

**STATE FIRE PREVENTION COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
December 19, 2013**

Members Present: Timothy F. Dayton, Chairman  
Charles D. Davis, Vice Chairman  
Martin J. LePore  
Stacy Welsh  
Richard L. Yinger

Member Absent: K.C. Harrington  
Mark F. Hubbard  
Eugene A. Jones  
Anthony J. Spencer

Chairman Dayton called the meeting to order at the Mount Airy Volunteer Fire Department in Mt. Airy, Carroll County. A moment of silence was observed in remembrance of Past Maryland State Fire Marshal James C. Robertson who passed away November 9, 2013.

#### **FIRE MARSHAL REPORT**

Fire Marshal Brian S. Geraci was unable to attend the Commission meeting due to his attendance at a departmental budget meeting. In his absence, the Fire Marshal Report was presented by Deputy State Fire Marshal Bruce Bouch. A copy of the report is attached.

#### **CHAIRMAN REPORT**

Chairman Dayton welcomed newly appointed Commission member Stacy Welsh to her first meeting. Commissioner Welch stated it was a pleasure to be appointed and she looks forward to serving on the Commission.

Chairman Dayton reported Commissioner Jones has several good suggestions on community and citizen involvement and education to help reduce fire fatalities. Baltimore City and Prince George's County, which have the highest numbers, both have very good programs and smoke alarm initiatives so perhaps new strategies should be explored. Deputy Bouch reported the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) would like to coordinate efforts to ensure homes have working smoke alarms with various community groups that visit residential dwellings such as Meals on Wheels, Parent/Teacher Associations, and home health care providers. Assistant Attorney General Susan Baron also suggested Parole and Probation officers since they routinely visit homes as well. Commissioner Welch stated fire fatalities are of great concern to her and she hopes her service on the Commission will be beneficial in helping to reduce them.

Chairman Dayton recommended some foresight be given to a future public education campaign for replacing the ten-year smoke alarms. With the law being passed in 2013 to phase in replacement of alarms with ten-year units, it will be important that in ten years the public doesn't become complacent and not replace the unit itself. Deputy Bouch stated even though the units have a low battery signal, he has already begun to give this some thought. Delmarva Power donated 1,000 ten-year alarms this year for customers in their service area. Efforts are being made to obtain additional tactile alarms for the deaf and hearing impaired which currently cost about \$150 each. Hopefully as technology improves the costs will decrease.

Chairman Dayton attended Fire Marshal Robertson's memorial service. It was a very nice event with many people sharing their memories. Fire Marshal Robertson was very passionate about fire prevention and possessed a wealth of knowledge regarding the history of the OSFM and the Fire Prevention Commission. Deputy Bouch reported that many historical documents have disappeared during

the various office moves but the OSFM staff is researching available historical data to prepare a report for next year's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the official legislative establishment of the OSFM and Commission.

## OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Yinger thanked everyone for their cards, letters, calls, and thoughts during the last few months.

In response to Commissioner Yinger's inquiry regarding who inspects residential 13D systems, Deputy Bouch stated it depends on the location. When a home is constructed, it can be either OSFM personnel or the local authority having jurisdiction (AHJ). Typically once the home is approved for occupancy, no additional inspections of the systems are conducted by the OSFM or AHJ.

Vice Chairman Davis reported he completed the web-based training on the Open Meetings Act.

Commissioner LePore stated it was nice to see Commissioner Yinger back in attendance. He reported things are slow at the Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute this time of year but several upcoming projects are in the works.

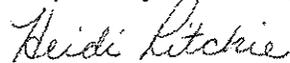
Motion by Vice Chairman Davis, second by Commissioner LePore and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the October 17, 2013, meeting with the following correction noted by Fire Marshal Geraci: The federal grant amount awarded to the Silver Spring Fire Department was \$140,000.

