

Wyoming Fire Chiefs' Association  
Meeting Minutes  
December 9, 2015  
Lander Community Center

**Call to order:** The meeting was called to order by President Munger at 2:34pm.

**Roll call:** Board members present were President Don Munger – Newcastle, 2nd Vice President Chris Kocher – Worland, and Secretary/Treasurer Gene Diedtrich – Newcastle. Forty members were present.

**Minutes of last meeting:** President Munger asked for the approval of the minutes as sent out for the June 17th, 2015 meeting.

**Motion #1:** Brent Godfrey motioned to accept the minutes.

Second: Justin Smith

Motions Carries.

**Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer, Gene Diedtrich reported the following for the dates of June 1, 2015 through November 30, 2015. Beginning Cash \$28,680.15, Deposits of \$34,362.32, Expenses of \$30,593.46, leaving an ending balance of \$32,449.01. Recruiting and Retention Grant Income restriction is \$13,391.39, which leaves an unrestricted balance of \$19,057.62.

**Motion #2:** Willy Watsabaugh motioned to accept the treasurer's report.

Second: Brent Godfrey

Motion Carries.

**Association Bills:** No bills at this time.

**Presentations:**

Chad Rupe from Rural Development in Casper discussed the Finance and Grant program that they offer. They work mostly with rural communities. The program helps with housing, business, and utility projects. They have invested over \$265,000,000.00. They will help finance sustainable projects, including construction, repairs, and improvements to name a few.

Mike Bournazian has asked the Chief's Association to consider looking at having one sole state agency handle the Firefighter training, structural and wildland record data management program. To make the record data management program more efficient and convenient. To start talking about how to fix issues that are present and be proactive. It was mentioned to have representatives go to the session on Friday morning to listen to Bob Ridgeway from EMI.

**Committee Reports:**

**Missouri Valley Division, IAFC:** Craig Haslam said that the VCOS conference in Florida was great. It is a good place to network and has a lot of great opportunities. A lot was learned at the conference.

**Wyoming Council on Fire Prevention and Electrical Safety:** Dan Johnson stated that on September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015 the 2015 IFC was voted on and passed. The Governor signed it on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015. Local adoption is expected by July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016.

**IAFC-VCOS:** Not at this time.

**National Volunteer Fire Council:** Not at this time.

WYO-Link Update: Mark Harshman talked about how the JAC study came up with a long range plan for voice communication. The high priority areas within the core towers for 2017-2018 were Alcova, North Goshen County, and the Bondurant area. In 2019-2020 the areas were Tensleep, North Big Horn County, and Moran Junction. The Legislature will be asked for a one time amount for the portable enhancement sites including Rock Springs, Evanston, Jackson, Buffalo, and Newcastle for the 2017-2018 biennium. The 2019-2020 biennium included Sundance, Greybull, Wright, and Lusk. The dispatch consoles, Gold Elite, are no longer supported. Most have been replaced and five communities are in the process of replacement. The Legislature is being asked for the amount of 1.9 million to help these communities replace the equipment. In the 2019-2020 biennium the radios at the seventy towers will need to be replaced. A funding request is being made to the Legislature for 6.7 million to replace this equipment with GTR 8000's. Ongoing cost for hardware, software, and lines is 3 million per biennium. A discussion has started in the Governor's office on the possibility of user fees being charged but at least for the next year the cost is covered.

WFOA Legislative: Jeff Kehl stated that Senator Christenson was wondering if the Chief's Association would like to support mandatory carbon monoxide detectors. Senator Christenson is working on a bill for mandatory carbon monoxide detectors to fill in the gaps. Aid to cities, towns and counties are going to be affected by the budget issues. They will keep an eye on any bills that come up. Carbon monoxide detectors were discussed in regards to the loopholes in construction by Willy Watsabaugh. Chris Kocher mentioned that the IRC code has code for carbon monoxide detectors in new construction and remodels. Lanny Applegate stated that the state does not adopt residential code. This topic will be discussed further at the meeting in January. There is proposed legislation for special districts, fire districts number 66, to curtail the creation and if created after July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 they can only exist for twenty years and then must come up for a vote. A committee has been formed and they are discussing this issue.

