MAINE FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES COMMISSION

**Minutes**

## **Monday, February 7, 2022**

**8:00am**

**(ZOOM)**

Chief Dan Brooks called the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission meeting of February 7, 2022 to order at 8:00 a.m. via ZOOM. Fire Commission members present for the meeting included:

Stephen Bunker, Gerry Gay, James Graves, Ron Green, Vicki Schmidt, Charles Soltan, Fire Marshal Joseph Thomas, Steven Greeley - Executive Director of the Maine Chief’s Association, Chief William Gillespie, Gerry Gay, Matt Gomes, Ronnie Green, Chief Larry Willis.

**Committee Reports**

D. Recruitment and Retention Committee

Chief Willis stated that there is on much news to report since the last meeting. He also reiterated that if the Maine Chiefs suggestion of a statewide PSA-type recruitment effort was to happen, he would certainly be interested in participating in that effort.

G. Staffing Committee

Fire Marshal Thomas provided an update on the Margaret Chase Smith School of Public Policy, the Hancock Fire Service, and the Maine Fire Marshal’s Office collaboration on Maine’s fire service staffing issue. The survey is proceeding well and the collaborative in now working on the submittal of an AFG Fire Prevention and Safety Grant to continue the collaboratives survey work at the state level in 2022 and 2023.

Steve Bunker is working with Maine Municipal Association to bring to their attention the work of the collaborative to gain their support for the project.

Vicki Schmidt asked whether the survey will be annual. Others echoed Vicki’s concerns.

Fire Marshal Thomas stated the survey itself will not be done annually, however, the data collected on each fire departments staff can be updated annually as each fire department wishes and hence it can be kept current.

H. Treasurer’s Report

Chief Brooks reported an estimated balance of over $2000 and that he’d received a bill for services in the amount of $700 from Susan Pinette. There may also be some additional bill’s coming from Ms. Pinette.

A motion was made to pay Ms. Pinette and passed.

Chief Brooks has reached out to an individual regarding the replacement of Susan Pinette on the Commission. This individual would not be available for a month or more.

II. Old Business

1. LOSAP

An award for a third-party administrator has been made following a response to the recently issued RFP. Purchasing will notify the awardee of the award.

The awardee will be attending the conference in March.

III. New Business and News from Members

1. Commission Board Positions

Chief Gillespie stated that Jay Bradshaw and EMS were working out final language for LD 1797. The changes included adding two licensed emergency medical services persons to the Board of Directors. Changes were also made to calculating service credit.

LD 1803, *An Act to Attract and Retain Firefighters and Emergency Medical Services Personnel Through the Length of Service Award Program* has moved on to the appropriations committee for funding. Chief Brooks thought the request was received well by the CJC and is hopeful funding will be received.

Ronnie Green reported on the following LDs:

LD 1785, *An Act to Address Staffing Shortages in Critical Public Safety Jobs through Economic Incentives* has received an OTP vote from the Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business. The bill would provide funding for student loan forgiveness for local and county first responders.

LD 305, *An Act To Include Forest Rangers and Forest Fire Prevention
Specialists in the Bureau of Forestry's Forest Protection Unit in the
Laws Concerning Cancer Suffered by Firefighters* has also moved on to appropriations. The bill adds forest rangers and forest fire prevention specialists in the forest protection
unit within the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Forestry who have contracted cancer to the list of firefighters under the workers' compensation laws whose cancer is presumed to be caused by their firefighting duties.

LD 1504, *An Act To Enhance Use of Critical Incident Stress Management
Teams for Firefighters* came out of the CJC in a divided report. The bill directs the Commissioner of Public Safety to provide critical incident stress 14 management team services to all firefighters in the State.

LD 1879, *An Act To Support Law Enforcement Officers, Corrections
Officers, E-9-1-1 Dispatchers, Firefighters and Emergency Medical
Services Persons Diagnosed with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder* received an OTP as amended report. The bill repeals the provision of law repealing, on October 1, 2022, the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 39-A, section 201, subsection 3-A, paragraph B, which establishes a rebuttable presumption that, for law enforcement officers, corrections officers, E-9-1-1 dispatchers, firefighters and emergency medical services persons diagnosed as having post-traumatic stress disorder resulting from extraordinary and unusual work stress, the post-traumatic stress disorder arose out of and in the course of employment.

Fire Marshal homas brought LD 1348, *An Act To Limit the Decibel Level of Fireworks Near Working Farms* to the Commissions attention. The bill has been rewritten as a resolve to study the decibel levels of fireworks. Vicki Schmidt mentioned the process of having a substantive bill passes is difficult.

Also mentioned was LD 1307, *An Act To Restrict the Sale, Purchase and Use of Fireworks in the State* has received an OTP as amended. The amendment replaces the bill. It requires sellers of consumer fireworks to provide to customers a statement that local ordinances may prohibit or restrict the use of consumer fireworks within a municipality and that information on such prohibitions or restrictions is available through the Office of the State Fire Marshal. It amends litter control law to provide that litter includes all waste materials resulting from the use of consumer fireworks.

1. Other

Commission members discussed the process of submitting legislation after cloture. It was agreed there would have to be great urgency for such legislation. Charlie Soltan pointed out that the Commission has submitted legislation before but no this late in the session.

Director Graves of MFSI notified members that there would be fees to take written exams issued by MFSI in the near future. The new software, though requiring a fee, will improve efficiency, save time, and enable MFSI to maintain a level of quality in testing it needs. The fees will be $30 to $40 per written exam. Members of the committee supported the fees and it was suggested that the Board of Directors from MFSI write a letter supporting the fees.

Fire Marshal Thomas mentioned that Maine has seen four fire fatalities already this year and that COVID has had impact on the numbers both in Maine and around the country.

Gerry Gay asked if there were any resources that could be referenced with regard to the relationship between prostrate cancer and chemical foams used to extinguish fires. Fire Marshal Thomas mentioned that the SFMO and DEP were working on removing the use of such products. Jim Graves noted that this issue is being discussed nationwide.

A motion was made to adjourn, seconded and passed.

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

Other schedule meetings:

Spring Conference March 23rd thru 25th, 2o22

Monday April 4th, 2022