



State Fire Advisory Board Summary

September 5 2023

1:00 p.m.

**PEMA Headquarters, Room 112,
Harrisburg, PA**

I. Call to Order

- Thomas Cook, 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
- 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
- Tim Leech, Pittsburgh Firefighters
- Jerry Ozog, PFESI
- Nathan P. Silcox, PA State Association of Township Commissioners
- Sean Harris representing Rep Gillen, Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee
- Senator Muth, Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee
- Tom Gramling, PA State Association of Boroughs
- Dustin Ulrich, PA Career Fire Chiefs Association
- Kerry Vanyo, Rep Solomon House VA & EP Committee
- 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
- Randy Padfield, PEMA Director

III. Opening Remarks

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

IV. ACTION ITEM: Motion by Steve Bair and seconded by Tom O'Donnell to approve the Minutes from the May 25, 2023 Meeting Motion passed unanimously

V. Review of the Regional Meetings

- 10 Regional Meetings to date – last region will be finished this week.
- Approx. 30 per meeting – well received
- Frustration with Loan application process – legal review
- Additional courses from the state fire academy – lithium ion batteries, solar farms
- Blended learning
- PENNFIRS Reporting Software – starting on invitation to bid

VI. Update on Sub-Committee for Relief Association Reform – Steve Bair

- Please see attached documents
- Motion made to accept - Tim Knapp first, Jeff Jumper Second

VII. Old Business

- Act 104 Grants
 - Municipal Fire Department Capital Grant
 - 124 Applications, requests for 8,294,465.78
 - Award notifications have been sent
 - Emergency Services Training Center Capital Grant
 - 34 Applications, requests \$2,275,903.66
 - Award notifications have been sent

Model Federal Assistance to Firefighters grant program to have meetings to discuss the applications

- Bomb squads – communications to them within the next 2 weeks
- Fire works public education
- Act 10 EMS Covid final reports 56 did not report.
- Annual grant update – 19 did not submit final reports from 2022-2023 grant year
Opens September 6 and closes October 20, 2023
Introduced Evie Madenford, the new Grants and Loans Supervisor

How many were funded for the two grants

Municipal Fire Department Capital Grant – 6 approved – Total of \$450,290

[Municipal Fire Awards](#)

Emergency Services Training Center Capital Grant – 5 approved – Total of \$447,251.30

[Emergency Services Training Awards](#)

Loan Program – Doubled the number of loan applications going to committee

- Best Practices Subcommittee
 - Jeff has agreed to chair this committee – standing committee – asking the board members to contact Jeff if you are interested in being on this committee
- Distributing Contact Information for Board Members – Contacts are on the website
 - Looking at quarterly updates from the commissioner is still in the works

New Business:

Survey requests – strategic plan – please encourage feed back
Will follow with focus groups

Tim Knapp – can anything be done with the emissions on the new trucks - will have a conversation with Transportation to see if there is anything that can be done.

Jerry Ozog – Regional IMT Meeting – They are having struggle in finding instructors for entry level.
Is there a plan for that?

Final proof reading - takes a special personality to training young firefighters. (we have met with Lancaster)
Release a report by the end of the year.

Joe Mitchell – have we considered an APP - Messaging moving toward social media in addition to our web site

Jeff Jumper – Jr FF Program, Blue Red Light Laws, Raffles. – how can we encourage to rep and senator and get that info to the commission to advocate – educational (quarterly) webinars for chiefs and officers (late 2024) ie Jr program, someone from state police on blue lights

Bruce Trego – suggest regional members meeting to consolidate suggestions that may include other agencies

VIII. Other Business/Public comment/Closing Remarks

IX. Next Meeting

- November 16, 2023 1:00 – 3:00

X. Adjournment – Motion to Adjourn passed unanimously.

Relief Reform Working Group
Report to State Fire Advisory Board
September 5, 2023

Working Group Members: Bruce Trego, Tom O'Donnell, Frank Zangari, Sam Aungst, and Steve Bair (Chair)

The most recent meeting of the Working Group was August 23rd. Additionally, Working Group members hosted or attended Advisory Board Regional Meetings in August and September. The Chair of the Working Group has attended 5 regional meetings, with plans to attend 2 remaining meetings scheduled after this date.

Based on average attendance numbers for regional meetings, at least 200 people have had the opportunity to consider the recommendations of the Working Group and ask questions related to the proposed framework. The Pennsylvania Fire and Emergency Institute set up an on-line data collection site for people to comment on the proposed framework and as of August 31, sixty-four responses have been received. Links to the data collection site appear on both the PFESI and OSFC home pages.

Of the 64 comments received, 49 expressed support or nonsupport and/or offered specific suggestions. The remaining responses were simply requests for clarification or what can best be described as 'rants'. The on-line data shows 48% of the respondents offering unqualified support for the framework and a total of 94% generally supporting the framework. Approximately 6% of the respondents do not support the framework and prefer to leave the system 'as is'. These numbers are consistent with the 2021 surveys where 90% of the respondents supported relief reform and 10% opposed relief reform.

The Working Group believes it unlikely that additional data, significant enough to change the proposed framework, will be received. In order to submit a formal report by year-end to the Legislature as required by Act 91 of 2020 (§ 7419.1) the Working Group suggests a motion for formal acceptance of the current framework offered by the Working Group. Once adopted, the Working Group will write a formal report for consideration and adoption at the State Fire Advisory Board scheduled for November 16. This will enable the Board to meet its obligation.

Respectfully Submitted,
Steven W. Bair, Working Group Chair

Description	Number	Percent		Cumulative %
Unfettered Support	23	47.9%		47.9%
Increase \$10K Base	6	12.5%		60.4%
Establish Cap	4	8.3%		68.8%
Address Properties not paying in	3	6.3%		75.0%
Increase the Tax Rate	2	4.2%		79.2%
Modify 70% Performance	2	4.2%		83.3%
Add a Minimum Training Requirement	1	2.1%		85.4%
Eliminate Municipal Pass Through	1	2.1%		87.5%
Allow Fund Use as Collateral	1	2.1%		89.6%
Increase the Fire Service Share	1	2.1%		91.7%
\$10K minimum to each Municipality	1	2.1%		93.8%
Only Support the \$10K Base	1	2.1%		95.8%
Only support loosening allowable equipment	1	2.1%		97.9%
Do Not Support	1	2.1%		100.0%