

Wyoming Fire Chiefs' Association
Meeting Minutes
January 10, 2020
Wyoming Fire Academy

Call to order: Meeting was called to order by President Chris Kocher at 12:02 pm.

Roll call: Board members present were President Chris Kocher – Worland, 1st Vice President Byron Mathews – Cheyenne, and Secretary/Treasurer Gene Diedtrich – Newcastle. Forty-two members were present.

Minutes of last meeting: Partial minutes of the last meeting in April have been sent out. Approval of last meeting minutes will be deferred to the next meeting in order to have time for them to be completed by Krissy Kappus.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer, Gene Diedtrich reported the following for the dates of December 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019. Beginning cash \$31,519.11. Interest accrued of \$5.46. Expenses of \$1,628.70, leaving an ending balance of \$29,895.87. A total restricted amount of \$15,823.59, which leaves an unrestricted balance of \$14,072.28.

Motion #1: Brent Godfrey made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report

Second: Craig Haslam

Motion carries.

Association Bills: Gene Diedtrich reported no bills at this time, however, \$4500 should be allocated again for lobbying.

Motion #2: Donny Munger motioned to allocate \$4500.00 for lobbying.

Second: Jim Wamsley

Motion Carries.

Presentations:

Chief Ryan Wells – New laws with AFFF foam - Chief Wells gave information on current situation of Class B foams (C8, purchased prior to 2015) that are being heavily regulated in other states and is a current hot topic with the EPA due to the carcinogens within the foam. Wyoming has not taken a stance on regulation yet but that will probably be coming within the next few years.

Industry is preparing for regulations by keeping inventory, keeping historical data (when, where and how much was used), and with personnel accountability and training.

In discussion throughout the room it was stated that there are fire departments around the state that are receiving calls from DEQ with questions already.

Committee Reports:

Missouri Valley Division, IAFC: Craig Haslam reported that there have been two Line of Duty Deaths in our division within the last couple of months.

The conference is in Fargo, North Dakota on July 15-17, 2020.

Chief Kocher and Chief Haslam will be attending the Missouri Valley Division meeting in March. The meeting will be held in Cheyenne in 2021.

Special District Association: Craig Haslam reported the association will be having its next meeting on January 15th at 10:00 am in Casper.

He is appreciative of those that have updated contact information and has sent a list out of those that still need to. It is a misdemeanor and \$750 fine if special districts are not doing their reporting.

A website is being developed that should be up within the next couple of months. Training and resources will be available through the website geared toward the state requirements for each type of district.

They are struggling on how to handle dues at this time, currently trying to decide if it should be income based. There are over 600 special districts within the state of Wyoming with over 60 being special fire districts.

President Kocher took a moment to point out that with there being new faces in the room, this would be a great opportunity to network.

Wyoming Council on Fire Prevention and Electrical Safety: Dan Johnson reported there was a meeting in November. (26:00)

National Volunteer Fire Council: Rusty Dunham reported there have been no meetings since the last Fire Chiefs Association meeting. They are working on membership levels and have reduced it down to one. Wyoming has enough NVFC members that the \$500 state membership fee is waived. 843 Wyoming firefighters are members at a fee of \$18 per year.

Anheuser Busch still has their free water program. If your department needs water you can request through the NVFC.org website. Free resource and free delivery.

Makemeafirefighter.org is a great resource also.

Nominations are being taken through February 7th for the Lifetime Achievement Award, Health & Wellness Leadership Award, Junior Firefighter of the Year Award and the Junior Firefighter Program Award. Nominations can be submitted through the website.

NFPA: Nick Hudson is the new contact with the Wyoming State Fire Marshal's Office. He reported that our region is about 22 states. They are working on getting folks involved with fire prevention programs throughout the state and region. Through the Fire Marshal's conference, they are putting a schedule together for training with a 4-hour block on teaching strategies.

