



## MBFTE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

**DATE:** August 11, 2021

**TIME:** 10:03 a.m.

**LOCATION:** Elk River Fire Department

Board Member	In Person	TEAMS	Teleconference	ABSENT
Reno Wells – Assoc. of Townships				X
Dean Wrobbel – League of Cities	X			
Rick Loveland - MPFF	X			
Jonathan Kahnke - MSFDA	X			
Chip Lohmiller - MSFCA	X			
Roger Ihrke – League of Cities		X		
Chris Ford - MPFF	X			
John Peura – Public Member		X		
Robert Dixon Jr - MSFDA		X		
Roxanne Altmeyer - MSFDA		X		
Jim Fisher – Assoc. of Townships		X		
Gavin Peterson – MSFDA	X			
Becki White - MSFCA		X		
Natascha Hennen - MSFDA	X			
Jim Smith – SFM - DPS		X		

Guests: Dave Schliek (MFSCB), David Jensen (SFMD FSS), DeeDee Jankovich (MnFIRE), Theresa Zikmund (MFSCB), Wayne Kewitsch (MnFIRE), Steve Shapira (Century), Dave Yurczyk (MSFDA), Patrick Kelley (M-State College & University Office), Jared Rozeboom (SFMD FSS), Assistant Commissioner Bruce West, Galen McCarthy (MN-West), and Chris Johnson (Ridgewater)

Staff: Steve Flaherty, Executive Director, Margaret Koele, License Coordinator

## **I. Call to order – Dean Wrobbel, Chair**

- a. Roll call attendance completed above
- b. Agenda additions
  - i. At large board position
  - ii. Recognition from certification board
  - iii. Present Governor certificate to Jon Kahnke for service on the board
  - iv. Accept agenda with additions
    - 1. Rick Loveland motioned to approve the agenda with additions, Natascha Hennen second the motion
      - a. Roll call approval of the agenda, motion carried unanimously

## **II. Approval of minutes from May 11, 2021**

- a. Jonathan Kahnke motioned to approve the minutes, Becki White second the motion
  - i. Roll call approval of the minutes, motion carried unanimously

## **III. Reports**

- a. Treasurer, John Peura
  - i. Financials are in order and getting good reports from local fire departments on redistribution
    - 1. Steve Flaherty commented that we are closing our books this week with fiscal
  - ii. FSA balance, Marshal Smith
    - 1. \$178,488.99 - FY22 July collections
- b. Executive Director, Steve Flaherty
  - i. Total budget was about \$8 million for FY21 and with COVID restrictions, the training still took place with all department requests being met for reimbursement, less than \$20,000 will be going back to the fire safety account
    - 1. 630 departments submitted for reimbursement this year (145 did not submit anything)
    - 2. Region five departments that get additional Sourcewell funds at \$205 per firefighter, had 47 of the 49 submit for reimbursement and 40 spent all Sourcewell and MBFTE funding
    - 3. NFPA1001 we carried over the FY19 students due to COVID, 942 students were covered with 1765 certifications. In the last three years, since the board has put the criteria of completing the course with pass of certifications for accountability of the funds, we have reimbursed 2100 students (this funding does not impact the per firefighter department award)
    - 4. 125 live burns reimbursed
    - 5. 14 different agencies were approved for funding in FY21, but only six took place due to COVID

