



MINNESOTA BOARD OF FIREFIGHTER TRAINING AND EDUCATION

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MBFTE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

November 15, 2016

11:30 am

Camp Ripley

1. Call to order - Chair Mark Bergerson, meeting called to order at 12:00 p.m.
 - a. Attendance in person: Eric Hedtke, Rick Loveland, Chip Lohmiller, Chris Ford, Greg Withers, Gary Stevens, Mark Bergerson, Jim Fisher, Christine Patrick, Dean Wrobbel, Bruce West, Steve Flaherty (Executive Director), and Margaret Koele (License Coordinator)
 - b. Attendance via teleconference: Amanda MacDonell and Roger Ihrke
 - c. Guests: Marv Calvin (M-State) and Robert Hawkins (DPS Assistant Commissioner)
 - d. Absent: Kelly Slavik and Jonathan Kahnke
 - e. Accept agenda
 - a. Agenda additions
 - i. Training information
 - i. Survey responses
 - ii. Reimbursement option
 - f. Approval of August Minutes
 - a. Motion from Jim Fisher and second from Gary Stevens to approve the August 16, 2016 minutes as written, motion carried.
2. Officers Reports
 - a. Chair, Mark Bergerson
 - a. Nothing to report.
 - b. Vice Chair, Chip Lohmiller
 - a. Nothing to report.
 - c. Treasurer, Dean Wrobbel
 - a. Financials have been reviewed and approved as shown.
 - i. Each member of the board was given an abbreviated version of the financials to review.
 - d. Fire Safety Account Balance Update – Bruce West, State Fire Marshal
 - a. The current balance of the account is \$3,902,194.97.
 - e. Secretary, Amanda MacDonell
 - a. Nothing to report.
3. Executive Director Report – Steve Flaherty
 - a. Leadership Development
 - i. We have 13 students in leadership development class that started in October. The next course offering will be December 2-3 at Camp Ripley and there are 16 students scheduled to attend. We currently have 26 on a waiting list for next fiscal year.

- b. NJPA (National Joint Powers Alliance)
 - i. There is \$165,000 budgeted for NJPA funds for training reimbursements in Region 5 area, which is an additional \$155 per firefighter award amount in this region. In addition, the NJPA is offering \$175,000 in training reimbursements for EMS, law enforcement and county health agencies, which is being run through MBFTE this fiscal year.
 - ii. Bruce West, State Fire Marshal and Steve Flaherty, MBFTE Executive Director met with the NJPA board in September and plan to meet with them annually.
- c. Training Reimbursements
 - i. EMS
 - i. \$193,000 reimbursed to date for 138 departments.
 - i. \$39,000 EMS
 - ii. \$22,000 EMR
 - iii. \$18,000 Backfill & OT
 - ii. The FAO, Officer 1, Instructor 1 and Bridge classes being offered this year around the state are being received very well. We are getting great feedback for these classes around the state. We will send this program information out to all the Regional Directors so they know there is funding available this year.
- d. Conferences / Cancer awareness/Mental Health regional projects
 - i. We have awarded 23 different agencies funding for conferences and seminars this fiscal year, which had a budget of \$95,000.
 - ii. We have received four reimbursement requests, to date, for events held and over 1,000 firefighters have benefited from this funding.
 - iii. Steve Flaherty, Executive Director commented that he, Kevin Sedivy and Tate Mills has attended each of the events held so far. If any board member would like to attend any funded events, we have them posted on the calendar that is on our web site.
- e. Live Burns
 - i. We have a budget of \$198,400 (132@ \$1500 ea.), in FY17. There are 25 live burns currently on the waiting list for FY17.
- f. Cancer awareness/Mental Health regional projects
 - i. We have a calendar of the upcoming programs being held throughout the regions. This program is receiving very positive feedback throughout the regions.
 - ii. Century College has submitted a curriculum of their program that is being offered throughout the state. This program has met the board goals and expectations.
 - iii. Each program being requested will need to submit a curriculum to meet the board objectives for this program before it can be approved.
- g. Licensing
 - i. We are currently at 4,050 licenses that are active. Margaret Koele, License Coordinator has been cleaning up the license data base by reaching out to expired licensees for reinstatement or renewals. We have increased the number of licenses by over 1000 active license within the last year.
- h. MAD Study (Management and Analysis Development)