Changes to the Safety Source newsletter will be coming in March, 2020. Newsletter will be combined.

They are working on creating workshops for departments to be better able to respond to emergencies with persons with disabilities.

He will continue to send out information quarterly to the fire chiefs regarding changes and updates.

WFCALegislative: Jeff Kehl reported Byron Mathews will be taking over for him next year. The next session starts on the 10th of February.

Wyoming Fire Tax Bill – The Volunteer Fire Pension Board met with Senator Bebout

Changes include the monthly contribution for firemen, EMT's and Search & Rescue. Current contributions are \$15.00 per month for Fire/EMT and \$30.00 per month for Search & Rescue. If the bill passes the Search & Rescue monthly contributions would go to \$37.50 and \$18.50 for Fire/EMT. The board is working with Senator Bebout on additional changes that could possibly take the contribution for fire to \$20 per month.

The recommendation of the Legislative Committee is to follow the lead of the Volunteer Fire Pension Board in support of this bill.

Motion #3: Jerry Parker made a motion to support the bill

Second: Donny Munger

Motion Carries

Transparency – Craig Haslam spoke about amendments being needed with this bill for consistency and palatability for special districts and reporting in general. For instance, record transparency on salaries and access to the ombudsman being granted to not only the persons asking for information but also the entities being asked. Some of those changes have been made through the committee but a bill hasn't come out yet. His recommendation would be to follow the Special Districts Association lead to support if good legislation is brought forth.

Motion #4: Brent Godfrey motion to support.

Second: Mike Bournazian

Motion Carries.

Statute on Vehicle Procurement – John Rutherford brought up that Rawlins Fire Department is not allowed to use the state vehicle procurement process. It would be beneficial for fire departments to be able to use the state process in order to purchase vehicles at a more cost-effective rate.

Funding for WYOLink – Mark Harshman explained the proposed bill that would add a .50 monthly charge on all phones to help pay for the WYOLink system. The bill was presented in October in Casper and failed. It was brought back a couple of weeks ago and passed 9-5. His recommendation is to support the bill as a way to fund the local portion of maintenance of the system.

Motion #5: Jim Wamsley motion to support

Second: JR Fox

Discussion: John Rutherford brought up the need for our legislative group to discuss with the committee the reasoning behind why the WFCAL supports this bill. He would like to see something possibly printed out so that everyone is carrying the same message to legislation.

Motion Carries

Jeff Kehl reported that the session starts on February 10th. There are rooms reserved at the Stay Bridge Inn behind the mall and there are open reservation dates in March for those that would like to attend.

Wyoming Volunteer Fire Pension Board Report: Tracy Brown reported as of August 31, 2019 there is a total of \$81,485,000

Wyoming Fire Academy Training Report: Ian Kraft reported he will be using a new format for the Training Division, Wyoming Fire Academy and Certification reporting that will also become available on the website.

Highlighted training numbers 2019:

230 classes – combined WFA and regional trainers

2609 students

2937.5 contact hours

52 agencies served

Highlighted investigation numbers 2019:

43 Investigations

33 Accidental

3 Incendiary

7 Undetermined

Online Courses are gaining traction with 24 held in 2019.

Ian noted that the Wyoming Fire Academy is available for utilization by all departments.

We are moving forward with improvements to training grounds outside that will greatly extend capabilities for training, hopefully breaking ground in 2021.

Highlighted testing & certifications 2019:

911 tests processed

31 skills tests

883 certifications issued

Personnel changes: Ken Metzler and Rita Lee both retired in 2019. The new Certification Coordinator is Rebecca Bestul and Jody Wheeler was hired as Administrative Assistant.

Updates on certifications: There will be changes in testing equipment and the program used for testing. The current equipment is outdated and will no longer be supported. WSFM is moving to a new program for written testing that will also have the capability for online testing. FEMA Student ID # (SID#) will be the new requirement as an identifier for each test taker. All proctors will be updated on procedural changes. If anyone would like to help with the pilot portion of online testing or is interested in being a regional online testing site please get a hold of the Fire Marshal's Certification Office to let them know.

