

Sullivan County Bureau of Fire Public Safety Meeting Report

May 7, 2026

The Bureau of Fire continues its efforts with the Bureau of EMS, the Sheriff's Office, and the New York State Police in preparation for the 3rd Annual Emergency Services Youth Academy. This year's program will take place July 20–24 at the Richard A. Martinkovic Public Safety Training Center and is open to students ages 14–16. Registration officially opened on April 1, and interest in the program remains strong as we work to engage and inspire the next generation of emergency service professionals.

Training initiatives remain a priority, with both basic and advanced courses continuing to be delivered to support the development and readiness of our fire service personnel.

Recently, the Bureau of Fire participated in the New York State Fire Coordinators Conference held in Watkins Glen. This conference brought together fire service leaders from across New York State to address key issues impacting public safety and emergency response. Sessions covered a wide range of topics, including grant funding opportunities, the implementation of the State's new fire reporting system, disaster safety assessments, solar energy emergency response challenges, and lessons learned from a significant fire incident in Ontario County. There was considerable focus on the increasing role of artificial intelligence in emergency services and how it may shape future operations.

A highlight of the conference was a presentation by Sullivan County Health and Wellness Coordinator Jill Holland, who emphasized the importance of firefighter mental health an area receiving growing attention across the fire service as well as all First Responders.

Additional discussions centered on firefighter training programs, fire prevention strategies, and the sustainability of New York's volunteer fire service. With approximately 93% of departments staffed by volunteers, recruitment and retention continue to be critical challenges statewide.

The New York State Burn Ban remains in effect from March 16 through May 14. During this period, several small fires have occurred but were quickly contained and extinguished thanks to the prompt response of our local fire departments.

The Recruitment and Retention Task Force, "Join Sullivan Fire," remains active in community outreach efforts. Members have been participating in school career days and will continue engagement at upcoming events, including First Responder Night at the Bethel Lakeside Music Festival, the Wurtsboro Street Fair, the Bagel Festival, and the Little World's Fair.

A recent Safety Committee meeting was held at the training center, where discussions focused on procedures and responsibilities during evacuation drills, as well as enhancing observation skills for safety and evacuation checks. In addition, participation continues in PERMA quarterly safety meetings conducted via Zoom, involving County Safety Committee members, staff, and representatives from fire departments, towns, and villages.

The Bureau of Fire remains committed to strengthening training, supporting personnel, and enhancing public safety services throughout Sullivan County.

Thank you. Please stay safe.