



MINNESOTA BOARD OF FIREFIGHTER TRAINING AND EDUCATION

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MBFTE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

February 14, 2017

Elk River Fire Department

13073 Orono Parkway

Elk River, MN 55330

11:30 a. m.

Board Member	PRESENT	ABSENT	TELECONFERENCE
Eric Hedtke	X		
Kelli Slavik	X		
Rick Loveland	X		
Jonathan Kahnke		X	
Chip Lohmiller	X		
Roger Ihrke	X		
Chris Ford	X		
Greg Withers	X		
Gary Stevens	X		
Mark Bergerson	X		
Jim Fisher	X		
Christine Patrick	X		
Dean Wrobbel	X		
Amanda MacDonell		X	
Bruce West		X	
Staff:			
Steve Flaherty, Executive Director	X		
Margaret Koele	X		

1. Call to order - Chair Mark Bergerson
 - a. Guests present at the meeting: Marv Calvin (M-State), Kevin Sedivy (SFMD), Tate Mills (SFMD), John Ehret (SFMD), Dave Schliek (MSFCB), Ron Stoffel (MN DNR), Becki White (EPFD-MSFCA) and Natascha Hennen (MSFDA).
 - b. Meeting called to order 11:40 a.m.
 - c. Agenda additions
 - i. Accept agenda additions
 1. Voting positions
 1. Secretary
 2. Vice Chair
 3. Chair
 2. Motion by Jim Fisher to accept the agenda additions and Dean Wrobbel second the motion, motion passed.

2. Approval of Minutes as Written
 - a. November 15, 2016 Board meeting minutes (approve to remove DRAFT and post on the web site)
 - i. Dean Wrobbel motioned to accept minutes as written, Chip Lohmiller second the motion, motion carried.
3. Officers Reports
 - a. Chair, Mark Bergerson
 - i. Nothing to report.
 - b. Vice Chair, Chip Lohmiller
 - i. Nothing to report.
 - c. Treasurer, Dean Wrobbel
 - i. Nothing to report.
 - ii. Margaret Koele, License Coordinator - Fire Safety Account balance update
 1. As of the end of January the account has \$7,586,893.50, which is above projection.
 - d. Secretary, Amanda MacDonell
 - i. Amanda MacDonell has resigned the position and Christie Patrick was assigned the position until the vote during the last Executive meeting.
 - ii. Nothing to report.
4. Reports
 - a. Executive Director – Steve Flaherty
 - i. Leadership Development
 1. We have just completed two cohorts of students. There have now been six cohorts of fire service leaders that have now completed this course. We have a waiting list of 31 students for the next fiscal year. This course has been getting very positive feedback, which you can see by the waiting list we have each fiscal year.
 - ii. NFPA 1001
 1. We have a budget for 1800 students and we have paid for a little over six hundred students to date.
 - iii. Training Reimbursements
 1. EMS
 1. \$102,000 submitted and \$72,000 has been paid.
 2. Backfill & OT
 1. \$37,000 submitted and \$33,000 has been paid.
 - iv. Live Burns
 1. 132 spoken for and we have 40 on the waiting list. This has been a very popular program.
 - v. NJPA
 1. \$163, 720 budgeted for Region 5, which equates to \$155 per firefighter this fiscal year. We have had 28 departments send in reimbursement requests and paid out \$52,000 to date.
 - vi. FAO/Officer 1/Instructor 1 regional projects
 1. Programs were very well received in each of the regions and the budgets have been used up for each of these trainings for this fiscal year.
 - vii. Cancer awareness/Mental Health regional projects