Wyoming Fire Academy has been initiating some technology upgrades to include capabilities for virtual meetings and live streaming. Staff will be creating short instructional YouTube videos to bridge the gap on questions regarding paperwork issues.

Older NFA courses that are listed on the website dashboard are still valid and can be taught by qualified instructors regionally.

Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment and Retention Grant Update: Gene Diedrich reported no changes since the last meeting. Expenditures \$441,027.00. Appropriated \$444,186.00 from FEMA. The grant will expire 12/2/2020 and expenditures to date are less than half. Anyone wanting to take advantage of the grant or that has questions contact Gene Diedrich or Chris Kocher.

Ian Kraft brought up the possibility of applying for extensions.

Shad Cooper inquired if there was a new grant request ready to submit. Chris Kocher explained they are waiting for the new grant to open up but are preparing to submit when it does. He also explained how to submit for reimbursement for education costs. There was further discussion on which types of courses are covered. Within parameters any approved course (does not have to be fire related) can be reimbursed as long as it is in the state of Wyoming and you are an active rostered firefighter.

WFCRA Residential Sprinkler Committee: No report at this time. Deferred.

Wyoming Fallen Firefighter Memorial: Mark Young reported that the dates for the memorial will be changed beginning in 2020 to avoid conflict with the National Police Officer's Memorial. August 22nd or 29th are the dates being considered.

WYO-Link Update: Chief Mark Harshman reported changes since the last meeting regarding the expansion of system statewide. There are 16 towers being built around the state with two now erect. One being in Buffalo and one off of I-25 near Orin Junction. Within the next couple of months those towers will be put into test mode and then go live. There are several other towers following close behind. By the end of this year all sites should be built out or at least have begun construction. Funding has come from Federal Highway Transportation monies. The Governor has recommended funding for upgrading the radios and power supply at the sites. He has also recommended continuing to use minerals money for funding.

Section Reports

Wyoming Firefighters Certification Committee: Rusty Dunham reported that the Certification Committee met on 1/9/2020.

Regarding lapsed certifications with a need for refresher courses, they have tasked Ian and Becky to create a better list.

They are still working on a revision of the Origin & Cause Technician Certification and are looking at a crosswalk over to the 5th edition. Eric Siwik will be working on JPR's for the next meeting so that can be finalized.

Brian Coe has been elected to the vice chair position.

They voted on a by-law change adding a seat on the committee for an industrial fire brigade spot and are hoping to have that position filled by Director Reed by the April meeting.

As a committee they decided to maintain the term limits to keep the committee fresh with new perspectives and ideas.

Currently there is one vacancy that the committee has referred to Director Reed for appointment, with the recommendation of Cameron Siplon from Casper being placed in that seat.

There will be three openings next year. If anyone is interested please get applications submitted to the Fire Marshal's Office.

Pro Board certification for Firefighter II does not have prerequisites of HazMat courses. Going forward students will not need to go back and obtain those certifications to get their Pro Board certification.

Wyoming Association of Fire Marshals: Byron Mathews reported on Community Risk Reduction Week beginning January 20th. Byron will send the website link out.

Industrial Fire Chiefs: Ryan Wells reported the Industrial Fire Chief's Association has grown since they began about 3 years ago. Recruitment is priority and the main focus right now is working on their ability to help their counterparts within the fire community to be better prepared for industrial emergencies. They are seeking referrals from local fire departments that have any industry within their areas. They are hopeful that within about 6 months they can have 1081 Curriculum certification for the state. They also do have props available for training.

Wyoming Firefighter Cancer Support Network: Shad Cooper reported the last meeting was held January 10, 2020 and presented information on how to contact him through the website for support. The organization currently has 15 members, leaving 14 counties without representation. They would like to have a representative from each county. Their current focus is support for individuals within the fire service with cancer and awareness training for members and community.

