

STATE FIRE PREVENTION COMMISSION
MINUTES
April 18, 2013

Members Present: Timothy F. Dayton, Chairman
Charles D. Davis, Vice Chairman
K.C. Harrington
Mark F. Hubbard
Eugene A. Jones
Martin J. LePore
Anthony J. Spencer
Richard L. Yinger

Member Absent: Sharon S. Gilyeat

Chairman Dayton called the meeting to order at the Laurel Municipal Building in Laurel, Maryland.

A moment of silence was observed for the victims, some of whom were first responders, of the Boston Marathon bombing and the West, Texas fertilizer plant explosion.

FIRE MARSHAL REPORT

Fire Marshal William E. Barnard reported the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) currently has four vacant full-time positions: two Fire Safety Inspector (FSI) and two Deputy State Fire Marshal (DSFM) positions. A hiring freeze exemption has been approved to fill the FSI positions. Progress is being made to fill one DSFM (explosive option) position with an applicant who is already trained. An exemption request to fill the contractual position in Headquarters vacated by Jane Edwards was denied. An FSI contractual employee in the Metro Region has submitted her resignation. Due to the agency budget and the new state employment hiring system procedures, filling the vacancies is progressing slowly.

As of April 17, 2013, Maryland has recorded 30 fire deaths compared to 18 for this period last year. Additional information is available at www.mdsp.org/firemarshal under document downloads. Prince George's County has reported eleven, Baltimore City seven, Frederick County three, Anne Arundel County two, and one each in Baltimore, Carroll, Charles, Dorchester, Garrett, Montgomery, and Talbot counties. Local jurisdictions are working hard with public education and smoke alarm installations but unfortunately it is very difficult to ensure all residences have working smoke alarms.

Several fire departments and/or counties are still behind in submitting their MFIRS reports. Please continue to remind all departments of the importance of submitting accurate reports by the 10th of the following month. All 2012 reports must be submitted to the federal government by July 1st so it is important that all companies submit their 2012 reports in order to gather the most accurate data.

The 2013 Public Fire and Life Safety Educator's Conference was held March 23rd at MFRI College Park. Fifty-two professionals attended the event and discussed information on residential fire sprinklers, carbon monoxide poisoning, Maryland weather phenomenon, and fire and life safety facts and preparation.

The Mid-Atlantic Life Safety Conference will be held Tuesday September 24th, and the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory Kossiakoff Conference Center in Laurel. This year's theme is "Doing More with Less".

This year's legislative session in Annapolis ended April 8th. The Fire Marshal thanked the Maryland Fire Service Legislative Working Group for their ongoing efforts to keep up with legislation. The group held weekly meetings in Annapolis to discuss legislative issues. Many thanks were extended to Annapolis City Fire Chief David Stokes for hosting the meetings and to Phil Hurlock of MIEMSS for his leadership in chairing the group. Of noted success was the passage of House Bill 1413 and Senate Bill

969 which repeals and recodifies numerous laws dealing with the requirements and installation of smoke alarms. Taking recommendations from the Smoke Alarm Technology Task Force Committee study and working with realtors and rental agency representatives, the final legislation to become effective July 1, 2013, will phase in requirements for the installation of long-life sealed battery alarms with a hush-button feature on all levels of dwellings. The legislation also includes realtor/landlord disclosure requirements. The OSFM will undertake an extensive public education campaign with other jurisdictions after the law is signed by the Governor.

The Fire and Life Safety Information Exchange Program's website at www.md lifesafety.org continues to be updated on a weekly basis.

The Maryland Youth Fire Intervention Coalition held another meeting on March 26th in Howard County. Three agencies presented their successful programs to assist with determining a common path to form guidelines throughout the State. If your department is interested, contact DSFM Bruce Bouch at bruce.bouch@maryland.gov. The next meeting is scheduled for June 4th, 9:00 a.m. at the Howard County Fire and Police Training Center in Marriottsville.

