



Pennsylvania Office of the State Fire Commissioner

State Fire Advisory Board Summary September 19, 2024 1:00 PM PEMA Headquarters, Room 112 Harrisburg, PA

I. Call to Order

- Thomas Cook, Fire Commissioner, called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM

II. Roll Call

- Thomas Cook, Acting State Fire Commissioner
- Scott Little, PA Career Fire Chiefs Association
- William Rigby, PA Fire and Emergency Services Institute
- James Carstater, Region 1 Firefighter
- Joseph C Mitchell, Region 3 Firefighter
- Bruce Trego, Region 4 Firefighter
- Sam Aungst, Region 5 Firefighter
- Jeffrey Jumper, Region 6 Firefighter
- Frank J. Zangari, Region 7 Firefighter
- Timothy Knapp, Region 8 Firefighter
- Tom O'Donnell, Region 9 Firefighter
- Robert Brooks, PA Professional Firefighters Association President
- Steve Bair, PA Fire and Emergency Services Institute President
- Sean Harris representing Rep Gillen, Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee
- Conner O'Leary, Rep Gillen's Office
- Thomas Gramling, PA State Association of Boroughs
- Amy Sweitzer, Fire Equipment and Apparatus Vendor
- Randy Padfield, PEMA Director

III. Opening Remarks

- Commissioner Cook welcomed all to the meeting of the Pennsylvania State Fire Advisory Board. Introduction of reinvigorating the FAB meeting soliciting more feedback.
- Board member terms through 2025 – soliciting interest for next term.

IV. ACTION ITEM: Minutes from the May 16, 2024 Meeting

- Motion to approve by Zangari and second by Joe Mitchell - Motion passed unanimously.

V. Legislative Overview – Wes Majors

- Current Legislative Activity
 - 24/25 budget has been adopted.
 - 1. Working with general assembly changes for next grant cycle – disappointed that this didn't pass.
 - Modular testing (SB 1101)
 - Permits Hazmat Responders to receive tax exemptions (SB 1193)
 - Repeals COVID-19 disability benefits; provides for COVID-19 emergency responder and law enforcement officer death benefits (SB 1278)
- Upcoming Legislation/Activity
 - Relief Reform
 - 1. OSC currently working with Rep Miller - introducing language for VFRA reform.
 - 2. Language is currently with the Governor's Office for review.
 - PFAS
 - 1. Several PFAS bills before the General Assembly.
 - 2. Rep Scott (HB 1571) PFAS warning labels on PPE – we support.
 - 3. Sen. Yaw (SB 144) to establish statewide uniform requirements restricting the use of Class B firefighting foams containing added PFAS chemistries for training, restricting their use in testing, while also allowing for continued sale and use against real-world fires.
 - Cancer allowable expenses

VI. Sub-committee Updates

- Firefighter Memorial – Zangari
 - 8 volunteers – would like more people from the western area
 - Have not yet met.
- Relief Reform – Bair
 - Group met on June 12
- Relief Database Cleanup – Mitchell & Knapp
 - Meeting to coordinate the categories.
- Best Practices – Jumper
 - June meeting – looking for communicating between meetings.
 - Ways to communicate good things happening throughout the Commonwealth – provide some positive stories.
 - OSFC – grant applications – require 3 contacts for the grant.

- Looking for someone to take Jeff Jumper's place on the committee.

VII. OSFC Program Area Update

- Line of Duty Death Support Updates – developed draft SOP – awaiting feedback.
- Labor and Industry – Minor equipment usage
- OSFC Events Attended
 - Reps Cutler, Greiner and Mentzer
 - Rep Grove
 - Rep James
 - VA&EP Testimony
 - House Ag and Rural Affairs testimony – increased fireworks has increased our load
 - Attendance at events – our focus is on attending events
 - Digital is refreshing the OFSC website – should see this next week.
 - Grants/Loans – grant closes Oct 20 at 4:00 PM
 1. 291 Applications submitted and approved.
 2. 18 being reviewed.
 3. 518 that have been started but have not submitted.
 4. 826 applications submitted.
 5. 35 Loans pending – 12 to ARC next week.
 6. Ashley Gutshall with our grants and loans will be transferring to another agency. We hope to fill this position soon.
 7. Recruitment and Retention
 - a. Through phase one 2072 fire departments in the commonwealth – next step is to work on physical contacts for those departments.
 - i. We find out about mergers when they apply for a grant and wish to get their merger bonus – the official merger is the date on orphans' court.
 - b. Tax incentive report has been completed.
 - c. Neil Gunnet is no longer with our office.
 8. Community Risk Reduction
 - a. PennFIRS – close to a contract – we hope to announce something soon.
 - b. Vision 20/20 – Registration on Acadis

VIII. Fire Academy

- Courses are National courses and will be canceled if we do not meet minimum attendance.
- New Certification evaluator taking place.
- New test site proctor training is scheduled.

- Reaccreditation
 - IFSAC
 - Proboard – got comments back yesterday – developed plan moving forward. – dec is when the visit should be scheduled.
- Mobile live fire training trailer
 - Application for use of this is on the web site – please push the use of this unit.
 - Local Level Instructor application – the process is now electronic through Acadis – links are live on the website.
- Personnel
- Submissions for certification
- Reciprocity and equivalence are up to date
- Haz Mat awareness and Ops
- Training – engine academy 2 launched – success
 - Engine academy
 - Truck academy 2

IX. Strategic Plan

- Working on this plan
 - Influenced by feedback from the board and others.
- November we will provide a more details.
- Legislative Meetings Held
- New Website
- Strategic Plan
- State Certification Accreditation
- Grant/Loans
- Training and Certification/PSFA
- Recruitment and Retention
- Community Risk Reduction

X. Old Business

- None

XI. New Business

- Feedback on Grant Changes – ask regional reps to meet with departments – what are their thought moving forward. – propose we form a subcommittee of people who want to look at this grant program.
- Necessity for policies and Procedures subcommittee – not necessary
- Fire Advisory Board Vacancies – through Dec 25 – authorization from Gov to start soliciting to fill or re-appoint board positions.
- OSHA Proposal – OSHA Emergency Response Regulation changes – we do not have an official position – encourage your fire chiefs to look at the regulations – moving to public meetings in November – sign up to provide testimony.
 - Fire department must work with their solicitor.
- Reporting software. RFI's received – there should be an announcement of the selected vendor shortly.

XII. Other Business/Public Comment/Closing Remarks

- None

XIII. Next Meeting: November 21, 2024

- **Will be having a meal with the meeting - Noon**

XIV. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn by Tom O'Donnell, second by Joe Mitchell. Passed unanimously.