

**STATE FIRE PREVENTION COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES**  
**June 17, 2014**

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

Member Absent: Mark F. Hubbard  
Eugene A. Jones

Chairman Dayton called the meeting to order at the Roland E. Powell Convention Center in Ocean City, Maryland.

**FIRE MARSHAL REPORT**

Fire Marshal Brian Geraci reported the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) is unable to fill two Deputy State Fire Marshal (DSFM) positions, the Computer Specialist position, and one Fire Safety Inspector position due to budget cuts. The Department of State Police has been requested to reduce its FY 2015 budget by \$7.4 million. Hiring exemptions have been requested to fill the two contract Fire Safety Inspector positions but approval has not yet been granted. Orientation for potential DSFM applicants will begin in July. The application deadline for the Chief Deputy Fire Marshal (CDFM) and Computer Specialist positions have closed. Of the twenty-one applications received for the CDFM only one candidate qualified. A conditional offer of employment has been made. Two hundred forty-two applications for the Computer Specialist position were received but that position has been frozen. Fire Inspector George Via began employment on June 11<sup>th</sup> and has been assigned to the Southern Region. DSFM Dan Giblin resigned from the agency on May 24<sup>th</sup> to accept a position with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATFE). He is to be assigned to the Baltimore Field Office. Well wishes were extended for his success as a special agent. DSFM John Ray will transfer from the Southern Region to the Western Region on June 25<sup>th</sup>.

ATFE has officially retired accelerant detection K-9 Inez as of June 16<sup>th</sup>. K-9 Inez served with her partner DSFM Howard Ewing for nine years. They have both provided outstanding service across the state and nation. K-9 Blitz, a German shepherd, is the newest explosives K-9 team member. K-9 Blitz was received from the State Police and has been assigned to DSFM Edward Ernst in the Western Region. He is currently doing well in training and should be certified in the near future.

The following Senior DSFMs have been recognized as the DSFM of the year in their respective regions:

Joseph Walters – Northeast  
Edward Ernst – Western  
Brian Quick – Metro  
Caryn McMahon – Southern  
Daniel Giblin – Upper Eastern Shore  
Thomas Harr – Lower Eastern Shore

DSFM Ernst is the recipient the statewide Deputy State Fire Marshal of the Year Award. The commission members extended congratulations to DSFM Ernst for his outstanding performance.

The reorganization of the Headquarters Office has taken place with the reassignment of personnel from the Metro Region. Fire Marshal Geraci distributed a revised organizational chart of agency personnel.

As of today, 33 fire fatalities have been reported statewide, compared to 41 for this period last year. Additional information can be found at [www.mdsp.org/firemarshal](http://www.mdsp.org/firemarshal). The 2013 Fire Deaths Summary report was distributed. In addition to the fire fatality map on the website, Fire Marshal Geraci intends to post another map that accents some positive fire related aspects, such as the sprinkler and smoke alarm activations that save lives and property.

The Department of Motor Vehicles will begin putting fire and life safety messages on their public monitors in the waiting areas of their facilities. The messages will be in both English and Spanish.

The Fire Marshal has received reports from Prince George's County, Howard County, and the Gamber and Community Fire Company regarding their community outreach events during the weekend of May 17-18<sup>th</sup>. The reports indicate fire companies installed more than 200 smoke alarms in homes and replaced approximately 80 batteries. Numerous homes in Prince George's and Howard Counties were found to have inoperable or no smoke alarms, or alarms that were more than ten years old. Additional reports are expected. The next event is scheduled for October 18-19<sup>th</sup>.

The National Association of State Fire Marshals have approached the OSFM to transition from its outdated crowd manager on-line course to one that has been developed by their vendor. The cost to take their course is \$20 with some of the proceeds being sent back to the OSFM through FABSCOM.

Thirty-seven percent of the current OSFM vehicle fleet has over 200,000 miles and seventy-nine percent has over 100,000 miles.

The Fire Marshal may seek legislation to prohibit the sale of smoke alarms with 9-volt batteries in Maryland. California has already done so. The passage of the revised smoke alarm law was a tremendous victory but did not seek to prohibit 9-volt sales.

The International Code Council has begun allowing remote voting, thus giving members who are unable to attend the meetings a voice on code issues. There may be an effort during the next code cycle to remove the residential sprinkler requirements from the codes.