WFOA Residential Sprinkler Committee: Justin Smith talked about how the committee is dedicated to educating people on residential fire sprinklers. A study done at John Hopkins University stated that nearly 80% of people educated in fire sprinklers would choose them for their new homes. In their last meeting one goal was to put a Wyoming spin on the statistics. They joined forces with a high school video/film making class to produce 30 second PSA's on fire safety topics including fire sprinklers. The PSA's will eventually be put on websites, Facebook pages, and hopefully statewide television stations. The committee meets once a month on the third Thursday anyone is welcome and can join the meeting by phone.

Wyoming Volunteer Fire Pension Fund Report: Gene Diedtrich stated that the pension plan was effective on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015 with the passage of HB-0072 combining the existing Volunteer Firefighter and Volunteer EMT pension plans into one. At the September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015 meeting the new Board elected Gene Diedtrich as Chairman and Lanny Applegate as Vice-Chairman. The members of the Board stayed the same except for one member of the Volunteer EMT Board (Eric Quinney) was added. Emergency rules were passed and will be in place while the regular rule-making process proceeds. The combined plan has 121 volunteer entities with 2,371 volunteers. Antelope Gap Rural Fire district joined on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015. There are 186 survivor pensions being paid and 1,077 retiree pensions. The smallest pension being paid is \$44.88 and the largest is \$719.70 compared to the previous plan in which the smallest was \$38.04 and the largest was \$689.62. GRS, the external actuaries for WRS, has run a new funding projection as of July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015. The projection showed that the plan will be fully funded in approximately 16 years, which is about 6 years higher than the original projections. There are four reasons for the difference:

- The data is one year older, and is more accurate due to the audit of all the volunteer member and retiree files.
- Actual earnings on the WRS investment portfolio were less than the projected 7.75%.
- The benefit improvement of 5 year vesting, which changes the status of 152 people from just terminated/inactive to vested terminations, meaning that they can accept a benefit at some point in the future rather than just a refund. The most important one.

- The interest rate change for the Volunteer EMT Plan – it was previously 2% but that group saw an increase in the combined plan since interest was designated to be 3% to match the old volunteer fire provisions.

The actuary bid is coming up for renewal next year.

### **Section Reports:**

Wyoming Firefighters Certification Committee: Not at this time.

Wyoming Association of Fire Marshals: Justin Smith stated that the association provides networking and educational opportunities. They are IAAI affiliated and meet jointly with an IAAI chapter. They will keep offering more and more classes.

### **State Fire Association Reports**

Wyoming State Firemen's Association: Gene Diedtrich said that the WY State Firemen's Convention and Tournament is June 15-18, 2016 in Riverton.

Wyoming State Rural Fire Association: Willy Watsabaugh stated that there are many different certifications including structural fire, HazMat, NWCG, EMS, and FEMA to name a few. Many of you need qualifications in multiple areas. Willy proposed that the WY Fire Chief's Association think about what we can do in terms of contracts, certifications, and qualifications and pull some things together so there is one contract, one set of qualifications, etc. in one place. As FEMA All-Hazard moves forward with their qualification and certification what about 310-1 which is a NWCG qualification. There was a discussion about putting together a joint task force to take a look at this including representatives from the Rural Fireman's Association, WY Fire Chief's Association, WHLS, WSF, and SFMO. The task force needs to be active and proactive. Wyoming is far behind compared to other states and we need to catch up. There was a discussion in regards to statutes and that they may need to be revised. The current SFMO statute is 35-9-107. It was discussed to request a meeting between representatives from RFA, WFCA, and the Directors of WOHS, WSF, SFMO. Craig Haslam and Shad Cooper offered to be representatives.

**Motion #3:** Mike Bournazian motioned to request a meeting with the agency Directors.

Second: John Rutherford

Motion Carries.

