MAINE FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES COMMISSION

**AGENDA**

## **Monday, January 3, 2022**

**10:00am**

**(ZOOM)**

Chief Dan Brooks called the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission meeting of January 3, 2022 to order at 10:08 a.m. via ZOOM. Fire Commission members present for the meeting included:

Stephen Bunker, Senator Chip Curry, Gerry Gay, James Graves, Ron Green, Vicki Schmidt, Charles Soltan, Chief Michael Thurlow, Chief Larry Willis, Fire Marshal Joseph Thomas, Chief Roger Hooper, Vicki Schmidt, Steven Greeley, Executive Director of the Maine Chief’s Association Chief William St. Michel, Chief Ken Desmond, Chief Joseph Guyotte, Chief William Gillespie, Senator Cyrway, Director of the Maine Forest Service Patty Cormier, Gerry Gay, Matt Gomes, Ronnie Green.

Chief Brooks introduced Robby Gross who is the Assistant Fire Chief of Mapleton and who recently took over the post of Chief Forest Ranger for the Maine Forest Service.

Mr. Gross spoke and emphasized his wish to maintain and enhance the Forest Service’s working relationship with the Commission and Maine’s Fire Service at large. Mr. Gross is looking forward to learning more about fire issues in Maine.

Members of the Commission led by Chief Thurlow welcomed Mr. Gross and stated they looked forward to working with him and the Forest Service.

**Committee Reports**

A. Best Practices Committee

Stephen Bunker reported no new best practices presentations at this time but

mentioned two from 2021 including one from Old Town regarding recruitment practices

which emphasized how important it is for ALL members of a fire department to

participate in recruitment.

Chief Brooks stated he would be drafting a letter thanking those departments sharing

their best practices and create a plaque to recognize that contribution.

B. Professional Development Conference

Chief Gillespie reported that the Profession Development Conference scheduled for

March 23rd to the 25th may or may not be held due to concerns about Covid. The

legislative breakfast has been canceled.

C. Education and Training Strategy Committee

Jim Graves reported that the Maine Fire Service Institute (MFSI) was working on an RFP to solicit engineering studies of fire training facilities in Maine and that he was hoping to have the studies completed by the middle of summer. Mr. Graves then requested that the Commission provide funding for the studies.

Chief Thurlow expressed a concern that there could be problems approving/awarding funding for a study absent a more formal grant process.

A discussion as to the process of awarding funding for engineering studies and/or as opposed to funding for performing subsequent repairs; the urgent need to fund both; the cost of studies; and repair work and funding sources ensued. It was agreed that counsel from the Attorney General’s Office review what process the law requires for the awarding of funds by the Commission for these purposes.

D. Recruitment and Retention Committee

Chief Willis stated he was pleased to see the issue of fire service staffing and recruitment being covered in the news citing the work done in Old Town that was part of a best practice’s presentation.

E. Bylaws

Charles Soltan reported that the committee had completed its updated draft of the bylaws with the biggest change being related to remote meetings and that other minor changes were made including the removal of obsolete language.

A motion made by Chief Thurlow and seconded by Mr. Green, was made to approve the Bylaws. The motion received unanimous approval.

F. Wildland Fires

Matt Gomes reported that the Forest Service had a new Chief Forester in Robby Gross and that training in fighting wildland fire was being developed by the Forest Service in collaboration with MFSI.

There was discussion as to whether the fire service training for wildland fires being delivered in Maine by the Forest Service would meet national standards for such training and be consistent with training being conducted at the U.S. Fire Academy.

Matt Gomes reported that the training would likely be held during the months of December through March due to April forward being the wildland fire season. The training will be delivered upon the request of a department.

G. Staffing Committee

Fire Marshal Joe Thomas reported that Hancock County group was issuing survey numbers 6 and 7 of the counties staffing study. The group is also preparing language for a joint Fire Prevention and Safety grant application being submitted by the University of Maine and the State Fire Marshal’s Office. The grant will focus on a statewide survey using the methodology employed in the Hancock County survey.

Matt Gomes expressed an interest in working with the Fire Marshal to discuss the Forest Service efforts to work with local fire departments and the complexities of those agreements made between the Forest Service and local departments. Fire Marshal Thomas agreed and added that working together with the Forest service would be beneficial given that many of those local departments that have agreements with the Forest Service might have staffing issues too.

H. Treasurer’s Report

Chief Brooks reported that there was no change from the Treasurers report issued during the most recent Fire Commission meeting.

II. Old Business

1. LOSAP

Chief Gillespi reported that all comments/questions from bidders responding to an RFP for a Third-Party Administrator had been addressed.

Stephen Bunker emphasized the importance of continued support for the LOSAP program.

1. Legislative Breakfast - canceled

Canceled.

III. New Business and News from Members

1. Commission Board Positions

Chief Brooks reported the need for a new treasurer and secretary. Those positions were vacated recently.

There was a discussion as to the amount of work, the nature of that work and reimbursement for that work as it related to each position.

Mr. Green introduced the idea of combining the two posts and Mr. Soltan volunteered to do the legislative notices as required.

Senator Cyrway recommended that the Commission consider Joanna Oberg for the position.

1. Letter to Governor

Members of the Commission expressed their appreciation for the letters detail, and it’s being mentioned in the newspapers and the subsequent interest being stimulated. Other’s recommended the inclusion of the letter in all legislative efforts being made the coming session.

1. Other

It was suggested that Fire Commission meetings convene at 8:00 AM to make time for legislators to attend the meetings.

A motion was introduced by Senator Cyrway and seconded by Chief Desmond to move the meeting time to 8:00 AM from 10:00 AM. The motion was approved unanimously.

The next meeting of the Fire Commission will be held Monday February 7th, 2022 at 8: 00 AM

Other schedule meetings:

Monday March 7th, 2022

Spring Conference March 23rd thru 25th, 2o22

Monday April 4th, 2022

Chief Brooks called for any further business or comments and seeing none adjourned the meeting at 12:00.