

STATE FIRE PREVENTION COMMISSION
MINUTES
June 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 Roland Powell Convention Center in Ocean City.

FIRE MARSHAL REPORT

Fire Marshal Barnard reported the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) currently has four vacant full-time positions—two Fire Safety Inspectors (FSI) and two Deputy State Fire Marshals (DSFM). There are also two vacant full-time contractual positions—one FSI and one Program Manager. Applications for the DSFM/Explosive position have been received and are being processed. It is hoped one position can be filled in July or August. The FSI positions have been advertised with applications being accepted through June 21st. The contractual FSI position which is funded through the Department of Human Resources should be advertised in the next few weeks. The recruitment announcement has been advertised to establish an eligibility list for the entry-level DSFM position. Orientations are scheduled for September. The hiring freeze exemption request to fill the Program Manager is still denied.

The Fiscal Year 2013 deficit will carry over into Fiscal Year 2014. Some deficiency modifications will be allotted. The OSFM has 70.5 positions and a \$389,000 turnover expectancy rate which is difficult to meet. Departmental and agency budgets are a big issue. A budget meeting was held a few weeks ago to develop a long-term multi-year replacement plan for vehicles, computers, etc. The Fiscal Year 2015 budget proposal is due by September. A fleet report on the aging vehicles is due December 1st. Although Maryland will end the fiscal year with a surplus, appropriations to agency budget deficiencies will have to go through the legislative process.

As of June 12th there have been 38 fire deaths reported compared to 21 for this period last year. Baltimore City and Prince George's County have seen significant increases this year despite the diligent work of the fire departments to promote and install working smoke alarms in residential dwellings. Additional information can be found at www.mdsp.org/firemarshal under document downloads.

Please continue to remind fire departments and/or counties to submit MFIRS reports in a timely manner. A recent article in the Baltimore Sun about military audits mentioned the reporting system.

The Fire Marshal thanked DSFM Bruce Bouch for chairing the Public Fire and Life Safety Educator's Conference. The conference held on March 23rd was attended by 52 professionals and covered topics such as residential fire sprinklers, carbon monoxide poisoning, Maryland weather phenomenon, fire and life safety facts, and stocking your toolbox. The next conference is scheduled for March 22, 2014.

DSFM Bouch also chairs the Mid-Atlantic Life Safety Conference and OSFM Fire Protection Engineer (FPE) C.J. Giblin serves on the committee. This year's theme is "Confronting Today's Challenges" and will be held September 24th at the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory Kossiakoff

Conference Center in Laurel. Presentations will focus on doing more with less. Additional program information should be posted in the near future.

The Maryland State Firemen's Association (MSFA) received applications from 83 fire departments for this year's grant distributions. The MSFA is distributing \$41,500 to assist departments in their community fire prevention efforts with a maximum of \$500 being awarded to each department selected. Grant awards will be announced this afternoon during the convention.

Chief Ronald Siarnicki, Executive Director for the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF), held a conference this morning on the revised Maryland smoke alarm law. Fire Marshal Barnard praised Chief Fire Protection Engineer (CFPE) A. Larry Iseminger, Jr. and the smoke alarm task force for all their research and assistance in getting the law updated to incorporate new smoke alarm technology and protect residents in older homes. The support of Senator Barry Glassman and Delegate James Malone in helping to get the legislation passed is greatly appreciated. When the law becomes fully implemented, homeowners using older 9-volt battery powered smoke alarms will need to replace them with long-life sealed battery smoke alarms with a hush feature.

Melissa Williams, the current Miss Carroll County Fire Prevention Ambassador, has done a tremendous job in updating the Fire and Life Safety Information Exchange website (www.mdflifesafety.org). Updates and resource links are being added on a weekly basis.

The second meeting of the Youth Firesetting Intervention Coalition is expected to be scheduled in July. Representatives from several agencies and departments meet to discuss and provide direction to address juvenile firesetting issues in Maryland. For additional information contact DSFM Bruce Bouch (bruce.bouch@maryland.gov).

Fire departments are encouraged to create a wish list for fire safety education materials for use during school visits and community events. NFPA's nonprofit section has created Sparky's Wish List (www.nfpa.org/SparkysWishList) to partner with businesses, community members, and others to purchase items directly from NFPA who then will send the materials to the fire department.

The Fan Zone at Dover International Raceway in Dover, Delaware, will be expanded to promote fire prevention and life safety over the September 27-29th NASCAR race weekend. The OSFM, MSFA, NFFF, Delaware State Fire Marshal, Delaware State Fire School, and the Delaware Volunteer Firefighter's Association have partnered to promote the event. A 30x30 foot tent will be erected on site to provide cover for an interactive youth fire prevention area, Kidde smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detector display, and an informative residential fire sprinkler myth and fact section. The Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition will assist with the side-by-side burn demonstration to be held September 28th.

