



MSFCA

Meeting Minutes Montana State Fire Chiefs Association Mid-Winter Meeting February 9-10, 2010 Bozeman Station 3

Called to order by Chairperson Rich Cowger

Career Chiefs' Section

- Steve Larson
- Jeff Miller
- Jason Shrauger, 2nd V.C.

Combination Chiefs' Section

- Rich Cowger, Chairperson
- Tom Kuntz
- Brett Waters

Volunteer Chiefs' Section

- Leonard Lundby, Vice Chairperson
- Kraig Hansen
- Bruce Charles

Ex-Officio's: Ted Mead, Butch Weedon

Staff: Jen Winans, Jessica Heintz

CONSENT AGENDA

Moved by Brett Waters seconded by Jason Shrauger to approve the Board Meeting Minutes dated 2-3-2010. Motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

License Plate Discussion - **Moved by Jason Shrauger, seconded by Steve Larsen to present baseline of \$35,000, 10% of base, 75% of anything beyond baseline of revenue goes to volunteers. Motion Passed.** See License Plate Agreement written February 2010 for additional information.

MSFCA By-Laws - Discussion to include verbiage in the MSFCA By-Laws to give volunteers the opportunity to have membership status in order to vote. Proposal is to not limit the membership to officers, thus giving voting privileges in the Chiefs association in their respective section. Steve will work with Leonard.

Memorial - Next meeting, may develop subcommittee; discuss with Laurel Fire Chief for cohesiveness.

Budget Approval/Future Funding - Potential marketing of residential sprinklers this year; \$2500 dollars added to budget for marketing. **Moved by Tom Kuntz, seconded by Brett Waters to approve 2010 budget as presented. Motion Passed.** Potential for the MSFCA to work more closely with Corporate Sponsors, draft tri-fold brochure brought to Board. **Moved by Jason Shrauger, seconded by Brett Waters to move forward with the Corporate Membership campaign. Motion passed.**

Executive Director – The Board has work product that needs to be accomplished, importance and power will be generated with the right person in the right place. Need to narrow scope of position to make this viable. Individual would be the voice for the Montana Fire Service. Position would include both revenue generation activities and lobbying efforts. Brett will request position descriptions from other states who have hired Executive Director's. **Moved by Leonard Lundby, seconded by Steve Larsen to move forward contingent upon receiving SAFER Grant funding. Motion passed.**

Strategic Plan – Much from last revision is still relevant. Brett, Jason and Bruce will work together to refine Strategic Plan. Vision statement will need special attention.

Legislative Issues – Will look into cost associated with developing a login section to our site where we can share legislative issue and discussions regarding progress. Jessica will check into costs. Updates could also be added to The Latest.

Fire Marshal Groups - Approach Career Chiefs about having just one group with all members having voting privileges. Questions from Board: What are the differing needs of each group? Training classes coming out of State Fire Marshal's office, who hosts/receives the training? In the past, training and codes are the two big decisions that have been made.

Fire Alliance Conference - June 17-20 with an extra training on Sunday (\$39/each for 4 hour extrication and/or burn training). War Bonnet Hotel is the headquarters. Venues will be spread out over a few motels; there will be busses available. Chiefs will do mailing. Color brochure should be printed and out this week. Final proof will come out soon and MSFCA can send out on Email blast. Not set up to register on-line. It would cost \$300 to do on-line registration through the Chiefs Association; credit card processing is available by calling the Chiefs and running cards via phone. **Moved by Tom Kuntz, seconded by Brett Waters for MSFCA to pay for and host on-line registration for the Alliance. Motion passed.**

Insurance/Workers Comp Misconceptions - Part of SAFER grant is an education piece for fire departments. There is a supplemental plan has been sold in the State as 'it's like' workers comp. This is NOT equivalent to workers comp. If a volunteer firefighter is an employee of the district; workers comp covers employee and employer. If employer is at fault, the district is not free of liability; the employee is free of liability. When departments don't understand this, therein lays the problem. Providence can step in and help here. Education is important to get out worker comp to all departments. Heart attack is not covered by workers comp, #1 reason for death of firefighters. Career firefighters are all covered by MMIA. Legislatively it is important to find middle ground on presumptive disease legislation in order to get all volunteers in the state covered by workers comp. **Moved by Tom Kuntz, seconded by Bruce Charles to form a committee to investigate and work on the issues with workers compensation and how they affect the Montana Fire Service. Motion passed.** Committee will look at (1) Workers comp for volunteers, (2) Loss of wages for self employed, and (3) Presumptive diseases. Committee will include Tom Kuntz, Bruce Charles and Jeff Miller.