Last year 3 support missions were provided and they taught 8 Taking Care of Our Own Courses. If anyone is interested in hosting a course please contact Chief Cooper to get that scheduled.

The booth will be available throughout the state during fire schools and events.

State Fire Association Reports

Wyoming State Firemen's Association: Robert Munger reported that Fire Convention this year will be June 18-20th in Newcastle. They are selling raffle tickets as their big fund raiser for the association if anyone might be interested in helping to sell them. Their numbers are diminishing, there were 6 competing teams last year. In 1991 there were 17 teams competing. If you do plan on attending this year please make reservation as soon as possible as Newcastle has limited hotel/motel space.

L.A.S.T. Team Update: Mark Young and Dan Johnson reported missions for 2019 are:

7 Level 3 Missions, Retiree in good standing

5 Level 2 Missions, Active member non-Line of Duty Death

2 Level 1 Missions, Line of Duty Death

Provided support for 1 Level 1 in Colorado

Dan reported on Public Safety Officer Benefit Program (PSOB). 3 current PSOB officers are Dan Johnson, Russ Wenke and Jordan Freese.

LAST has been operating on a \$10,000 budget per year. In 2019 the expenditures were \$8057. They are looking at continued funding options.

They will hold a symposium in the fall with both basic and advanced classes.

State Agency Reports

Wyoming State Forestry: Gary Hobbs reported for Bill Crapser who is attending budget hearing meetings. Gary introduced the new District #3 Forester Keith Coulter.

Military Maintenance class will be coming up February 28th through March 1st, 2020. There are still openings available.

Steve Stowe the Excess Property Manager for WSFD retired in November. That position is currently open and taking applications.

The helicopter contract is being finalized. It will be a two-year contract with Air Resources out of Utah.

The VFA grant award letters have gone out. There were 33 applications for \$530,000. \$245,000 will be reimbursed.

Fire Marshal's Office: Deputy Director Mark Young reported for Director Reed who was unable to attend. Chief Young stated the WSFM has requested \$7.3M at the budget hearing.

Modernization of electrical licensing software continues. Other areas of modernization are the ER program being used for inspections and investigations, along with reporting of incidents by fire departments. They are also updating the agency vehicles with internet capabilities to create a mobile environment for inspectors to be better able to work. There has also been an internet upgrade at the Wyoming Fire Academy. WSFM is in partnership with the NFSA (National Fire Sprinkler Association) and is working with them in public education by using the side by side demos. NFSA will donate the side by side demo trailer with the agreement that there be 12 demos held throughout the year. Wyoming is partnering with some surrounding states to accomplish this.

The trend of fire fatalities each year jumped from 3 in 2016 to 7 in 2017 and 8 in both 2018 and 2019. Per capita Wyoming is at a very high rate of fire fatalities and we need to be actively looking for ways to reverse the trend. Through data gathered by WSFM it shows that 50% of this year's fire fatalities are a result of smoking while using oxygen. WSFM is looking for help from Fire Chiefs and Officers to help build a portfolio of each fatal fire, to determine what is happening and begin accumulating data. This can be done through WFRS reporting and ER reporting by adding a little more information and additional coding.

The question was brought up as to who would be the contact if you are having issues with the Emergency Reporting software and/or general questions about navigating ER. Chief Young explained that for software issues the user would need to go directly to Emergency Reporting for help. General questions and direction on using the software should be directed to Joyce Knapp at 307-777-2435. Joyce will also be offering classes throughout the coming year around the state.

One of the struggles of collecting the fatality data is that WSFM Investigators are not always called out. Mark asked that when there is a fatality fire please call and request an investigator.

FDID numbers are all over the board. WSFM will be working to audit and fix the issue. Some of that work may be through personal phone calls to the fire chief. Currently NFRS is showing about 50% reporting from WY because of the FDID issue and reports being kicked back. WFRS shows only 8 departments that are currently not reporting.