1. \$75,000 budget has all been used for this program with 113 classes completed. We will be tracking the amount of students that have attended these programs and will report back to the board once those figures are in.
 2. There has been a lot of media coverage regarding these issues in the fire service lately. The board is out in front with programs like these running across the state making people aware these issues exist within the fire service.
- viii. Licensing
1. We are at 4100 active licenses and continue doing well with renewal process.
- ix. Rail & Pipe Safety/Training Update
1. This program is slowing down and a reminder that this is funded through HSEM and processes the reimbursements through MBFTE.
- x. HMEP Grant
1. We have been approved to manage this grant and we are just waiting for the funding to arrive. There will be \$100,000 for training and \$40,000 for planning, which is less than half of last year's funding for this program.
- b. Executive/Legislative Committee - Chair Mark Bergerson
- i. We met last week and most of the discussion will take place during this meeting.
- c. Licensing/License Review Committee – Eric Hedtke, Chair
- i. Legislation Update (Statutes)
 1. The legislative updates are being deferred until 2018 session since we do not have a consensus coming out of the license committee at this time.
 2. The committee did not have any resolution on the DNR wildland firefighters being licensed.
 3. DNR present at Board meeting to discuss “Wildland Firefighters”
 1. Ron Stoffel, DNR, was recognized to talk on the Wildland Firefighters behalf:
 - i. They were not aware of the law regarding full time firefighters being licensed in Minnesota and were just made aware last fall that it may pertain to their full time “Wildland Firefighters”. The statute as written right now would apply to the DNR as a state agency and include their full time “Wildland” firefighters. We need to determine how many this would affect, what requirements would suffice for licensure on their behalf and if we could work together on this issue.
 1. If it is determined they would need to be licensed, they would need to rewrite human resource documents and have new hiring practices, which differentiate whether they are a forester or firefighter within FSA standards. We would also need to define what training

requirements would be needed, as they do not do structural training at this point.

- a. Mark Bergerson, Chair, asked if they are asking the board to have discussion to exclude them within the statute.
 - b. Eric Hedtke, Licensing Chair, commented we had a discussion in committee regarding the Wildland firefighters and the program was brought about specifically for structural firefighters. We discussed having an exemption for wildland firefighters and would like to have the discussion with the whole board.
2. Ron Stoffel commented that would be very helpful to be exempted from the licensure requirement.
 - a. Dean Wrobbel commented that if they are strictly wildland firefighters and if they start doing any structural firefighting they would need to be licensed.
 3. Mark Bergerson, Chair, commented that this discussion should be taken back to the license committee to work with DNR on wording for the wildland firefighter definition to exempt them from licensure.
 - a. Gary Stevens asked for a formal request from the DNR to receive an exemption from MBFTE licensing program.
 - b. Mark Bergerson, Chair, agreed that the board would like that request made in writing from the DNR.
 - c. Greg Withers brought up addressing other agencies that have not gotten licensed, but fall under the statute. Steve Flaherty, Executive Director, commented that all agencies are accounted for at this time, if they have an FID number they are considered a fire department and need to comply with licensure.
2. Eric Hedtke, License Chair, also commented that the AG office let us know there is no grace period or probationary period for licensing within a hiring department. We will be drafting a letter out to the departments of the language and we will be working to change the language in the next legislative session to accommodate this situation.

- ii. Renewal Update – Margaret Koele, License Coordinator
 - 1. Letters were sent out at the end of December for opening up renewal January 2, 2017 – June 30, 2017.
 - 1. Margaret Koele, License Coordinator, commented that we sent out 4,909 letters with 1368 applications processed and 722 completed. 58 new applications applied for and 27 completed. The remaining are in verification or waiting for payment status.
 - 2. We are getting positive feedback from departments and licensees on the process and the speed of the process.
 - 2. We sent out 864 expired license letters in early December and we will get figures on how many of those have reinstated for the next meeting.
- d. Training Committee- Dean Wrobbel, Chair
 - i. Target Solutions vs League of Cities program update
 - 1. Webinars
 - 1. Information sessions
 - i. We will get the information sessions set up for everyone to see. This could be offered at \$5.00 per firefighter and will include the eleven core elements and OSHA requirements. We have been getting very positive feedback from departments on this program. Several departments are using the program already at \$95 per firefighter and this would not get them a credit if the Board moves forward with the program, but they will offer more online training for those departments to offset the cost. This program offers reporting options and will track training across the state and offers online training. Many departments are finding out this is reimbursable and are looking at picking up the program for their departments.
 - ii. Steve Flaherty, commented as the administrator of the program we have reporting that can track training throughout the state.
 - iii. Rick Loveland commented that the other program was piloted by the city of Moorhead and will not meet the needs the fire service is looking for.
 - 1. Erik Hedtke asked if this would have to be bid out through RFP through the state if over a certain dollar amount.
 - ii. Qualified Instructors – Dean Wrobbel, Training Committee Chair
 - 1. We discussed this program with 963 instructors on a very outdated list. We are proposing to the board to go back one year and drop the rest of the list. Then get an online program for application built and have a three year renewal for staying active. If they want to add more course instruction they would need to re-upload resumes. We will have a group review the information submitted that they are qualified to instruct what they are requesting.

