MAINE FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES COMMISSION

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, June 3, 2019**

***(Unanimously Approved on Monday, July 1, 2019)***

Chair Dan Brooks called the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission to order at 9:00 a.m. in the Fallen Heroes Room at the Department of Public Safety in Augusta. Fire Commission members attending today’s meeting included Chief Dan Brooks, Deputy Chief Kenneth Desmond (RET), James Graves, Chief Joseph Guyotte, Harty Norris, Vicki Schmidt, Chief Joseph Thomas, Chief Michael Thurlow, Chief Larry Willis (RET), Stephan Bunker, Gerry Gay, Matt Gomes, Steven Greeley, Chief Thomas Higgins, and Interim MEMS Director Jay Bradshaw. The Fire Commission welcomed Chief William Gillespie of the Liberty Fire Department, Maine Fire Chiefs’ Association Executive Director Jeff Cammack, Chief Terry Bell and Deputy Chief Tim Hardy of the Farmington Fire Department, and former commission member Geoffrey Maker as guest of today’s meeting.

***A motion by Chief Joseph Thomas, seconded by Deputy Chief Kenneth Desmond (RET), that the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission accepts the meeting minutes of March 11, 2019 and May 6, 2019.*** The motion passed unanimously.

Committee Reports and Old Business

The Joint Spring Conference Committee reported that plans are just beginning for next year’s 2020 conference which is scheduled for Wednesday, March 25th through Friday, March 27th at the Grand Summit Hotel and Conference Center at Sunday River.

The Education and Training Strategy Committee distributed copies of their final report and recommendation on the Live Fire Training Facility Grant process. Chief Thurlow reviewed the report (attached) and explained the process that was used to score the applications per the grant guidance. A total of $2,706,972 in grant requests were received but we only had $1,432,500 to award after expenses. The recommendation was to fully fund repairs to Auburn’s existing facility and to replace the burn building in Yarmouth in year one of the grant. In year two the recommendation was to fully fund a new facility in Farmington, and to partially fund a new facility in Fairfield with the balance of grant funding available.

***A motion by Chief Joseph Thomas, seconded by Deputy Chief Kenneth Desmond (RET), that the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission accepts the report from the Education and Training Strategy Committee and approves their recommendation as submitted.*** The motion passed unanimously with one abstention – Stephen Bunker.

Jim Graves noted that he has inquired from the SMCC Finance Office as to the status of the cash flow from the grant funding. He learned that the college is receiving the annual $500,000 funding in monthly installments of $41,666.67. He further inquired as to whether we can fund these projects with existing reserve funds and replenish those funds from the state funding as it becomes available. Jim is waiting for an answer which may impact timing of the second year projects.

Several members of the Commission praised the work of the Training and Education Strategy Committee. There was wide spread support to use these four projects as demonstrations of the need for additional funding to keep this grant program funded in the next biennium. Chair Brooks will be following up with the bill’s sponsor, Senator Herbig, to thank her and arrange press coverage and a brief ceremony to make the award notifications at our next Fire Commission meeting in July.

Chief Willis (Ret) of the Recruitment and Retention Committee updated Fire Commission members that the National Volunteer Fire Council Grant was not successful and that there would be no funding coming to Maine. Chief Gillespie suggested we do more advertising of the state-wide 211 recruitment line on our social media sites. Chief Gillespie stated we need to stop talking about recruiting and move forward with local ideas instead of waiting for grants or someone to fix this problem for us.

Chief Thomas noted the bill to provide more funding for the Office of the State Fire Marshal and Maine Fire Service Institute has been carried over to next session.

Treasurer’s Report – no activity during the past month. The Fire Commission balance is $1,949.68. The LOSAP Committee balance as of 4/30/19 was $ 1,815.19.

Old Business

The Commission members discussed the following bills:

* LOSAP bill is on the appropriations table. They need at least sufficient funding to keep the project moving forward by hiring an auditing firm and a third party administrator so local communities that want to participate can do so on their own. Chief Gillespie suggested everyone reach out to their legislators to remind them of the importance of this bill and the funding for it. Bill will also let supporters know when it is scheduled for discussion. It is important that stakeholders attend to show their support. The LOSAP committee is meeting next week.
* There are multiple Workers’ Compensation bills being consolidated into one.
* Ron Green was unable to attend because he and the legislators were at the State House today. He sent his thanks for the support of LD 1664 and 1674.
* Funding to increase MeCare reimbursement rates remains on the appropriations table.
* The Forest Service bill to eliminate the $7.00 fee for on-line burning permits was tabled due to the $50,000 fiscal note.

New Business and News from Members

Future meeting dates were discussed. It was decided to leave the July and August meetings as listed pending confirmation from Senator Herbig’s office. Chief Thurlow noted that the 9/2 date listed on the agenda was on Labor Day and would have to be changed to 9/9.

With no further business to come before the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission, Chair Brooks adjourned the meeting at 10:15 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Chief B. Michael Thurlow

Maine Fire Protection Services Commission

Treasurer

**MEETING SCHEDULE**

Monday, July 1, 2019 MEETING DPS 9:00am

Monday, August 4, 2019 MEETING DPS 9:00am

Monday September 9, 2019 MEETING DPS 9:00am