The U.S. Fire Administration is moving forward with the "Fire is Everyone's Fight" action plan. Members of the fire service are being encouraged to use the materials and logos available at the website (www.usfa.fema.gov/fireiseveryonesfight).

The OSFM in partnership with the Maryland Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Council, the Maryland Society of Eye Physicians and Surgeons, and the Curtis National Hand Center is planning a fireworks safety media event on June 27th at the Baltimore County Agricultural Center. The event will include several fireworks demonstrations and is expected to be well attended by local media outlets. Fire Marshal Barnard thanked Baltimore County for assisting with the setup and standby during the event.

Fire Marshal Barnard commended the staff of the Western Region and those assisting from other regions and agencies for their diligence in bringing a series of arson fires to a successful closure. Eight persons have been charged in a string of more than 30 fires involving trash cans, mailboxes, vehicles, sheds, and barns that occurred in Washington County during March and April 2013.

Fire Marshal Barnard introduced several OSFM staff members present at the meeting —DCSFMs Mark Bilger and John Wagner, and Administrative Specialist Linda Bounds—and former Chief Fire

Protection Engineers John Bender and Dennis Gentzel. The Chairman recognized the current and former OSFM staff members as well as former Commissioner Brian Geraci.

The Fire Marshal thanked everyone for their support during his twelve year tenure. He enjoyed every minute of it and working with all partnering agencies and private industry. The next two or three years will be a challenge for the new Fire Marshal.

DSFM William Potts assigned to the OSFM Bomb Squad has been selected as Deputy State Fire Marshal of the Year. DSFM Potts was very instrumental in developing the bomb squad's dive/underwater mitigation program.

CHAIRMAN REPORT

Chairman Dayton acknowledged this would be the last Commission meeting William E. Barnard would be attending in his formal capacity as Maryland State Fire Marshal. Fire Marshal Barnard will be retiring from the position effective July 1, 2013. The Commission members thanked the Fire Marshal for his dedicated service and helping Maryland achieve nationwide recognition for its accomplishments to improve fire and life safety. The Maryland Fire Chiefs Association has dedicated its 2013 Book to Fire Marshal Barnard in appreciation and gratitude for his years of service and support of the Maryland Fire/EMS/Rescue Services. Copies of the book were distributed.

The Commission has received an appeal filed on behalf of the C'Town Laundromat located in Chestertown, Kent County. The appeal will be scheduled for the August meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

CFPE Iseminger was very pleased with the accomplishment of getting the smoke alarm law updated. It was definitely a team effort and he thanked Mr. Bender and Mr. Gentzel for serving on the Task Force. The next step will be to get all fire departments to transition to the new sealed long-life with hush feature when they distribute and install smoke alarms for those in need.

CFPE Iseminger reported the International Code Council proposal to exempt residential sprinklers in homes that have a portable fire extinguisher in the kitchen has been withdrawn by the proponent. As such it will not be subject to a vote at the final meeting so the next code cycle will retain the requirement for residential sprinklers in new homes. Calvert County will require residential sprinklers effective July 1, 2013. Ed Landon, the Director of the Maryland Building Codes Administration under the Department of Housing and Community Development, has been reviewing modular home placements in local jurisdictions to ensure they are sprinklered and on several occasions has pulled the use and occupancy approvals when no sprinklers were provided.

Commissioner Jones suggested it may be useful to collect data on sprinkler activations. Fire Marshal Barnard stated the OSFM typically is not notified of activations and usually becomes aware of activations because of fire department responses. Some sprinkler contractors report activations but it is not consistent. Montgomery County has a web-based data collection program to voluntarily contribute information. Commissioner Jones will research this further to see if the collection of such data would be beneficial.

CFPE Iseminger reminded the Commission that 2014 will mark the 50th anniversary for the formation of the Office of the State Fire Marshal and the Fire Prevention Commission as structured today. He encouraged the organizations to do something special to honor the occasion. Fire Marshal Barnard has spoken with former Fire Marshals James Robertson and Rocco Gabriele about doing a video or taped interview type documentary to preserve the history of the organizations.

Commissioner Hubbard reported volunteer firefighter Gene Kirchner with the Reisterstown Volunteer Fire Company died as a result of injuries sustained in a house fire that also resulted in the death of a civilian. Commissioner Hubbard thanked everyone for their thoughts and support.

Motion by Commissioner Yinger, second by Commissioner Spencer and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the April 18, 2013, meeting.

MEETING SCHEDULED

The next meeting is scheduled for:
Thursday, August 15, 2013 – 9:30 a.m.
Laurel Municipal Building Council Chambers
8103 Sandy Spring Road
Laurel, Prince George's County, Maryland

Chairman Dayton concluded the public meeting and the Commission convened in closed session to review and discuss the appointment of a new State Fire Marshal.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Heidi Ritchie". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Heidi Ritchie, Secretary