

MAINE FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES COMMISSION

MINUTES

Monday, June 1, 2026, from 9AM – 12PM (3hrs)

Held on Zoom and at Maine Department of Public Safety at 45 Commerce Drive, Augusta

Present

1. Chief Dan Brooks, Chair
2. Gerry Gay, 1st VP, PFFM
3. Ronnie Green, 2nd VP, PFFM
4. Vicki Schmidt, MSFFF
5. Jim Graves, MFSI
6. Mary Matthews, BLS *designee*
7. Joe Guyotte, MSFFF
8. Ken Desmond, MSFFF
9. Chief Shawn Esler, FMO
10. Rep. Steve Bunker
11. Chief Robby Gross, MFS
12. Chief Darrell White, MFCA
13. Chief David Groder, MFCA
14. Rep. Mike Lajoie
15. Senator Chip Curry
16. Senator Scott Cyrway

Absent

1. Rep. Dean Cray
2. Catherine Nadeau, Public Advocate
3. Charlie Soltan, Insurance
4. Wil O’Neal, EMS
5. *Vacant, Governor’s Office*

Guests

1. Michelle Mason-Webber
2. Chief Bill Gillespie

Secretary

Shannon Els

Excused

1. Larry Willis, MSFFF
2. Steve Mallory, MEMA

*Moment of Silence for FF Michael “Mike” Drake, Game Warden Joshua Tibbetts, FF Andrew Cross
And all those impacted and recovering from the Robbins Lumber Fire*

Approval of Minutes: May 2026

Motion: Gerry Gay Second: Ken Desmond – Approved, passes unanimously

I. Committee Reports

A. Best Practices Committee - no updates

B. Professional Development Conference

Planning meeting coming up. RFP has received six (6) proposals. Sunday River: March 27-29, 2027; March 24-26, 2028. Starting 2028 RFP process for speakers.

C. Education and Training Strategy Committee

- Bangor facility is working with builder now. Chief Brooks to confirm with Ellsworth’s reimbursement. Farmington and Yarmouth improvements are in the works. Next year, planned to work with engineer to keep facilities compliant. Other facilities/regions in mind towards the plan for the 11 facilities: Washington, Aroostook County.
- **For next legislative session – commission will work on a proposal for a clear strategy and direction to propose funding options.**
- Proposed motion: Gerry Gay, Second: Ronnie Green to start a commission to explore how to pursue moving MFSI out of MCCC into Division of Public Safety – **never voted on.**
 - Comments made that this is a monumental task and has been attempted twice. Counter comments made in response that the needs for MFSI contrast with the demands of the MCCC. And this is the starting point of a discussion with the community college system.

- **Amended Motion to be voted on: Gerry Gay Second: Ronnie Green – passed unanimously. “Put a sub-committee together to analyze fire service training and management. This group will build expectations and issues facing the fire service.”**
 - Comments made for need to visualize current state, future goals, and define the path towards goal. Additional comments made to review Blue Ribbon Maine EMS report as a model or comparison.

D. Recruitment and Retention Committee

Chief Brooks visited Corinth and Larry Willis; introduced the fire science program at EMCC to potential interests. Handed out information. EMCC went from 11 candidates to 48 within years with this style of recruiting. Next location will be at Dexter.

E. Wildland Fire Committee

- Busy Spring. 321 fires statewide. 13 residences destroyed or damaged, 27 other structures destroyed or damaged. Drought is still here. 25 acres burned north of Millinocket even after rain. Another busy season potential.
- Demoed air curtain burn. Community wildfire preparedness/prevention demo at Bolton Hill as an option outside of open burns. Vendors are available for communities and transfer stations for debris reduction options. Consolidation is encouraged.
- Issue with training wildland programs, managing rail companies and working with AG and DACF to reduce vagueness/loopholes. Work on legislation to address this.
- Approval process for funding to update aerial apparatus. *Will keep MFPSC informed.*

Chief Gillespie thanked Chief Gross and the Maine Forest Rangers' response to the Lumber Fire.

