

MARYLAND FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION BOARD MEETING MARCH 4, 2010

The Board meeting of the Maryland Fire Chiefs Association was held on March 4, 2010 at the Fisherman's Inn in Grasonville. It had postponed from February 25 due to inclement weather. The meeting was called to order by President Smarte at 1900 hours. The opening prayer and Pledge of Allegiance was given by Ron Watkins. Officers present were President Dave Smarte, 1st VP Jeff Thompson, 2nd VP Rick Blair, Assistant Secretary Ron Watkins, and Regional Representative Roger Steger. Also present were Skip Menzies, Harry Gossard, Robert Seibel, Hugh Owes, and State Fire Marshal Bill Barnard.

SFM Barnard was asked to start with his report. He presented a written report (attached) and highlighted some parts for the group. He noted the efforts the State Fire Marshal's office has been making with the current legislative session.

Hugh Owens reported on the upcoming Chief Officers Seminar, to be held March 13 and 14. There was a question about the food for the Saturday session. There are 216 pre-registered, and with expected walk-ins, they expect to feed around 250. Hugh will check with Firehouse Subs ASAP. Margaret Gouty will be present to sell MFCA related merchandise. There was discussion about the breakdown of what items were used for breaks, meals, etc. It was MOVED by Hugh Owens, 2nd by Jeff Thompson to accept the price given by Montgomery County to cater the Sunday session and break food for the Seminar. PASSED

There were some concerns about our tax situation. It was not clear on where the MFCA is on this matter or what is being done. 2nd VP Blair indicated he had someone that would handle the bookwork for our taxes if so desired. After discussion, it was agreed that Rick will contact Treasurer David See and get the information needed to get this work done.

Financial investments - President Smarte and the Investment Committee will meet with Chris Brown of the Wells Fargo organization to go over our investments.

Business solicitations – negotiations have been conducted with the J.H. Bogwell Company and a contract has been signed for them to handle this for us. There have been some indications that Bob Haines of East Coast Productions may also have been doing solicitations in our name. This is being looked into.

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The Congressional Fire Service Institute's event is being held on April 28 and 29, 2010. The MFCA will again handle a reception on April 29 at the Hilton .hotel. Hugh Owens will be the contact person.

Robert Seibel asked about whether the past records of the Secretary and Treasurer were being audited and accounted for. It was agreed that the location of these items is important. Bob is checking on finding the original Articles of Incorporation for the MFCA.

Bylaws – Bob Seibel reported he is trying to get a complete copy of the current Bylaws compiled. We need to add the IRS policies to the Standing Rules, and also add rules for the use of the MFCA auto tags. There was much discussion on these items. Some of the things discussed were that there were several items of procedures that should be followed by the Association, such as the meeting of the Endowment Committee, issue of membership cards, etc. It was agreed that these things will be looked into and pursued further.

Mr. President, members of the *Maryland Fire Chiefs Association*, it is my pleasure to present to you this report on the activities and events pertaining to the Office of the Maryland State Fire Marshal since the last meeting of the Association.

- ❖ **OSFM Staffing:** – Currently, the OSFM has six vacant full time positions; five Deputy State Fire Marshals, and one Fire Protection Engineer. Effective December 31, 2009, Deputy State Fire Marshal Joseph G. Zurolo retired from the Office of the State Fire Marshal after 35 years of dedicated service. Other personnel actions included filling the vacant Fire Safety Inspector position in Southern Maryland and a contractual Fire Safety Inspector at the Northeast Regional Office to conduct daycare and foster care fire safety inspections. The OSFM is currently recruiting for a contractual Fire Safety Inspector to conduct fire safety inspections at health care facilities. This position will be working out of the Northeast Regional Office. The closing date for applications is March 11, 2010. Effective February 9, 2010, the OSFM part-time contract Data Device Operator position at OSFM HQ was vacated. The OSFM is seeking permission to fill this critical position, which is essential part of the billing process for fire safety inspections and plan reviews.

- ❖ **Fire Deaths – Update:** – As of March 3, 2010, the fire death total for 2010 stands at 15. During the same period last year there were 15 fire deaths reported.

