

MINUTES OF THE  
*WYOMING FIRE CHIEFS' ASSOCIATION*  
RIVERTON, WYOMING  
April 24, 1999

- ▶ The meeting was called to order by President Diedtrich at 10:13 am, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.
- ▶ A Roll Call registry was sent around for signatures. Members were asked to e-mail Russ Wenke with their e-mail addresses. Officers present were Gene Diedtrich, Russ Wenke, and Bob Taylor. Brad Sarff was absent due to weather. Minutes recorded and transcribed by LoRayne Phipps.
- ▶ A motion was made by Ken Sutton to approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on January 8, 1999 as mailed. . Lanny Applegate seconded. Motion carried.  
**(Motion #1)**
- ▶ The Treasurers' report was given by President Diedtrich. As of 3/31/99 there was a balance forward of \$11,611. Additions of \$3240 for dues, and \$77.00 interest. Deductions of \$300.00 to National Volunteer Fire Council for dues, \$110.00 to Kevin Kilmer for Web Site expenses, \$1145.00 for Web-Site Grant expenses - still \$2700.00 left. Also paid \$1500.00 to Fire Advisory Board for legislative expense and \$66.00 postage. Total at the end of March is \$11,756 and of that there are three grants. The Recruiting and Retention Grant is \$3,265.10, The Missouri Valley Fire Chiefs Grant is \$2200.00 and the Web-Site grant is \$2744.40 so there are unrestricted funds of \$3546.97. A motion was made by Gary Scott and seconded by Ray Weidenhaft to accept the Treasurers' report. Motion carried.  
**(Motion #2)**

Gene reminded everyone that the 99 stickers were there for their Fire Chief's Association Plaques and to be sure to get them.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- ▶ State Fire Council (Russ Wenke): The last meeting was in January in Cheyenne and in conjunction with that meeting was a meeting of the Code 2000 Task Force which consists of representatives of the Fire Marshal's Office, Building Code Officials, Fire Code Officials, Contractors, Architects, Engineers and Public at large. The task force will study the new 2000 codes and make a recommendation to the Fire Council whether to adopt or not adopt those codes when they become available. Task Force will get together again at the 2000 code presentation at the Wyoming Conference of Building Officials on May 6th from 9:00 - 5:00 at the Holiday Inn. Council's next meeting will be May 14th in Green River at the Fire Station at 9:00.

- ▶ Missouri Valley (Bob Taylor): The Missouri Valley Fire Chiefs' Association meeting is scheduled in St. Charles, Missouri and information should be in the mail. The Fire Chief's and Casper Fire Departments are planning to try to hold the 2001 meeting in Casper. They plan to have the Parkway Plaza for the conference site. Bob Taylor, Mark Harshman and Mark Young will make their presentation in July in St. Charles. It looks like they could be successful in making the bid.
  
- ▶ Certification (Nancy Eagle): Bob Taylor has resigned from the Certification Committee and he will be greatly missed. There were over 300 firefighters certified in the first 3 months of 1999. Ron Smith will also be working on getting certification standards set for Incident Safety Officer and Live Burn Coordinator.
  
- ▶ Legislative (Lanny Applegate): It was a very busy Legislative session. The following bills are the ones that we actively took part in or followed through their process.
  - a. HB-39 - Safety Enforcement - State Buildings  
Would have removed jurisdiction away from home rule on state buildings. This bill failed.
  
  - b. HB - 60 Fire Loss Information - Disclosures  
Added law enforcement departments to authorized agencies to receive fire loss information. This bill passed.
  
  - c. HB-69 Revolving Fund Account  
Authorized the State Forestry Division to maintain a revolving account for purchase of wildland fire equipment, parts for federal excess property, supplies, and provide repairs for county and local fire services. The account had been in place for years but now it is a legally authorized account. This bill passed.
  
  - d. HB - 72 - Hazardous Material - Emergency Response  
Delegate response authority, provide cost effective response options, provide cost effective training, provide qualified response, provide cost recovery, provide safe response within the law and provide for regional response teams. This bill was indefinitely postponed.
  
  - e. HB - 75 - Special Districts elections for continuance.  
Was an attempt to make special districts go back to elections every 4 years to see if the special district would continue. This involved sewer, water, fire, etc. The legislative committee wanted it to die and it went to the conference committee and died after having passed both houses. It may come back again so if it does contact your legislators.
  