Sparky's Wish List program has been extended through 2013. Fire departments are encouraged to create a wish list for fire safety education materials. More 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. Members of the fire service are encouraged to begin using the materials and logos to assist with educating the public with fire and life safety practices. More information is available at www.usfa.fema.gov/fireiseveryonesfight.

The OSFM Bomb Squad is partnering with the Maryland State Police Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Division (MSP CVED) and MFRI to hold two training programs at MFRI College Park. The training will focus on fireworks permitting and site inspections, fireworks safety and accident review, and the role of the MSP CVED. The first portion of each day's training will be provided by the OSFM Bomb Squad. Each day will end with a presentation by MSP CVED on its role in hazardous product transportation enforcement. To register contact patricia.ward@maryland.gov.

Dover International Raceway in Dover, Delaware, will host a fire safety event September 27-29, 2013. The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) will be on location with a hospitality tent again this year. A new expansion to promote fire prevention and life safety efforts in a joint venture between the OSFM, the NFFF, and the Maryland State Firemen's Association will include a tent in the Fan Zone to include an interactive youth prevention area, a Kidde smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detector display, and information on residential fire sprinklers. The Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition will assist with a side-by-side burn demonstration on September 28th.

The International Code Council has proposed a change to the International Residential Code to delete the fire sprinkler requirements. The proposal is to exempt sprinkler requirements if the kitchen is provided with a portable fire extinguisher. The issue will be on the agenda for the meeting in Dallas, Texas next weekend. If the proposal is accepted, the only opportunity to change it will be at the October meeting in Atlantic City, New Jersey, when the final action vote takes place. New rules this year will only allow voting members as of April 1, 2013, to participate in the final vote. The Fire Marshal will keep a close eye on the progression of the proposal.

Fire Marshal Barnard attended a sprinkler summit sponsored by NFPA and gave a presentation on Maryland's many years of hard work in successfully getting residential sprinkler requirements adopted.

Please visit the OSFM's Facebook page for new educational news releases at <http://facebook.com/MarylandStateFireMarshal>.

An investigative team effort in Washington County including the OSFM, MSP, the Sheriff's Department, the State's Attorney's Office, and municipal law enforcement agencies has led to eight arrests in a series of more than 30 incendiary fires involving trash containers, vehicles, sheds, and barns which began March 17th. The case will go to Grand Jury on April 30th with additional charges anticipated. Fire Marshal Barnard commended the entire Western Regional Staff and OSFM staff from other regions that assisted in bringing closure to these investigations.

Fire Marshal Barnard and the Commission welcomed MSP Superintendent Brown's Chief of Staff Bernard Foster, Laurel Mayor Craig Moe, and Laurel Public Information Officer Pete Piringner to the meeting.

Fire Marshal Barnard announced he will not be seeking another term as the State Fire Marshal and will be retiring July 1, 2013. Although it was a difficult decision, he feels it is time to step down on his own terms. He enjoyed the job and is very proud of the successes Maryland has achieved with residential sprinkler initiatives, low propensity ignition cigarettes, and this year's passage of updated smoke alarm laws. Chief of Staff Foster, Chief Fire Protection Engineer Iseminger, and all the Commission members expressed their support in his decision and recounted memories in their own careers working with Mr. Barnard in many facets as he progressed through the ranks in the Prince George's County Fire Department, working for the State of Maryland in various capacities, and his dedicated involvement in countless professional organizations both in Maryland and throughout the country. His commitment to fire and life safety and his diligence in participating in the legislative process to improve the quality of life for Maryland citizens is to be commended. CFPE Iseminger commented that the OSFM has had only three Fire Marshals appointed since the modern era of the OSFM and establishment of the Commission in 1964 and the Commission has a very important task in selecting the next Fire Marshal.