The Fire Service Directory is very difficult to keep up to date. Mark asked that all departments visit the WSFM website <http://wsfm.wyo.gov/training/fire-service-directory> and click the link to update their department information on a regular basis.

The WSFM Facebook page has been very active. Surplus equipment can be posted under the page.

307CRR (Community Risk Reduction). There are currently 27 departments that are active with the program and they are looking for more. There is a state initiative and each local department can have their own local initiative. The current state goal is to have 100% installation of thermal o2 devices (approximately 30,000 homes) within a 5-year period. This can be done through the partnerships with local departments and they are also looking to find 73 "like minded" partnerships such as home oxygen companies, hospitals, etc.

Wyoming Office of Homeland Security: Spencer Pollock reported that April 7-9 Wyoming Office of Homeland Security will be in Riverton for an All Hazard preparedness planning workshop. They are currently working on a dashboard data mapping system which should be rolled soon. They have had an overhaul on some units within the agency. Currently 4 position are open, including Logistics Section Chief.

Wyoming Office of EMS: No Report

Continuing Business:

Safer Grant: Chris Kocher reported that they are still waiting for it to open as stated earlier.

Fallen Firefighter Memorial: Chris has not received any new information from that which was reported in December.

Rusty Dunham brought up Transcare. There are now two coordinators within the state that are available to come out and provide training and public outreach.

Rusty Dunham also mentioned the International Fire Inspector Workshop will be in Cheyenne in June with presentations and hands on training.

New Business:

VCOS nominations were opened up for any additional individuals that would be interested in being put on the ballot. Chief Jason Caughey was mentioned but because he was not in attendance could not be put on the ballot. Nominees are Mike Bournazian and JR Fox.

Motion #6: Craig Haslam moved nominations cease

Second: Byron Mathews

Motion Carries

Ballots were gathered and counted by Chief Mathews and Chief Haslam.

Motion #7: Brent Godfrey moved for disposal of ballots once counted and recorded

Second: Rocky McWilliams

Motion Carries

VCOS Representative will be JR Fox

Chief Kocher passed on the message that Chief Jim Minchow is continuing to improve and he would like to thank the organization for all of the prayers and well wishes.

Chief Kocher updated the group on 2nd Vice President Eric Quinney's son Bryson who is on the heart transplant list. They are asking for a patch from every fire department in the state of Wyoming so a board can be built for Bryson. Please send patches to Byron Mathews and he will get them forwarded to Lanny Applegate.

Membership for WFCA - Chief Kocher stated that current membership is \$100/department and \$30/additional member. Gene Deidtrich's research shows that if membership stays where it was in 2019 income and expenses would be relatively even in 2020.

Motion #8: Gene Diedtrich moved to keep membership the same cost as 2019, \$100/chief and \$30/additional member

Second: Byron Mathews

Motion Carries

307CRR – Chief Kocher stated that the program is a great fit for partnership with the Wyoming Fire Chiefs Association. They are looking for a place to potentially have donations sent to and he feels this would be fit with the mission of the WFCA. He asked for thoughts and/or discussion.

Motion #9 Brent Godfrey made a motion to support the 307CRR program by establishing an account and housing funding

Second: Craig Haslam

Motion Carries

There was discussion on streaming the next meeting for those that are not able to be there in person.

Elections: April 4th, 2020 at 9:00 am is the next business meeting. Elections will be at that time. Byron Mathews will move up to President, Eric Quinney will move into 1st Vice President, leaving an opening for the 2nd Vice President. He urges everyone to put thought into this opportunity to serve the state.

WFC Meeting Schedule:

Next meeting scheduled for April 4, 2020 0900 at Riverton Fire Station #1

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 2:37 pm

Motion #10 Brent Godfrey moved to adjourn

Second: Jim Wamsley

Motion Carries