

**STATE FIRE PREVENTION COMMISSION
MINUTES
February 21, 2013**

Members Present: Timothy F. Dayton, Chairman
Charles D. Davis
K.C. Harrington
Mark F. Hubbard
Anthony J. Spencer
Richard L. Yinger

Member Absent: Sharon S. Gilyeat, Vice Chairperson
Eugene A. Jones
Martin J. LePore

Chairman Dayton called the meeting to order at the Taylor Avenue Fire Station in Annapolis.

FIRE MARSHAL REPORT

Fire Marshal William E. Barnard reported the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) currently has four full-time vacancies: two Fire Safety Inspectors (FSIs) and two Deputy State Fire Marshals (DSFMs). A hiring freeze exemption was granted to fill the FSI positions (it is not required for the DSFM positions) but due to budget constraints, none of the positions will be filled at this time. The hiring freeze exemption request to fill Program Manager Jane Edward's contract position was denied. It is hoped the position can be filled next fiscal year. DSFM Kirby Travers has been performing her duties in the interim. The Fire Marshal introduced DSFM Travers and complimented him on the great job he has been doing so far, particularly with assisting during the legislative session. Fire Marshal Barnard was pleased to report that House Bill 403 was defeated. This bill sought to increase the number of children clients under the age of two years in family day care homes from two to three with only one caregiver.

Fifty-three fire deaths were reported in Maryland during 2012, the new historic low and a 21% decline from 2011. The previous historic low was 60 fire deaths reported in 2006 and 2008. Unfortunately so far in 2013 the number of fire deaths is currently much higher than in 2012, with seventeen as of February 20, 2013 compared to thirteen for this same period in 2012. Fire Marshal Barnard distributed the 2012 Fire Fatality Report. Additional information can be found at the OSFM website: www.mdsp.org/firemarshal under "document downloads". Although Baltimore City reported the most fire deaths (12) in 2012, Fire Marshal Barnard commended them for their outstanding efforts to educate the public about the importance of working smoke alarms. Its 311 notification system allows the public to request a smoke alarm and have a 10-year sealed battery with hush button alarm installed within two hours of receiving the call. The Fire Marshal introduced Baltimore City Fire Department Deputy Chief Shawn Belton and Lieutenant Derrick Ready. Deputy Chief Belton expressed his appreciation for the State Fire Marshal's support and welcomed any suggestions which may help in their efforts to reduce fire fatalities. Unfortunately, public apathy regarding the importance of working smoke alarms is difficult to overcome.

Several fire departments and/or counties are not submitting MFIRS reports in a timely manner. Reports are due by the tenth of the following month. Please continue to remind all departments of the importance of submitting reports in a timely manner. The deadline for the OSFM to submit the 2012 Maryland reports to the federal government is July 1, 2013.

The old OSFM email addresses have been deactivated and any emails sent to the old addresses are no longer being received. 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 misp.sfpc@maryland.gov. Please be sure to update your contact information with the new addresses.

The 2013 Public Fire and Life Safety Educator's Conference is scheduled for Saturday March 23rd at MFRI College Park. Topics this year are residential fire sprinklers, carbon monoxide poisoning, Maryland weather phenomenon, fire and life safety facts, and stocking your toolbox. Forty persons have registered so far. Additional information is available at the MFRI website.

The Mid-Atlantic Life Safety Conference is scheduled for Tuesday September 24th at the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory Kossiakoff Center in Laurel. Additional information will be available in the near future. Deputy State Fire Marshal Bruce Bouch has replaced Fire Protection Engineer Ken Bush as the conference's steering committee chairman.

Intern Melissa Williams of Carroll County and the current Miss Carroll County Fire Prevention Ambassador has assumed the role of maintaining and updating the Maryland Fire and Life Safety Information Exchange Program website (www.mdlifefesafety.org). More interactive fire and life safety related games have been added and resource links are being updated on a weekly basis.

The first meeting of the Maryland Youth Fire Intervention Coalition was held at the National Fire Academy on August 9th. Representatives from several agencies and departments have attended multiple meetings to discuss and provide a direction to address juvenile firesetting issues in Maryland. Three agencies will be presenting their successful programs to assist with determining a common path to form guidelines for programs throughout the state. If your department is interested in being involved, contact DSFM Bruce Bouch at bruce.bouch@maryland.gov.