6. 18 students completed the Leadership course in FY21 with a total of 196 students attending this training over the last seven years at no cost. We have a waiting list of 75 students - (all COVID safety protocol was in place when class took place)
  7. 101 Officer, 129 FAO and 130 Instructor students went through these programs in FY21 and were covered either by the special funding or department award
  8. The speaker series was well received and we had over 4000 registered participants. We started out strong and then dropped off when COVID restrictions were lifting. This ended up a cost of about \$11 per participant
    - a. Rick Loveland would like to have a better way to track the groups that watch the presentations in the recorded registrations, as they had several people in the room that could not be recorded in the count. It was a great program
  9. FSAC awarded MBFTE with \$1.2 million in one- time appropriation for FY22 per firefighter funding
  10. FY21 was a very successful year for the MBFTE with the funding and getting that to the fire service. We had several key people that helped make that happen through their hard work & diligence, those people are the four Fire Service Specialists, as well as Margaret Koele License coordinator
  11. AC West will be retiring and we will greatly miss him in the fire service. He has moved this board in a good direction, as a past Executive director, and we thank him for all his contributions to the board and wish him the best in a happy & long retirement
    - a. Dean Wrobbel, on behalf of the board, would also like to thank AC West for all the work he has done and thank Margaret Koele & Steve Flaherty for pushing out all that funding for the board to meet all the deadlines for fiscal end and meeting budgets
- ii. COVID update – Steve Flaherty, Executive Director MBFTE
    1. The staff are working hybrid currently and will be reporting to work on Mondays starting in September, with one other day to alternate. MBFTE will be in the office during the work week and we are back on mask mandates
  - iii. Target Solutions update – Steve Flaherty, Executive Director
    1. 137 departments connected through the core version. The company is now called VectorSolutions and the program is going well
      - a. 4000 firefighters with access to online training through the program
  - iv. Certification board transition update
    1. Legislation update – Steve Flaherty, Executive Director
      - a. The legislative language did not go through and SFMD did not get statutory approval. Marshal Smith let the certification board know we are no longer interested in pursuing the program through the state





- a. Reviewed 16 applications and would like to recommend to the board to fund 11 of those applications for a total of \$29,700 in this year's budget
  - b. Becki White revised the application to be more clear on what we will fund and what the committee is looking for
    - i. Roxanne Altmeyer wanted to thank Becki White for the application revision
  - c. Rick Loveland would like a list of the conference & seminars that were approved for recommendation
    - i. Steve Flaherty replied the list will be posted on the website once the board makes a budget decision
- d. Executive Committee, Chair Dean Wrobbel
  - i. No quorum discussion only meeting
  - ii. Discuss combining Training & Executive Committee or having different members on each committee or combine the two committees
  - iii. Budget discussion
  - iv. Conference & seminar grant discussion
  - v. Marshal Smith commented that the oil refineries are now required to have full time fire departments (Marathon & St Paul Park)
  - vi. Marshal Smith commented he spoke to the FSAC chair for making a formal proposal that the Fire Marshal requests be honored first then the MBFTE, also talked about what fully funded means at the MBFTE level
    - 1. We discussed what goal we would like, it was \$200 per firefighter, but is that something we should be thinking a higher amount verses relying on redistribution
      - a. Dean Wrobbel wanted to thank Marshal Smith & Steve Flaherty for working hard on behalf of the MBFTE to get us up to a \$4.5 million budget
- e. Licensing, Chair Rick Loveland
  - i. FT - 2273
  - ii. PT – 135
  - iii. POC – 1174
  - iv. VOL –322
  - v. Unaffiliated – 10 (active licenses renewed and the individual is no longer affiliated with a department but will remain licensed until expiration)
  - vi. 6 applications in process, we should see an increase with more departments hiring full time staff
    - 1. The committee will only meet on a as needed basis
- f. Fire Service Specialist Report – David Jenson FSS
  - i. Update was sent out to all board members. We were very busy this summer with line 3 civil unrest. We got out and met with many departments, attended regional and county meetings. The month of June we worked with getting rosters submitted by

departments, as well as getting reimbursements in. We have contacted over 500 departments with most of our conversations being in regard to MBFTE.

#### IV. Old business

- a. No old business

#### V. New business

- a. FY22 budget worksheet discussion

- i. See attached worksheet (Discussion on funding below)

