annual General Meeting of the United Fire Brigades' Association at 1305 hours.

Theme of Conference

The theme of the 2024 Conference is "Mobilise".

Quorum

The Chair stated that Quorum had been met enabling AGM business to be conducted.

342 Delegates; 18 proxy votes. A majority vote of 50% + 1 is 181

Obituaries

The delegation was upstanding for a Moments Silence to acknowledge and remember those who have passed.

Below is the official obituary list:

Rank	First Name	Surname	Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Warren	Stringer	Oamaru Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Gary	Thompson	Kaitangata Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Control Room Operator	Victor	Young	Dunedin
Retired Senior Station Officer	Stu	McLennan	Wellington Fire Brigade

Retired Member	John	Cunningham	Winton Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Member	John (Pat)	Swann	Invercargill Fire Brigade
Retired Deputy Chief Fire Officer	Noel	Gilbert	Browns Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Senior Firefighter	Russell (Butch)	Culling	Bluff Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Firefighter	Stewart	Rickard	Mayor View Volunteer Fire Brigade
Deputy Controller	Christopher (Alex)	Scarrow	Te Pohue Volunteer Fire Brigade
Operational Support Member	Ian	Wilkinson	Pauanui Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Mervyn	Ferguson	Kaitangata Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Assistant National Commander	Owen	Kinsella QFSM	Fire and Emergency New Zealand
Brigade Life Honorary Member	James (Jim)	Anderson QSM	Te Kuiti Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	James	Ewers	Upper Moutere Volunteer Fire Brigade
Senior Firefighter	Gavin	Lack	Lincoln Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Murray	Dysart	Waikaia Volunteer Fire Brigade
Qualified Firefighter	Bryant	McKenzie	Wallacetown Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Ronald (Ronnie)	Summers	Owhango Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Chief Fire Officer	Paul	Whitehead	Marton Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Wesley (Wes)	Reichel	Millers Flat Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Senior Firefighter	Leonard (Lenny)	Stone	Rakaia Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Senior Firefighter	Colin	Twose	Waikari Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Chief Fire Officer	Gary	Talbot	Hamilton Fire Brigade
Retired Senior Firefighter	Duncan	Troughton	Whanganui Fire Brigade
Retired Chief Fire Officer	John	Eaton	Outram Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Operational Support Member	Philip	Campbell	Remutaka Operational Support Unit
Retired Qualified Firefighter	Ray (Mac)	McKnight	Nelson Fire Brigade
Retired Qualified Firefighter	Frank	Anderson	Wellington Fire District
Retired Rural Fire Officer	Barry	Low	Western Bay of Plenty
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Cheri-Lu	Flight	Turangi Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Neil	Petersen	Spencerville Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Senior Dispatcher	John	Goodliffe	Southern Fire Communications Centre
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Leo	May	Waiuku Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Chief Fire Officer	Ivan (Oakey)	Weastell	Waiau Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Graeme	Trigger	New Plymouth Fire Brigade
Retired Deputy Chief Fire Officer	Andrew	Prangley	Kaikohe Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Controller	Ian (Monty)	Montgomery	Okiwi Bay Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	James (Jim)	Nicholls	Pukekohe Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Qualified Firefighter	Richard	Crawford	Te Puke Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Deputy Chief Fire Officer	Kenneth (Ken)	Lucas	Coromandel Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Mervyn	Connelly	Bulls Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Station Officer	Gary	Beban	Wellington Fire District
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Patrick (Jack)	Feeney	Johnsonville Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Senior Station Officer	Rowan	Reeves	Wellington Fire District
Retired Chief Fire Officer	Graeme	Hawarth	Cambridge Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Chief Fire Officer	Mervyn	George QSM	Whitianga Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Rodger	Gillespie	Cust Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Peter	Sicely	Otorohanga Volunteer Fire Brigade
Operational Support Member	Alan	Moros	Mangonui Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Member	Eifion	Williams	Urenui Volunteer Fire Brigade
Operational Support Member	Lawrence	Snelgar	Hutt-Wairarapa Operational Support Unit
Qualified Firefighter	Davina	Solomon	Levin Volunteer Fire Brigade

Firefighter	Jade	Halkett	Waihaorunga Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Senior Firefighter	Terry	Cook	Invercargill Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Desmond	Hide QFSM	Cust Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Member	Gordon	Duncan	Wellington Fire District
Retired Station Officer	Alexander	Carey	Kaitaia Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Station Officer	Gary	MacKenzie	Gore Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Chief Fire Officer	Charlie	Dudley	Diamond Harbour Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Member	Murray	Frost	Linkwater Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Member	Dave	Bould	Wellington Fire District
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Gordon (Mick)	Guthrie	Rahotu Volunteer Fire Brigade
Founding Member	Donald	Gyton	Plimmerton Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Trevor (Trev)	Moore	Paraparaumu Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Barney	Donaldson	Blackball Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Firefighter	James (Jimmy)	Morris	Edendale Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Senior Station Officer	William (Les)	Wilson	Johnsonville Fire Brigade
Retired 3rd Officer	William (Jim)	Harper	Martinborough Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Richard (Dick)	Tohu	Okaihau Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Chief Fire Officer	Thomas (Ed)	Finnie	Riverton Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Ian	Huggins	Mount Somers Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Member	Kenneth	Monk	Napier Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Senior Station Officer	Tony	Nightingale	Wellington Fire District
Senior Network Engineer	Steve	Oxenbridge	FENZ ICT
Retired Firefighter	Samuel (Sam)	McGregor	Wellington Fire District
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Maurice (Morrie)	Gore	Palmerston North Fire Brigade
Retired Senior Firefighter	Michael (Mike)	Howell	Otago Fire District
Retired Member	Russell	Postlewaight MNZM	Wellington Fire District
Brigade Life Honorary Member	William (Bill)	Dougherty	Port Chalmers Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Greg	Olsen	Mapua Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Member	Archdeacon Joseph (Joe)	Huta NZOM	Auckland City Fire Brigade
Retired Chief Fire Officer	John (Huey)	Eunson	Pongoroa Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Member	Bruce	Abernathy	Cheviot Volunteer Fire Brigade
Deputy Chief Fire Officer	Michael	McLees	Blackmount Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Fire Officer	Ronald	Lennon	Wellington Operational Support Unit
Retired Chief Fire Officer	Don	Hassall QFSM	Rangiora Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Anton	Sutorius	Plimmerton Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Senior Station Officer	Martin	Cuff	Hokitika Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Victor (Vic)	Moody	Clinton Volunteer Fire Brigade
Wildfire Specialist	Graeme	Still	Fire and Emergency New Zealand
Operational Support Member	Grant (Bertha)	Baker	Kaitaia Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Russell	Campbell	Kaitangata Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Support	Taina	Savage	Kamo Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Firefighter	Alan	Collison	Wyndham Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	John	Thomas	Katikati Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Fire Police Officer	Arthur	Meadows	Otautau Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Ross	Kinghorn	Kumeu Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	John	Pellew	Wainuiomata Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Brigade Member	Bernard	Faull	Paraparaumu Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Senior Firefighter	Neil	Foster	Thornbury Volunteer Fire Brigade
Rural Firefighter	Alan (Lofty)	Harrington	Rissington Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired 3rd Officer	Raymond (Ray)	Christie	Thames Volunteer Fire Brigade

Deputy Chief Fire Officer	Matthew (Matt)	Ledgerwood	Little River Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Ian	Rizzi	Winton Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Bradley	Dymond	Stratford Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Member	Chantelle	Brosnahan	Himatangi Beach Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Station Officer	Brett	Bennett	Waitemata Volunteer Fire Brigade
Founding Member	Frank	O'Brien	Blackmount Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Member	Barry	Hazelton	Te Kuiti Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Member	Dean	Ashton	Wakefield Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Member	Gail	Williams	Springfield Volunteer Fire Brigade

The UFBA Chair, the Hon. Peter Dunne addressed the Delegation:

Board Membership and Staffing

I would like to give a special acknowledgement to our Patron, Dave McFarlane QSM, who is here today and who will address us shortly.

Let me now introduce the members of our Board:

- Deputy Chair, Kevin Ihaka. He is the Managing Director of Forest Protection Services based in Whangārei and brings extensive experience in fighting wildfires across New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and North America. Kevin was previously Chair of the Forest and Rural Fire Association of New Zealand and was first appointed to the UFBA Board in 2019, then re-appointed in March 2023.
- Director Daryl Sayer. Elected to the Board in 2018, Daryl is Chief Fire Officer of the Sumner Volunteer Fire Brigade, and a community pharmacy owner. He is the chair of the Board's Complaints and Disciplinary Committee. Daryl completes his two terms on the Board at this AGM, and I want to acknowledge and thank him for the quality of his service and contribution over the last six years.
- Director Tom Thomson, ONZM. Appointed to the Board in 2019, Tom is a former executive member of the Forest and Rural Fire Association of New Zealand. He is Deputy Controller of the Motunau Rural Fire Brigade, and the Managing Director of Elastomer Products. Tom is chair of the Board's Audit and Risk Committee.
- Director, Jason Prendergast. Elected to the Board in 2021, Jason is a Past President of the UFBA and is well known to you all. He supports our volunteers on the West Coast as a Volunteer Support Officer for FENZ. Jason is a long-serving and senior official for our Challenges and makes a valuable and conscientious contribution to the Board's deliberations.
- Director, Howard Cole, QSM. Elected in 2022, Howard has extensive experience with wildfire and is the Chief Fire Officer of the Maramarua Volunteer Fire Brigade. He is the managing director of three dairy farms in the Waikato, a former executive member of the Forest and Rural Fire Association of New Zealand and has been on the UFBA Membership Advisory Panel.

Earlier this year the Board resolved to establish an intern programme for up-and-coming leaders within the UFBA to spend a year working closely with the Board to broaden their experiences and skills. Our first two interns, Kaye Ahsam from Northland and Duncan Tabor from Wellington were appointed in August this year and are already making a positive contribution to the Board's work.

I also acknowledge our President Warren Maslin, and Vice President Jeff Manson.

To the Board, Dave, Warren, and Jeff, I express my thanks and appreciation for your contributions and support during the year. You all serve the Association well.

To our dedicated professional staff, so ably led by Chief Executive Bill Butzbach, thank you all for your commitment and service throughout the year. Your devotion to duty is inspiring, and I am in awe of the hard work you all put in on our behalf, to ensure the UFBA operates to the highest standards of professionalism.

Hidden in Plain Sight

In June, the Hidden in Plain Sight report which the Board had commissioned from Esperance Capital was released. That report assessed the monetary value of the contribution of volunteer firefighters to fire and emergency services across the country as \$823 million for the year to June 2023. It confirmed what we already suspected anecdotally about the pervasive contribution volunteer firefighters make to the life of New Zealand communities, year in and year out. Nevertheless, the statistics are worth repeating here today.

Volunteers are first responders to 42% of all structure fires, 70% of all motor vehicle accidents, 71% of all medical emergencies, and 85% of all vegetation fires.

Our volunteers make up 86% of frontline firefighters, covering over 93% of the country's landmass. 567 of the New Zealand's 647 fire stations are fully volunteer, a further 34 are operated jointly with employed firefighters, leaving 46 stations operated entirely by employed staff.

Significantly, the report showed that the value of the contribution of volunteers has been increasing – up just over 16% from the \$619 million figure assessed in 2019, the last time such a study was undertaken.