## **CHAIRMAN REPORT**

The Chairman and several commission members participated in various events held during this week's Maryland State Firemen's Association's (MSFA) convention in Ocean City. The Commission presented certificates of appreciation to this year's fire prevention award winners.

The Mid-Atlantic Life Safety Conference is scheduled for September 23<sup>rd</sup>. The brochure on workshops has been distributed. Members wishing to attend should advise Secretary Ritchie. The Fire Marshal is unsure whether funds will be available to pay the registration fee.

Commissioner Jones has informed the Chairman he will be resigning from the Commission to accept a new position with the District of Columbia as the Interim Fire Chief for Fire and Emergency Medical Services.

Chairman Dayton's second term expires June 30<sup>th</sup> and he is not eligible for re-appointment. He intends to continuing serving until replaced. Election of new officers will take place at the August meeting. He thanked former Fire Marshal William Barnard for encouraging him to serve after the untimely death of former Chairman Robert Shimer. On behalf of the members, Commissioner LePore thanked him for his leadership and good temperament dealing with some difficult issues.

Commissioner Spencer has received a letter from the Governor's appointment office advising that his reappointment to a second term will be delayed until after the general election and the new governor takes office. Based on this information, it is presumed that no new appointments or re-appointments will take place until next year.

Chairman Dayton attended Fire Marshal Geraci's MSFA convention workshop on hoarding yesterday. It is a growing issue that hopefully can be addressed.

The MSFA has dedicated this year's program to former Fire Marshal Barnard and the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Chairman Dayton acknowledged and welcomed guests who were in attendance: Former CFPE John Bender, former DCFM Mark Bilger, DCFM John Wagner, and FSI Jim Towers.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Chief Fire Protection Engineer (CFPE) Larry Iseminger reported the fee regulation amendments are currently being reviewed by the AELR committee, which has until June 18<sup>th</sup> to complete its review.

CFPE Iseminger reported he is working on the final chapter covering administrative personnel for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary book. It will then be ready for final editing. Chairman Dayton thanked CFPE Iseminger for his efforts and for providing the Commission members with a preview of Chapter 4. The history of the Commission contained in Chapter 4 was very helpful to him in developing tomorrow's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary presentation. Chairman Dayton, former Fire Marshals Rocco Gabriele and William Barnard, and current Fire Marshal Brian Geraci will be making a presentation as part of the MSFA convention events.

CFPE reported the OSFM is considering fees for the licensing of persons who service and repair portable fire extinguishers and the licensing for the installation, service, and repair of non-waterbased fire extinguishing systems. Fire Marshal Geraci is also reviewing fees currently being charged for other licenses and permits pertaining to explosives, blasters, and fireworks. It costs the agency approximately \$200 for each fireworks display permit when you consider the administrative and inspection time involved. Currently the cost for a permit is \$50 with a \$50 late application fee. Any new fees or current fees that are established by law will require legislative approval. All monies collected by the OSFM goes into the state's general fund. Commissioner Lepore suggested a built-in gradual increase of fees to cover the cost of inflation in years to come to avoid having to seek legislative approval again in a few years. He also recommended reviewing the various types of insurance requirements.

The schedule of fees in COMAR 29.06.04 for inspections and plan reviews will be due for an in-depth review next year. As in the past reviews, the Commission will form a sub-committee to conduct the review and request information on fees collected by the OSFM for the various services. The law requires the fees collected cover the costs of administering and providing the services.

Commissioner Yinger motioned that when appeals are scheduled and a postponement is requested that the Commission make every effort to keep with the bi-monthly meeting schedule. It is very difficult for the members, most of whom have full-time jobs, to re-arrange their schedules, and also for the secretary to coordinate a date with all parties involved. Second by Commissioner Spencer and carried unanimously.

Commissioner Yinger reported that Delaware recently passed a law prohibiting the underage sale of e-cigarettes. Fire Marshal Geraci will continue to monitor Maryland's status on legislation dealing with e-cigarettes.

Commissioner Spencer reported he will be retiring from his position with the Annapolis Department of Transportation. He will be pursuing other endeavors. The members wished him well.

Motion by Vice Chairman Davis, second by Commissioner LePore and unanimously carried to accept the minutes of the May 7<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **MEETING SCHEDULED**

The next meeting is scheduled for:  
Thursday, August 21, 2014 – 9:30 a.m.  
Laurel Municipal Building Council Chambers  
8103 Sandy Spring Road  
Laurel, Prince George's County, Maryland

Respectfully submitted,



Heidi Ritchie, Secretary