

MAINE FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES COMMISSION

MINUTES (Approved)

Monday, February 2, 2026, from 9 - 11am

In-Person (Augusta) and Virtual/Zoom

Present 18

1. Chief Dan Brooks, Chair
2. Gerry Gay, 1st VP, PFFM
3. Ronnie Green, 2nd VP, PFFM
4. Chief Shawn Esler, FMO
5. Senator Scott Cyrway
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. Steve Greeley, BLS
14. Steve Mallory, MEMA
15. Wil O'Neal, EMS
16. Rep. Steve Bunker
17. Catherine Nadeau, Public Adv
18. Rep. Mike Lajoie

Absent

1. Senator Chip Curry
2. Rep. Dean Cray
3. *Vacant, Governor's Office*

Excused

1. Larry Willis, MSFFF
2. Joe Guyotte, MSFFF

Guests

1. Bill St. Michel
2. Bill Dingee
3. Chief Bill Gillespie
4. Glen Garland
5. Chris Azevedo

Secretary

Shannon Els

Approval of Minutes: January 2025

Motion: Gerry Gay Second: Ken Desmond

Amended with Bill Gillespie present -- Passes Unanimously

I. Committee Reports

A. Best Practices Committee

Closed Applications for Best Practices. Motion: KD Second – passes unanimously

B. Professional Development Conference - March 27-29, 2026 [\[link to register\]](#)

All preparations are set. Fundraiser: proceeds to Shriners Burn Foundation

Chief Gillespie will follow up with Steve Bunker regarding the conference committee's decision to remove the option for tabling at no cost to specific organizations.

C. Education and Training Strategy Committee

Vendor cannot complete the construction of Bangor facility/updates by the end of June.

Discussion on language/proposed legislation to ensure funds carry over into the next fiscal year. Recommendation from the legislature to propose a bill through the Governor's Office to secure a non-lapsing fund for the Commission. State Fire Marshal (**On hold, pending exploration 2/10/2026**) will propose language with support from Fire Commission to Governor's Office by the end of the week. The Fire Commission will explore putting together a letter (**on hold until further exploration/recommendation from FMO**). The process proposed means that the commission would manage the funds. Motion: Senator Cyrway Second: Gerry Gay - Correct current language of rollover funding for fire training facilities

and LOSAP funding, and to address future concerns to ensure that funding is non-lapsing and continuous. Passes Unanimously – No opposition. Clarification: \$200,000.00 funding (line item) for fire training, managed by Southern Maine Community College, will not be addressed in the legislative/motion proposal above.

Spent a total of \$400,000.00 on Basic Fire and Fire Fighter I & II materials, testing, and included resources for Basic Pumps and Emergency Vehicle Driver Training. Eight (8) programs currently running with this funding: Basic Fire and Fire Fighter I & II.

D. Recruitment and Retention Committee

Promoting in Penobscot County schools – starting up school tours again.

Alna Volunteer Fire President/Deputy Chief hosted Wiscasset students. [[FB link](#)]

E. Wildland Fire Committee

Completed Somerset County Wildfire Workshop this past weekend. Attendance of 30+ participants from fire departments, municipal departments, and county representation. Scenario – fire started in unorganized territory, spreading into organized territories with 1,000 acres. After-action report to be completed shortly.

Town Warden meetings [link letter] end of February to March

Question from Senator Cyrway: Ash borer – 50% of state – unable to stop it completely. Spruce budworm up north - MFS working with municipalities to provide resources. Firewood transportation is also a cause of spreading. Main killer of wildland firefighters = treefalls.

F. Staffing Committee

FMO is meeting with BRIC grant/UMaine survey weekly. Code Enforcement Officials report is almost complete by the end of February. There is significant data that shows CEOs are covering 10-15 communities each.

FMO has requested a micro report for the Fire Service snapshot to be completed in March 2026 with a presentation for the MFPSC meeting in April. Data included: mutual aid has increased, volunteers decreasing, full-time increasing, fire departments are regionalizing, and fire training considerations.

FMO knows the entire list of fire departments across the state. Considerations to the Maine EMS Licensing management system as a potential model for firefighters across the state.

Fire Marshal fully marked vehicles are on the road (4). Public comments have been significant for transparency. It is important to have well marked vehicles for the Inspection. The next five months, renovation is underway at FMO office. All employees are available by phone.

And FMO has a full-time contract working 1 year, 3 months on PFAs survey.

Public safety grant funding reporting is beginning (\$2mil for cancer screenings and mental health recipients)

G. Cancer Reduction Grant

No significant changes. Completing contracts and reimbursements.

H. Emerging Energy Hazards Committee

Members: Chief Robby Gross, Gerry Gay, Chief Shawn Esler, Jim Graves, Ken Desmond

Exploring CT-developed program (two-hours) online.