The blunt conclusion from all this – something that FENZ, the government and the wider community need to take on board – is that our emergency services could not survive without the contribution of volunteers, and nor, given the breadth of that contribution, could any government ever afford to replace them with fully employed staff.

All we therefore ask – in no way unreasonably – is that FENZ treat value our volunteer firefighters and treat them as equally and fairly as its employed staff. It is no longer acceptable that our volunteers do not receive the same level of uniform, training or equipment as their employed colleagues. Nor is it acceptable that volunteers receive less rehabilitation support, compensation, health and safety cover when they are injured on duty.

We recently met with the ACC Minister to highlight the anomaly where ACC does not cover mental trauma experienced by volunteer firefighters on duty, or chronic workplace illness, because volunteers do not receive payment for their work. The Minister's response was sympathetic, so we look forward to that being matched by positive action to correct that anomaly.

Relationship with FENZ

In previous AGM addresses I have expressed frustration at the lack of progress being made to complete the reform agenda I set out in the 2017 legislation. While there is still much to do, there have been some important steps during the year.

We are delighted that FENZ has finally accelerated the establishment of the network of Local Advisory Committees across the country.

The LACs are a vital link between local communities and their emergency services, to ensure to the greatest extent possible that local priorities are considered in national decision-making.

The recently signed agreement between FENZ and the UFBA to begin scoping a new Volunteer Engagement Model is an important step forward towards ensuring our brigades are enabled and supported to face the diverse challenges of the future.

This has been a UFBA objective for some time, and we are very pleased to see progress. However, although the relationship between the FENZ and UFBA boards, and the senior management of both organisations has matured and strengthened over the last year, there remain some challenges.

While the UFBA and FENZ have shown we can work constructively together on issues where we have common cause, it must never be forgotten that we are two separate organisations. We each have our own, different priorities. That means we will have our differences from time to time, which we will not be afraid to air.

But we will always do so in a dignified way, and will not stoop to innuendo, rumour and false assertion. One such area relates to organisational culture. Although the FENZ senior management may be becoming more accepting, perhaps albeit grudgingly, of the reality that theirs is an overwhelmingly volunteer organisation and the implications that has for resourcing, training and support of volunteers, that view is not necessarily held throughout the middle management level.

We still hear too many instances of some middle level personnel treating volunteers as second-class in terms of access to training and resources. That behaviour is intolerable and out of step with the intentions of the 2017 reforms. Unfortunately, FENZ tends to wring its hands when such situations are identified and do very little to call the culprits to account.

That approach is no longer acceptable and FENZ needs to take a stronger line in rooting out such behaviour and moving aside those personnel who are impediments to progress. FENZ's Eke Taumata programme is about achieving long-term culture change within the organisation. We applaud that and are working alongside FENZ on that programme. At the same time, though, entrenched old style attitudes towards volunteers amongst some middle management staff cannot go unchallenged.

As the country's primary fire-fighting organisation, confirmed by the Hidden in Plain Sight Report, the UFBA expects that at all times and at all levels FENZ will act to enhance and strengthen the role of the volunteers who comprise 86% of their membership. And we will be more vocal in calling them out when they fail to do so.

Overall Environment

There have been a number of reviews of emergency management practices following last year's cyclones and subsequent adverse weather events.

Many of these have pointed to inadequate operational preparedness and resourcing but few have acknowledged the critical role our volunteers played in those responses. Again, the reality is that without the volunteer component, there would have been no response.

Our plea to the government as it reviews our national emergency management structure is that it does not reinvent the wheel in response. We do not need another emergency management organisation. Our volunteers already provide that response.

What we need is better resourcing and training for them to be able to do so safely, and effectively for their communities. However, at the same time, there remains a need for a better approach to wider land management issues.

The UFBA established Tāngata Matatau as an independent forum for all those with an interest in wider land management issues so they can have a better say on the best emergency management policies for their sector and are able to offer specialist advice to FENZ and the government accordingly.

While there is sector support for such an organisation, FENZ remains ambivalent about becoming involved. It still sees Tāngata Matatau as some sort of potential challenge, rather than a partner agency which would strengthen its work through high quality, independent advice.

Next year, with the support of the UFBA, Tāngata Matatau intends holding a national conference of stakeholders, including input from similar bodies that have been established overseas, to further develop this approach. We hope that FENZ and other government representatives will accept the invitation to participate.

Challenges for the Future

The UFBA's future is not without its own challenges. You will see from the Annual Report and the Financial Statements that the Association is in a sound financial position, with a prudent investment policy. More details will be provided by the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee when he speaks shortly.

However, ongoing funding issues remain. The UFBA receives around \$4 million a year out of FENZ's annual budget of approximately \$670 million. Our budget grant has stabilised this year after reductions in recent years, and discussions are ongoing about future arrangements.

Nevertheless, it is clear to the Board that some changes need to be made if we are to continue to provide and expand the level of services we offer to members and remain financially viable. We have recorded significant budget deficits over the last two years. We cannot continue down this path.

The resolutions the Board is proposing at this meeting to modestly adjust brigade levies – which have not been increased for many years – are a vital step towards ensuring the UFBA can continue to provide the level of service and support to members that you properly expect. We urge your support for these. At the same time, we are reviewing many of our activities.

While FENZ funds our Annual Conference and is expected to continue to do so, it does not pay for the AGM component of that gathering. The AGM currently costs around \$90,000, excluding the travel costs which we fully fund. We cannot carry on in this way.

To minimise those costs, which we are currently meeting from reserve funds, which is unsustainable, we are looking to move it to a more online format, while retaining the face-to-face Annual Conference. That is why the Board is proposing the resolution regarding reducing the AGM quorum from 30% to 20%. A 20% quorum is still a relatively high one, compared to other not-for-profit organisations like ours. Therefore, we do not consider that a move in this direction will significantly reduce overall accountability. Indeed, it will make it easier for there to be greater participation in the UFBA's affairs.

One of our great strengths is the long history and tradition built up over almost 150 years. We should be staunch in upholding that, but we should also not be averse to change when it becomes necessary. The UFBA today is one of the most professional and skilled members' services voluntary organisations in New Zealand.

In that regard, we are all the custodians of a great tradition, with an ongoing responsibility to manage the Association's finances and resources prudently in the interests of our members. The demands and expectations our members rightfully place upon us are increasing, as the challenges you face are similarly increasing.

The resolutions the Board is proposing to this AGM are all about ensuring we can always meet your expectations. At the same time, we are continuing to lobby FENZ for better funding for some of our activities, and to explore potential commercial sponsorship for others.

But, regardless of that, we also need to become more self-reliant and less dependent on external support. When I foreshadowed the possibility of changes along these lines at last year's AGM, I made a commitment that any changes we ultimately make will be to enhance both the UFBA's ongoing relationship and contact with members, and the service it provides.

On behalf of the Board, I repeat that commitment unequivocally today. Our challenges remain positive opportunities to be embraced, rather than difficult problems to be overcome.

Conclusion

Since the release of the Hidden in Plain Sight report there has been a significant increase in the level of media and wider community interest in and awareness of the huge contribution you all make as volunteers to serving our communities and keeping them safe. Your work is not governed by a roster – you are always on call, 24 hours a

day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. For you there are no shifts or days off. Your commitment means you always respond when called out – rain hail, or shine.

Alongside your extraordinary commitment is the support of your families who support and encourage you. Every one of you will have all endured disrupted family occasions to enable your partner, sibling, parent, or child to answer the community's call.

So, we owe the UFBA families a mighty thank you and a huge debt of gratitude for your continuing support. Your employers, who stand by you when you are called out also play an important, unspoken role which must be acknowledged.

Thank you, employers, for your ongoing support and understanding. I continue to regard it as a huge privilege to be involved with such a committed, highly skilled, and uncomplaining group of people as our members.

Please enjoy the next few days of camaraderie and learning. I look forward to catching with many of you over that time and I wish you well for the future.

No reira, tena koutu, tena tatou katoa.

Confirmation of the 2023 AGM minutes

MOTION: That the minutes from the 2023 AGM which are on the UFBA website, are true and correct as confirmed and adopted by the UFBA Board on the 5 March 2024, in accordance with UFBA Constitution 6.1 (b)(i).

Moved: CFO Kenneth Austin, Kaingaroa Volunteer Fire Brigade
Seconded: SFF Malcolm Frost, Bunnythorpe Volunteer Fire Brigade

The motion was **CARRIED**.

Let the minutes show that the Minutes of the 2023 AGM are adopted.

Board Director Candidates

The three board director candidates Tristan Ilich, Jason Prendergast, Karl Scragg addressed the delegation.

Voting Process

The AGM voting processes were overseen by our scrutineers, auditors Grant Thornton. An announcement of the elected candidate for the first position will be made before the next Board Director vote.

Voting for Board Director Position 1

Voting buckets were taken into the audience by the scrutineers. Voting delegates placed one card inside the bucket. Those holding a proxy vote, placed the choice of their proxy in the voting bucket.

Votes were taken to a secure room by the scrutineers to be counted.

2023/24 Annual Report

All Brigades have received a copy of the 2022/23 Annual Report. Reporting on the years activities has been provided in the annual report as required by constitution and financial statements have been audited.

Director Thomson and Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee addressed the delegation:

As chair of the Audit and Risk committee, I will address this year's financial results. The financials have been circulated and for the most part I will take them as read.

We have received our auditors report, and it is fair to say this was a very good report. The auditors were impressed with the controls on the organisations activities and made positive comments on the professional nature of all the

staff they interacted with and made a special point of passing high praise for Stephen Malanchak our Finance and Membership Services Manager. This is not common from auditors I can assure you. I want to record a huge vote of confidence and appreciation in the work that Bill Butzbach and his team have done, and continue to do, in these uncertain times. I would also like to publicly note a vote of thanks to Graeme Mitchell, our independent financial advisor as he retires from UFBA involvement after 5 years valuable support coming as he did from a high-level career the accounting profession. Our auditors have told us we have our operations well buttoned down and I'm happy with that.

What auditors do not do, is get themselves involved in the day to day running and direction of the business. It is the function of the board to direct the activities and future directions of the organisation. Under the direction of our chair, Peter Dunne, we have had a very full year, working in challenging conditions.

As we approach our 150th anniversary, we reflect on our history of overcoming many challenges through collective effort and goodwill. We've never faced a period where our main funding source has been cut by 40%. Our funding from FENZ has been cut by 40% over the last few years. We hope the reductions have stopped, but we need to act prudently to right the ship.

While we understand FENZ's position and acknowledge their efforts to collaborate with us, the stark reality is that we now have significantly less funding to run the organisation than even two years ago, and something must change for us to survive. For the second year in a row, we are recording a loss of equity in our year end accounts and it is time for us to take stock and agree on a strategy to turn this situation around.

We had a small surplus in the 2021/2022 year, but this was helped by the fact we were dealing with the covid crisis, and we were unable to travel. In the 2022/2023 we posted a loss in equity of \$144,000. This wasn't helped by a big back log of honours nights and an unusually high number of gold star presentations.

