



State Fire Advisory Board Summary

May 25 2023

1:00 p.m.

PEMA Headquarters, Room 112,
Harrisburg, PA

I. Call to Order

- Thomas Cook, Acting Fire Commissioner called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

II. Roll Call

- Thomas Cook, Acting State Fire Commissioner
- Art Martynuska, Region 2 Firefighter
- Joseph C Mitchell, Region 3 Firefighter
- Bruce Trego, Region 4 Firefighter
- Sam Aungst, Region 5 Firefighter
- Dan Crum representing Jeffrey Jumper, Region 6 Firefighter
- Frank J. Zangari, Region 7 Firefighter
- Timothy Knapp, Region 8 Firefighter
- Tom O'Donnell, Region 9 Firefighter
- Jeremy Warkessel, IAFF Local 302 President
- Robert Brooks, PA Professional Firefighters Association President
- Steve Bair, PA Fire and Emergency Services Institute President
- David Padfield, PEMA Director
- Aaron M. Rhone, Department of Health EMS Director
- Adam Andrews, PA Association of Fire Equipment Distributors
- Nathan P. Silcox, PA State Association of Township Commissioners
- Sean Harris representing Rep Gillen, Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee
- Jeff Cav representing Sen Muth, Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee
- Marvin Meteer, PFESI
- Tom Gramling, PA State Association of Boroughs
- Lisa Schaefer, County Commissioner Association of PA
- John Brenner, PA Municipal League
- Andrew Boni, PA State Association of Township Supervisors
- Amy Sweitzer, Fire Equipment and Apparatus Vendor

III. Opening Remarks

- Commissioner Cook welcomed all to the meeting of the Pennsylvania State Fire Advisory Board.

IV. ACTION ITEM: Motion by Frank Zangari and seconded by Tom O'Donnell to approve the Minutes from the February 16, 2023 Meeting with the addition of Mr. Carstater was present at the February Meeting Motion passed unanimously

V. Office of the State Fire Commissioner Strategic Plan Presentation

- Each regional member to schedule meetings in your region (leveraging technology) within the next 3 months

VI. Legislative Overview – West Majors

- Budget – ensuring GOveners goals increasing fee for 911 (6 cents for 988)
- Annual grant program reauthorization in June 2024
- Fire Relief – will rely on suggestions from this board
- Commissioners Confirmation will soon be scheduled

VII. Expectations of the Board Regional Representatives

- Schedule public strategic plan rollout meetings
- Be the connection with the community – if we need to be engaged in a meeting please contact our office
- OSFC needs to share list of Fire Departments with board members

VIII. Update on Emergency Reporting Software (PENNFIRS) – We have put a hold on the process. ESO to extend emergency reporting contract an additional 6 months - There has NOT been a vendor selection at this date.

- Specification is that the product be compatible
- End User Friendly – OSFC working directly with other state agencies (VDMU).
- How consistent is the reporting from fire departments – it is not consistent. Share the monthly report number of incidents with the board members
- Meeting is needed with federal partners and report back to board

IX. Discussion of eligible projects for the Relief Association Funds

- Act 91 require OSFC certify __ to receive the funds. Aud Gen to collect the info and forward to OSFC for Certification
- Renovations of facilities
 - Building owned by Municipality with agreement for the fire department to used facility
 - Commissioner: If a piece of fire apparatus is housed in the facility it is allowable.
 - Key question – no definition in the act for a “Facility”
 - Concern about restricting from using funds for banquet hall, bar, etc.
 - Suggestion – provide for a certain percentage of the funds to go to facility
 - Should be directed related to safety and well being of the firefighter
 - Look at the definition in the loan program for facility.
 - Commissioner will provide a policy statement then look at recommendations.
- Cancer Screening for Members of the Department
 - Fall under section 11 –
 - Pay for medical bills for Cancer
 - Senator Muth: Cover Cancer
 - Current legislation does not talk about illness.
 - Distress circumstances
 - Cover interim period while waiting for insurance to act.
 - Cancer insurance should be an allowable expense.
 - OSFC will create policy statement and send it to the board for recommendations

X. Update on Sub-Committee for Relief Association Reform.

- Bruce Trego has stepped down as chair of the subcommittee and Steve Bair has taken his place
- Subcommittee members: Bruce Trego
- Required to give legislature a report by November of this year.
- Give financial assistance for suplimental insurance.
- Will be reaching out to find how much insurance is being carried
- Combination departments are growing - important that not only portions of the fire department(s) benefit from Relief funds.
- Reallocation – instead of 9% it should be closer to 25%
- Should be a bottom line amount - anything over that would be allocated.
- Concern – should be requirements to received funds. Do reporting, etc
- Question: have you considered incentives for consolidating.
- What is a combination fire department: has paid personnel to supplement the volunteers. There are either Municipal fire departments or volunteer fire departments.
- Municipality and fire department working together. It should be sufficient to be demonstrated that the funds are being used to assist the community.
- Some departments have significant funds saved in relief fund – should there be a cap.

XI. New Business

- Staffing:
 - Deputy Fire Commissioner – John “JC” Tedorski
 - Loan and Grant Manager will start May 17
 - Fiscal Technician in Loan Program needs to be filled
 - Fire Service Technicians – Job spec is complete – civil service test to be created Relief specialist is included in these
 - Fire Academy all three program managers have been filled.
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 - Moving forward in filling the Administrator at the Academy
- Best Practices Subcommittee
 - Tim first steve second to move forward.
- Distributing Contact Information for Board Members – quarterly news letter
 - Already underway with strategic plan

XII. Other Business/Public comment/Closing Remarks

XIII. Next Meeting

- September 5, 2023 1:00 – 3:00

XIV. Adjournment

- Motion by _____ and second by _____ to adjourn the meeting at _____ PM.
Motion passed unanimously.