- i. This will be run through the Fire Marshal Division funded through the fire safety account for approximately \$100,000. There will be listening sessions being held throughout the state for the fire service. We are not sure yet where those listening sessions will be held. They will also be checking what other states do in comparison to Minnesota. This study will help the board see what has been accomplished and what direction to head for the future.
 - i. Bruce West, State Fire Marshal commented he will be in attendance at each of the listening sessions and they will probably be held at about 5 or 6 locations around the state. Steve Flaherty and he will be taking a trip to Iowa to see the Fire Marshal there about the training program offered throughout their state from the Fire Marshal Division.
- b. Executive/Legislative Committee - Chair Mark Bergerson
 - a. Nothing to report.
- c. Licensing/License Review Committee – Chair Eric Hedtke
 - a. Legislation Update (Statutes)
 - i. The committee had discussions regarding amending the following statutes:
 - i. Amend 299N.02 subd.2
 - ii. Amend 299N.02 subd.2 (a) under “The board may”
 - iii. Amend 299N.03 subd.7
 - iv. Amend 299N.04 subd.1 and 299N.04 subd.1 (a)
 - i. Eric Hedtke commented that this would open up the board to accept other accredited agencies certification. We currently only accept IFSAC accreditation examinations and this would allow the board to accept Pro-Board or any other credible agency. This would also include accepting the NWCG which is the accrediting agency for the DNR wildland firefighter’s certifications.
 - ii. Rick Loveland commented that the license committee should discuss setting classification of licenses as volunteer, paid on call and wildland firefighters should not be in the same classification as career firefighters. We should list each “Nationally Accredited” agency in statute as there are no other National Accredited agencies for firefighters except Pro Board and IFSAC.
 - iii. Marv Calvin, M-State, explained the history of the statute in 2009 that the definition of a “firefighter” was written to include volunteer, paid on call and career firefighters to carry the bill forward through legislation.
 - iv. Gary Stevens commented that the examination should state completing NFPA1001 standards rather than stating fire prevention, fire suppression and hazardous materials operation.
 - v. Steve Flaherty, Executive Director commented that by the definition of “Fire Department” has the meaning given in statute that includes a division of a state

agency, regularly charged with the responsibility of providing fire protection to the state or local government, to include a private, nonprofit fire department directly serving a local government, but does not include an industrial fire brigade. Under the “full-time firefighter” definition states a person who is employed and charged with the prevention and suppression of fires within the boundaries of the state on a full-time, salaried basis and who is directly engaged in the hazards of firefighting or is in charge of a designated fire company or companies that are directly engaged in the hazards of firefighting. The way the statute is written all volunteer, paid-on-call and wildland are all “firefighters” by definition.

1. Steve Flaherty, Executive Director, also commented that we would look at the NWCG, which is the wildland certification accrediting agency, and compare the training certification requirements and compare to the NFPA1001 standards to meet the training requirements for licensing in statute. We have been told there is a parallel training in NWCG that meets the requirement.
 2. Greg Withers wanted to know if the DNR would go to the legislature to change the statute on their own. Steve Flaherty, Executive Director, commented they would not do that as they are working with our board on how we chose to handle the situation.
- vi. Dean Wrobbel suggested that we have a classification license of “Wildland Firefighter”. Also, that the training for the license under their accredited program NWCG compare to the structural side under the NFPA1001 standards. Dean Wrobbel also suggests that the accredited agency should be listed and the board should not be the one to decide what an accredited program is. Also it should be listed as “National Accredited Agency”.
 - vii. Roger Ihrke mentioned that we need to be careful on what criteria we are using to approve what form of training is considered accredited for licensing.
 - viii. Eric Hedtke agreed that under the statute and how it is written the DNR wildland full time firefighters would need to be licensed. We do need to do some sort of changes to accommodate this situation under statute as they fall within the wording under statute with what a “department and firefighter is”. We can have more

discussion at later date regarding classification of licenses.

- ix. Mark Bergerson agreed that opening up the statute is to allow the board to accept other accredited agency certifications for those coming from other states to get licensed. We do not want to hold up a department hiring someone based on the fact we only accept FSAC. This would include Pro Board and NWCG as other accredited agencies for the board to accept for licensure.
- v. Repeal 299N.04 subd.1 (b)
- vi. 299N.04 subd.1(c) amend to (b)
- vii. Amend 299N.04 subd.2
- viii. Amend 299N.04 subd.3
- ix. Amend 299N.05 subd.1
 - i. Eric Hedtke wanted to let the board know this is for clarification on license requirements by adding the license can be obtained while serving a probationary period, if any, by a department. Also, to make the statute easier to understand. Under the current statute we do not allow for probationary period it states must be licensed if employed by a fire department.
- x. Amend 299N.05 subd.2
- xi. Repeal 299N.05 subd.4
- xii. Amend 299N.05 subd.5
- xiii. Amend 299N.05 subd.6 (a)(1)(2)(3)
- xiv. Repeal 299N.05 subd.6 (c)
- xv. Amend 299N.06
 - i. Eric Hedtke wanted to let the board know we added reciprocity to the statute.
 - ii. Steve Flaherty, Executive Director, commented that we wanted to open up reciprocity so that we do not restrict employment in Minnesota without the firefighter having to go through more certifications when they already have Pro Board or IFSAC certification.
- ii. After lengthy discussion on the legislative changes Mark Bergerson recommended we table the legislative discussion until the next meeting. Rick Loveland then made a motion to table this agenda item until further review of the changes are discussed with MPFF, since they will be carrying the bill for us. We can then call special meetings to discuss again in January. Motion second by Dean Wrobbel, and the motion carried.
- b. The board agreed that license renewals will be opening up January 2, 2017 for all licenses expiring January 2, 2017 through June 30, 2017. The licenses will be renewed for a three year period expiring June 30, 2020.
- d. Training Committee Report - Chair Dean Wrobbel
 - a. We went through the NJPA reimbursements and the live burn waiting list.