1. Dean Wrobbel would like to see us fund the FAO, Officer and Instructor programs with pass of certification again. We are trying to drive for professionalism and what levels we are trying to hold people to. I would like to see certification passing kept in there to hold people accountable. We are requiring qualified instructors now, which you need to be instructor I certified
2. Rick Loveland commented in regards to funding the DNR leadership courses request that did not get funded by FSAC, that it seems like a high cost per student at \$1877, when have 75 people wait list for an MBFTE sponsored Leadership course. I would like to see the funding kept for the structural side. I have been tasked by people we represent to put more money into the per firefighter reimbursement
3. John Kahnke agreed with Rick Loveland on the funding for the per firefighter and the Chair on the other programs which are virtually more important than funding the DNR program
4. Natascha Hennen wanted to clarify that it is for 5 classes of DNR leadership courses, and she agrees with keeping the funding in the rural area with the per firefighter funding. I also agree with the officer, instructor & FAO. It is a great class, but hard to spend quarter million on a class that takes a week of your time to go through
5. Jim Fisher says rural needs more training on the wild fire side, we work with DNR and agrees some training to be set up, but does not agree with the 5 day course
  - a. Natascha Hennen clarified it is a leadership course not training on wild land fires, it is how to manage people
6. John Peura commented that you are bringing in the experts to interface the wild land fire side with the structure side being a valuable training. The MBFTE is more on the structural side of things, so feel it would be important to have the DNR training as well as everything the board is proposing
7. Roger Ihrke commented that we should go back to basics and put everything in RFR and let departments decide what classes they would like to take. A lot of the classes are not being spread out over the state and taken by a certain group with certain size fire departments. The rural departments and some of the larger departments also, have their own programs and so they are not doing these classes. The only class I would fund out of all the programs would be the NFPA1001 course because new firefighters coming on should be allowed to be

trained, leaving enough money for the departments to do the training they would like

8. Becki White agrees with the other comments on the DNR classes, as there are many leadership courses out there through FEMA and the Fire Academy, which are free to the firefighters. I am going to throw my hat in with Roger Ihrke with NFPA1001 & live burns are essential to make sure people have the basic foundation of training and beyond that the Chief's across the state would appreciate having a say as to where the money goes when they are trying to train their people, speaking on behalf of the MSFCA
9. John Kahnke commented if MBFTE gives more money to the departments, to be prepared for some of their budgets from the municipalities to be cut. We would not be gaining on the fire department side, but losing
  - a. Steve Flaherty commented that is correct, as we get many calls on what the MBFTE award will be each fiscal year when they are setting department budgets
  - b. Rick Loveland commented that the FSAC, which I am a member on that committee, was tasked with putting together a strategic plan with the money coming in, because when we are in the first biennial funds are limited, then in the second biennial it is like hunger games. We have asked Steve Flaherty what MBFTE's magic number is to be fully funded, which seems to be \$8 million, and how do we get there. We are asking the SFMD and statewide teams the same question, to work on getting the groups we are statutory responsible to fund, fully funded. It is our charge here to also take care of the fire departments.
    - i. Rick Loveland motioned to adopt the budget as shown, with adding to it: instructor, officer, FAO and remove DNR leadership, with Chris Ford seconding the motion
      1. Natascha Hennen asked if they could have a break out session with their respected organization members to talk about the budget information
  - c. Roger Ihrke commented that on the comment made if we give them more money that their department budgets would be reduced; when departments set up contracts with townships or cities they are only stating training will be included, not what training or costs of training. Training is part of their job as a Government unit. Any additional funding they get from the state provides better training. That is the message the state needs to deliver to these people, not the fact that their budget will get cut if you they get more money from the state. That is not the entire idea of this program, it is to supplement what they are already getting for training and not have it removed. I take a little offense to that comment and this is the message we need to send out. I also stand by my previous

statement, it is nice to have all those classes, but if they are that good then departments will send their firefighters to them. Let them spend their money on them, as we should not be funding them. They should be able to take their money and decide if it is a good class to send their people to and not just a select few on a list that get to use the funds if we are funding the classes. I think the department should make the decision. I would like to see the people that attend these classes and where they are from. I will support this budget if this is the one that you want to move forward with, but I am a firm believer to put into the RFR and let the departments decide how to spend the funding

