

**UNOFFICIAL
STATE FIRE COMMISSION MEETING
CHARLESTON, WV
JUNE 12, 2009**

The official business meeting was called to order at 8:30 AM by Chairman Charles Eversole. Chairman Eversole thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. He thanked the St. Albans FD for the hospitality on Thursday evening at the reception for the Fire Marshal's 100th anniversary.

A moment of silence was held for the passing of Louis Dale "Sonny" Farthing, Chief of Sophia City Fire Department.

On May 24th, the Dunbar Fire Department was dispatched to a structure fire. Assistant Chief Chris Thornhill, Captain Mike Hoffman, Firefighters Chuck Carney and Billy James responded to this fire. They rescued an occupant of the structure who had reentered the structure and was trapped. State Fire Marshal Sterling Lewis, Jr. presented them with a Certificate of Commendation for their efforts in saving this occupant.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Charles L. Eversole, Chairman
John Bailey
Randy James
Victor Stallard, Jr.

Chuck Runyon, Secretary
Joseph J. Bostar, III
James L. Oldaker

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Dale L. Clayton
Francis A. Guffey, II
Bill L. Spencer, Vice Chairman

Larry Goodwin
Kenneth Morgan
David Tolliver

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Runyon made a motion to approve the minutes of April 17, 2009. Commissioner Stallard seconded the motion. The ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Bob Nevins, ISO
Ron Bateman, ISO
Murrey Loflin, WVU-FSE
Corey Roblee, ICC
Ron Brown, NFSA
Don Iverson, NEMA
Ken Tyree, FMAWV
Ben Roy, NFPA
Tom Miller, Sissonville FD
Michael Mahoney
William James II, Dunbar FD
Melissa Thornhill

Edward Hicks, WV Dept. of Education
David Plume, RESA VIII
Jim Shedd, RESA III
Mike Freeman, RESA VII
Ted Shriver, Architect
Jason Pizatella, Amerigas
Chris Thornhill, Dunbar FD
Terry Lilly, Dunbar FD
Mike Hoffman, Dunbar FD
Steve & Lynda Grass
Chuck Carney, Dunbar FD
Kirstie Carney

STAFF PRESENT:

Sterling Lewis, Jr., State Fire Marshal
Nancy Olson, Secretary
Debbie Hudson, Secretary
Carol Nolte, Deputy Fire Marshal

Tony Carrico, Deputy Fire Marshal
Joe Leake, Deputy Fire Marshal
Reed Cook, Deputy Fire Marshal

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

CORRESPONDENCE

None

STAFF REPORTS

Fire Marshal Lewis stated an application was received for a substation for the Silverton Fire Department, Jackson County. They have met all requirements and staff recommends approval. Commissioner Oldaker made a motion to accept staff's recommendation. Commissioner Runyon seconded the motion. The ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

Fire Marshal Lewis stated there are a number of areas around the state in which the Fire Marshal's Office is working with fire departments. One of these is the McDowell VFD, in the Welch area. They ran into a number of problems with finances and power wise in order to keep their doors open. They have voluntarily decided to dissolve the fire department. The Fire Marshal's Office has gone ahead and worked with the 911 Center and the Welch Fire Department who have been covering that area. We are awaiting the intended papers from the County Commission and the 911 Center to solidify the dissolution of that fire department to bring to the Fire Commission to approve this action. He stated they will bring to the Fire Commission, the areas covered to see if the Welch FD can adequately cover this area.

Fire Marshal Lewis stated that the office has been working with Big Wheeling Creek FD in the Northern Panhandle. It was brought to his attention that they had been running for a number of months without any Workers' Comp coverage for their firefighters. He stated he contacted the fire chief and explained to him that it would be in his best interest to cease operations. He talked to the 911 Center and made sure the area was covered. He stated he checked back this week and talked to the lady who did their books and she stated they had received their new bunker gear which was required by the Fire Marshal's Office and they were working on the Workers' Comp. To date, they have not received their Workers' Comp or their insurance on their building and apparatus. The cease and desist order is still in place until those matters are cleared up. Discussion followed.

Fire Marshal Lewis stated the State Building Code Officials and Fire Protection Workers will go into effect on July 1, 2009. The electrician renewals are approximately 70% complete for this year.