FENZ contribute 50% of the cost of a gold star but it is a capped dollar figure each year which we easily exceeded in the first year after Covid. Once we exceed that cap figure we carry full costs of 25-year gold star medals, along with all other medals. It must be noted that base medal purchase price has gone up over this period as well. In fact it will not come as a shock that all costs have gone up at the same time as funding has gone down.

In the 2023/2024 year we posted a further loss of \$173,000. The budget for that year showed we were facing a loss of \$275,000 if we did nothing new to reduce costs. It was something of a relief when we were able to reduce this loss to approximately \$100,000. Our first cut of this year's 2024/2025 budget shows a potential loss of \$206,000.

We went back to the drawing board, by carefully reducing services in some areas, management believes they can get this loss down to \$50,000. That will not be easy, but we are committed to trying. So that totals \$367,000 in two years and if we don't achieve the cost savings I've just indicated, then we can add back losses of up to \$156,000. That would see us looking at a total loss in equity of over \$500,000 in 3 years.

As an organisation we represent the vast majority of firefighting activities in NZ. A recent survey, has indicated that our members save the country over \$800M each year. We will continue to lobby on that point but that doesn't immediately solve our problem. It beggars' belief that as an organisation, we doubled in size and funding was almost halved, yet here we are.

There is now a considerable commercial risk for the UFBA in holding its annual conference as there is a large funding gap of \$150-200K for which the UFBA must carry the commercial risk. Previously this was covered within the funds FENZ contributed for the running of the conference. This is no longer the case. We also now carry the full cost of running our AGM. You will see some of the ways we are trying to reduce cost in running the AGM reflected in the remits to conference coming up shortly.

We acknowledge that FENZ is under the same government cost-saving pressures as the rest of the public sector. Receiving funds from a crown entity comes with increased financial and physical oversight, adding to our management workload at a time when we need to cut costs. For example, the honours team now deals with over

5,000 medals annually, doubling previous years' demands and members are always looking for quicker turnaround times.

The costs of running events continue to rise, and our small management team cannot shoulder this burden alone. Hope is not a strategy—we need to take definitive action. We cannot cut, slash, burn and cut our way to a better future.

We have been exploring income-generating activities such as training, but these require seed capital and significant effort, with rewards often years away. FENZ trainers frequently fill market gaps we identify, adding to our challenges. If we lose more retained funds, we'll be forced to downsize our offerings.

In my opinion we have two simple choices:

1. Continue to reduce core activities and services to member services that have been in place for a very long period and/or:
2. Raise more funding from somewhere else.

The problem from my observation, is that when we spot a gap in the market, FENZ trainers seem to swoop in and fill the void that we are working on. There are lots of smart minds working on this, but the point remains the same, if we lose too much more of our retained funds, we must seriously downsize our offering.

Again, we recognise the working relationship we have with both management and board of FENZ but we must stop the losses or we will run out of both time and money.

Both organisations are doing their best to support volunteerism in our sector in what are truly tough times.

I leave you with these key points:

- The Association recorded a loss in equity of \$317,000 in the last two years and this year we will add to that.
- Due in the main to reduced FENZ funding.
- Cost increases associated with our investment in sector issues such as welfare and grievance support and now covering full costs of our AGM.
- Management and the Board have worked hard to identify and action financial initiatives to move the Association back into surplus, but the big gains of previous years have been taken.
- Our financial position remains strong, with \$1.1 million of cash and term deposits. Note that last year this figure was \$1.2M
- Last year, the association placed \$410,000 with Craigs Investment Partners in a diversified investment portfolio, similar to the Benevolent Fund investment fund, and has this has gone slightly better than I had expected in this environment.
- This is the second year the UFBA was required to prepare a statement of service performance to FENZ which discloses several key performance measures, including a record 247 25-year Gold Stars awarded to members 2022/23 in and 160 in 2023/24. It's not a simple case of getting the money and spend it, we have to report on where it has gone and if we met our stated objectives.
- The service report is also a requirement of the auditors who have pointed out the closer scrutiny of charitable trusts such as ours.
- This increasing scrutiny by both FENZ and auditors have added significantly to the workload of our small but very busy management team

As the financial statements have been circulated, the meeting was opened up to questions about the 2023/24 Financial Report.

The following questions were raised from the floor:

Clevedon Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate. CFO Mike Kelly

Because it pertains to Motions later on the 5% of brigade grant funding that gets passed to the UFBA, how much is that in revenue? It does not seem to be separated out anywhere. Of the 5% we are paying now, how much of the UFBA's revenue does that equate to?

Director Thomson replied:

Approximately \$340,000

Clevedon Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate. CFO Mike Kelly

So to clarify the CPI adjustment that FENZ make to the brigade grants, that gets passed on to the UFBA?

Director Thomson asked UFBA Accountant Stephen Malanchak to respond

Currently we get around \$30,000 a month in brigade subscriptions which is about \$360,000 roughly. Two years ago FENZ increased the brigade grant by 7% that flowed through to the UFBA subscriptions, so our subscriptions went up by 7%

Clevedon Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate - CFO Mike Kelly

So \$350,000 of the UFBA's income is what comes from the Brigades

UFBA Accountant Stephen Malanchak replied

That is correct

Porangahau Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate - FF Lou Bird

Further clarification please. Is that the subscription revenue total that shows in the Annual Accounts of \$340,000; or are there other subscription revenues that are included in that?

Director Thomson asked UFBA Accountant Stephen Malanchak to respond

The subscription line in the annual accounts are only brigade subscriptions.

There were no more questions from the delegation

Membership Advisory Panel Annual Report

President Warren Maslin as Chair of the Membership Advisory Panel spoke to the Membership Advisory Panel Annual Report

The Membership Advisory Panel is made up of myself, Past President Amber Hollis, Vice President Jeff Manson and Past President James Walker who was one of the original members of the Membership Advisory Panel.

A review of the performance of the Membership Advisory Panel was undertaken. What occurred through Covid is we had to move with the times, we got fluid. The Membership Advisory Panel were involved in looking at what representation the UFBA was going to have on working groups. We did a lot outside of our remit, but it was needed at the time.

We have got back into normal operational mode. The Membership Advisory Panel put a paper together to the Board. The Board has reinforced that the Panel goes back to its normal state of affairs. That is the Membership Advisory Panel was created for the purpose of allowing membership to talk and consult on the UFBA's direction and ensure the UFBA Board can be held to account outside of this realm, of an AGM for decisions and direction. I am incredibly proud to say that the Membership Advisory Panel for 2024 has had no meetings. We have not had any instances where we have been approached by membership to call to account the Board and/or their direction. This reinforces the good job the Board are doing, and the direction they are taking the Association.

We continue to have the Membership Advisory Panel there for you. If you have concerns about what we are doing as an Association or if you have concerns about what is happening, contact the Membership Advisory Panel.

Announcement of Elected Board Director - Position #1

The Chair advised that the successful candidate with 186 votes for the first elected Board Director position was Jason Prendergast from the Runanga Volunteer Fire Brigade and will be appointed at the end of the AGM.

Benevolent Fund Annual Report

The Fund's Chairman Past President Alan Burgess introduced and thanked the Trustees and spoke to the Benevolent Fund Annual Report.

It has been business as usual this year. If you think of previous years there has been something happening, either a flood, earthquake, Covid. Last year that wasn't the case.

The Fund distributed on your behalf in excess of \$71,000 to 32 claimants. That is considered to be a business-as-usual figure. The reason we can do this is the funding that you give as a member of the organisation. Last year the contribution went from \$5 to \$8 per person. That allowed us in the past year to live within our budget, and we were able to bank a little surplus money ready for whatever is around the corner.

From the Benevolent Funds' point of view, we live in the world of the unknown. We do not know what is around the corner. We have to make sure we have what we consider sufficient funding. In the Financial Statements it shows we have holdings in excess of \$400,000. While that seems a lot of money if we have another earthquake, flood for example, that can be depleted quite quickly.

One of the concerns for the Fund is that our image is not out there, in this age of technology. It is a high priority in the next 12 months to get our image out and about, as well as looking to start up a bequest programme.

We appreciate the support we received last year, and this has allowed us to do our job efficiently.

UFBA Benevolent Fund Subscription Fees

MOTION: In accordance with the UFBA Constitution 4.8 a) the UFBA Benevolent Fund subscription fees will remain unchanged for the next financial year.

Questions about the Annual Report were invited – there were none

Approval of Annual Report and Financial Statements

MOTION: That the Annual Report and Financial Statements have been received, considered and approved for 2023/24 in accordance with UFBA Constitution 6.1 (b)(ii).

Moved: RFF Ryan Anderson, Blenheim Voluntary Rural Fire Force
Seconded: QFF Charlotte Barden, Newlands Volunteer Fire Brigade

Let it be shown in the minutes that the Annual Report and Financial Statements are reviewed, considered and approved by the membership.

The motion was **CARRIED**.

Appointment of UFBA Patron

MOTION: That Dave McFarlane be appointed as UFBA Patron for a further 12 months in accordance with UFBA Constitution 6.1(b)(vii).

Moved: UFBA Board
Seconded: CFO Russell Anderson, Alexandra Volunteer Fire Brigade

Let it be shown in the minutes that Dave McFarlane is appointed by the membership as UFBA Patron for the next 12 months.

The Motion was **CARRIED** by acclamation.

The Patron addressed the delegation.

UFBA Board Chair Hon Peter Dunne, UFBA President Warren Maslin, Members of the Board, Past Presidents & Life Members, Distinguished Guests, Delegates, Ladies & Gentlemen

I continue to be very impressed with the amount of work the UFBA undertakes on behalf of its members. I know there has been a tremendous amount of work undertaken on your behalf over the past 12 months.

I wish to acknowledge the members of various working groups for their input into numerous projects. It's a lot for the UFBA team to coordinate but without that coordination and connectiveness, our voice might well be lost in the wind.

Funding of the UFBA's activities in support of the volunteer workforce continues to be a growing issue and the funding the UFBA has traditionally received from FENZ is under increasing threat. We know times are tough and all government organisations and crown entities are having to cut costs but removing funding from the organisation that represents volunteers – 86% of FENZ's frontline workforce, should be the very last resort. Maintaining services to member brigades, with increasing cost pressures cannot be sustained indefinitely, and ongoing funding is the biggest issue facing the UFBA Board. Unless adequate funding can be obtained, it will impact on UFBA operations going forward.

The work of the UFBA is a vital component in sustaining the volunteer workforce and making sure that the Fire and Emergency reform agenda, that is, placing NZ Communities and their volunteers at the heart of the organisation, is achieved as designed and intended by the government.

The UFBA has a relatively small team working hard for you, but it is only funded for 60% of their operational costs, including wages. The UFBA has to find the other 40%. You will have read in the Annual Report that the UFBA has sustained significant losses over the past 2 years and is forecasting a loss in the current financial year.

If the UFBA is to remain a strong organisation advocating for its member brigades, it has to be on a sound financial footing, and this leads me to the proposed increase in brigade annual levies.

When I was a member of the former Fire Service Commission, it had a policy that it would not allow the UFBA to get into a situation where it had to increase levies on its member brigades, so each year it ensured the UFBA was funded to a level that would make increases in brigade levies unnecessary.