L.A.S.T. Team Update: Mark Young stated that they will have training at Mid-Winter this year. A basic class will be given Friday night January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016 for four hours. There will be advanced table top classes all day Saturday January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016 and half day Sunday January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016. If you would like to register for any of the classes contact Chief Walters, Mark Young, or Randy Vickers. The classes need a least 7 to 8 people. The Lovell Fire Department donated \$1000.00. They met with Governor in October it was a positive meeting. They did not get a sheep tag but the Governor is considering donating a bison tag. Governor Mead was very supportive. The Governor's Chief of Staff is checking into grant money and/or federal money for the L.A.S.T. Team by the Governor's request. Two Game and Fish commissioners we contacted, Richard Klouda in Lander and David Rael in Cowley. They both thought it was a great idea. David Rael has not yet confirmed a tag donation. The L.A.S.T. Team thanks Richard Klouda for his donation of an Elk tag. PSOB Specialist Chief Johnson has three claims pending that need to get through the Department of Justice. The Fall Firefighter Memorial service is April 2nd, 2016 at 1:00pm at the Wyoming Fire Academy everyone is invited to attend. If any knows of any Drum and/or Pipe corps please let Mark young know. Also if you know of any Honor Guards that might want to be a resource for the L.A.S.T. Team contact Mark. They are a little light in the Northern part of the state.

### **State Agency Reports:**

Wyoming State Forestry: JT Wensman the new Fire Management Officer stated that the fire season started out dry. There were nine EFSA fires in approximately eight counties. Two hundred forty three county personnel were sent out of state along with 65 county engines and fifty-eight overheads. The Helitack crew and helicopters were sent out on thirty fires this year. The inmate program went out on thirty-two fires this year. There are six vacancies right now in the agency. JT's ultimate goal is to help and have open communication.

Fire Marshal's Office: Lanny Applegate appreciates the invitation to the WFCOA meeting and wants to thank all of you for your thoughts, cards, and visits for Chief Speed Hartbank. Hats off to Craig Haslam and the Fremont County Fire Protection District for their great job in taking care of the Chief Hartbank's family and the time spent sitting with Chief Hartbank. There is a chance that Chief Hartbank might be coming back to Riverton on December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Chief Hartbank has received 356 cards. The Denver, Colorado Fire Departments have been visiting Chief Hartbank every week. Budget cuts have forced us to tighten our belts. Our department has two openings; Fire Prevention Inspector in Worland, application being taken, and Electrical License Specialist in Cheyenne which is on hold for now. The 2015 I codes were signed by Governor Mead on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015. These codes must be in place at the local level by July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016. If you have any question you can call the office, Lanny or Mark can help you, also any one on the Council. Lanny thanked John Rutherford and Sasha for their work. Sasha will be recertified at least two more times. Stephanie Schofield is getting set for a second dog.

Wyoming Office of Homeland Security: Not at this time

Continuing Business: Wyoming 2011 Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment and Retention Grant Update: Ian Kraft stated that the previous Chief's SAFER grant was extended until January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016 and the amount left is just shy of \$100,000.00. Covers the same three programs; Travel for Training, Physicals and Immunization, and College Scholarships. After Wheatland Fire School there is approximately \$79,000.00 left which means there is approximately; \$49,000.00 for travel for training, \$3,700.00 for physicals and immunizations, and \$25,000.00 for college scholarships to be used between now and January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Ian is going to work with FEMA and try to get it extended one more time. Mid-Winter Fire School is covered and includes tuition, meals, lodging, and fuel costs if a personnel vehicle is used. Grants are getting more competitive. In February or March a new SAFER grant for the Chief's Association was applied for but they did not receive it. The grant can be applied for again after the first of the year. There was a discussion.

**Motion # 4:** Brent Godfrey motioned to apply for the SAFER grant again.

Second: Willy Watsabaugh

Motion Carries.

New Business: Mike Bournazian brought up the dwindling attendance at the WFCOA meetings and that maybe the number of meetings should be evaluated. There was a thought that the meetings should be promoted better and earlier. It will be looked into.

It was also mentioned that the EMS Association should be included in the task force that will be discussing contracts, certifications, and qualifications.

#### WFC Meeting Schedule:

The next meeting will be held at Mid-Winter Fire School in Riverton at the Wyoming Fire Academy on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at 12:30pm.

The spring meeting will be in conjunction with the Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016 at 9:00am at the Riverton Fire Station #1, Lunch to follow.

The summer meeting will be in conjunction with the WY State Firemen's Convention and Tournament in Riverton on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at Station #1 and #3. The time for this meeting will be sent out later.

#### Adjournment:

**Motion #5:** John Rutherford motioned to adjourn the meeting at 4:44.  
Second: Brent Godfrey  
Motion Carries.