- i. Eric Hedtke asked if anyone has checked with the AG office if we have the authority to take in applications and deem qualifications of instructors to teach classes. Also, regarding an appeals process or a standard we would need to apply to distinguish qualifications.
 - 1. Margaret Koele, License Coordinator, responded that she has sent questions up to the AG office regarding if the board has authority to accept applications and make determinations if applicants are qualified to instruct different training classes. The AG representative is out of the office, but we will share the information with the board as soon as it becomes available.
 - 2. We may have to open statute to define what the board wants to do with this program and get legislative authority to move forward.
 - 3. Also, the board needs to keep in mind financially that we are contracted with our computer programmer on an annual contract and the more we add to the list of maintenance the more it will cost the board. We currently are at the max with maintenance and if we increase the projects the programming may have to be bid out, since other companies do not like to take over someone else's work and they would bid to re-do the whole data base. We have had a company in to quote that and it was over a couple hundred thousand to start over from scratch.
- ii. Greg Withers is not on board with having the AG office giving us advice and wants to make a decision as a board then ask for forgiveness later. We do not want them saying we do not have statute authority to do something and wait two years to go back to legislature again to open up issues all over again. We need to get this on the road and moving.
- iii. Margaret Koele, License Coordinator, commented that staff works for the state and as a board we need to abide by the laws and recommendations of the AG office. When we ask questions on behalf of the board to the AG office, the board will need to consider abiding by the advice that is given. The AG office would be the ones that represent the board if any legal situations should arise. If the board does not abide by the advice of the AG office recommendations or statutes that are in place saying what the board's authority is, they can choose not to represent this board in front of the ALJ. Also, the board will need to make sure we have the

authority to collect information from individuals in application form and we need to advise the applicants that all information collected is public information, except for social security numbers. If the board does not have the authority to do this process then the board will need to follow the correct process to obtain authority through the legislative process as advised.

2. Mark Bergerson, Chair, commented this will be for FY18, so we have time to get the answers from the AG office to some of the questions. Then this discussion can be brought back with more specific costs, information and time.
- iii. Presentation Policy – Dean Wrobbel, Training Committee Chair
1. Revised the section on date of presentations
 1. There is an updated form in all the folders for each handbook and updated on web site.
 - i. The committee has decided on 10 minutes for presentations and 5 minutes for questions. They will be reviewing presentations May 2nd starting at 8:00 a.m.
 - ii. The committee is proposing to the board to accept the revisions of the presentation policy:
 1. Changing the meeting for presentations and updated vision / mission statement.
 2. Rick Loveland asked what criteria is being used to select presentations to move forward for board approval.
 - a. Dean Wrobbel, Chair, commented that it needs to be tied to a NFPA standards and what they are proposing is the benefit to the fire service across the state. They will work on a grading system going forward.
 - iii. Jim Fisher motioned to approve the presentation policy revision, Christie Patrick second the motion, motion carried.
- iv. FF1 & FF2 Split – Steve Flaherty, Executive Director
1. The provider would need to let us know up front they are splitting FF1 and FF2, so funds could be dedicated. This will start FY18 and end FY19. The funds would be held over the second biennial for this special funding.
 2. The MSFCB had some reservations regarding the HAZ Ops portion and they cannot get certification until the live burn is completed. Could take up to two years to get certification.
 1. Roger Ihrke asked how many departments would go for this and what if they only do FF1.
 - i. Mark Bergerson, Chair, commented this is for the whole funding NFPA1001 standard program and if they want to only do FF1 that would be out of there reimbursement per firefighter award funding, not the

NFPA1001 funding. This is communicated to all of the fire departments.