Well those days have gone haven't they. FENZ pays lip service to the value of its volunteers but is clearly not prepared to back that up with adequate funding. A 3% increase unlikely to cause an enormous impact on your brigade funds, but it does equal a significant impact for the running of your association and the services we can provide. I urge you to support Motion 7 – the 3% increase in Brigade Levies.

Talking of FENZ brigade grants, they were last reviewed in 2022, and I'm going to suggest to you that brigade grants should be increased each year in line with the Government CPI increase. This year that was 3.29%, last year it was 6.7%. Now there is something to ponder!

In closing I would just like to say I consider it a privilege to serve as your Patron and I thank you for re-electing me to the position. I welcome the opportunity to be able to continue to serve the UFBA and its members and to add value to the organisation.

CEO Update

Chief Executive Bill Butzbach addressed the delegation via video link.

I'm coming to you live from Martinborough. Unfortunately I have picked up COVID-19 and will not be able to join you in person. This year is going to be a special event and I'm gutted that I'm not there to share it with you. I know the team have pulled out all the stops to make sure it is the best ever.

As you'll see in the Annual Report, the UFBA staff have had another busy year working on your behalf. I just want you to know that the UFBA is not 13 people sitting in an office, it is actually about you. It is about an entire membership of engaged and mobilised members. In addition to the core services we provide for members, there are a few key projects I'd like to update you on.

Eke Taumata – is a project designed to address culture change within Fire and Emergency NZ. We have a lot of engaged and enthusiastic members that are working in the various ropu and are informing this project. I commend their work to you. They are really passionate and committed. We are making sure there is a volunteer voice on all these forums.

The Volunteer Brigade Leaders Programme. This is to review the role of local leaders and all of the development that needs to go with that. There has been wide consultation with members in this project and the FENZ project team and UFBA have been working closely almost on a weekly basis such is the importance of this work. We have encouraged members to make individual submissions through us. We will also be monitoring individual submissions to make sure they are aligned with those of the UFBA, to ensure we have one clear and collective voice.

The next project is the New Volunteer Engagement Model. The UFBA has worked in partnership with the FENZ Volunteerism Team to develop and progress this. On 2 October Kerry Gregory and I signed off phase one of the scope, so it is underway. I am also pleased to announce that FENZ have put resource into this including a fulltime paid project manager for the work. This engagement model will redefine and strengthen the relationship that brigades have with FENZ. We look forward to getting into this work next year and keeping you updated.

A new FENZ project, called the Future Operational Capability Model. This project is about developing a new service delivery model that is evidence based, and it will to some degree operationalise the local planning work getting underway now. We sit on the governance group for that project. We have a very clear view of the direction of travel and will be able to keep you informed, and that you have a very strong and coherent voice in this forum.

Raising the profile of firefighters has been a key strategic priority for the Board. you would have seen some of that work through the Hidden in Plain Sight report that was widely published that describes the value that Volunteer Firefighters provides to the economy each year. We will be telling that story more particularly to politicians. More recently a number of brigades have been telling their story through the media.

We have been telling your story widely, especially with politicians. To name a few this year we have met with include Brooke van Velden the Minister for Internal Affairs. She has had a full briefing on the valuation report and more importantly the nature of the work you are undertaking and the fact that there is a broad variance in the work you are undertaking and your paid counterparts. She was particularly interested in that.

Minister Louise Upston, Minister for Volunteering. She is very enthusiastic about the volunteering story and well briefed on the work you undertake.

We have been talking with Mark Patterson, Minister for Rural Communities. This is relevant especially for our Rural Brigades to make sure they have a voice as well.

Matt Doocey the Minister for ACC. He is an important player in terms of the ACC Project which we are making very steady progress on. Just recently Peter Dunne and I met with Matt and a team of policy writers from MBIE

to talk about the way forward. ACC Legislation might be modified to recognise volunteer firefighters given the nature of the work that you do. WE will keep you up to date on this very important project.

There has been a fair bit of networking this year. We appreciate the various invitations we have had to the various AGM's around the country and some of the Leadership Forums in FENZ where we have been invited to participate. Can I encourage the Provincials to keep the invites coming as we love attending and catching up and comparing notes on how we are all doing.

Finally, the UFBA Volunteer Expert Groups we are currently putting together. Quite often, FENZ ask us for submissions and ideas on particular topic areas. We have to go out to the Membership and ask for volunteers to come together and start cold. We thought it would be a better idea to have standing committees permanently in place to get together every now and then to discuss topics like, fleet, safety and health, ... so when it comes time for the UFBA to provide submissions we are already together, we are already talking and already have a bit of an idea of what we want to say. Giving us a more powerful and cohesive voice.

Once again, I regret not being with you today. I encourage you to make the most of your time together.
Mā te wā

Voting for Board Director Position 2

Delegates were instructed to remove the card for Jason Prendergast, and to cast their vote for the second Board Director position from the remaining candidates. The vote is between Tristin Ilich and Karl Scragg.

Voting buckets were taken into the audience by the scrutineers. Voting delegates placed one card inside the bucket. Those holding a proxy vote, placed the choice of their proxy the voting bucket.

Votes were taken to a secure room by the scrutineers to be counted.

Vice President Candidates

The two Vice President candidates Raymond Fower and Lesina Walden addressed the delegation.

Voting for the Vice President

Voting buckets were taken into the audience by the scrutineers. Voting delegates placed one card inside the bucket. Those holding a proxy vote, placed the choice of their proxy the voting bucket.

Votes were taken to a secure room by the scrutineers to be counted.

General Business

Thirty minutes was allocated for General Business.

There were no pre-submitted questions to the AGM questions email address.
There were no items raised from the floor.

Break

1500hrs the delegation took a 20-minute break

The AGM resumed at 1520hrs

The Chair welcomed the delegation back to the auditorium.

Announcement of Elected Board Director – Position #2

The Chair advised that the successful candidate with 194 votes for the second elected Board Director position was Karl Scragg from the Manutuke Volunteer Fire Brigade and will be appointed at the end of the AGM.

Announcement of Appointed Vice President

The Chair advised that the successful candidate with 338 votes for the appointed position of Vice President was Lesina Walden from the Ngongotaha Volunteer Fire Brigade and will be appointed at the end of the AGM.

Voting Process for Motions

The Chair confirmed the voting process as follows:

There are eight motions which you will have received a copy of one month prior to give you time to discuss with your brigades and they have been available on the UFBA website since 27 September [2024].

Voting will be by show of coloured cards. At registration, you will have received an orange card which denotes a delegate vote, a green card if you are holding a proxy vote for another brigade, or a light blue card for those who are non-voting but have speaking rights.

I will introduce the Motion. This will then be spoken to. Questions will be invited from those who have speaking rights, which are Delegates, Life Honorary Members and Past Presidents.

A reminder to approach the microphones in the front, with your coloured card and state your full name, brigade or if you are a Life Honorary Members or Past President, so that this can be recorded in the minutes.

After the motion has been addressed, the delegation will be called to vote for or against the motion by showing their orange or green coloured cards. This process will be overseen by the scrutineers Grant Thornton.

The majority vote will be passed based on a clear visual of the cards held up. Should there not be a clear visual majority, we will ask for you to stand at your seat.

MOTION ONE – Amendments to the UFBA Constitution – Incorporated Societies Act 2022

This motion has been put forward by the UFBA Board.

MOTION:

That the Constitution is amended to adopt Schedule 2 to the Incorporated Societies Act 2022 (Act) to give the Association ‘safe harbour’ protection under s 41 of the Act.

Clause 16 of the Constitution shall be deleted in full and replaced with:

“16. Complaints and Grievances Procedures

16.1 Disputes and complaints are to be resolved in accordance with clauses 2 – 8 of Schedule 2 to the Incorporated Societies Act 2022, except that:

- a. references to “the committee (or a complaints subcommittee)” shall be deemed to be references to “the Disciplinary Committee”;*
- b. references to the “society” shall be deemed to be references to the “Association”;*
- c. references to “constitution” shall be deemed to be references to “Rules”;* and
- d. references to “bylaws” shall be deemed to be references to “the Association’s regulations and policies, including for the avoidance of doubt, the Complaints & Disciplinary Committee Processes and Procedures Policy as amended from time to time and the UFBA Code of Professional Membership Behaviour as amended from time to time”.*”

Replacing Clause 16 Complaint and Grievances Procedures of the Constitution as detailed in the booklet.

UFBA Board Member, Daryl Sayer spoke to the motion

For those who are involved in boards or committees of community groups which are Incorporated Societies, you're probably well aware that the legislation governing Incorporated Societies is changing. And we too must change our Constitution in order to comply with that new law.

Most of the work to bring our Constitution in line with the new legislation was done ahead of time when it was rewritten in 2019. However, back then, we couldn't imagine every change that would be required. For the UFBA Section 16 of our Constitution deals with the resolution of disputes. Although it's already well written, it will not quite comply fully with the Act. The most straight forward way of ensuring that we do meet the requirements of the new Act is to adopt a Schedule which was written as part of that Act. Doing this will mean that our Constitution aligns with the principles of natural justice and will enable us to meet the legal requirements without having to totally rewrite our Constitution. We the board ask that you vote to accept this motion so that our Constitution is fit for purpose for the coming years.

The Chair invited comments from the membership.

There were no comments from the delegation.

The Scrutineers were invited to the stage to oversee the voting process.

The delegation voted on motion one by raising their voting cards.

There was a clear visual **for** Motion One

MOTION: Let it be shown in the minutes that this motion has now been **accepted** as per the voting of the delegation.

MOTION TWO – Reduce AGM and Special Meeting Quorums

This motion has been put forward by the UFBA Board.

MOTION:

*That the quorum for a Members' Meetings be no fewer than 20% of Voting Members; and
That a Special Meeting must be called if no fewer than 20% of Voting Members submit a written request to the Board.*

That the Constitution be amended as follows:

6.3 (c) A Special Meeting must be called within two months following written request to the Board signed by at least 30% 20% of the Voting Members. Where the Board fails to convene a Special Meeting within two months of such notice, the Voting Members may convene a Special Meeting themselves.

6.7 (b) At all Members' Meetings, a quorum shall consist of Delegates participating and valid proxies entitled to vote representing 30% 20% of the Voting Members.

UFBA Board Member, Howard Cole spoke to the motion.

The proposal is to reduce the quorum to 20% for reasons of practicality in being able to get large numbers of people together, more so where an AGM is required to run online due to circumstances such as a pandemic, transportation issues or funding.

That's not about reducing our standards, but it is about reflecting the fact that more and more of our meetings in the future are likely to be online either in part or in whole.

It costs the UFBA about \$90,000 to run the AGM, which we are not funded for, so it's more likely as our financial pressures grow, we'll be looking to do more of our business online and a practical way of addressing that, is to have a quorum of 20%. It still means that there will be a mixture of online and in present occasions. It means

that where there is significant voting to take place, we'll make sure that the best arrangements are in place to protect everyone's rights. But we need to have a lower quorum threshold, which is still high by the standards of most organizations, to enable us to conduct our business in this new, more online environment in the future. In 2021 we were forced to hold the AGM online, we had 261 delegates registered and only 181 online at the start of the meeting. The quorum required then was 208 and accordingly, we could not proceed with AGM matters, resulting in more costs to the association to conduct any urgent business in other ways.