2010 Fire Deaths by jurisdiction are as follows:

Anne Arundel County – 2
Baltimore City – 4
Baltimore County – 3
Calvert County – 1
Fredrick County – 1
Garrett County – 1
Howard County – 1
Prince George’s County – 2

- ❖ **MFIRS** – Several fire departments and/or counties are not submitting MFIRS reports to the OSFM in a timely manner. MFIRS reports for each month should be forwarded to the OSFM by the tenth day of the following month. Please continue to remind all fire departments of the importance of submitting accurate and timely MFIRS reports to the OSFM.
- ❖ **Howard County Building Code** – On March 1, 2010, Howard County became the first county in Maryland to adopt the 2009 editions of several International Code Council (ICC) codes, including the International Residential Code (IRC), which includes the requirements for residential fire sprinkler protection for all newly constructed one and two family homes effective January 1, 2011. The Howard County Council approved the updated Howard County Building Code by a unanimous vote of 5 to 0. Congratulations to the Howard County Council, Building and Fire Officials for adopting the new ICC codes.

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- ❖ **NFPA 921 - Guide for Fire & Explosion Investigations** – The OSFM made arrangements with two members of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 921 Committee to provide a training program on the NSPA 921 Standard to OSFM staff members and the local jurisdiction staff members assigned to Fire Investigation Units. This training is being provided at no cost. The only requirement is those individuals attending the training must bring a current copy of the NFPA 921 standard to attend the training. The first of two NFPA 921 training programs was held at the Easton Volunteer Fire Department. The second training program was held at the Public Safety Training Center in Sykesville, on Wednesday, March 3, 2010.
- ❖ **Legislation:** – The Maryland Fire Service Legislative Working Group (MFSLWG) been holding weekly meetings on Friday’s since January 8, 2010. The MFSLWG will continue to meet weekly during the remainder of the General Assembly Session at the Annapolis City, Taylor Avenue Fire Station. Representatives from several organizations and local jurisdictions attend the meetings to address issues and concerns related to pending legislation. Below is a brief summary of some of the legislation the OSFM is following:

House Bill 87 – State Fire Marshal – Non-Governmental Electrical Inspections,
Departmental Bill – Hearing held on January 21, 2010, House Economic Matters
Committee. This Bill was voted out third reader.

House Bill 191 – Criminal Law – Sale of Novelty Lighters – Prohibition
Hearing held on February 2, 2010, House Judiciary Committee. This bill was
given a favorable report out of Judiciary February 25, 2010.

Senate Bill 226 – Criminal Law – Sale of Novelty Lighters – Prohibition
Hearing held on February 9, 2010, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee. This
bill was given an unfavorable report.

House Bill 546 – Public Safety – Explosives – Definition
Hearing held on February 16, 2010, House Judiciary Committee. This bill was
given an unfavorable report on February 25, 2010.

***House Bill 35 – Environmental Brominated Flame Retardants –
Decabrominated Diphenyl Ether – Prohibition***
February 10, 2010, Hearing postponed until February 19, 2010, Environmental
Matters Committee

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- ❖ **Selected Significant Incidents** – On Wednesday, January 26, 2010, Deputy State Fire Marshals charged a 49 year old Cecil County man with Reckless Endangerment and Possessing and Discharging Fireworks without a permit. The man suffered severe damage to his left hand and his 22 year-old daughter received minor cuts and burns after he discharged a commercial firework in his hand. The incident occurred on January 1, 2010.

On Sunday, February 7, 2010, a snow plow driver called 911 after observing thick black smoke coming from the Value Village Store at 2215 Crain Highway in Waldorf. It took over 100 firefighters four hours to bring the fire under control. Damage estimates to the building and contents are \$900,000. The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

On February 11, 2010, a roof collapse over the social hall and ensuing fire occurred at the Skyesville - Freedom District Volunteer Fire Department in Carroll County. The fire was caused by natural gas escaping from a damaged pipe caused by the roof collapse. Deputy State Fire Marshals were not been able to determine that exact source of ignition. Damages are estimated at \$3.5 million. No fire apparatus or support vehicles were damaged by the roof collapse or fire. Utilities were isolated from the damaged area of the structure, which has allowed the continued operation of the apparatus bay area using temporary living quarters.

Mr. President, and members of the Association, this completes my report to you today. As always, it is our pleasure to provide you with this updated information. Thank you for your dedication and hard work in making Maryland a better place to live.

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With no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting will be held on March 25, 2010 at 1900 hours at the Fisherman's Inn, Grasonville. The Annual Meeting will be held at the Sudlerville Fire Station on April 25 2010. Lunch will be held at 1100 hours, and the meeting will begin at 1200 hours. The benediction was given by Ron Watkins.

Respectfully submitted,
Ronald E. Watkins, Asst. Secretary