**MAINE FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES COMMISSION**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, February 1, 2021**

**Via ZOOM**

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

Chief Dan Brooks called the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission to order at 8:35 a.m. via ZOOM. Fire Commission members present for today’s meeting included Senator Chip Curry, Senator Scott Cyrway, Deputy Chief (RET) Kenneth Desmond, Gerry Gay, James Graves, Steven Greeley, Ron Green, Harty Norris, Vicki Schmidt, Charles Soltan, Representative Timothy Theriault, Chief Michael Thurlow, Representative Bruce White, Chief Larry Willis (RET) and Susan Pinette (staff). Members unable to attend the meeting were Stephan Bunker, Matt Gomes, Chief Joseph Guyotte, Chief Thomas Higgins, Sam Hurley, Representative Grayson Lookner, Peter Rogers and Chief Joseph Thomas. Guests joining the Fire Commission meeting were Chief Roger Hooper, York County Fire Administrator and Chief William Gillespie of the Liberty Fire Department.

The Fire Commission announced that the Presiding Officers reappointed Senator Scott Cyrway and Representative Timothy Theriault and appointed three new members to the Fire Commission. President Troy Jackson named Senator Chip Curry to replace Senator Brownie Carson. Speaker Ryan Fecteau named Representatives Grayson Lookner and Bruce White to replace Representatives Catherine Nadeau and Charlotte Warren. Both Senator Curry and Representative White joined this morning’s meeting. The Fire Commission is grateful to all Legislative members who serve or have served as Fire Commission members. Welcome to the Fire Commission!

Committee Reports and Old Business

The Best Practices Committee did not report any new nominations for Best Practices recognition.

The Bylaws Committee reported to Fire Commission members that a proposed bill on remote participation this session may make revisions of the Commission’s bylaws necessary. Committee members will monitor LD 32 *"An Act Regarding Remote Participation in Public Proceedings”* sponsored by Senator Stewart and referred to the Judiciary Committee. A public hearing on LD 32 has not yet been scheduled.

The Education and Training Strategy Committee reported that they have updated their page on the website. The updated page will feature live fire training information and pictures of several newly constructed sites. The Committee reported that Yarmouth is close to closing their grant and due to less loss than estimated, there may be extra funds available to go to the Fairfield project. Richard Taylor has returned to the State Fire Marshal’s Office and will be responsible for updating the website. Welcome back and thank you Richard!

The Recruitment and Retention Committee reported they have partnered with local high school guidance counselors in Northern Maine. The goal is to increase the interest of high school students in the EMCC fire science program and provide them with information on careers within Maine’s fire service. A one page bulletin with contact information for interested students as well as providing this information on the Fire Commission’s website are also planned.

The Staffing Committee met recently with Maine Emergency Medical Services representatives and they are very interested in partnering with the Fire Commission on the staffing survey.

The Wildland Fire Committee reported that two Fire Commission members recently participated in a meeting with Central Maine Power Company representatives (CMP). Discussion included, but was not limited to, the concerns and challenges for Maine’s fire service in protecting the corridor. Committee members described the meeting as positive and reported that CMP discussed providing some resources.

The Treasurer’s Report noted that the Fire Commission account has a balance of $774.70. The LOSAP Board balance stands at $652.15.

The LOSAP Board told Fire Commission members that their proposed bill has not been printed. Once printed, the new bill is expected to be referred to the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee.

New Business and News from Members

The Fire Commission’s Chair met via ZOOM with members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. The Fire Commission, the Maine Fire Chiefs’ Association and other public safety organizations had the opportunity to describe the work of their groups and discuss future legislation.

Fire Commission members reviewed two proposed bills of interest to Maine’s fire service. LD 37 *“An Act To Amend the Laws Concerning the Retired County and Municipal Law Enforcement Officers and Municipal Firefighters Health Insurance Program”* sponsored by Senator Libby and LD 90 “*An Act To Amend the Removal Process Applicable to the Position of State Supervisor of the Forest Protection Unit of the Bureau of Forestry”* sponsored by Representative Skolfield were discussed. Commission members questioned whether the Fire Commission and MFCA might review proposed legislation for vetting and support in the future.

Fire Commission members agreed to move the meeting start time to 8:00am to accommodate the Legislative members’ conflicts with other ZOOM meetings. Commission members further agreed to discuss legislative issues at the beginning of the meetings.

Fire Commission members were informed of a very sad situation in Farmington. A student in the Fire Fighter 1 program committed suicide after being sent home for disciplinary reasons. Suicide and mental health are issues the fire service needs the fire service will need to address.

The Fire Commission will meet on Monday, March 1 at 8:00 a.m. via ZOOM.

With no further business to come before the Maine Fire Services Protection Commission, Chair Brooks adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:30 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!*