- d. John Peura commented that local Government aid is for public safety that includes fire departments and is supplemental. Local agencies should not be reducing funding because of MBFTE, which falls into such a category as the local Government aid programs, which is all supplemental
  - i. Steve Flaherty commented that a lot of what we do, the FSS as well as myself, is explaining to the Chiefs that these funds are a supplement to a budget not to supplant their budget, but reality is their budgets do get cut because of this funding. We do not have any control or authority over those decisions with local municipalities
- e. Dean Wrobbel commented that the Executive committee has had this discussion and we try to educate that these funds are not to be included in their budgets, but it does happen and Chiefs have to do more educating their fiscal agents on the program
  - i. Motion on the floor by Rick Loveland to approve the budget with amendments listed: removing DNR, \$140 per firefighter, 645 students NFPA1001 with certification, 100 live burns, \$29700 conference & seminars, \$79910 Leadership, 65 Instructor with certification, 70 Officer with certification, 70 FAO with certification, with amendment that in order to pay out they have to pass all the certifications for each course to get reimbursed, does not matter if 1-4 instructor/officer courses, FAO/Instructor/Officer get one fiscal year to complete and NFPA1001 get two fiscal years to complete the full program  
Second of the motion with amendments by Chris Ford
    - 1. Roll call vote completed – motion carried
      - a. Unanimous vote budget approved (Roger Ihrke lost connection on Teams during the vote and Reno Wells was absent) Motion carried

**b. Training & Executive Committee**

- i. Dean Wrobbel commented that at the last meeting we did not have a quorum and the question is do we want to combine the two committees or look at other people so we can have two committees made up of different people
  - ii. Rick Loveland commented that you need to have an Executive Committee, the rest are work groups
    - 1. Margaret Koele commented that work groups are still considered a committee and fall under meeting rules for public meetings. The Executive Committee is your officers and a committee you need under the bylaws. The board has limited the number of 5 to a committee because if you have more it is a quorum and considered a board meeting
    - 2. Dean Wrobbel commented thinks we should have two different committees
  - iii. Natascha Hennen would like to try and combine Executive and Training committee to see how that goes, if gets to be a lot then can break back into two committees
  - iv. Rick Loveland commented that the groups were made to be able to recommend to the board verses having long board meetings
    - 1. Motion to combine the committees by Natascha Hennen, second by Rick Loveland
      - a. Dean Wrobbel commented that it was suggested by MPFF to have the two committees so that everyone has a voice in recommendations being made
      - b. Margaret Koele commented this discussion happens every couple years, if you refer back to past minutes the same people that volunteer for the committees and to be officers of this board, no other members are stepping up due to time, drive time, or no interest to be on them
      - c. Jim Fisher commented that you need to make sure you have all the groups represented, so one group does not take over the whole thing
      - d. Dean Wrobbel replied to open up for one week to have members email him if they want to be on a committee to see what response we get
        - i. Motion called again to combine the two committees
          - 1. Roll call taken, Motion Carried
            - a. Approve to combine – Gavin Peterson, Jim Fisher, Jon Kahnke, Chip Lohmiller, Rick Loveland, Chris Ford, Natascha Hennen
            - b. Against – John Peura, Jim Smith, Robert Dixon Jr, Becki White, Dean Wrobbel
            - c. Absent from vote - Roxanne Altmeyer, Reno Wells and Roger Ihrke
- c. Presentation of Governor certificate
  - i. Jon Kahnke was presented with a certificate of recognition from the State of MN signed by Governor Walz for the years served on MBFTE

- d. Certification letter from Dave Schliek wanted to share good news and thank the board for certification record setting year and recognized the long time collaboration between the two groups
- e. Thank the FSS for the work they do on behalf of MBFTE

#### **VI. Public Comment**

- a. Wayne Kewitsch (MnFIRE) – thank you for help getting the HomeTown Heroes program passed and with that funding we will be able to cover any training in NFPA1001 and the Leadership course rather than having to charge for it, will all be free of charge to the MBFTE
- b. Dave Yurczyk (MSFDA) asked what the difference is between part time and paid on call
  - i. Rick Loveland commented it is how they classify them by department in the job description
  - ii. Margaret Koele commented there is now a description that paid on call is strictly paid a set amount per call they go on and part time is paid hourly for their time

#### **VII. Adjourn** 12:11 p.m.

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