We need to ensure that UFBA constitutional matters can continue regardless of the current local or national environments.

As it stands today, the UFBA has 677 Member Brigades, and we need 30% of Delegates participating which equates to 204 Delegates. The proposed change would reduce this requirement to 136 Delegates. I emphasise that while we are proposing that 20% is the minimum number of Voting Delegates required to conduct our association's business meetings, this will not stop our association from encouraging as much representation as possible to ensure we hear from our membership.

The Chair invited comments from the membership.

Omarama Volunteer Fire Brigade, CFO Gregor Harper

In 2021 several people today in this room trying to get on to that meeting and due to technical issues, couldn't. So is that the reason? Especially when we have a record amount of people in here today?

Director Cole responded

The short answer, is no. We're actually protecting the future of the brigade to be able to hold online meetings and meetings that's different to what we're currently used to doing. If you think back a year ago there was a delayed flight which had 30 delegates on it. If that flight was delayed even longer, we wouldn't have been able to make quorum last year, because we needed those people to make quorum. This year we have a flight cancelled from Palmerston North and those people won't get here till 4:30 this afternoon. So it's a matter of protecting the UFBA's business and being able to conduct business. Don't forget it's cost \$90,000 to hold this and if we couldn't get quorum we wouldn't be able to conduct business. And that's the reason why we're looking to reduce that threshold.

Porangahau Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate - FF Lou Bird

Now I'm one of those ones that was unable to enter the 2021 AGM. Through I don't know why some of it was an unfamiliarity with Teams. I think it was whatever the software was. A lot of people working in cities through the COVID period, they became very familiar working with Teams. But when you're punching sheep and cattle and sitting on a tractor or riding a quad bike, you don't have much call for it. So there's an issue there with familiarity with technology.

You've cited two reasons, two examples last year and this year with delayed flights. It really alarms me that a 30% reduction in quorum is being promoted. I think in 2022 the suggestion was reducing the quorum to lower than that, which had considerable opposition. I'm not comfortable and my brigades, not comfortable with the quorum being reduced to that level. Maybe we would entertain a reduction to 25% of membership. But to go to 20%. Is a big ask. Thank you.

Tawa Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate – QFF Carte Hewson

You mentioned flight cancellations. Potentially this year and last year. Would the board prefer that those brigades not have their voices heard and make quorum, then have the AGM postponed and still have them vote?

Director Cole responded

The whole theme of what you've heard today is about our financial situation of the UFBA and I think to minimising those risks is prudent for us as a Board to consider. This is part of the consideration of reducing the quorum is that spending, like I said before, spending this amount of money on an AGM and not being able to hold it properly and conduct the business because of delayed flights or pandemic or funding is not a good move by the Board as we represent you as the UFBA.

**Plimmerton Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate – QFF Leona Smith
As proxy for Porirua Volunteer Fire Brigade**

This proxy is supported by Plimmerton Volunteer Fire Brigade. A little bit similar to what was already said, but Margaret [Smith], the officer in charge in Porirua would like me to state the following.

“And we've had this conversation once before the UFBA was told overwhelmingly that we the Members did not agree with the lowering of quorum. If the UFBA is committed to working together to support and represent members, because we care, which is a direct quote from the website, and actually the UFBA should be considering increasing the quorum. The annual report states our strength comes from the unity of over 690 brigades that the UFBA represents lowering of the quorum would only represent 138 of those. That, in the minds of our brigades, does not represent unity. A quorum is supposed to represent a majority of those with voting rights. 20% gives an unfair power and balance to the minority”. So Porirua and Plimmerton vote No.

My question is. Is it not correct that people delegates attending online can also count towards the quorum?

Director Cole responded

They can, as long as they are registered.

UFBA President Warren Maslin

A voice about where we've come from and where we're going to. Previous to amalgamation, we were approximately 400ish Brigade members, and our quorum was around about 120. Now we're 660 plus. We're talking about an extra number that we have to deal with actually being on site. The key thing we've got with the quorum, it's not stopping anyone having a voice. The people delayed by flights aren't getting a voice because of circumstance, not because of the quorum. The issue we've got is this organisation can't change anything if circumstances outside our control mean we have to get a 30%, a 200 plus attendance at an event. That is the key factor.

It's not reducing your voice or taking away the ability to talk. All it is, is ensuring we can continue to conduct business so we can get stuff done. But then the point is very vital. It's why we're putting this together. And I was on the board when this remit was put last time. This time it's been put again because the purpose is not to actually take away voices but is to ensure we can continue to conduct business and serve you as our membership. Thank.

Otaki Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate – SFF Simon Black

I just thought I'd make a comment just from what I've heard today. Look, I'm in IT and also I'm an elected member for Ortega and the on the Community Board there and we've just changed our standing orders so that we can actually hold meetings like this online. So that should the circumstance arise, we can actually still hold quorum.

I would like to make a recommendation to the Board that we actually invest in technology or ways of conducting these meetings, holding quorum with you present or you are virtual. I think that's probably the way we're going to get around this issue. Rather than reducing the numbers, I think we should probably look at using the technology which is already here and already available to actually conduct our meetings.

There being no further comments or questions the Scrutineers were invited to the stage to oversee the voting process.

The delegation voted on motion two by raising their voting cards. The visual was too close to call.

Delegates for the motion were asked to stand to be counted by the scrutineers. Delegates holding affirmative proxies were asked to stand and were counted by the scrutineers.

Delegates against the motion were asked to stand to be counted by the scrutineers. Delegates holding opposing proxies were asked to stand and were counted by the scrutineers.

By count there was a clear majority **against** Motion Two

MOTION: Let it be shown in the minutes that this motion has now been **denied** as per the voting of the delegation.

MOTION THREE – Accessibility of Constitutional Documents

This motion has been put forward by the UFBA Board.

MOTION:

That the Notice of AGM, Notice of Motions, Notice of Date, Time and Manner, Notice of Business to be Transacted, and details of Board Member and Officer nominations be “made available to Members on the UFBA website” by the due dates.

That the Constitution be amended as follows:

6.2 Motions

- a) *The Board may put forward a motion to be voted on at an Annual General Meeting. Such motions shall be made available to Members on the UFBA website sent to Voting Members at least one month prior to the Annual General Meeting in accordance with Rule 6.5 unless the Board determine that exceptional circumstances exist and a shorter period of notice is required.*

6.4 Notice of Date, Time and Manner

- a) *The date, time and manner for the Annual General Meeting or a Special Meeting must be made available to Members on the UFBA website notified to each Voting Member not less than three months before the date of that meeting (except in relation to a Special Meeting where such notice must be provided within one month or such shorter time if in the view of the Board such notice period is not practicable).*

6.5 Notice of Business to be Transacted

- a) *In addition to providing notice of the Members' Meeting, a notice of the business to be transacted at that Members' Meeting must be made available to Members on the UFBA website sent to Members not less than one month before the date of that meeting or as soon as is reasonably practicable in the event that less than six weeks' notice of the Members' Meeting has been given.*

7.4 Board Members

- a) *Nominations: The Chief Executive will make available to Members on the UFBA website send a list of vacancies to be voted on at the AGM at least four months prior to the AGM. Nominations must be made by a Voting Member on the prescribed form (if any), include the consent of the nominee and be received by the Chief Executive at least two months prior to the AGM. Details of all nominees must be made available to Members on the UFBA website sent to all Voting Members not less than one month prior to the AGM.*

11.1 Officer Roles

- d) *The Vice President of the Association will be elected at each Annual General Meeting. Nominations for Vice President must be made by a Voting Member on the prescribed form (if any), and include the consent of the*

nominee, and be received by the Chief Executive at least two months prior to the AGM. Details of all nominees must be made available to Members on the UFBA website sent to all Voting Members not less than one month prior to the AGM.

UFBA Board Deputy Chair, Kevin Ihaka spoke to the motion

Like the previous two motions, this motion continues on the theme of modernising our processes. While there's a great merit in having an organisation with a history as long as ours. There's also a need to modernise our operations as technology evolves around us. Currently any material relating to such things as notices of AGM. Board member and official nominations are required to be sent to voting members. This is very difficult to manage as emails bounce back due to incorrect addresses. They get filtered due to size or spam settings and this makes it difficult to comply with the Constitution as it is currently written.

This motion proposes is to make all these documents available on the website where they can be easily managed to ensure you will always have the latest and most up to date version. We will use a range of communication tools, including e-mail, to ensure that Members are aware of the documents that are posted and this way we have far greater chance of connecting with all Members.

In summary, we want to change the wording from a requirement to send to members to say that we will make them available to Members. In the interests of efficiency and economy we ask that you give this motion your full support.

The Chair invited comments from the membership.

Tarras Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate – RC Mark Davidson

We've been hearing about cost cutting and cost pressures and so forth and listening to what Kevin had to say about this remit, how much does it cost to send an e-mail? You've got mass emailing ability; we get emails thrown at us from FENZ on a daily basis. I drive a truck for a living. I can spend 12 or 13 hours a day in a truck. I don't have time to sit there looking at websites just for the hell of it. I can't remember the last time I was on the UFBA website, so if I was relying on that website to know what's going on, I wouldn't know what's going on at this conference because I got an e-mail telling me what the date was and when I had to get my nomination.

So I don't know as I say, how much does it cost to mass send emails. If they bounce back, don't send them to that e-mail address again. It's up to us as delegates to keep our e-mail addresses up to date. And I don't accept that cost is an issue.

Director Ihaka Responded

There's a very simple answer to that. You'll still get it. What this means is that we'll also be able to use other methods.

Tarras Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate – RC Mark Davidson replied

So you're removing the bit that says to be sent to you. What's the point if you're still going to send it?

Director Ihaka Responded

There's a difference between making it available and sending it. It means that if we haven't got your e-mail address, we can still make it available. E-mail is a very easy, very cheap way to get it to people, but I think I heard some statistics once. It was only about 20% of the FENZ emails actually get answered. So we're not actually reaching the people we need to. E-mail will still be part of the process. We're not abolishing it. This is simply building around it. That just means there's other ways to make things available to people should.

Board Chair Peter Dunne commented

Can I just add that you may have heard New Zealand Post this week indicate it's going to cut back further on mail deliveries in urban and rural areas. This gets around either cost and inefficiency of that. So what we're saying is, you make it available, which means which covers areas like e-mail. It covers the website, but it just means that we're coming into the modern age and not relying as we might of once on snail mail.

Te Aroha Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate – SFF Glenn Norman

Our brigade, the only conflict we had here was on 6 and 6.4 and it was only about the notice of date, time and manner and we didn't want that change like last year and said, like most of us are volunteers, we're not on the website all the time. If we just got an e-mail. Then we're made aware that something's actually coming up, but that's the only one we were actually against.

Director Ihaka responded

Yeah, it might be as simple as you don't get an attachment, you get a link, but e-mail is definitely part of the process.

Clevedon Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate – BS Mike Kelly

No real issue with what you're proposing and the way you're presenting it, but the motion as it was given doesn't put any obligation on the UFBA to notify the members at all that something has changed on the website. Got no issue if you put the document up and as you said, you're going to do it. I had no issue with that. The problem is missing in that motion is the obligation to notify.