  - f. HB-97 - Workmans Compensation - Volunteers  
A bill trying to expand the coverage for volunteer firefighters. To include anything sanctioned by the Fire Department. It passed in part, the following is the language agreed upon by the House and Senate: Specifically enumerated volunteers to whom this act applies are: Firefighters while: A. Firefighting, B. Performing rescue work, C. Participating in a

hazardous materials response, D. Responding to any other situation where the health or safety of the public is at risk, E. Training for the activities enumerated in subparagraphs (a) through (D) and (F) of this paragraph. Mainly wanted coverage doing maintenance on buildings and apparatus. (F). Constructing, maintaining or improving equipment or facilities utilized in the activities enumerated in subparagraphs (A) through (E) of this paragraph.

- g. HB - 122 - Electrical Fees  
Provided raising the fees and the extra money would go to hire more inspectors. This becomes effective July 1, 1999. A special account will be established and the money will go direct to the Fire Marshal's Office. This bill passed.
- h. House Bill 149 - Volunteer Pension Fund Amendments  
Amending the payment of contributions as specified: Upon the death of any member a lump sum payment of \$5000.00 or the amount in the deceased member's account which ever is greater will be paid to the eligible survivor. This bill passed.
- i. HB - 151 - Special License Plates for Fire Fighters  
It died on the third reading in the house. Probably due to lack of support by the Fire Service. People did not contact their legislators. The legislative committee also was not represented but that will be rectified next time.
- j. HB - 147 - Fireguards - Penalties  
Special legislation for one county but it was not necessary.  
This bill was indefinitely postponed.
- k. HB - 178 - Providing for the use of Automated External Defibrillators, providing for immunity.  
AED's will be distributed throughout communities and set up with an operating procedure but provides for immunity. This bill passed.
- L. HB - 184 - State Lands Forest Products  
Another account that is now an authorized account. This bill passed.
- M. HB - 217 - LP Gas Regulation  
Creating a State Board, regulating LP gas, certifying installers, vendors, etc.  
Recommended funding Fire Marshal's office more to help with their part of it.  
This bill was postponed indefinitely.
- N. SF - 48 Emergency Management  
Expanded authority of Governor (evacuation), Search & Rescue Advisory Council, Disaster Contingency Fund, Rule Making. Much of this bill is Federal Law now.  
This was to clean up the actions that are done in Emergency Management. It was too long - 30 some pages. It was also tied to HB - 72 and it failed.  
This bill died in the Senate on the 3rd reading.

Lanny thanked the Haz Mat committee and Bob Bezek from Emergency Management for all their work on these bills.

**SF-52 Motor Vehicle Registration**

An act relating to Motor Vehicle Registration and GFD plates and the counties or towns having no titles to the Excess property.

Governmental agencies can display a unique plate without a title.

**SF-94 Below Grades LP Gas Valve Installation**

The bill exempted single family dwelling from regulation.

This would have allowed propane appliances to be installed in basements.

Passed the Senate, assigned to House committee, Indefinitely postponed.

Lanny thanked those that went to Cheyenne and worked so hard on these Legislative efforts. Next year will be a budget session so it should be a quiet year. The next year could be busier. Lanny asked that the Chief's go back and write a personal letter of thanks to the Legislators.

Bob Bezek thanked the Fire Chiefs for supporting Emergency Management and Haz Mat.

WIFERS: There was no report.

Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial (Gerry Dewey): The Memorial is scheduled for 1:00 pm today in Memorial Hall due to the weather. The frames are up with the pictures of the Fallen Firefighters (the ones that we have received). Gerry would like help on getting more of the pictures. Would like to purchase name plates on each one. The cost would be about \$4.00 for the name, date of death, fire or dept. Lanny moved and Speed seconded for the Chief's to buy the plates. The motion carried.

**Motion #3**

Gary Scott from Campbell County offered to pick up the bill for the plates.

Nomination Committee (Brad Sarff): Chief Sarff was unable to make the meeting. He gave his report to Gene. The Wyoming State Firefighter's Golf Tournament will take place in Rock Springs on July 17th and 18th. His list of nominees are Russ Wenke, President; Brad Sarff, 1st Vice President; Don Huber, 2nd Vice President. They have all agreed to serve. There were no nominations from the floor. A unanimous ballot was cast for the election of these officers for the next year.

Constitution and Bylaws (Emily Howery): Emily was not present. Nothing to report.

Officer Development (Gary Scott): Classes are going strong. They have done 4 classes and have 4 more scheduled. About 75 students have taken the class. Asked by the Mid-Winter Fire School to do an Intermediate and Advanced Officer Development Class. The Certification Committee is going to see where it will fit into their Fire Officer requirements.

Wyoming Fire Academy (Larry David): To date there have been about 144 students go through the Academy not counting EMT's, private business. The new carpet has been installed in all the offices. Work is progressing on the gas project but has slowed down some right now. Thanked LoRayne and Colleen for their help in breaking him in. Lanny (on behalf of the Lander Fire Department) thanked the people at the Academy for the help they gave Jack Coppock during his time at the Academy.

