

STATE FIRE PREVENTION COMMISSION
MINUTES
October 18, 2012

Members Present: Timothy F. Dayton, Chairman
K.C. Harrington
Martin J. LePore
Anthony J. Spencer
Richard L. Yinger

Member Absent: Sharon S. Gilyeat, Vice Chairperson
Charles D. Davis
Mark F. Hubbard

Chairman Dayton called the meeting to order at the Maryland State Police Western Operations Center in Hagerstown, Washington County. Commissioners Davis and Hubbard were unable to attend due to other commitments. Vice Chairperson Gilyeat contacted the Chairman during the meeting to advise she was stuck in a major traffic jam and would not be able to arrive in time to be present. Chairman Dayton acknowledged the resignation of Commissioner Brian Geraci who moved to Virginia. Commissioner Geraci's service and commitment to life safety and fire prevention is appreciated and the members wished him well in his new endeavors.

At 10:18 a.m. the Commission and guests participated in the Great Southeast Shakeout, a multi-state earthquake awareness safety drill. Participants were encouraged to familiarize themselves with their surroundings and potential hazards should an earthquake strike and actions to take to prevent injuries or death.

FIRE MARSHAL REPORT

Fire Marshal William E. Barnard reported the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) currently has two full-time vacant positions--Administrative Aide (AA) and Deputy State Fire Marshal (DSFM). Interviews of the top twelve AA applicants were conducted but the top four turned the position down due to the salary. Letters will be sent to other applicants to schedule more interviews. The DSFM position is being held vacant to meet the turnover requirement which has increased to \$386,000 this year. DSFM Brandon Rice has submitted his resignation after two years with the agency. He is making a career change into the computer industry. Special Projects Coordinator/Legislative Liaison Jane Edwards will be resigning in November. She has done a tremendous job the last seven years, particularly with the legislative issues. Several DSFM's have indicated an interest to help fulfill her duties until a permanent replacement is hired. The Headquarters Office also has a part-time contractual Data Device Operator vacancy. The position has been advertised twice but so far few applicants have applied and no one has been hired. The position will be re-advertised. The OSFM is very thankful to the other part-time Data Device Operator Allison Nicodemus in the Western Regional Office for her help with processing invoices until the vacancy is filled. There will be delays in filling some vacancies to help meet the turnover requirement.

The Fire Marshal discussed this year's fire deaths which total 39 as of October 15th, compared to 43 during this period last year. Baltimore City recently had a family of five perish in a fire bringing its total to eleven for the year. It has not been confirmed if the residence was equipped with smoke alarms. The fire department has been doing a tremendous job distributing and installing the 10-year sealed long life smoke alarms throughout city residences and follow-up visits have indicated the alarms are still in place and functioning. They continue to reach out to residents who may need smoke alarms in an effort to prevent fire fatalities. Historically Maryland's lowest reported yearly fire deaths has been 60, which occurred twice.

The AES Corporation in Cumberland is donating 10-year sealed long life smoke alarms for distribution in Allegany County. Commissioner Dayton reported Allegany County fire companies can

request free alarms for installation in county residences. A press conference is scheduled for October 19th in Cumberland.

Several fire departments and/or counties are not submitting MFIRS reports in a timely manner. Companies continue to be reminded to get reports to the OSFM by the 10th of the following month.

After October 31st, the old OSFM email addresses will no longer function. All OSFM email addresses have been changed to the following format: firstname.lastname@maryland.gov. The Fire Marshal's new address is william.barnard@maryland.gov. The Commission's new email is msp.sfpc@maryland.gov. Please be sure to update your contact information with the new addresses.

Some local jurisdictions have chosen to amend fire sprinkler requirements for one- and two-family homes out of the 2012 edition of the International Residential Code. Legislation passed during the 2012 session will prohibit local jurisdictions from amending fire sprinklers out of future editions. Chief Fire Protection Engineer (CFPE) A. Larry Iseminger, Jr. reported that although Garrett County amended the requirement out for this cycle, they are offering a \$2,500 incentive for persons wishing to voluntarily install sprinklers. Chairman Dayton reported Allegany County is also considering an incentive and are reviewing the cost differences in homes on public water versus private wells in order to establish a fair incentive.

The Fire Marshal and other OSFM staff members attended and participated in demonstrations of new technology low-pressure water mist fire suppression systems. The demonstrations were held October 10th and 11th at the Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute (MFRI) Headquarters in College Park. Commissioner Lepore, a MFRI employee, helped coordinate the demonstrations and gave a brief summary. Each day, more than 100 persons—including code authorities, high-ranking fire officials, and elected government officials—were in attendance. Three different fire scenarios were demonstrated: an apartment bedroom fire, a kitchen fire, and a sitting room fire. The German engineered systems offer lower pressure (60-80 psi) and reduced flow (4 to 8 gpm), can operate with normal water pressures, use plastic piping which helps reduce the costs, and cause less water damage. The systems are widely used in Europe. The simulations were very successful, extinguishing the fires in two to four minutes. Videos of the demonstrations will be available in about three weeks which should help improve awareness of the benefits of fire sprinklers. The systems, when approved, will fall under NFPA 750 Water Mist Fire Protection Systems criteria and the company is talking with Underwriter's Laboratories at this time. Chairman Dayton attended the event with Allegany County Commissioner Michael McKay who indicated it was a very informative demonstration. He thanked Commissioner Lepore and Fire Marshal Barnard for their hospitality during the event.