## MEETING SCHEDULED

The next meeting has been scheduled for Thursday February 20, 2014, at 9:30 a.m. in Laurel.\*

Chairman Dayton concluded the public meeting and the Commission convened in closed session to review additional evidentiary documents submitted by the OSFM for appeal case #13-01 C'Town Laundromat.

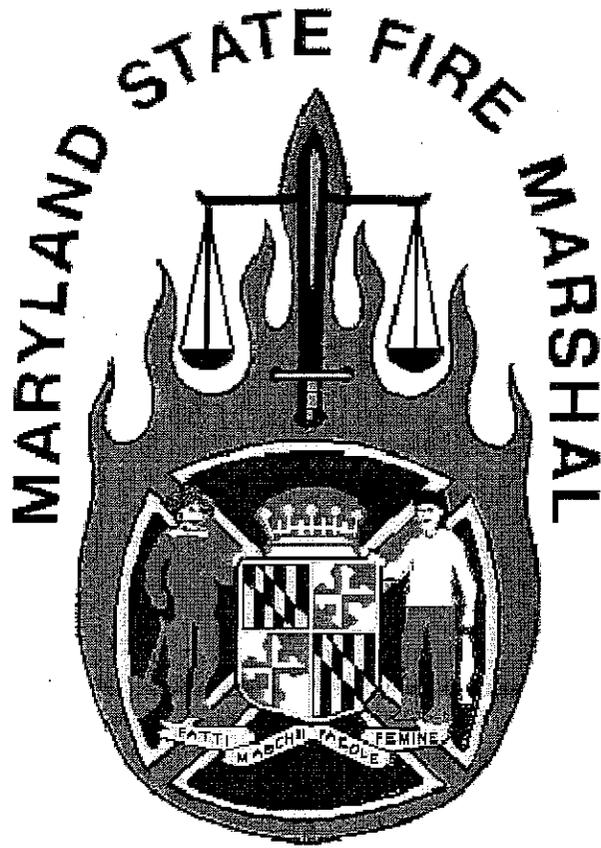
Respectfully submitted,



Heidi Ritchie, Secretary

Attachment

\*Subsequent to the meeting, the location was changed to the Taylor Avenue Fire Station for the convenience of those who may have to attend legislative hearings in Annapolis.



**REPORT  
Of**

**BRIAN S. GERACI  
STATE FIRE MARSHAL**

**Maryland State Fire Prevention Commission  
December 19, 2013**

Mr. Chairman, members of the commission, it is my pleasure to present to you this report on the activities and events pertaining to the Office of the State Fire Marshal since the last meeting of the council.

**OSFM Personnel:** Currently, the OSFM is in the process of filling three Deputy State Fire Marshal positions at the Bomb Squad Unit, Upper and Lower Eastern Shore Regional Office. In addition we are filling two Fire Safety Inspector and two Contract Fire Inspector positions at Metro and Southern Region. Seven new positions have been requested and one upgraded position to meet the needs of a mid level supervisor within the agency. Lastly we are in the process of obtaining a full time IT position for the agency.

Effective November 13, 2013, Matthew Stevens was promoted to Deputy Chief State Fire Marshal and has reported to the Northeast Region as the new Commander for Harford and Cecil Counties. Fire Protection Engineer Ken Bush has been appointed to the NFPA Standards Council. This is a significant professional achievement and speaks volumes of Ken's long term commitment to fire and life safety. DFM Charles Widdoes retired from the agency on November 15, 2013 after 15 years of dedicated service.

**Fire Deaths:** As of this date, Maryland has recorded 66 fire deaths compared to 51 during the same period in 2012. More information about fire deaths in Maryland can be found at the OSFM website at [www.mdsp.org/firemarshal](http://www.mdsp.org/firemarshal) under the Document Downloads tab on the left side of the page.