National Volunteer Fire Council (Carl Jungck): Carl was not at the meeting. Bob Taylor reported the Kurt Weldner is sponsoring a bill that will greatly enhance the money that we get through there. He suggested the Fire Chief's and the Rural Fire Association write letters of support for this bill. Gary Scott reported that there is talk of forming a National Volunteer Firefighter Coalition. It organizes Volunteer firefighter companies into a cohesive movement.

National Volunteer Chief Officer (Gary Scott): They are pursuing the Fair Labor Standards. Gary testified in Washington DC. at the Congressional hearings. The Democrats are supporting seeing that this is resolved in a timely fashion. Scheduled to be in DC in July for workshops and to testify before the Senate Labor Committee. VIFS is making a significant contribution to this. This is Gary's last year on national Board of Directors but he has been asked to chair a national legislative committee and an NFPA Standards Review committee. He has accepted. The challenge will be to provide people in the Fire Service with updates on the legislation. The NFPA Standard 1200 has resurfaced. We need to follow this closely. In light of the Ft. Worth fatalities, career firefighters may not be able to volunteer outside their jurisdictions. It could have national implications. Kurt Weldner's Ambiance bill that deals with the Spectrum radio situation - 3 billion dollars (in the next 3 years) could be given to provide direct financial aid to the Fire Service. We need to get behind that when it comes up.

Haz-Mat (Don Huber): Don thanked everyone for the education he got last year. The Haz Mat committee has had no meetings. What direction do you want the committee to head into? There is a new chairman of the SERC - Virgil Lewis, Kim Lee is the co-chair. Jim Noel is the chairman of the Planning committee. It was suggested that they try to push through the Haz Mat bill but break it down into smaller bills. Need to bring industry on board. Gary Scott related a Haz Mat incident that happened in Gillette. There was no state legislation to allow the fire department to do its job. There was no authority to keep people at the hospital. No way to confine anyone. Luckily it was only tear gas. Larry Lee moved that the Association pursue this legislation, break it down and try to get it passed. Ken Sutton seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**Motion #4**

It was suggested that we contact the Federated firefighters to get them on board.  
Don thanked Chief Taylor for his help.

Recruitment and Retention (Gene Diedtrich): Gene will get with Chief Scott and Ron about expending the rest of the grant money.

Fire Marshal's Office (Jim Noel): Jim reported that the Fire Marshal's office had been in Newcastle several times investigating. Also, Ron Smith is involved in the investigation of injuries in a training situation and is doing a draft on issues involved in doing live fire burns. The certification committee is also involved in this. Budget process is coming up and the state is predicted to have a significant shortfall. They are trying to find ways to solve it but there may be possible cuts of programs or services.

Nancy Eagle reported that in Haz Mat (Ron Smith), we have trained approximately 2600 people. We will include in the training sessions of Awareness and Operations information about the legislation issues. In fire reporting, Donna is reporting in the next newsletter that the vendors now have the NIFRS 5.0, and who to contact. She is working on a grant to do 2 pilot programs for 2 counties to provide hardware and software for the NIFRS 5.0. Operation Fire Safe (Ken Metzler), has distributed 1000 smoke alarms and we are requesting 3000 more. Contact Ken Metzler to schedule the Fire Safety House. The Terrorism Grant - we are looking for additional funding. Right now we are out of money for Awareness training. Contact Ron Smith if you are interested in Operations or Incident Command. Under Certification, it was decided that we change our patch to include chevrons. We are about out so we are working on getting new ones. The patches are given out free to firemen as an incentive. The training division is going to be doing self evaluation to decide what kinds of service we are providing. Hopefully we will have enough information to back us when the budget cuts are decided.

Forestry Division (Ray Weidenhaft): Expanding on the state budget cuts: Forestry is only one division of the State Lands and Investments. The State Lands money goes to support schools and institutions. Forestry is not one of the big revenue earning divisions compared to mineral royalty money for example. Agencies are being looked at to justify their programs. If there was no Forestry what would it cost the state of Wyoming to protect state lands? Where would we be without the Excess Property Program? On the volunteer fire assistance money, Ray asked the County Fire Wardens to write letters to congressional delegation in support of this issue. Some counties did write. Chances are that the appropriations could go from 2 million to 10 million dollars. Don't know what impact that will have on Wyoming but if it does filter down it should amount to a significant amount on Volunteer Fire Assistance. The same holds true on the State Fire Assistance money (which goes to counties). If that goes through it could be a significant increase but there will be strings attached. Each state will get a base amount and the rest may go to a grant basis. Will get the word out when more information is received. Ray gave an overview of the lawsuit on the Point Fire (1997). BLM was found 35% at fault and Volunteer Fire Department was 65% at fault. Because of Idaho's immunity clause, Volunteers didn't have to pay but it cost BLM 2 million dollars. The reason was not giving good directions, no safety briefings and allowed people on fire without appropriate certification. This will have an impact on how volunteers are treated on a federal fire. We meet the training standards and Forestry has passed a physical fitness standard. If counties don't adopt the physical fitness standard they will not be allowed on federal fires outside of their local jurisdiction. Fire season: Florida and Georgia are already heating up. John Chapman is in Florida as a Fire Behavior Analyst. Ray was contacted to start putting engines together. Possibly in June we may be sending resources. Wyoming doesn't look too conducive with all the wet weather but that will bring grass so we may be busy.