The Fire and Life Safety Information Exchange Program is seeking a new intern to maintain the mdlifesafety.org website, an information resource to assist with educating Maryland citizens about fire and life safety issues. The current intern is graduating college and will be seeking full-time employment after the end of the year.

The Smoke Alarm Technology Task Force report presented at the last meeting is available on the OSFM website www.msp.org/firemarshal. CFPE Iseminger stated the task force worked hard to establish criteria to help protect older homes at a reasonable cost, proposing the use of sealed long-life alarms instead of requiring the retrofitting of hard-wired electric alarms. The Fire Marshal thanked CFPE Iseminger for his work on the task force and also in preparing a legislative proposal which the Fire Marshal is working to get introduced in the next legislative session.

The 2012 Mid-Atlantic Life Safety Conference, "Caring for Your Community – and Yourself" was held September 26th at the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratories Kossiakoff Center. Vicky Taylor from the National Fire Academy was the keynote speaker and presented, "The Power of Five". Although attendance was down this year, the conference was a success and provided attendees the chance to network with other life safety advocates. The Public Safety Educator of the Year Award was presented to Teresa Ann Crisman from the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department.

The Home Fire Safety Sprinkler Coalition has introduced the "Built for Life Program" to help fire departments educate their communities about home fire sprinklers. Fire departments may enroll at www.homefiresprinkler.org. Participating departments will be provided with free resources and educational support materials.

The first meeting of the Maryland Youth Firesetting Intervention Coalition was held August 9th. Representatives from several agencies and departments were in attendance to discuss and provide a direction to address juvenile firesetting issues in Maryland. The next meeting is scheduled for October 24th at the Howard County DFRS Training Academy. Persons wishing to be involved may contact DSFM Bruce Bouch at bruce.bouch@maryland.gov.

Sparky's Wish List, part of Fire-Safe Communities nonprofit section of NFPA, is providing a free resource for fire departments to obtain educational materials for use during school visits and community events. Additional information can be found at www.nfpa.org/sparkyswishlist.

Senior Deputy State Fire Marshal Caryn McMahon, Southern Regional Office, was honored by the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association for her exceptional work as a law enforcement officer during 2011. Fire Marshal Barnard stated he was very proud to attend the awards ceremony held in Ocean City. This is the second Deputy State Fire Marshal to receive this award during his tenure as the Maryland State Fire Marshal. Deputy McMahon also received the Deputy State Fire Marshal of the Year Award earlier this year.

The OSFM has received some inquiries regarding the installation of smart meters and the potential for them to be involved with starting fires, emitting dangerous RF radiation, increasing utility bills, and invading privacy. Smart meters are an internet-capable device that measures energy, water, or natural gas consumption. Power companies are installing smart meters to monitor consumer usage and adjust prices according to the time of day and season. To date, the OSFM is not aware of any fire incidents involving smart meters in Maryland. Florida has reported some fires. The problem may be when the old meter is pulled the prongs may not be getting a good connection when the new meter is installed, creating resistance and heat buildup. The Fire Marshal will meet with Baltimore Gas and Electric next week to review some technical aspects of the meters.

CFPE Iseminger reported the OSFM has updated its policy on special amusement/haunted houses. Fire Marshal Barnard also stated the October news releases pertain to Halloween and alternative heat safety. These items are posted on the OSFM website.

CHAIRMAN REPORT

Chairman Dayton welcomed former State Fire Marshal James C. Robertson. Mr. Robertson apologized for not being able to attend the Mid-Atlantic Association of Fire Commissions Conference in Delaware to represent the Commission. He is pleased with the low number of fire deaths and the progress being made in Maryland. Maryland is also doing a great job being a good leader on the east coast with residential sprinklers. He gave a brief history of the Office of the State Fire Marshal and the Fire Prevention Commission and hopes the upcoming 50th Anniversary of the Commission's establishment will not be overlooked. The Commission was established September 1, 1964. Commissioner Spencer also expressed his desire that the Commission's history be preserved and would like to see the valuable historical knowledge of Mr. Robertson properly documented or even videotaped. Fire Marshal Barnard will look into this further.

OTHER BUSINESS

Motion by Commissioner Harrington, second by Commissioner Lepore, and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the August meeting.

CODE OF MARYLAND REGULATIONS

Secretary Ritchie reported no public comments on amendments to COMAR 29.06.01 State Fire Prevention Code, 29.06.07 Ground-Based Sparkling Devices, and the repeal of COMAR 29.06.03 Approval of Testing Laboratories have been received since the public hearing on August 30th. The published proposal contained a typographical error in Regulation 29.06.01.08J. The correct paragraph reference should be 3.3.182.22. Motion by Commissioner Yinger, second by Commissioner Spencer, and unanimously carried to adopt the regulations as proposed with noted correction, effective January 1, 2013. Secretary Ritchie will arrange to place the final notice of action in the Maryland Register.

APPEALS

Appeal 09-02 David Hysan (Thursday's Restaurant), Galesville, Anne Arundel County. The Commission's decision was appealed to and heard by the Court of Special Appeals. The court has remanded the case back to the Commission for further administrative proceedings. The Commission has scheduled the evidentiary hearing for December 13th in Annapolis.

MEETING SCHEDULED

The next meeting is scheduled for:
Thursday, December 13, 2012 – 9:30 a.m.
Taylor Avenue Fire Station
620 Taylor Avenue, Classroom
Annapolis, Anne Arundel County

Respectfully submitted,



Heidi Ritchie, Secretary