Fire departments are encouraged to create a wish list for fire safety education materials through NFPA's nonprofit program, Sparky's Wish List. Information is available at www.nfpa.org/SparkysWishList.

The U.S. Fire Administration is moving forward with the "Fire is Everyone's Fight" action plan. After agreeing to the terms of use, fire service members may begin to use the materials and logos and apply them to their existing educational programs. Information is available at www.usfa.fema.gov/fireiseveryonesfight.

The OSFM posts two educational news releases each month on its Facebook page at <http://facebook.com/MarylandStateFireMarshal>. The releases may be shared on other Facebook pages.

The Maryland State Firemen's Association in partnership with the OSFM is making \$60,000 in grant funds available to provide assistance to member companies in the form of fire prevention publication and supplies for the development, continuation or enhancement of local public fire and life safety education efforts. The Public Fire and Life Safety Educational Grant Program will award a maximum of \$500 to each member company selected to receive a grant. Applications must be received via e-mail no later than midnight April 13, 2013. The grant awards will be announced at the MSFA convention in June. Additional information and the application are available at <http://www.msfa.org>.

Fire Marshal Barnard reviewed some of this year's legislative bills:

HB769-The insurance industry is sponsoring a bill to prohibit local jurisdictions from weakening the wind design and wind-borne debris provisions of the Maryland Building Performance Standard (the State building codes). Currently local jurisdictions and counties may amend the codes to weaken requirements which effectively eliminates any minimum standards for building codes throughout Maryland. Legislation was passed last year which prohibited the weakening of the residential sprinkler requirements. A report entitled "Rating the States" does not give Maryland a good rating due to the weakened local building codes. The Fire Marshal will be testifying at the hearing.

HB1413/SB969-This legislation seeks to repeal and recodify provisions of the law pertaining to residential smoke alarms and to clarify types of alarms, minimum number of alarms, and specific areas where they must be installed in residential dwellings. Fire Marshal Barnard commended the Smoke Alarm Task Force for its two-year study reviewing existing laws and smoke alarm technologies. The report

is available at the OSFM website. Based on the Task Force's recommendations, Chief Fire Protection Engineer assisted with drafting the proposed legislation which will require homes built before 1975 to replace battery alarms with 10-year long life sealed battery alarms with hush button on every level of the dwelling. The Maryland building codes currently have such requirements for new homes. The cost is minimal (approximately \$20-\$30 per detector) but with the sealed battery units, the yearly cost of replacing batteries is eliminated. Rental property owners may oppose the legislation and enforcement will be an issue. When the OSFM issues its daylight savings time news release regarding "Change Your Clock – Change Your Battery" it will also emphasize replacing existing battery alarms with the new long-life sealed battery units. It is recommended that homes have both the ionization and photoelectric type alarms to improve early warning regardless of the type of fire--slow smoldering or fast burning.

SB971 seeks to require legislative approval prior to agencies increasing fees. Chairman Dayton will review this legislation to see what impact it may have on the Commission's COMAR regulations pertaining to fees for fire prevention services.

CHAIRMAN REPORT

Chairman Dayton also commended Baltimore City for its efforts and reported Allegany County has initiated a similar program to get smoke alarms installed in homes. The County received a \$10,000 donation from the Warrior Run Power Company for the purchase of alarms. Due to the rural nature of the county, their goal is to have a 10-year sealed battery with hush button alarm installed by the end of the shift when the local fire department receives the request. Fire companies are encouraged to check homes for working alarms if they respond to a call. This may be easier for the rural companies which do not have the higher volume of calls that Baltimore City or other metropolitan companies have.

The Chairman entertained motions to nominate a new Vice Chairman since Vice Chair Gilyeat's term has expired and she will be replaced. Motion by Commissioner Yinger, second by Commissioner Spencer and unanimously carried to nominate Commissioner Davis. Commissioner Davis accepted the post.

OTHER BUSINESS

Motion by Commissioner Spencer, second by Commissioner Yinger and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the December 2012 meeting.

MEETING SCHEDULED

The next meeting is scheduled for:
Thursday, April 18, 2013 – 9:30 a.m.
Laurel Municipal Building Council Chambers
8103 Sandy Spring Road
Laurel, Prince George's County, Maryland

Respectfully submitted,



Heidi Ritchie, Secretary