**MAINE FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES COMMISSION**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, May 3, 2021**

**Via ZOOM**

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

Chief Dan Brooks called the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission to order at 8:00 a.m. via ZOOM. Fire Commission members present for today’s meeting included Stephan Bunker, Senator Chip Curry, Deputy Chief (RET) Kenneth Desmond, Gerry Gay, Matt Gomes, James Graves, Steven Greeley, Ron Green, Chief Joseph Guyotte, Representative Grayson Lookner, Harty Norris, Vicki Schmidt, Representative Timothy Theriault, Chief Joseph Thomas, Chief Michael Thurlow, Representative Bruce White, Chief Larry Willis (RET). Members unable to attend the meeting were Senator Scott Cyrway, Chief Thomas Higgins, Sam Hurley, Peter Rogers, Charles Soltan and Susan M. Pinette (staff). Guests joining today’s Fire Commission meeting were Chief William Gillespie of the Liberty Fire Department and Chief Tim Polky, Fire Chief and Town Manager of St. George.

The Fire Commission was pleased to welcome Town Manager and Fire Chief Tim Polky from St. George to the meeting. Chief Polky discussed how St. George obtained their live fire training facility which consists of a two story building with two burn rooms on both floors, confined space props and a three story tower. Funding for their training facility was assisted by USDA loans and grants and $150,000 has been raised so far. The Knox County Mutual Aide Association and training group is overseeing this as a regional project. Great job!

Committee Reports and Old Business

The Best Practices Committee did not have a report this month.

The Education and Training Strategy Committee reported that the final payment for the Yarmouth live training facility has been completed. The Committee updated members on the status of the Town of Fairfield project. The contract has been signed although final cost updates from vendor are pending. Fairfield decided to go with the bid that limits cost escalation.

The Recruitment and Retention Committee is working with WCSH on a news story about firefighter recruitment and retention. WCSH has done other firefighter related stories in the past that got good press for Maine’s fire service.

The 2021 Spring Conference Committee reminded Commission members that the Professional Development Conference, cancelled earlier this year, has been scheduled for August 25th through August 27th at the Sunday River Grand Summit Resort Hotel and Conference Center in Newry. Conference and registration materials should be available via email in the next few weeks.

The Staffing Committee continues to work with the Margaret Chase Smith Center on the project to quantify firefighter numbers and their qualifications.

The Wildland Fire Committee reported that their numbers of forest rangers are down to twelve and three new rangers are due to start soon. The hiring process for additional forest rangers has begun yet those new hires would not be available until August at the earliest. Maine’s Forest Service continues to see a shortage of rangers.

The LOSAP Board reported their bill is on the Appropriations table. The bill still requests the original 2.5 million for the program.

The Treasurer’s Report reported the Fire Commission’s balance remains unchanged from April’s report.

New Business and News from Members

Legislative committee public hearings and work sessions continue to meet via ZOOM. The full Legislature has a tentative date of May 14th to meet to take action on Committee bills. Fire Commission members also discussed a federal earmark for Auburn’s live fire training facility sponsored by US Representative Golden.

Commission members discussed whether the Fire Commission should meet in July. Members agreed to make a final decision at the June 7th meeting.

With no further business to come before the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission, Chair Brooks adjourned the meeting at 9:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan M. Pinette

Staff

*My sincere and continued gratitude to Chief Thurlow, for without his notes, I would not have been able to produce these minutes. Thank you!*