Deputy Fire Marshal Leake has filed the Building Code and Fire Code. The public hearing is scheduled for June 16th, 10:00 AM for Fire Code and 1:00 PM for the Building Code at the Fire Marshal's Office in Charleston. There will need to be an emergency meeting to go over the comments received to approve or disapprove. It is staff's recommendation that the hearings examiner who is appointed by the Chairman to answer those comments.

Fire Marshal Lewis stated that currently the Fire Marshal's Office has approximately half dozen fire departments under investigation. To date, the Fire Marshal's Office has arrested 14 firefighters statewide. They currently have that many and more that could be arrested in the near future. The arson problem in West Virginia is contributed to by the fire service. They are trying to get the highest level of arson charge when these individuals are arrested. However, when they go to court, they are getting slapped on the wrist and sent back out. This does not correct the arson problem. They have fire departments that are covering up arson fires. One department has refused to call in 17 arson fires. That is breaking the law. He stated they do not have the answers. He stated that maybe the Chairman would like to appoint a couple Commissioners to work with the Fire Marshal's Office and let their ideas be known. Chairman Eversole appointed Commissioners Runyon, Bailey and Bostar to assist the Fire Marshal's office in brainstorming ideas.

AGENCY REPORTS

Technical and Adult Training, Vo-Tech, Mr. Bill Wilcox stated they had a good training committee meeting on Thursday. He stated they are producing a DVD on HazMat Training. It is intended for orientation purposes only, it is not intended to replace anything else in awareness or higher level program. He thanked Mr. Ed Hicks from their office, Fire Marshal staff, Fire Service Extension and RESA personnel that have worked on it. They will be distributing posters. It will be introduced by the State Fire Marshal.

Training, WVU-FSE, Mr. Murrey Loflin stated he would like to recognize the State Fire Marshal's Office on their 100th Anniversary.

He stated that Fire and EMS Safety Week starts on Sunday, June 14th. This is something that is very important especially some of the issues throughout the State in the last year or so. The emphasis this year is making sure people wear seat belts, drive responsibly and the health and wellness of personnel; another is situation awareness as personnel go to incidents; and the last thing is the Chief's responsibility.

He stated the Pro Board Test for Firefighter I and Firefighter II is scheduled for June 20 and 21, 2009. They have 12 people signed up.

The Junior Firefighter Camp is scheduled for June 27th to July 2nd. They have 70 to 75 campers.

The Fire Inspector I Class is scheduled for August 10-14 at the Fire Academy. This is in conjunction with the State Fire Marshal's Office.

Their new website is www.wvufire.org will be online soon.

Insurance Services Office (ISO), Mr. Robert Nevins stated that last year they had reported on the updated Fire Rating Suppression Schedule. At that point in time, it had been about two years in progress. He stated they are moving along pretty well. They had solicited input from various fire service organizations across the country and received it and have taken that information and consider it as part of the revision. They hope to finalize it within the next couple of months. And then they will move into the adoption phase. Another thing he wanted to comment on was that they have changed their retrogression process. Previously, it was a 12 month grace period. They have changed it to a 6 month grace period. West Virginia has experienced very few retrogressions. Discussion followed.

Office of Emergency Medical Services – No Report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Training Committee, Commissioner James. See attached report. Discussion followed.

FD Standards Evaluation, Commissioner Oldaker stated they met on June 11th. They have received 10 applications for Fire Officer I. They are:

- Thomas K. Johnson, Sissonville FD
- O.E. Elmore III, Sissonville FD
- Kevin Rhodes, Pond Creek VFD
- Robert S. Davis, Davis Creek VFD
- David S. Martin, Tyler Mountain VFD
- David M. Martin, Tyler Mountain VFD
- Glenn J. Acker, Tyler Mountain VFD
- James J. Rouf, Williamstown VFC
- Troy D. Phillips, Williamstown VFC
- H. Howard Nicholas, Jr., Williamstown VFC

He stated the committee recommends all 10 for approval.

Commissioner Stallard made a motion to accept the Committee's recommendation. Commissioner Bailey seconded the motion. The ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

Commissioner Oldaker stated he had the opportunity to attend several of the classes that were mentioned earlier. Lincoln County Fire School had 140 attendees for the weekend. It was very well organized and RESA III helped coordinate it. The Kanawha County/WV Public Safety Expo at the Civic Center had 321 attendees. They had excellent classes. He stated he also attended the NFPA 1 and NFPA 101 seminar sponsored by the Fire Marshal Association of West Virginia and the State Fire Marshal's Office. There were approximately 60 attendees in Charleston and 52 attendees in Clarksburg, WV. He wanted to recognize the efforts of the Propane Education Research Council and the National Volunteer Fire Council that brought the propane awareness training into the state. This was approved at the April meeting.