Develop Solar Panel training with Maine-based subject matter experts.

Set up Committee to meet in March/April.

I. Treasurer Report – no changes at \$4336.77

II. Legislative Report

- LD 2012 An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Carbon Monoxide Detectors
- LD 2016 An Act to Eliminate the Thermal Imaging Camera Program Status
- LD 2100 An Act to Update the Laws Regarding Fuel Gas Detector Requirements
- LD 2081 An Act to Provide Health Care Cost Reimbursement for Retired Law Enforcement Canines
- LD 1730 An Act to Make Small, Portable, Plug-in Solar Generation Devices Accessible for All Maine Residents to Address the Energy Affordability Crisis
- LD 2173 An Act to Update Laws Regarding Housing Developments and Accessory Dwelling Units
- LD 245 An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission to Study Emergency Medical Services in the State

LD 2076 An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the Reporting of Incidents by Municipal Fire Chiefs:

Changes the reporting requirements from NFIRS to NERIS Form (in MEFIRS/ImageTrend) and provides FMO with more law-making ability. There will be a change in fire service reporting because MEFIRS/ImageTrend is not being used in 47 fire departments across the state. To note, software companies are taking advantage of fire stations and reporting; costs for small departments are rising. MEFIRS/ImageTrend was designed to be cost effective for municipalities. 370 departments reporting in MEFIRS/ImageTrend and 50 departments are using different software (larger departments). For example, the state has tasked FMO to report PFAs foam usage; however, it cannot collect this data from departments that do not use MEFIRS/ImageTrend so there is a disconnect. Intention is to work with fire chiefs and find a solution. Note: FMO office doesn't have the bandwidth to manage the software. And every time NERIS updates the form, they must update fire chiefs. Form changes every month; different than previous versions - rarely changed. Chief Forest Ranger mentioned that NERIS is releasing a wildfire reporting process that is different than Maine's current process.

LD 2128 An Act to Reorganize the Emergency Medical Services Board to Implement the Recommendations of the Blue-Ribbon Commission to Study Emergency Medical Services in the State - Maine EMS created a two-year plan, ten-year strategy. Inside the plan, MSTAR and two blue ribbon commission reports (2022-2023). Condense regions and move inside state offices, push community paramedicine, and bifurcate professional standards from certifications. Then, shrink the size of the board to make it more agile (16-18 voting). Boards: Licensing, Medical/Practices (clinical), Maine EMS (administrative), and proposed EMS Commission. Fire & EMS community is linked. So, to work together with Fire departments (private/municipal ambulances), on the EMS board currently, there are six chiefs. The second phase of the plan is to reduce the size of the board so that any current fire chief could take any remaining seats (three-year term). Seeking to include the representation of the fire chiefs while still maintaining the edict that the board needs to be trimmed down. Concern mentioned that data collected for staff reporting is not accurate. Clarification is needed when looking at EMS/responder data and needs to address the duplication of responders.

LD 2132 An Act to Amend the Maine Emergency Medical Services Act of 1982 to Require Compliance with the Statewide Trauma-incidence Registry and Make Certain Technical and Other Changes – In order for communities to receive funding, Community Paramedicine must be defined. MaineCare is being asked to define Community Paramedicine. First step towards creating a system and staffing. Saves

money for agencies, better care for communities, and continues to run with the barrier that no one wants to pay for them - these services are currently 100% federally funded.

LD 2133 An Act Regarding Licensing of Community Paramedicine Services and Clinicians – 1993 Maine EMS will participate in Trauma registry and reporting. Sat on the books since then, because Maine is being asked to participate in a national reporting mandate. Vital to continue serving on whole blood, trauma reporting at a national level. Hospitals are partnered and in connection with Fire Marshal Office reporting; they must also report on burns which they are not able to access currently from hospital.

LD 679 An Act to Increase the Funding to the Live Fire Service Training Facilities Fund -- MFPSC Chair has set up a meeting with Drew Gatine, reaching out to Lewiston Fire Chief and Senator Karen Reny (appropriations). Continued strategy is ongoing.

III. Old Business

A. LOSAP Board Report – no updates

B. EMS Report

Workforce Development – easy ways to connect to a degree. Three tracks are well-trained and positioned for the future. Received grant to support HazMat training (\$400,000.00 grant) for biohazard cases.

C. OSHA/BLS Updates

- Submitted a fact sheet on lithium-ion batteries [link]
- State Plan meeting later in February. No updates on legislation.

IV. New Business and News from Members

A. Website Content - Chair and Secretary will reach out to each committee for information.

B. *National Fire Academy is shut down until further notice.*

Adjourn: Motion – Ken Desmond Second – Senator Cyrway, Passes Unanimously

Next Meeting: March 2, 2026, at 9am

In-Person (Augusta) and Virtual/Zoom