Board Chair Peter Dunne responded

Thanks for that. That we'll take that point on board.

Clevedon Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate – BS Mike Kelly

Is it constitutionally acceptable to add that to the motion?

Board Chair Peter Dunne responded

The Rules state the amendments have to be lodged 24 hours in advance, so we cannot do it here, but I'll give you an assurance we will take that point on board.

Porangahau Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate - FF Lou Bird

If this motion is put to a vote and is carried, then are we looking to a further amendment of the Constitution next year to include a requirement to send via e-mail notification of changes on UFBA website? Because if once this motion passes, it will require another notice of motion to amend that clause. To include the send component that everybody's concerned about. As the Porangahau delegate I do read the UFBA emails and how many delegates have we got here today 200?

Board Chair Peter Dunne responded

There is 370 something voting delegates.

Porangahau Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate - FF Lou Bird

I did receive one item of snail mail regarding the AGM, all of the other notifications for the AGM came via e-mail and when I look around this auditorium there's a hell of a lot of people who got that e-mail that it didn't bounce back, that it wasn't an incorrect address. So unless there is some manner of right here today, including that notification via e-mail is included, then I can't vote for this motion.

Board Chair Peter Dunne responded

If the resolution says made available, it covers a range of media by which the message may be made available. E-mail is included within that.

Porangahau Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate - FF Lou Bird

That's at the discretion of the UFBA Board or the UFBA management. It's not included.

Board Chair Peter Dunne responded

It's the current practise. That's what we do over here.

Kaingaroa Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate – CFO Kenneth Austin

If the e-mail addresses these are being sent to, the e-mail addresses which are to brigades and to there and or to their members. They're all being designated by FENZ. So if they are incorrect, you should be going to FENZ to say this is the problem. Not changing things because a lot of people, as has already been said, they don't have time or find it difficult to navigate the website, and things aren't always straight away kept up to date.

Director Ihaka responded

There is a lot of work put into this by our staff to make sure they reach out to everybody at the moment. They are telling me that it is extremely difficult to manage the emails and that's the information I've got, and I have seen how much effort they put into this. This is not about removing emails. This is about making other avenues available. It is always hard to reach out to members in a membership organisation and even though there's a lot of people in here today, there's probably 50% of the brigades are not here. So even though we're doing really well to reach out to brigades, we can always do better. It's not just about the AGM, there's a lot of other notifications that could go out and we could do better by using other medium.

Unidentifiable Speaker

I completely agree with this motion. You know, we have to think about our future. You know how many of you don't have smartphones on you at the moment? You know, that's why we can use the small, smarter, better, more efficient. I completely agree that we can actually use more channels. And I think we need to look out for our future. So, you know, don't be scared of change. You can still get the e-mail if you want. From what I'm hearing.

Waitati Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate – CFO Jeffery Burrow

Just a couple of things. One, how much does it cost for us to change the Constitution? So that's a cost to do this.

Two, it doesn't actually say in the Constitution that you cannot make it available. So you make it available on the website and send an e-mail. Then you've met the constitutional needs. The change isn't needed at all. Flick out an e-mail. Put it on the website. Job done. You don't need to change the Constitution. You can actually just put it on the website, anyway, make it available and send it out. Once it's sent, it's sent. If it bounces back, you've sent it. You've made the effort to send it. You don't need to change the Constitution. Spend how many thousands of dollars with a lawyer when we talk about saving money.

UFBA President Warren Maslin

A comment in regard to the intent. The intent again is about making sure we have flexibility to be able to deliver messages to Members. The trust bit is what you're talking about in regard to you're not going to send an e-mail, but we want to write it in there. You can send an e-mail. There's a process of the board can't deliver or don't do what they're saying. They're going to do because they're saying they're going to send e-mail. They're saying they just want the option to have other opportunities of delivering the information.

There's a membership advisory panel that I'm currently on that I have talked about earlier. That is a venue and a channel to deliver concerns and to address these sorts of things. Don't stop progress because you think "what if". As accountability for this board through the membership advisory panel. If they don't deliver on what they say here, you can come to us, we can hold them to account through your concerns. Don't stop the progress that we need as an organisation to be able to get more information out to you. Because you have a concern that we're going to stop doing something because it's not written in the rule. Our whole Constitution is generated and put together to give flexibility to the board, which you as Members agreed. So they can actually make decisions so we could deliver product and deliver information. This is a very simple remit that will not stop you getting contact. It will just give you the opportunity to see different options.

There being no further comments or questions the Scrutineers were invited to the stage to oversee the voting process.

The Scrutineers were invited to the stage to oversee the voting process.
The delegation voted on motion three by raising their voting cards.
There was a clear visual **for** Motion Three

MOTION: Let it be shown in the minutes that this motion has now been **accepted** as per the voting of the delegation.

MOTION FOUR – Modernise Board Member and Officer Voting Process

This motion has been put forward by the UFBA Board.

MOTION:

That the Constitution is amended around the voting process as follows:

1. *remove the word “ballot” and replace it with the word “vote”*
2. *update the clauses to include the words “via electronic means or otherwise as directed by the Board”*

That the Constitution be amended as follows:

- 7.4 (b) (ii) *There will then be a ballot vote (via electronic means or otherwise other means directed by the Board) of all Voting Members entitled to vote either by their Delegate or by proxy;*
- 7.4 (b) (iv) *Where the votes for candidates are tied, a further ballot vote (via electronic means or other means directed by the Board) will be held; and*
- 11.1 (f) *At each Annual General Meeting the person who has served as Vice President since the immediate preceding Annual General Meeting shall be appointed President until the following Annual General Meeting. In the event such person is unavailable to be appointed as President, then the Vice President elected at that Annual General Meeting shall be appointed President. An election for the vacant Vice President position, in a manner specified by the Board (that may include a postal or electronic ballot vote, or vote cast by any other means directed by the Board), shall then be called by the Association and conducted within three months of the Annual General Meeting.*
- 11.5 (b) (ii) *If the vacancy is that of Vice President the position shall remain vacant until the next Annual General Meeting or in the event that the next Annual Conference will not be held within six months of the vacancy occurring then an election for the vacant Vice President position, in a manner specified by the Board (that for clarity may include a postal or electronic ballot vote, or vote cast by any other means directed by the Board), shall be called by the Association; and.*

UFBA Board Deputy Chair, Kevin Ihaka spoke to the motion

This is about bringing our practises into line with modern technology. The technology is there, and we have it. available. Most of you will know how time consuming the paper ballot process is or can be. We've had a few nominations today. In future, I'd like to see six or seven for each position. Imagine how long it could take.

It takes up a considerable amount of a meeting time and it causes a big effort from auditors paid. From our staff and everybody involved to ensure that there is fairness in the process. The board will ensure that any electronic process is robust and is secure, and they'll have confidence in the results. It will support online AGM processes that currently our system does not.

This was evident through the COVID-19 restrictions. I must also say what it's not. It's not about taking away your AGM and making it all online. Stopping you meeting face to face. This is about making the process more effective, more efficient and quicker. The amount of time we've spent today, through process we could have spent a lot more productively. So again, I asked that in the interests of efficiency, you give this your support.

The Chair invited comments from the membership.

There were no comments from the delegation.

The Scrutineers were invited to the stage to oversee the voting process.

The delegation voted on motion four by raising their voting cards.

There was a clear visual for Motion Four

MOTION: Let it be shown in the minutes that this motion has now been **accepted** as per the voting of the delegation.

MOTION FIVE – Membership of the UFBA

This motion has been put forward by the UFBA Board.

MOTION:

That membership of the Association is extended to include Fire and Emergency NZ (FENZ) employees.

That district / regional groups of non-operational FENZ employees may apply for, and be considered for, membership of the Association with the same rights, privileges and responsibilities of Brigade Members.

UFBA Board Member, Jason Prendergast spoke to this motion

Some considerable work by United Fire Brigades' Association Service and Ceremonial Committee, current members, Ric Carlyon, President of the day Warren Maslin, and myself as the board representative. The intent of the motion is to allow for members of Fire and Emergency New Zealand who are not already included. By way of being a member of a fire brigade that is a member of the United Fire Brigades' Association to become so.

Within less than an hour's drive of where we stand now, there are so many people that currently show and have done so for many years, such great support to the contribution and performance to ourselves as firefighters. Yet they're not able to be recognised. Just two blocks away. Down there at the Justice precinct. They perform critical roles for region Te Hiku our BSC's, our planning and Intel team. Then there's the district office, another couple blocks away, IT specialists, communications, property, fleet. All these people contribute in a massive way. A lot of those people are on call 24/7 to help us do the frontline work. Over at Rangiora, there is a crew that clean test and reprepare all the hoses and small pumps for this region. They even at times go out and either supply more hose on a large rural incident or help pack it up. One gentleman of that group stopped becoming a member of United Fire Brigades' Association in his 23rd year due to leaving his role as a volunteer rural firefighter when he had to move towns to fulfil his paid role in supporting our firefighting activities. Therefore, his access to our services and his service records stopped.

These staff, just like many others, right up and down the Motu, perform valuable roles and deserve to be able as a collective, which could easily be through their social clubs etcetera, to join for all of the rights of United Fire Brigades' Association, including the honours. It also reflects the push a couple of years ago to provide honours to non-operational members. Therefore, we ask the delegates for your support with this motion

The Chair invited comments from the membership.

Clevedon Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate – BS Mike Kelly

What does that membership actually mean? No issues with people getting honours and awards, etc. And if that's necessary to be a member of the UFBA for that, that's great. But the UFBA is trying to be a lot of things to a lot of

people. In the verbiage that comes with Motion 7 later on, it talks about the cost of maintaining a membership database and maintaining those members. Now we're potentially bringing on a whole heap more members with no associated revenue. I mean, you know, cost pressure is the word of the day. So you know from service honours, from recognition, etcetera that's great. But is this another group of people who the UFBA is then going to have to try and represent potentially in conflict with other groups that the UFBA represents. And they've already potentially got representative associations in the likes of the PSA, etc. Just wanted a bit of clarification around that.

Director Prendergast responded

I alluded to say that this won't be cost free. They will be required to pay a membership when they join up. Much like we do through our brigade subscriptions at the moment it will be subscription based as part of their membership.

Turangi Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate – CFO Peter Hanne

Just want to know if this motion does go ahead, will their service be retrospectively sorted?

Director Prendergast responded

Yes exactly as we did when we amalgamated with FRFANZ. If there is service records to prove the work that has been done to date, yes, this will be recognised.

Omarama Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate – CFO Gregor Harper

On that if, if we retrospectively do that, where do the funds come to pay for the possible gold stars, five-year medals, et cetera, and we're trying to save money.

Director Prendergast responded

Very valid point. But at what price do we also put on for the few occasions this might happen, for at what price do we put on this for the service those people have given? I know BSE in this in this town, just a couple doors down has worked for this organisation for 20 odd years. She's very well known in region to Te Ihu and it's only the fact she become the secretary of the local PFU that she could get a five-year medal. So at what price do we put a sacrifice on what commitment people have already given.

Onetangi Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate – BS Patricia Burgess

With the service medal that you were proposing to give people for doing things as a volunteer firefighter to get our service medals, we have to attend so many musters. Before we are recognised. So how are you going to do that with people out there that are helping us?

