

**STATE FIRE PREVENTION COMMISSION
MINUTES
December 18, 2014**

Members Present: Charles D. Davis, Chairman
Timothy F. Dayton
Martin J. LePore
Anthony J. Spencer
Stacy Welch
Richard L. Yinger

Members Absent: Mark F. Hubbard, Vice Chairman
K.C. Harrington

Chairman Davis called the meeting to order at the Laurel Municipal Center in Laurel, Prince George's County.

FIRE MARSHAL REPORT

Fire Marshal Brian Geraci reported that the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) currently has eight vacancies, four sworn and four civilians. In the next month Deputy Chief State Fire Marshal (DCSFM) John Wagner and Office Clerk Linda Neal will both be retiring and Deputy State Fire Marshal (DSFM) Michael Guderjohn will be resigning to take a position with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. This will create a total of eleven vacancies. Two contractual Fire Safety Inspector (FSI) positions are also vacant but funding for these positions comes from the Department of Human Resources since they are assigned to do day care and foster care inspections. Since the OSFM current turn over expectancy rate is 11%, much higher than the usual 4%, the Department of State Police has granted approval to fill two sworn positions and two civilian positions. Approval must now be obtained from the Maryland Department of Budget and Management

Fire fatalities for Calendar Year 2014 currently stands at 55 compared to 67 in 2013, a 17% reduction. Additional information can be found at www.mdsp.org/firemarshal. Commissioner Dayton commended the efforts of Prince George's County for its significant reduction to three in 2014 from fifteen in 2013. Fire Marshal Geraci reported it is mainly their door-to-door efforts in neighborhoods to get smoke alarms installed in homes.

The following reports were received regarding the Community Risk Reduction Weekend October 18-19, 2014: Gamber Community Fire Company visited 63 homes and installed 27 smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. Howard County companies visited 410 homes, installed 22 smoke alarms and nine batteries. Get the message out for companies to participate in next year's spring and fall campaigns scheduled for May 16-17 and October 17-18, 2015.

Fire Marshal Geraci presented each Commission member with a shadow box containing the 50th anniversary badge and patch commemorating the 1964 establishment of the State Fire Marshal's Office and Fire Prevention Commission.

Delmarva Power has donated 1,200 residential 10-year long-life sealed lithium battery smoke alarms to the OSFM for distribution on the Eastern Shore and Cecil County. Since 2000, Delmarva Power has donated 20,150 regular smoke alarms, 1,042 hearing impaired smoke alarms, and 2,050 carbon monoxide alarms to fire safety officials in Maryland and Delaware for distribution in its service areas. Pepco has donated 1,000 smoke alarms each to Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. Commissioner Yinger expressed disappointment that no smoke alarms for the hearing impaired were donated this year because there definitely is a need. The Fire Marshal hopes to obtain some

through funds from FABSCOM via the on-line crowd manager training program fee. Commissioner Dayton reported his fire company recently had an incident with a resident whose woodstove flue was clogged and she couldn't hear the normal alarm which was only a few feet away. They will install a vibrating alarm on her recliner in which she sleeps in hopes this will assist in alerting her.

OSFM staff conducted 778 investigations from January through September 2014. 210 were criminal cases with 84 (40%) closed by arrest. 12,808 code enforcement inspections were conducted for this same period.

The Fire and Life Safety Educator Spring Seminar will be held Saturday March 28, 2015, at the Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute in College Park. Additional information will be forthcoming.

Updated information regarding fire and life safety information and news releases may be found at the following websites: www.mdilifesafety.org and <http://facebook.com/MarylandStateFireMarshal>.

CHIEF ENGINEER REPORT

Chief Fire Protection Engineer Larry Iseminger reported the first Code Update Review Committee meeting to review COMAR 29.06.01 State Fire Prevention Code is scheduled for January 6, 2015, in Howard County. He anticipates four to five meetings and hopes to have a proposal for the Commission's consideration at the April or June meeting.

He reminded the Commission that in 2015 COMAR 29.06.04 Fees for Fire Prevention Services is due for an in depth review.

He distributed the 50th OSFM/FPC Anniversary booklet he compiled to those members who were unable to attend the 50th Anniversary dinner banquet. He reported the banquet was very nice with a good turnout.

Fire Protection Engineer C.J. Giblin assigned to the Headquarters Office recently passed his professional engineer exam and will be eligible for a salary upgrade.

Fire Protection Engineer Dan Hoang assigned to the Western Region is currently on a month-long working vacation to visit his home country of Vietnam and to speak at seminars in Australia on theology. In addition to his degree in engineering, FPE Hoang has a PhD in philosophy and MA in theology and religious studies. During his absence, CFPE Iseminger has been handling duties in the Western Region.

CHAIRMAN REPORT

Chairman Davis thanked Commissioners Spencer and Welsh for volunteering to serve on the Code Update Review Committee.

Effective January 1, 2015, the State Building Code will require automatic sprinkler protection in new one- and two-family dwellings. Local jurisdictions have six months to adopt and/or amend the 2015 building codes but law prohibits, with a few specific exceptions, the deletion of the residential sprinkler requirements.

The Chairman thanked the staff of the OSFM for its efforts in closing criminal investigations and conducting code enforcement inspections.

Chairman Davis requested the Fire Marshal send Commission members copies of news releases issued by the OSFM. The Fire Marshal will advise his staff to add the Commission to the list of recipients.

OTHER BUSINESS

Motion by Commissioner Yinger, second by Commissioner Dayton, and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the October 16, 2014, meeting.

Commissioner Spencer is seeking to bring awareness to post traumatic stress disorder experienced by many firefighters, law enforcement officers, as well as military personnel. He did his Master's Degree thesis on the subject which recently has been published.

Former Fire Marshal William Barnard was present at the meeting and wished everyone happy holidays. He stated the current Fire Marshal faces many challenges and with many new delegates and senators being elected, the 2015 legislative session should be very interesting. Fire Marshal Geraci reported he sent correspondence to all the legislators in an effort to open communications. Fire service representatives will be meeting on January 9th in preparation for the 2015 session. Members of the Maryland Fire Chiefs Association will be meeting and attending the Legislative Reception in Annapolis on January 29th.

Commissioner Dayton commended Deputy State Fire Marshal John Ray assigned to the Western Region for his efforts in closing several cases in Allegany County with 24 charges being filed against a volunteer firefighter.

Commissioner Yinger reported there apparently is an arsonist setting fires on Hooper's Island in Dorchester County and hopes that OSFM personnel can soon apprehend the perpetrator.

Commissioner Welch inquired if there have been any legislative discussions to require carbon monoxide alarms in commercial establishments. The Fire Marshal is not aware of any proposals.

MEETING SCHEDULED

The next meeting has been scheduled for
Thursday, February 19, 2014 – 9:30 a.m.
Taylor Avenue Fire Station
620 Taylor Avenue, Upper Level Classroom
Annapolis, Anne Arundel County

Respectfully submitted,



Heidi Ritchie, Secretary