Ready Set Go - Bruce Suenram is looking for 9 departments to test-drive program. Forest Service and BLM are paying for this research-based program (similar to Firewise). Program adds what to do if you get trapped in your house. Rich has volunteered his department. Issue: Why have we not been successful in changing behavior of people who live in these areas? Work needs to be done with codes for the areas in which wildland fire is an issue.

Trunking Systems/IM White Paper - DNRC moving to narrowband. The IM project is gearing up, roughly 1/2 million a year for the next 10 years. Official department position is that we cannot move forward until there is funding. MSFCA will issue their position including these points: IM is usable and suitable for some, IM will happen soon for some, IM is high priority for some; IM not usable and suitable for some, IM will not happen soon for some, IM is not high priority for some. Concerns: Costs for locals (radio, maintenance), do not want to lose what we have that works (local analog, direct/repeated frequencies), needs to be locally driven, do not want to spend funds that should be slated for higher priority items on trunking systems in areas that don't need it, it will take a long time to develop a full statewide system, need for local involvement.

Residential Sprinkler Committee - The Fire Service is up against a concentrated and organized opposition. Need to get the State Fire Marshal's sprinkler trailer moved around the state. Biggest issue is the costs of residential sprinklers (builders use this loophole to continue to fight against them). Maybe the best thing the Board can get out of this legislative session is to get legislation to not prevent sprinklers in the future. MSFCA supports the national model. MSFCA will fight as hard as we can to oppose any legislation that suppresses residential sprinklers. MSFCA will support the Careers Chiefs sub-committee and will pass our position paper to others. Could add a session at the Alliance regarding Residential Sprinklers.

Board Meeting Date/Time - Discussion of once-a-month meeting. Need to work hard to be efficient. Twice monthly allowed for shorter meetings. Board agrees on once-a-month meeting, sub-committees will need to work between meeting times. Sub-committees can schedule times to use the conference call line. Future Board meetings will be the first Wednesday of each month at 10:30am MST.

WFOA Contract for Services- **Moved by Tom Kuntz, seconded by Steve Larsen to authorize the Chairperson to update and sign new contract with the WFOA with the addition of an auto-renew clause and clause to cease services with 30-day MSFCA notice or 120-day WFOA notice. Motion passed.**

GOOD OF THE ORDER

MSFCA should be more involved DNRC, invite to Alliance Conference. NRCG needs input from local fire. Should have another rep from MSFCA at meetings; Tom willing (next face-to-face meeting is in Missoula in April). The more local and state people on IMTs the easier the communication. DNRC doing education workshops this Spring which will help with conversations and give another opportunity to be engaged.

New Firefighter License Plate- Leonard will speak to individuals who are pushing the license plate forward and share the reaction of the Board. Questions from the Board: (1) Who applied for the plate? (2) Under what pretense are they applying? (3) What is the plan for the money? (4) Where does that money go? (5) Has this been discussed publicly with any other fire service leaders? If the plate is good and doable, let's do the right thing and have any funds support all of the Montana Fire Service. Having too many plates dilutes the funds available. The ideal way to fix this issue is to be upfront and honest about the plate; how can we make this work for the entire Montana Fire Service?

Montana Mutual Aid - They have a meeting in one month. MSFCA supports the concept of MMA and recognizes the individuals who put a lot of time into the system. The system is too valuable to go about doing business this way. MSFCA needs to play a bigger role in MMA. In the past MSFCA has played the role of support from behind, but needs to provide guidance to the organization. Discussion of missing financial records; Tom will research MMA financials.

Call from Jason Manly; discussion about municipalities, annexation of fire districts and funding. Discussion of creating fire authorities in the State. Senate Bill 103 would allow municipalities of all classes into a district. Going back through it, problems occurred with the State Fireman's Association and the League of Cities and Towns. Now there are more on board from larger areas, and makes sense in rural communities. If we were interested in moving forward, Brett volunteered to meet with the State Fireman's Association and proceed to legislature. Serious concern from the Career Chiefs, but would be willing to look at it further.

Send expenses from trip to Jessica for reimbursement.

Next teleconference: March 3 at 10:30am MST

There being no further business to come before the meeting, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Jen Winans, Administrative Staff