Director Prendergast responded

So for all the roles that we refer to the BSC's, the VSO's etcetera, trust me, I work for Fire and Emergency. If I don't attend my master of being at work every Monday to Friday, I won't have a job. So that's fairly good evidence that they are attending the minimum requirement. Everything does have to be supported by the manager as well.

Manawatu Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate – BS Lucy Robson

If this is something that is moved as an organisation is all departments of Fire and Emergency going to come under it. Or will it be each individual part of the organisation that has to opt into it? Because we have six casuals? Looking at our equipment and logistics service centre work very casual hours, but they're still turning out to work. Getting paid, doing service as such. How is that then going to be monitored?

Director Prendergast responded

This is not a not a forgiven that if we offer this out to these firefighters or these support people, that they will take up on it. I use reference to Te Ihu. It's just down the road. They have a social club that they're all members of. They would have to contribute into that to do that now. If people, individuals don't wish to join that and be part of that collective, and that group does not wish to become a Member, funding member of United Fire Brigades' Association. Then this won't apply to them, if that helps.

Orepuki Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate – SSO Kevin Daly

If this motion goes through, will it mean that the United Fire Brigades' Association name will have to be changed? Because these people that want to get this from this motion, they won't be belong to a brigade. And the second point is, what is the voting rights at this conference.

Director Prendergast responded

Your brigade is a member. The Christchurch Firefighters Social Club, which is the Korea firefighters are member as a collective, so they have the right to have a delegate here they are funding members. So too do other organisations. What we're trying to do is offer out to other groups who play a critical role too also become members, so therefore they will be required to pay. For the membership to have the rights to attend this as well.

UFBA President Warren Maslin

The membership has restrictions on it and we have already talked to the FENZ Board and informed them of the intent of our Board here as well. The restrictions are that there will not be a mass amount of new members as in the group of FENZ employees. There will be restrictions to how much that is as a number and there will be requirements that they will have to opt in and so the FENZ Board support this because they understand that we can't. The inclusive as an organisation without including their people who get us supported in the back office. So the funding of the arrears of medals, there is a full cost to this membership to get the membership medals awarded. There is no subsidy based on the current rules, so there is no cost to the organisation. There is restrictions which are in more detail. Unfortunately, it's seven page document that Ric, I and Jason put together, so there's a hell of a lot of detail and content in there we couldn't quite get it all conveyed in the in the actual motion. The point being is we're being inclusive with people who help us do our job. Operationally. This started because USRA applied to be a member of the UFBA. And was accepted at a board level. Then we had the risk advisor role staff applying and saying can we also be a member of the UFBA, what we've done as a group, as a ceremonial committee is to put this together and actually consider what the future of this organisation looks like. And we're trying to be inclusive to say all firefighters that are involved, you've all got a passion to do what you do. You've all know someone in your region who's that operational person in FENZ who actually goes over and above the norm to support you. And they've got the same passion. They're just. Not on the fire truck. And this is where we come from. We'll take, we will get more revenue from this move and it won't cost us more. So there's actually more money coming into the association. They will have a voice, but it won't be out ranking number wise. It'll have a restriction. So it might be limited to district. It might be limited to region. We haven't quite got that detail, but that's what the board and the management of the UFBA will put together. But I think it's a great move to include. All our brethren and our brothers and sisters who support us on the fire ground.

There being no further comments or questions the Scrutineers were invited to the stage to oversee the voting process.

The Scrutineers were invited to the stage to oversee the voting process.

The delegation voted on motion five by raising their voting cards.

There was a clear visual **for** Motion Five

MOTION: Let it be shown in the minutes that this motion has now been **accepted** as per the voting of the delegation.

MOTION SIX – Extending Membership of the UFBA to its employees

This motion has been put forward by the UFBA Board.

MOTION:

That membership of the Association be extended to include UFBA employees for the sole purpose that their years' service in the employ of the Association may be recognised by the awarding of the Association's service awards.

That the Constitution is amended to provide for a new class of members, being employees of the Association with a current employment contract (who are not members of a Brigade Member), whose sole privileges and benefits of membership shall be their eligibility for the Association's awards for their years' service in the employ of the Association.

UFBA Board Member, Jason Prendergast spoke to the motion.

This motion comes from the UFBA Services and Ceremonial Committee. The motion is to extend the rights of service honours to the employees of the United Fire Brigades' Association.

The UFBA team who support our Members have become valued partners of our Association and amongst them are some long serving members. They all deserve to be supported by recognition of wearing of our service honours. The intent of this motion is that the employees will be required to fully self-fund the purchase costs of these honours, so this will be at no cost to the membership. We ask the delegates for your support.

The Chair invited comments from the membership.

There were no comments from the delegation.

The Scrutineers were invited to the stage to oversee the voting process.

The delegation voted on motion six by raising their voting cards.

There was a clear visual **for** Motion Six

MOTION: Let it be shown in the minutes that this motion has now been **accepted** as per the voting of the delegation.

MOTION SEVEN – Brigade Levy Increase

This motion is put forward by the UFBA Board.

MOTION:

That the Brigade levy be increased from 5% to 8% effective from 1 January 2025.

UFBA Board Member, Tom Thomson spoke to the motion.

I've been through a lot of this earlier on and I left you with some succinct bullet points. We lost \$317,000 in the last two years and this year we're going to add to it. The losses as we know are due to in the main to a reduction of funding from FENZ, a loss of 40%. We're covering increasing costs with our investments. Sector issues such as welfare, grievance support and covering full range. Now they're not all at the same levels, the grievance support takes lots of money and lots of legal time. Keeping track of records takes time. So Management and the Board worked hard to identify and action their financial initiatives to move the association back into surplus.

But the big gains the previous years have been taken, you don't bank them twice. Our financial position is still strong at the moment, but we've already lost \$100,000 in the last year. Some of this because we actually made some savings. The demands on their team are ramping up and we can't put more people on. We've just got to find other ways of financing this.

Changes to the Charitable Trusts Act and FENZ scrutiny of how the funds we get are utilised are to be expected. These requirements take a lot of a lot of extra time and effort. And they are under serious pressure. We all know about the cost of living increases. You see it every night on TV costs are going up. We're not getting any more money. We've got to come up with something different. But in the meantime, we have to still stand in existence. We talked about this last year and we said we'll just see if we can get more. As I said earlier hope is not a strategy. You've got to actually take some action. This is the time. If we don't get this through, we have a problem. We can't just continue to cut slash and burn our way back to stability. I put the motion that we increase the brigade levy from 5% to 8% effective 1st of January 2025.

We the Board believe that this gives us the best chance of carrying on the work that we do on behalf of you all. It will give us the best chance to reach 150 years in good shape and that's not that far away. And then give us the

opportunity to go forward for next 150. So I respectfully urge you to pass this motion. If it is voted down, it will inevitably have far reaching consequences on what we now believe as business as normal.

The Chair invited comments from the membership.

Ashburton Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate – DCFO Jeffery Marshall

I think we fully understand the financial position that UFBA are in, and I think we all fully understand that we need to support the UFBA and all the system to get into a better financial position than we are currently. So the Ashburton Brigade do support the motion. But we do ask. That the UFBA Board and the management review the process of the membership levy. Currently based on a nominated percentage of Brigade Grant.

Board Chair Peter Dunne responded

I appreciate the way in which Ashburton has raised this. We can't accept an amendment and you're not proposing an amendment, but the next best thing we can do is I can give an assurance, and Tom can give an assurance that the points you've made will be taken on board and addressed by the board immediately after this meeting is over during the course of the next year. So thank you for raising it. Your point will be addressed.

Ashburton Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate – DCFO Jeffery Marshall responded

We have had considerable discussion in the break and we do thank you. For that. Thank you.

Clevedon Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate – BS Mike Kelly

We're supportive of the UFBA and absolutely share the view that FENZ needs to support the UFBA to support us. But as I said before, the UFBA is a lot of things to a lot of different people. And judging from Mr. Dunne's address your primary focus is the supporting of us as the 12,000 volunteers. The \$350,000 we got last year, the proposed increase adds another \$210,000 into it, which will cover the deficit that we had. That was a bit of maths based upon \$350,000 last year was 5% of ours and you're asking for 8%. It might be wrong, I'm not a mathematician I'm keen to see what say we get and how this money is spent. So you know for example, I noticed in the reports that there were 160 Gold Stars attended by the UFBA. There was an increase in challenge spend of \$400,000, without any apparent associated revenue. The UFBA being who it is, and with the history it is. What I would like to see or to understand is how do we get a say and what we need from our association, because that \$400,000 if the challenge spend was the same as what it was last year, would have had a surplus of over \$200,000 this year. So how do we get that consultation? How do we get that say? How do we ensure that what the UFBA is spending its money on is reflective of the modern members as it stands today and tomorrow?

Director Thomson responded

I do have sympathy for what you're saying. That is why we have a president who spends his or her entire year going around talking to people and telling us what you want. I don't quite agree with your figures, I think is a bit of a double counting there because we didn't get that last year as an extra that's the amount of money that we've been getting for quite a long period of time. What we're talking about is having to add that to about \$200,000 to get ourselves back to break even. There is nothing new here. We need to do something to stop the rot now because we've lost it off the other end from FENZ. In terms of the challenges and all the other things we do, we get a lot of feedback on who wants what and the reality is that we try and keep everybody happy. But if we don't get this through, I suspect it won't be keeping anybody happy. So our view is to try and keep doing what we do, do it better and I can tell you from the bottom of my heart, everybody in that management team is very aware of any little bits of cost that they can get rid of. We've leased out half the building and stuff like that. I have said earlier, you can't do that twice. We are now down into the minute items, into the weeds, trying to save money. And I take your point, we are here to represent what you want to do, and there's the MAP, there's the phone, there's e-mails, and we get a lot of people coming and telling us what they want. And we have to make sure they represent the majority, or at least it's a reasonable thing for us to be doing. So we're not trying to be all things to all people. We're trying to deliver the service that we've always done. And that's the whole point of this motion, because if we can't get past this one today, we're not going forward, we're going back and that's what I'm trying desperately to avoid.

Motueka Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate – QFF Samuel Rubie

One of our concerns that we had is that I've noticed is that the actual amount that we're getting from FENZ for our grant account is actually, over the years been not matching up inflation. Because it's not matching up with inflation. We are actually at brigade level we are having to do less and less and less with the money we're getting. We are having to make savings as well. And now you're asking for actual money out of the money that we're having to make savings out of to keep UFBA operational as well. That was one of the struggles that we had with this motion.

Director Thomson responded

I'm not arguing with you and that's exactly the problem that we've all got. You cannot take a 40% loss, and we're talking in the millions to stand still. In terms of the actual amount for each brigade, my understanding at the moment, but we've got some discussion as to how it's actually been attributed, but it's about \$300 a year per brigade. So if that is a really big deal, I'm really sorry about that. But it's just we have actually run out of options. We are going to keep labouring away at FENZ, you better believe it.