**2013 Fire Deaths by Jurisdiction:**

Allegany County – 1	Garrett County – 1
Anne Arundel County – 4	Howard County - 1
Baltimore City – 20	Montgomery – 4
Baltimore County – 6	Prince George's County – 14
Calvert County - 1	St. Mary's County - 1
Carroll County – 2	Talbot - 1
Charles County – 1	Washington County – 2
Dorchester County – 1	Wicomico County - 1
Frederick County – 3	Worcester County - 2

**MFIRS:** We have been working with the leadership of the Maryland State Fireman's Association and the Maryland Fire Chief's Association to provide them with a list of delinquent reports by department. In addition we have updated this information on our web site which is now being updated on a weekly basis.

**Delmarva Smoke Alarm Donation:** The annual event involving the donation of smoke alarms for use in the Delmarva Power service area to the Maryland State Fire Marshal's Office was conducted on October 30, 2013 at the Delmarva Power, Salisbury Office Delmarva Power donated 1, 000 - 10 year long-life sealed battery smoke alarms at this year's event. Over the past ten years Delmarva has provide well over 10,000 smoke alarms.

**Passing of Maryland's First Fire Marshal:** James C. "Robbie" Robertson passed away on Saturday November 9, 2013 at the age of 84. Fire Marshal Robertson was appointed as Maryland's First Fire Marshal on July 17, 1964 by the State Fire Prevention Commission. Fire Marshal Robertson took office on September 1, 1964 and laid the foundation of the office. He served for 18 years as the State Fire Marshal. He was instrumental in making many changes to the fire and explosive laws in the state.

Fire Marshal Robertson's first book titled "Introduction to Fire Prevention" was published in July of 1975. The 8<sup>th</sup> edition of this publication was nearing completion at the time of his death. Fire Marshal Robertson was known nationally as a leading expert in fire prevention and will be missed by many.

To honor the memory and the many accomplishments of Fire Marshal Robertson the annual Deputy Fire Marshal of the Year award will now be named the James C, Robertson Award.

**Maryland Youth Fire Intervention Coalition:** The Maryland Youth Fire Intervention Coalition made up of representatives from several agencies and departments have attended multiple meetings to discuss and provide a direction to address juvenile fire setting issues in Maryland. Steady progress is being made with generic forms. The next meeting is expected to occur on January 14, 2014.

**Save the Date: - March 22, 2013 - Public Educator & Life Safety Seminar will be held in classroom 1 at MFRI in College Park.**

**Public Fire & Life Safety Grant Program:** In order to support the fire and life safety educational efforts of local fire companies, the OSFM in partnership with the Maryland State Firemen's Association is continuing the Public Fire and Life Safety Education Grant Program. This program is designed to provide assistance to MSFA member companies by providing funding assistance in the form of fire prevention publications and supplies for the development, continuation or enhancement of local public fire and life safety education efforts. It is recognized, effective public and life safety programs are one of the best ways to protect citizens and firefighters from injury and death caused by fire or other traumatic incidents. The next grant process will begin in February 2014.

**Fire and Life Safety Information Exchange Program:** The OSFM/MSFA intern, Melissa Williams is continuing to perform her exemplary tasks with updating and creating new content on the website. As a reminder, the Maryland Fire and Life Safety Information Exchange Program website is: [www.md lifesafety.org](http://www.md lifesafety.org).

**US Fire Administration – "Fire is Everyone's Fight" Initiative:** The U.S. Fire Administration has moved forward with the "Fire is Everyone's Fight" action plan. All members of the fire service are being encouraged to begin use of the initiative materials and logos immediately. The graphic and theme have been made available using the: [www.usfa.fema.gov/fireiseveryonesfight](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/fireiseveryonesfight) website.

**News Releases:** Please take time to visit the OSFM's Facebook page to find all of the educational news releases issued by the OSFM. There are at least two educational news releases issued every month. Share the releases on your Facebook pages as well. Like us at: <http://facebook.com/MarylandStateFireMarshal>.

Mr. Chairman, and members of the commission, this completes my report to you today. As always, it is our pleasure to provide you with this updated information. Thank you for your dedication and hard work in making Maryland a better place to live.

Thank You

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