MAINE FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES COMMISSION

**Minutes**

**January 9, 2023**

**9:00am**

**Maine Fire Service Bolton Hill Facility and Zoom**

Chair Chief Chief Brooks convened the meeting at 9:00 AM on January 9, 2023

Present members: Chief Brooks, Secretary Vicki Schmidt, Second Vice Chair Ronnie Green, Larry Willis, Joe Mints from Maine Forestry, Jim Graves, Charlie Soltan, Stephen Bunker, Chief Wytock, Sam Hurley, Stephen Greeley, and Thomas Higgens.

Prior to the committee reports a discussion about reporting, the need for a secretary and membership changes was had.

It was pointed out that Harty Norris is no longer going to be a member and that he should be recognized for his service.

The minutes for the November Commission meeting were approved.

**I. Committee Reports**

A. **Best Practices**

Stephen Bunker mentioned the Fryeburg Rescue’s nomination best practices award. Mr. Bunker stated the program is an excellent program that merits the best practices award for many reasons and in particular the ability to be replicated elsewhere. The program, launched in the fall of 2022 includes a 9-minute video illustrating the full scope of EMS life in the Western Maine Mountains.

Chief Brooks expressed his hopes that more programs warranting recognition would be coming.

B. **Professional Development Conference**

Conference planning is continuing for the January event at Sunday River in Newry, Maine.

Stephen Bunker inquired as to whether the issue of firefighter cancer was being included as part of the program or on the exhibit floor. Conference planners were not available to answer that question.

C. **Education and Training**

Jim Graves discussed the 8 applications he received for training programs including those in Franklin, Norther Aroostook, Lincoln, Penobscot, Washington, and Somerset counties. The latter three as one. Textbooks have been provided.

Chief Brooks stated he was pleased with the good geographic representation and hoped more would apply.

Jim Graves also mentioned the setting up of career fire service training programming.

There was a brief discussion about trainers’ distribution and training curriculum issues.

D. **Recruitment and Retention**

Larry Willis brought to the Commission’s attention that a letter to the Bangor Dailey News wasn’t timely and subsequently out of context.

Mr. Willis also mentioned the Penobscot Count Fire Chiefs effort to recruit members from local high schools. Members from the association went to high schools to set up tables with information about the Fire/EMS service. Apparatus was brought to the high school for viewing.

E. **Wildland Fire**

Lt. Joe Mints sat in for Robby Gross of Forestry. Lt. Mints provided a brief on legislation Forestry is working on to regulate campfires and open burns. The Maine Campground Association has expressed its concern about the legislation hoping to keep in place regulations that allow campfires even during “red flag days” provided an inspection is made prior to starting the campfires.

**F. Staffing**

No new information.

**G. Treasurer’s Report**

No change.

**II. New Business**

Vicki Schmidt asked Richard Taylor if the legislative resolve “A Resolve to Study the Impact of Consumer Fireworks Use” had been completed and if so to please send her a copy. Chief Brooks also requested a copy.

Mr. Taylor agreed to send them both a copy of the resolve report.

Richard Taylor then informed the Commission that to make a rule it would require $2,300 to be paid to the Secretary of State’s Office to post the notice for proposal in the newspapers.

A discussion as to whether a rule was necessary ensued. In lieu of the statute granting the Commission authority stating the Commission “may” make rules it was agreed that establishing a policy to follow in awarding grants would suffice.

Mr. Taylor suggested that sharing the criteria MFSI had set up to award the grants that was part of the proposed rule be the basis for the policy. He went on to suggest it be shared with all members of the Commission and then voted on for approval by the Commission.

Jim Graves will be looking into the development of a policy.

Larry Willis brought to the Commission’s attention that grants for facilities have already been approved and inquired as to whether the commission needed to approve them. A motion was made to approve the grants carried unanimously.

**III. Old Business**

**A. LOSAP**

Nothing new.

**B. EMS Report**

Nothing new.

**III. New Business and News from Members**

**A. Legislation**

Chief Brooks announced that the legislative breakfast would be held February 16th followed by a Commission meeting. Location has yet to be determined.

Regarding legislative activities Chief noted that he’d been sending out information on pertinent legislation to the Commission members for comment.

Ronnie Green pointed out that in such correspondence we be careful not to use “LD” as the legislative proposals being share are legislative requests.

Chief Brooks mentioned his discussion with Senator Stewart about legislation aimed at Employer Reimbursement Credit and defining volunteer fire departments.

Stephen Bunker announced that he’d been working on and had proposed that legislation addressing cancer in firefighters. The purpose of the of the legislation is to reduce the risk and subsequently the frequency of cancer in firefighters by addressing inadequacies of extractor washing machines and inadequate station house exhaust venting equipment. Commission members asked if there had been any dollar amount put on the bill for implementation of the law if passed. Mr. Bunker stated that it had a note for $500,000 and went on further to express his wish that information about this proposed legislation be shared with as many fire departments as possible.

Chief Brooks adjourned the Commission meeting at 10:46 AM, January 9, 2023.