**MAINE FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES COMMISSION**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, January 4, 2021**

**Via ZOOM**

***(Draft Copy Only, Not Approved)***

Chief Dan Brooks called the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission to order at 9:04 a.m. via ZOOM. Fire Commission members present for today’s meeting included Stephan Bunker, Senator Scott Cyrway, Deputy Chief (RET) Kenneth Desmond, Gerry Gay, Matt Gomes, James Graves, Steven Greeley, Ron Green, Chief Thomas Higgins, Harty Norris, Vicki Schmidt, Charles Soltan, Representative Timothy Theriault, Chief Joseph Thomas, Chief Michael Thurlow, Chief Larry Willis (RET) and Susan Pinette (staff). Members unable to attend the meeting were Chief Joseph Guyotte, Sam Hurley, Peter Rogers and Representative Charlotte Warren. Guests joining the Fire Commission meeting were the Honorable Catherine Nadeau of Winslow; Chief William St. Michel, Executive Director of the Maine Fire Chiefs Association; Chief Roger Hooper, York County Fire Administrator; and Chief William Gillespie of the Liberty Fire Department.

Committee Reports and Old Business

The Best Practices Committee has no new nominations this month but continues to encourage Fire Commission members to submit worthy candidates.

The Spring Conference Committee announced that the 2021 Spring Conference scheduled for March in Sunday River will be cancelled. The Committee hopes to reschedule in August.

The Education and Training Strategy Committee and the Recruitment and Retention Committee updated members on Yarmouth’s progress.

The Wildland Fire Committee led a discussion regarding the goals of the Committee. Members discussed many issues including whether large projects are required to provide a wildland fire plan, does the DEP permit include a plan, access road for firefighters, problems associated with large projects versus general public, and what is Maine’s Forest Services authority. Members agreed to table further discussion to a later meeting.

The Staffing Committee highlighted how staffing issues and wildland fires are connected and why it is becoming an issue in Maine. Committee members cited the lack or loss of smaller rural departments have required Maine Forest Service to cover those areas without added resources. Members suggested a comprehensive study would be needed and perhaps combining the resources of the two Committees.

The LOSAP Board reported that legislation for further funding of LOSAP has been proposed and has a possible sponsor. The proposed bill would remove the sunset and the funding would be long term.

New Business and News From Members

Fire Commission members were informed of additional bills of interest to Maine’s fire service proposed for the new Legislative session. Some of the topics of these proposed bills included fire permits, health insurance that includes a bridge for retired firefighters, residential sprinklers, decontamination solution and fireworks. Because the Legislative session will be fully remote, including public hearings and work sessions, it will be challenging to keep members informed. However, Charlie Soltan will continue to provide members an updated chart on legislation this session.

Fire Commission members agreed that future monthly meeting would be conducted via ZOOM. Members did also decide on an earlier start time because members did not have to drive. Meetings will start at 8:30am beginning in February.

With no further business to come before the Maine Fire protection Services Commission, Chief Brooks adjourned the meeting at 10:56 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan M. Pinette

Staff