But we have to, keep doing that because you know they're not doing this to be difficult. They're under the pump as well. There is going to be a concerted effort and you know we are showing pain and at some stage reality has to bite. My understanding talking to Dave [Paton] there used to be an automatic cost of living increase, but with the FENZ merger that's gone. With the FENZ merger, all of these things have happened since then because everyone was boxing on their own, everyone's quite happy. Now, money cut, numbers doubled. It's just not logical. All I'm trying to do is keep us going. We can have those discussions, so. I hope you are going to support me.

Board Chair Peter Dunne responded

I keep looking to my left because the FENZ delegation is sitting up there, to see whether we're going to get a last minute intervention saying all is well. I fear not. So we're faced with reality.

Richmond Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate – CFO Craig Piner

Just wondered what work the board has done to tell FENZ that it's actually not acceptable to not support the volunteer sector. Sorry, I realise a little bit light hearted. However, if we take a page out of our fellow firefighters book. With the PFU gained a substantial increase in funding, a substantial. And that increase was not to affect the volunteer firefighters and cutting the funding to the UFBA is one way that FENZ can save money. It is affecting volunteer firefighters. I note the theme of the conference is mobilise. At what stage do we mobilise in the public space to say that things not acceptable?

This was met by applause from the Delegation.

Board Chair Peter Dunne responded

I think that's an extremely fair point and the answer may well be in about half an hour's time. This is critical. We have constantly at every opportunity made the point to FENZ. We are in an ongoing round of discussions. One of the things in fact, I said at this conference last year was one thing we would not accept, which I think has come to pass unfortunately, is when the PFU settlement took place, FENZ got a substantial loan from the government to pay that. And I expressed the fear then that we would be part of the victims of that repayment and we received assurances, No. I think in reality that's what's happened. And while we have got to take action to get our house in order, even if this resolution is passed, the battle for adequate and equitable funding will have to continue. We have to then determine whether we make it a public campaign that's an ongoing, separate discussion as well,

I assure you all these possibilities are in the ether and may well come to pass sooner rather than later.

Director Thomson responded

I make the point, we are not a trade union, we are an association and we're not threatening. That's not what we're doing. We have been having some really good dialogue of recent times. It's just got to come to get past the dialogue. We need to see some action. Rest assured, there's been lots of discussion.

There being no further comments or questions the Scrutineers were invited to the stage to oversee the voting process.

The Scrutineers were invited to the stage to oversee the voting process.
The delegation voted on motion seven by raising their voting cards.
There was a clear visual **for** Motion Seven

MOTION: Let it be shown in the minutes that this motion has now been **accepted** as per the voting of the delegation.

MOTION EIGHT – Increase the UFBA Subscription for Non-FENZ Member Brigades

This motion is put forward by the UFBA Board.

MOTION:

That the annual subscription received from non-FENZ member brigades (defence, industrial, airports) be increased from \$153.33 plus GST to \$300.00 including GST, effective 1 July 2025.

UFBA Board Member, Tom Thomson to spoke to the motion.

A bit like the earlier discussion, we tried to be as fair as we could about trying make sure no one was being disadvantaged and no one was being advantage. It's about the same sort of figure per brigade. There is about 18 brigades that fall into this category. We have aired this at some length, what the reasons for It are. I'm happy to answer questions.

The Chair invited comments from the membership.

Delegate (non-FENZ Brigade, Industrial, Military) – Unidentifiable

One of the 18. Look, we are not against an increase and we understand the reasons why, but with the recent remit just passed with a 3% increase for FENZ brigades, we're looking at a 60 plus percent increase for non FENZ brigades which we think is quite inequitable. As I say, we're not against an increase, but it's just the level of the increase that's proposed.

Director Thomson responded

The amounts involved are about the same. it's about the same amount per brigade about \$300.

Delegate (FENZ Brigade) – Unidentifiable

For an accountant, I'm just worried about your figuring because I've just quickly worked out that an 8%, our 14-member brigade is paying far more than what the airport brigades are going to pay. \$582. I just worked out our total levy for the year. 8% of our total levy is \$582, which is somewhat more than \$300 what they are grizzling about. They're worried about \$300. We're paying \$800.

UFBA President Warren Maslin

I'll clarify; it's an average figure as an increase. Not what the actual increase will be.

Porangahau Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate - FF Lou Bird

I did the figures for our brigade. Our levy rises from \$342 a year to \$546. So it's \$200 increase. The stating that non FENZ brigades is about the same; their current subscription is \$153 and rises to \$300. You said that the increase would be about \$300.00 in fact it's half that.

Director Thomson responded

Per brigade is my understanding of what that difference is going to make on average.

UFBA President Warren Maslin

Stephen, our accountant has reaffirmed that it's increasing from \$153 to \$300

There being no further comments or questions the Scrutineers were invited to the stage to oversee the voting process.

The Scrutineers were invited to the stage to oversee the voting process.
The delegation voted on motion eight by raising their voting cards.
There was a clear visual **for** Motion Eight

MOTION: Let it be shown in the minutes that this motion has now been **accepted** as per the voting of the delegation.

The chair thanked the Delegation for the civilised way in which they contributed to the debate on all of the motions. Discussions were informal, informed, courteous and polite. A good reflection of the organisation.

Thank you for Outgoing Board Director

The Chair thanked outgoing Board Director Sayer and presented a plaque

Installation of Elected Directors

The Chair invited re-elected Director Jason Pendergast and newly appointed Director Karl Scragg on stage for the presentation of his director pin.

Thank you for Outgoing President

The Chair thanked outgoing President Maslin and presented a plaque

Installation of Officers

Outgoing President Maslin addressed the delegates.

Newly appointed President Manson was presented with the Presidential chains, and then made an address to the delegates.

Past President Maslin was presented with a lapel badge and was thanked for his service to the UFBA during his term.

President Manson addressed the delegation

I'd like to acknowledge all the members and guests that are here today, UFBA Board, Patron and staff, Past Presidents, Life Honorary Members, and to everyone watching online. I'd also like to make mention to the partners that are here today to be supporting us all in our roles. The ladies over here that have come and later in the day, it's very nice to see you all here. Thank you. I'd also like to mention my wife Jan, who's on this crusade with me, has been so far and will be all the way. It's a team effort and we're really looking forward to it. I'd like to mention my two brigade members, Panera and Craig, for attending today and over the weekend for supporting me. I very much appreciate that.

Congratulations to Jason and Karl for your appointments on the board. Karl's biggest concern is going to have to get a haircut like Jason, so I can assure you, you don't have to mate. It's all good.

It is with a huge amount of pride that I stand here in front of you all representing not only the UFBA, but each and every one of you. I am honoured to become your President at our largest AGM conference in the 146-year history. Thank you to immediate past President Warren, you've had a busy year. You've put so much into your term as president. Please take the time to share with your wife Tracy and reflect on the last seven years you have had and enjoy a well-earned break.

Thank you to the board and all the UFBA staff. I know you have had a challenging and busy year, but I also know how passionate and caring you all are of our Association. Keep up the hard work and I know we will continue to reap the benefits.

I would like to acknowledge all the Provincial Presidents and our representatives here today. The Provincials play a very important part with their involvement with the UFBA. We have regular online meetings as mentioned, and we have an annual strategic face to face meeting to support and help each other and achieving our workable goals.

Congratulations to our new VP Lisena. I'm really looking forward to working with you as a team together for the next 12 months. I've been very fortunate to know Lisena for quite some time and it is going to be an absolute blast working with her.

Bill highlighted earlier that there are significant projects underway which will affect us. As your President, and along with Lisena, we will work closely to support Bill and the UFBA team to ensure members are informed, engaged and give ample opportunity to participate in this work.

One of the roles of president that I'm so looking forward to is celebrating others. That's a privilege to acknowledge all those who put so much into their brigades and their communities. As Kiwis, we're not great at celebrating our achievements, no matter how big or small. But it's something I'm passionate about and I can't wait to enjoy these times together. So let's enjoy ourselves and have some fun when it's time to celebrate.

This leads me into connecting with as many of you as possible. Whether it's at the UFBA challenges, service honours, Jubilees or other functions, my door is always open to you. One of the biggest assets we have in this organisation, in my view is diversity and it's one of our greatest strengths from urban, natural, Defence Force, industrial. We have such a variety of backgrounds and knowledge from all walks of life. I welcome everyone, all opinions, positive or negative. This helps us develop as an organisation and as individuals. I'd love to hear from you not just over the weekend, but at any time, as does the UFA. We are all available, ready to listen whenever you would like.

I hope you thoroughly enjoy your weekend here in the Garden City and I hope to catch up with as many of you as possible over the weekend. I'd just like to express how excited I am to be not only standing here, but to taking this role on for the year. I was working out how can I explain how excited I am about it because I really, really am. So I think the best way to be able to put it is. I'm on the inside, the way Amber Hollis is on the outside. So inside I am fizzing. To tatou kaha ko to tatou Kotahitanga, you are our strength it really is our unity. Thank you.

Appointment of VP

President Manson presented newly appointed Vice President Lesina Walden with a lapel badge.

Nomination for a Life Honorary Membership of the UFBA

Chair Hon. Peter Dunne announced the Board's desire to confer a new Life Membership to the UFBA to Daryl Sater. As per rule 4.3 of the UFBA Constitution, the person nominated will require the affirmative votes of at least 80% of all Voting Members at the AGM in order to pass

The Scrutineers were invited to the stage to oversee the voting process.

The delegation was asked to raise their voting cards to vote on the proposition that Daryl Sayer be made a Life Honorary Member of the UFBA.

There was a clear visual for conferring a Life Membership for Daryl Sayer by acclamation.

This was met with applause. The Motion was CARRIED.

MOTION: Let the minutes show that this nomination has now been **accepted** as per the voting of the delegation.

UFBA President Manson presented Daryl Sayer with a Life Honorary Membership Medal. LHM Sayer addressed the delegates.

Nomination for a Life Honorary Membership of the UFBA

Chair Hon. Peter Dunne announced the Board's desire to confer a new Life Membership to the UFBA to Warren Maslin. As per rule 4.3 of the UFBA Constitution, the person nominated will require the affirmative votes of at least 80% of all Voting Members at the AGM in order to pass

The Scrutineers were invited to the stage to oversee the voting process.

The delegation was asked to raise their voting cards to vote on the proposition that Warren Maslin be made a Life Honorary Member of the UFBA.

There was a clear visual for conferring a Life Membership for Warren Maslin by acclamation.

This was met with applause. The Motion was CARRIED.

MOTION: Let the minutes show that this nomination has now been **accepted** as per the voting of the delegation.

UFBA President Manson presented Warren Maslin with a Life Honorary Membership Medal. LHM Maslin addressed the delegates.

UFBA Chair Hon. Peter Dunne declared the 2024 Annual General Meeting closed at 1524 hours

The closing Karakia was performed by DCFO Ahron Eastall of Wainuiomata Volunteer Fire Brigade

Kia tau ngā manaakitanga a te mea ngaro
ki runga ki tēnā, ki tēnā o tātou
Kia mahea te hua mākihikihi
kia toi te kupu, toi te mana, toi te aroha, toi te Reo Māori
kia tūturu, ka whakamaua kia tīna! Tīna!
Hui e, Tāiki e!

Let the strength and life force of our ancestors
Be with each and every one of us
Freeing our path from obstruction
So that our words, spiritual power, love, and language are upheld;
Permanently fixed, established and understood!
Forward together!