- b. Survey done by Margaret Koele, License Coordinator
 - i. FF1 & FF2 split
 - i. 238 would not want to split NFPA1001 between two years.
 - ii. 141 said they would like the program split.
 - 1. We would have to start this at the beginning of the biennium to pilot a program to see if it is beneficial.
 - ii. Training software
 - i. 325 responses would like a state wide training program.
 - ii. 58 said they would not.
 - 1. There is a company called "Target Solutions" we are researching and have offered a state wide program for training records. We would like to do a webinar for departments to see the feedback on this type of program across the state.
 - 2. Rick Loveland agrees we need this type of program and did anyone consider "League of Cities" program. If we are researching we should look at a program that would leave the money in the state rather than pay for something out of the state. Dean Wrobbel agreed we can certainly look at that program as an option.
 - 3. Mark Bergerson commented this would be a great program that we could pull reporting on training around the state.
 - iii. 277 departments responded that EMS training is critical to department needs.
 - iv. 108 responded it is not critical.
 - v. We asked if departments utilize their full reimbursement program funds and the responses that were sent back are listed in your handout with reasons some did not utilize the funds.
 - ii. Reimbursement to provider verses department with submissions monthly - brought up at last Board meeting.
 - i. This would be very costly to change the whole data base side to this sort of pay out tracking and reimbursement approximately over \$5000 in work that would be weeks of re-programming and re-writing the program.
 - ii. Also would have to design whole new reconciliation process in programming and with MMB with different funding streams being used.
4. Old Business
- a. Rail/Pipeline Safety Training Update – Bruce West, State Fire Marshal
 - a. Still plenty of funding available. They are into step two the operational training. It is continued across the state with training.

- b. Appointment Vacancy
 - i. The board welcomed Chris Ford as a new board member that will represent for MPFF.
 - b. Appointments Vacancies that will Post in November
 - i. Amanda MacDonell (MSFDA)
 - i. Not requesting reappointment
 - ii. Jim Fisher
 - i. Requesting reappointment
 - iii. Dean Wrobbel
 - i. Requesting reappointment
 - c. Strategic Plan Discussion– Executive Committee Report Mark Bergerson, Chair
 - a. The session was held at Camp Ripley September 26-27. We discussed some changes with an update to our mission and vision statements. We talked about what we would like to do moving forward with new obtainable goals. This is a rough draft of those notes and we would like to adopt these as our strategic plan for 2016 moving forward.
 - i. Steve Flaherty, Executive Director, commented this was a good meeting to revisit the mission and vision within an organization. The goals had all been met from the past strategic plan and this gives good direction in moving forward to new goals. This also gives anyone looking at what the MBFTE is all about a clear picture of what the strategic mission is of the board.
 - ii. Bruce West, Fire Marshal, commented that it was a great strategic planning session and a lot of good discussion, we wish that everybody could have attended.
 - b. Bruce West, Fire Marshal, motioned for approval of the draft notes to be adopted as the MBFTE 2016 strategic plan. Christie Patrick, second the motion. Motion carried with nobody opposing the motion.
 - d. HMEP Grant
 - a. We just completed the fiscal year for this grant and gave back \$35,000. They are meeting in December for the next round of funding.
5. New Business
 - a. Bruce West, Fire Marshal, would like to see direct billing for Providers for reimbursements. We would like to make sure that reimbursements are being submitted so the paperwork does not get left on a desk and not turned in by a city clerk or department. This would help the departments save time on submitting paperwork and letting the provider submit the paperwork for them to be paid directly and not through the department, city or township. This will take time to set up and could be set up to start July 1, 2017. Steve Flaherty, Executive Director commented that we will still have the same process for our fiscal audit process that the department chief or designee will need to sign off on the direct payment and the finance/treasurer will still have to sign the form also.
 - a. Software proposal to accommodate the data base for this program.
 - i. Dean Wrobbel motioned to approve the proposal for the data base changes to accommodate providers to be paid directly, Jim Fisher second motion carried. Motion carried with Rick Loveland voting against the motion.
6. Public Comment

- a. No public comment.
- 7. Adjourn
 - a. Meeting adjourned at 1:55 p.m.