F. Staffing Committee

- BRIC grant – presentation, submitted preliminary executive summary and requesting suggested next steps and initiatives. Further need for a position that is shared between MFSI/FMO to register firefighters and understand training records. Propose a position to be funded by general funds. And a potential law to register departments from fire chiefs and work with MMA and whose responsibility is to register. Look at Criminal Justice to explore their system.
- Title 30 provides three different definitions of fire departments (municipal, volunteer municipal, volunteer) Proposed Recommendation: if any of these three definitions are met by a department, then they are required to register. Additional recommendation for fire chiefs: Add bullet in role outlined in the title to require registering fire departments and fires.
- Ideas to explore for next session, not yet reviewed by the Governor's office, seeking Fire Commission's insight on strategy. *The following are listed in no particular order:*
 - Title 5 §17851-B Add State Fire Marshal option to participate in the special retirement plan for fire marshal investigators and sergeants. Allows staff to move through the ranks.
 - Title 8 §227-A Fireworks permitting updates to allow inspection discretion and streamline permitting for multiple displays at the same venue.
 - Title 22 §7855 Roll back regulation on residential care facility fire safety statutes and clarification of drill and life-safety requirements.
 - Title 25 §2391 Establish a statutory definition of "fire inspector."
 - Title 25 §2394 Expand Fire Marshal investigative authority to expressly include carbon monoxide incidents and dust/sawdust explosions.
 - Title 25 §2448 Clarify construction permit requirements and consider adding battery energy storage systems, data centers, and large-scale residential buildings to Fire Marshal review authority.

- Title 25 §2468 & Title 25 §2469 Revisit carbon monoxide and fuel gas detector legislation following the 2026 session.
- Title 30-A §3157 Update fire apparatus statutes to reference NFPA 1900.
- Title 39-A §328-B Expand firefighter cancer presumption coverage to include additional Fire Marshal Office personnel engaged in fire scene operations.
- NEW Placeholder legislation for recommendations resulting from the Searsmont fire and explosion investigation.
- Title 25 §2450 Review delegated plan review fee structures for municipal departments.
- NEW Explore creation of a statewide firefighter database and training records system.
- NEW Explore creation of a life-safety grant program to assist facilities with sprinkler, fire alarm, and other required fire protection system upgrades.

G. Cancer Reduction Grant

Following up with recipients from last cycle to see how the grant worked for them and any feedback.

H. Emerging Energy Hazards Committee

Exploring NFPA 855/NFPA 72/75. Motion for Commission to send intro letter to Maine Data Center Advisory Council. Robby Gross, Second: Shawn Esler – all approved.

I. Treasurer Report: \$4,197.04

II. Legislative Report -- see notes under Staffing

III. Old Business

- A. LOSAP Board Report – in talks with DAFS that money secured to rollover will not roll.
- B. EMS Report – no report
- C. OSHA/BLS Updates
 - Training component memo – exemption for apparatus damage suffered from Searsmont Fire. In place for 90 days. Departments did receive a phone call from Director Greeley.
 - Re: Searsmont Robbins Lumber Fire -- Team of investigators for workplace safety health will issue a report for each department involved. This will not be public knowledge, but there may be a line item, non-descriptive summary released to the public.
 - OSHA proposed Emergency Response Standard-Any updates or new OSHA standards are required by statute to be adopted by the Board of Occupational Safety & Health (BOSH) within six months. At this time, OSHA has proposed April 2027 for the standard's adoption,
 - Comment: There will be more coming from FMO in response to the lumber mill fire.

IV. New Business and News from Members

- Advisory Committee meeting for MFSI will be at 10am on Friday, June 5.
- National Fire Academy: five courses offered through MFSI for In-State weekend in September.
- On May 19 a landscaper redid the memorial in Augusta; owner of the company donated flags, and there was additional support from departments helping to clean up sidewalks.
- Saturday, October 3 at 1pm memorial to honor Andrew Cross and others who have passed.
- Skowhegan FD hosting Convention from September 18,19,20, 2026 – \$25 per attendee.

Vote to Suspend July & August Meetings - Motion: Ken Desmond, Second: Senator Cyrway – passed
Next meeting **September 14, 2026**

Adjourn 12pm - Motion: Gerry Gay, Second: Ken Desmond – passes