The law requires the Commission to submit a list of three candidates to the Secretary of State Police who will then appoint the State Fire Marshal. Minimum requirements include graduation from an accredited university and five years recent experience in the fire sciences/engineering field including three at an administrative level. Mr. Foster offered his support in the selection process and recommended the Commission contact MSP Personnel Director Donald Lewis due to the changes in the Maryland hiring process. Fire Marshal Barnard also offered any assistance and guidance during the hiring process and transition. Commissioner Harrington motioned that the Commission accept his assistance and guidance in the selection of the next Fire Marshal. Motion seconded by Commissioner Yinger, and unanimously carried. The Commission will contact Mr. Lewis and develop a job announcement to advertise the position. All commission members expressed an interest in participating in the application review and selection process.

CHAIRMAN REPORT

Chairman Dayton reported Thursday's Steak and Crab Restaurant/David Hysan has filed an appeal in Anne Arundel Circuit Court for a second judiciary review of the Commission's decision to deny his appeal originally filed with the Commission in 2009 and remanded back to the Commission by the Court of Special Appeals in 2012. Secretary Ritchie has prepared and submitted the Commission's records to the Clerk of the Court.

The Chairman thanked Fire Marshal Barnard, CFPE Iseminger, members of the MSFA and the legislative work group for the many long days and nights in Annapolis during the legislative session. It was a good year for the fire service and the passage of updated smoke alarm laws is a great achievement.

OTHER BUSINESS

The members welcomed newly appointed Commissioner Eugene Jones to the Commission. Commissioner Jones replaced Commissioner Geraci who resigned after moving to Virginia. Commissioner Jones stated he retired after 27 years with Prince George's County Fire Department, which included serving as Chief and working in homeland security. He is happy to be a member of the Commission and looks forward to serving.

Vice Chairman Davis reported Past President of the MSFA Ladies Auxiliary Barbara McWilliams passed away recently. She was a dedicated member and will be greatly missed.

Commissioner LePore reported on a research project being undertaken by MFRI, NFPA's Fire Prevention Research Foundation, and Exponent Engineering of Bowie, Maryland with the main focus of the project being to research and identify published "Best Practices for Emergency Response Personnel" to incidents involving electric vehicle battery hazards. The research consisted of looking at both fully electric powered vehicles as well as hybrid vehicles (vehicles using both electric batteries and fossil fuel to power the vehicle). The research covered the following key areas of review: 1) best practices for handling and extinguishing electric battery vehicle fires, 2) identify and categorize different battery technologies, 3) identify required personal protective equipment (PPE), 4) develop, implement and test full scale burn scenarios using a test prop provided by the NFPA Research Foundation and electric batteries. The research identified that the standard procedures and PPE employed by the emergency services today is adequate and the strategy and tactics have been effective. The live burn scenarios were allowed to burn uncontrolled for approximately 12 minutes simulating dispatch and response times that may be experienced within a jurisdiction. Electric battery design is relatively unique and they are equipped with a significant amount of circuitry inside of the battery tying all of the internal components together. The internal electric circuitry does have a unique feature which can cause the battery to enter into a phase called thermal runaway which means it will continue to burn on its own. Routine extinguishment procedures have been effective, but additional research on post-accident fires caused by thermal runaway have shown that there has been some re-ignition occurring on some of the battery packs. Vehicles were involved in an accident, burned, extinguished, and isolated, and the following day or day and a half later the vehicle battery had reignited as well as reigniting the vehicle. The research group (Exponent Engineering) is planning to have the final report completed and submitted to the NFPA Research Foundation by June. Mr. Foster requested a copy of the final report be forwarded to him. Commissioner LePore will disseminate the report once finalized.

Motion by Vice Chairman Davis, second by Commissioner Spencer and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the February 21, 2013, meeting.

MEETING SCHEDULED

The next meeting is scheduled for:
Tuesday, June 18, 2013 – 11:30 a.m.
Roland E. Powell Convention Center
4001 Coastal Highway, (Room to be announced)
Ocean City, Maryland

Respectfully submitted,



Heidi Ritchie, Secretary