- ii. Steve Flaherty, Executive Director, commented the providers will be monitoring this and we will track it in the data base.
 - 1. Rick Loveland, commented that if students do not complete the program or drop they get on the phone with Margaret Koele to drop and add students to meet the funding requirements.
- iii. Gary Stevens asked when the reimbursement is paid to the providers.
 - 1. Steve Flaherty, Executive Director, commented that the payments are made once the course is started or at the end of the course. Once they upload the paperwork into our data base we pay the reimbursement. We will only pay for the split portion taken within that fiscal year.
 - a. Gary Stevens asked if this is a pilot or unlimited program.
 - i. Steve Flaherty, Executive Director commented it depends on what the board budgets for the NFPA1001 program. Once we know what the board has budgeted we can hold funds back knowing how many are doing the split based on communication from the provider to our office staff.

v. Provider Direct Pay Reimbursement - Mark Bergerson, Chair

1. Reimbursement Form Online

- 1. Get board approval for reimbursement form
 - i. Program will start July 1, 2017 for FY18
- 2. Mark Bergerson reviewed the form with the board regarding the process for providers to get paid directly out of the departments per fire fighter award funding. The department Chief will still need to sign the form as well as their finance person to approve that the provider can be paid directly. For audit purposes with the state this is the process that needs to be followed and the provider will need to leave copies of the signed form and invoice with the department.
 - i. Rick Loveland motioned to approve the revised reimbursement form, Kelli Slavik second the motion, motion carried.

5. Old Business

- a. Firefighting Training Study update (M.A.D.) – Steve Flaherty, Executive Director
 - i. The first listening session started yesterday in Virginia, MN. The comments were excellent and MAD will put out a thorough report from the studies they have

conducted. This will be very beneficial to the future of the fire service in Minnesota and to our board. We encourage the board members to sit in on one of these listening sessions in your area.

- b. Appointment Vacancy – Steve Flaherty, Executive Director
 - i. Appointments Vacancies
 - 1. Amanda MacDonell
 - 1. Not requesting reappointment.
 - 2. MSFDA recommendation will be Natascha Hennen.
 - 2. Jim Fisher
 - 1. Requesting reappointment.
 - 2. Association of Townships will be recommending Jim Fisher.
 - 3. Dean Wrobbel
 - 1. Requesting reappointment.
 - 2. MSFCA recommendation will be Becki White.
 - ii. We will announce to the board once the appointments are made.
6. New Business
- a. Drone Training – Mark Bergerson, Chair
 - i. We would like to get board approval to add Drone training to the “Reimbursable Expense List” for per firefighter award funds to be used for the training.
 - 1. This puts an emphasis on using the drones in the fire service. The Chief would have to recommend individuals to this training.
 - 2. Rick Loveland asked if DPS has given any information on the fire service using this. Steve Flaherty, Executive Director said they are on board with the training and this has to meet FAA standards.
 - 3. Rick Loveland motions to approve the drone program on the reimbursable expense list, Jim Fisher second motion, motion carried.
 - b. Voting Positions
 - i. Secretary
 - 1. Rick Loveland nominated Chris Ford, Dean Wrobbel second Chris Ford
 - 2. Rick Loveland cast white ballot Dean Wrobbel second the white ballot
 - 3. Motion carried
 - ii. Vice Chair
 - 1. Chip Lohmiller nominated by Dean Wrobbel
 - 2. Jim Fisher nominated close and white ballot
 - 3. Motion carried
 - iii. Chair
 - 1. Nominations
 - 1. Mark Bergerson nominated by Dean Wrobbel
 - i. Gary Stevens nominated close nominations and white ballot
 - ii. Motion carried
7. Public Comment
- a. Kevin Sedivy
 - i. Introduced Tate Mills – West SFM specialist
 - ii. John Ehret – South SFM specialist
8. Other Business
9. Adjourn
- a. Meeting adjourned 1:23 p.m.