

MAINE FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES COMMISSION

MINUTES

Monday, December 1, 2025, at 0900

Champlain Conference Room, Maine Department of Public Safety, 45 Commerce Drive, Augusta, ME
Zoom Meeting ID: 897 3609 0722 Passcode: 946438

Present

1. Chief Dan Brooks, Chair
2. Gerry Gay, 1st VP, PFFM
3. Ronnie Green, 2nd VP, PFFM
4. Rep. Steve Bunker
5. Chief Shawn Esler, FMO
6. Vicki Schmidt, MSFFF
7. Ken Desmond, MSFFF
8. Jim Graves, MFSI
9. Charlie Soltan, Insurance
10. Chief Robby Gross, MFS
11. Chief Darrell White, MFCA
12. Chief David Groder, MFCA
13. Catherine Nadeau, Public Adv
14. Steve Greeley, BLS

Absent

- Wil O'Neal, EMS
- Joe Guyotte, MSFFF
- Steve Mallory, MEMA
- Senator Chip Curry
- Rep. Dean Cray
- Senator Scott Cyrway
- *Vacant, Governor's Office*

Guests

- Bill St. Michel
- Bill Dingee

Secretary

- Shannon Els

Excused

- Rep. Mike Lajoie
- Larry Willis, MSFFF

Approval of Minutes: November 2025

Motion: Dan Brooks, Second: Ken Desmond – Passes Unanimously

I. Committee Reports

A. Best Practices Committee

- No new nominations. Chair will send a Notification Letter to Previous Nomination

B. Professional Development Conference

- Sessions in planning, including Grant Workshop on Wednesday (4/5-hour program) Specializes for Volunteer/Combination Departments. Vendors/Primary Classes lined up; including Jason Mills Resilient Responder to speak. Auction to be bigger and better (Thursday Evening) – all funds raised will go to Shriners Burn Hospital in Boston.

C. Education and Training Strategy Committee

- Ellsworth signed a contract with MFSI and has been approved to do the work.
- Bangor is 50% recovery and ready to go. Farmington cannot complete work until Spring thaw. Fairfield is waiting for Spring to do the work. Permits taking time.
- MCCS has requested funding to carry over one more year (DAFS has applied to budget department for this additional time).
- Request that if there is another cycle, multiple buildings need more than one year due to financial and bidding processing demands.
- RFP for Engineering Study to start Summer 2026. Planning began for the specs of RFP.
 - The buildings that are not engineered cannot be used by MFSI Certification.
 - Discussion on exploring the former 11 facilities across the state vision and in relation to regional needs and new builds. Mention of York County's new facility supports EMS, Law Enforcement and Fire operations.
- J. Reed (former builder of facilities) is preparing repair specs by May 31, 2026.

D. Recruitment and Retention Committee

- No updates. Will update in January.

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E. Wildland Fire Committee

- Organizing events that focus on large scale wildland responses. Somerset County will roll out the first one on January 31, 2026, and backup date of February 7. Beginning to discuss the large concepts of response. I recommend that another representative from the Fire Commission is in attendance.
- Online Burn Permits System rolling out with improvements to the system.
- Annual and winter training sessions are coming out soon.

F. Staffing Committee

- The Fire Fighter Census Study Report is still being compiled. The deadline was October 2026 and FMO is pushing for a June 30, 2026, finish date to see if that's reasonable. Need to materialize something out of this report. Urgent. Chief Groder is reaching out to UMO for specific data sets in response to this request/concern.
 - Portland Press Herald is requesting to see the status of firefighter staffing across state, but the FMO is not making a position until the census is published.
 - Discussion from members that on-call departments are looking to add full-time staffing because on-calls are not turning out.
 - Ongoing conversation with FMO - Maine EMS has a licensing management system to add someone to MEFIRS system so that there is not a duplication of personnel across the state which addresses first responders overlapping across departments. Update, EMS will be shifted to LMS.
 - Discussion on how to make firefighter census/accountability a living document rather than one snapshot in time. The fire service members are changing quickly and overlapping across full-time and volunteer departments.
- Looking to fund a specific study on Fire Training and hiring a firm and this study needs to be done after the report of the current Census survey is published.
- Updated FMO Website. The Fire Commission is working on updating the pages.
- NERIS is going live on January 1, 2026.
 - ImageTrend runs MEFIRS and other programs across the state (builds report forms) is not adapting to updates. Due to this, FMO has updated and customized the forms to adapt to Maine's needs.
- DPS Bill Proposal
 - For FMO has rule making authority to capture data and mandatory reporting in order to fulfill state's requirement for reporting (law currently says that MEFIRS data is mandated to be reported). Rather than eliminating the functionality of individual fire chiefs, FMO is seeking to work with fire chiefs/current systems.
 - Gas facilities (education, daycare, detention, and others) to be introduced, including carbon monoxide bills. Current bill: One carbon monoxide detector is required in an education facility. Lessons learned from the Kittery incident (among others) are in relation to this proposal.
 - K-9 Bill (when retired, handlers often adopt and then are held accountable for all vet bills). Started in FMO and branching to state agencies – a proposal is to start fund that handlers can seek reimbursement for certain conditions and expenses up to \$5,000. In addition, if funds are available from other agencies, there will be no cap and allowance for them to be able to fund these expenses. Estimated 99% of retired dogs have cancer and exposed to carcinogens.
 - Work on LD 1375 sprinkler review work group. 38-page report presented. A compromise between municipal fire departments, contractors, and FMO, including a

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staffing review of FMO. Due to Criminal Justice Committee on December 3, 2025. Once submitted, it will be sent to the Fire Commission.

More specifically, the cost of residential sprinklers and the barrier it causes to put in additional housing. Direct FMO to convene a wide group, including insurance, for meaningful dialogue, over period of time.

- Eliminate thermal imaging cameras for funding for every department. It could be controversial; however, last time it was funded, data is not applicable anymore.

G. Cancer Reduction Grant

- Awaiting proof of payment from Boothbay, who had installation delay until December, at which time town will make payment, then issue grant award/payment reimbursement.
- Late submission from the Eustis Fire Department, inquiring about the status of their application. It seems that they sent it to an incorrect email address and never reached my desk until the application period ended. The date of their attempt was within the timeframe but simply was not received via email. Requests exhaust system at \$14670, typically award \$10,000. Due to late submission, we would be over \$1128 from a total of \$250,000. If Eustis is willing to accept an award of \$8,772, that would zero out our award program. Motion -- Vicki Schmidt created Motion to distribute the remaining \$8772 to Eustis Fire. Second, Ken Desmond – Unanimously Passes.
- It is projected that another grant cycle will start in January 2027. The committee will explore possible expansion of equipment systems and other qualified items.

H. Emerging Energy Hazards Committee (Robby Gross, Gerry Gay, Shawn Esler, Jim Graves)

- Need to reestablish the committee and explore funding mechanisms for training.

I. Treasurer Report – no changes

II. Legislative Report - See FMO report.

III. Old Business

- A. LOSAP Board Report – no changes
- B. EMS Report – no report
- C. OSHA/BLS Updates – no changes

IV. New Business and News from Members

- A. By-Laws Review – What's a quorum? 13 members. Motion to approve based on Soltan's edits and include annual review. Motion: K Desmond, Second: G Gay. Passes Unanimously
- B. Hall of Fame Event at State House. Wednesday, March 11, 2026, instead of Legislative Breakfast. Agencies are welcome to table at this event. Suggestion to put together info packet.
- C. MFSI has an Advisory Committee on Friday, December 5, 2025 in Brunswick, ME.

Adjourn – Motion: S Greeley, Second: G Gay – Passes Unanimously