He stated that he and Commissioner James will be attending the Jr. Firefighter Camp for the whole week. Discussion followed regarding scholarships to this camp.

Recruitment and Retention Committee, Commissioner Runyon stated he had no report, just that they need to look at new plans for recruitment and retention.

Legislative and Budget – Fire Marshal Lewis stated the budget is going well. Under Legislative, he stated he recommended the Fire Commission set an emergency meeting for June 29th, to hear the comments and address the comments for a final vote on the Building Code and Fire Code. Commissioner Runyon made a motion to schedule the meeting for June 29th, at 10:00 AM at the Fire Marshal's Office. Commissioner Stallard seconded the motion. The ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

Home Inspectors, Building Code Officials, Building and Fire Code Committees, Commissioner Guffey – No report.

TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Fire Commission Meeting will be held in the Wheeling area on August 7, 2009 with the Committee Meetings on August 6, 2009; the October meeting will be scheduled for the Martinsburg/Shepherdstown area on October 23, 2009 with the Committee meetings on October 22, 2009; and in the Vienna area on December 4, 2009 with the Committee Meetings on December 3, 2009.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

ADJOURN

Commissioner Stallard made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Runyon seconded the motion. The ayes and nays having been taken on a voice vote, the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Sterling Lewis, Jr.
State Fire Marshal

West Virginia State Fire Commission
Training Committee Minutes
06/11/2009 Charleston, WV

The Training Committee met on June 11, 2009 at the Holiday Inn Express in Charleston, WV at 1500 hours. There were fifteen participants. Chairman James distributed the day's agenda with last meeting's minutes and attendance roster attached.

The first order of business was discussion and update on the Hazardous Materials refresher course recommended by the U. S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Board. Mr. Ed Hicks of the Department of Education lead the update with the name of the course, "*Hazardous Materials Orientation*". The video and accompanying poster are still in progress. A preview should be ready for viewing by the Training Committee by the August meeting. Bill Wilcox of the Department of Education distributed an outline, or story board, of the DVD as it currently stands. During discussion, it was stressed that this course did not substitute for approved training in Hazardous Materials Awareness, Operations, or Technician. Murrey Loflin of WVU Fire Service Extension stated the course is an "introduction to Hazardous Materials Awareness", especially the Emergency Response Guidebook. Fire Marshal Sterling Lewis and David Plume of RESA 8 encouraged everyone to visit the Chemical Safety Board's website at www.CSB.gov. It has a wealth of information and free videos.

Discussion then turned to the main topic of the day: Progress on obtaining statistics concerning Firefighter 1 pass/fail rates. It was evident to all involved that this information will be slow in gathering due to the time required. The larger the sampling, the more accurate the information. We may not have that much time. Some estimates are two years. Therefore, another approach was discussed. Since, on the surface, the problem may be reading skills, the Department of Education is drafting, I say again "drafting", a plan to help those Firefighter 1 students who fail the first attempt at passing the written Firefighter 1 test. I will now read the first draft of that plan:

*"Effective (date to be determined) all participants in Firefighter 1 programs will be required to take the final exam in a written format. All candidates who do not score 70% or higher on the first attempt will receive information on how to access **free services** from Adult Basic Education. Candidates should contact their RESA Public Service Training Coordinator to schedule a second attempt. After failing the second attempt, the candidate must repeat the class before testing again. Candidates who seek the help through Adult Basic Education prior to the second attempt will be allowed a third attempt if needed."*

Final discussion points included: Getting financial help for the program. The Department of Education is having a meeting of regional supervisors on July 16. This possible new program will be on the agenda for discussion. Murrey Loflin was invited to join in. What are other states doing to address matters concerning testing? This program will be on the Training Committee's August agenda.

Bill Wilcox distributed a new price list for Fire Service Training. Sadly, due to ever increasing costs and a 3% across-the-board budget cut, the Department of Education is forced to implement a nominal fee for all Fire Service training, effective July 1, 2009.

It was announced by RESA that they plan three Instructor classes in the next twelve months: First, in the eastern panhandle in September and Wood County in January, 2010, and at the Fire Academy in April or May of 2010. The meeting adjourned at 1630 hours.