Ken Sutton reported that he did send a letter of support from the Rural Fire Association. Ray asked that anyone who sent letters to please get him copies.

WEMA - (Bob Bezek): Just adding on to the budgeting issues. WEMA also has to justify their agency. They want to save 120 million dollars in the next biennium. The simplest way is a 10-12% cut for all agencies. By fall, there should be a degree program in the Junior Colleges. Consists of 30-34 hours of courses taught around the state and 30-35 hours taught at the institutions for an Associate Degree. Should apply to all law, fire, emt and emergency managers. Hope to convince the University system to do education in a new manner. The new manner is that if anyone is in a position of public service, we would reach out to them and have them fill out forms on courses and instruction that they have taken. Then try to build them a road map on what it will cost, what they have to do, how to do it over a period of time and what it will take to get that degree from home. This is a ways off. The terrorism issues such as happened in Columbine can happen anywhere even in Wyoming. We can't put that kind of response out in front of a school in the time frame that they did what with the specialized teams, etc. We'll examine what we have and this will be used to enhance our haz mat efforts, the specialized regional teams, etc. Terrorism funding is up. It looks like they will open up a center in Las Vegas as a test site. That training is all paid for. Information will be sent out. Flood Conference was held a couple of weeks ago. The conclusion was that we are a little bit above normal and depending on mother nature we could have flooding. From Fremont County north to Cody we are above normal, the rest of the state is either at or below normal. The long range forecast is to be hotter and drier and that drought and wildland fires in 2/3 of the state will be the summer activity.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

- ▶ PUB ED (Dave Van Fleet) The twelfth annual conference was held in Jackson two weeks ago. He thanked Ken Sutton for the hospitality and beautiful facilities and thanks to Chief Taylor, Chief Scott and Fire Marshal Noel for the excellent class they put on. They have gotten nothing but compliments on the conference. He thanked Nancy Eagle for all of her help putting it together. They are looking for someplace different to host the conference. Green River, Powell and Gillette have shown some interest. If Campbell County can't pay for the plaques the Pub Ed Association will help. Nancy thanked Ken Sutton for allowing Rusty Palmer to teach the Instructional Techniques class which is needed for Fire Service Instructor certification. Thanked Rusty Palmer for teaching it and also thanks to Anna Thompson for providing over 32 thousand dollars in the past two years. Dave thanked the Chiefs for their support.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- ▶ Bob Taylor thanked Gene Diedtrich for his work as chairman for the past 3 years.
- ▶ The next meeting will be June 16th. The E-Board will meet at 1:30 p.m and the Chief's meeting will be at 2:00 p.m. at the Afton Fire Hall.
- ▶ Gene announced the banquet will be tonight at Fire Station One.

- ▶ Jim Noel reminded everyone about the Fire Marshal's Convention in September. The registrations will be coming out on that.
  
- ▶ John Scorsine, Major from the National Guard, gave a presentation on the Haz Mat program in place in the National Guard. It is a military support program and it can help the Fire Service as well as asking the Fire Service for their help. There will be a team of 22 full time soldiers in place by 2003. It does not take over situations, it only assists. It is a tool to help and they should be treated like your own firemen. It will interface with 10 regional teams. It's mission is to enhance the Governor's and Federal Government's domestic preparedness. It's intent is to assist, to support and to help save lives. The team will only come in at your request and give you support. Don Huber asked if the National Guard comes in, who pays for it? If it is because of a weapon of mass destruction it will be Federal Jurisdiction. If it is a local event in the county or state, then there is federal legislation for reimbursement. He encouraged the Chiefs to work with their legislators to provide for team costs. The things that the team won't do: They are not a State Haz Mat team. They are not intended to respond to every single incident. It is decided by the scale of the incident - they only become involved if local resources are outstripped. It also depends on the timing.

Gene thanked John for the presentation.

It was moved by Larry Lee and Seconded by Ken Sutton to adjourn at 11:55 a.m.. Motion carried.