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CHIEF WALTER O. NELSON
CHAIRMAN

**Massachusetts Fire Training Council
Minutes of the January 10, 2024 Meeting**

Vice Chairman Firefighter William Cabral opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and began the meeting of the Massachusetts Fire Training Council at 11:08 am on January 10, 2024, via Microsoft Teams meeting.

Members attendance: Chairman Chief Tim Nelson, Firefighter William Cabral, Courtney Mayo, Esquire, Assistant Chief Kurt Ruchala, Chief Justin Alexander, Captain John Bonadio, Director Eric Littmann, Chief Francis Barresi, Captain Drew Piemonte, Lieutenant John Lombardo, Assistant Chief Jonathan Miller, Deputy Chief Fire Warden Andrew Regan, Jason Cardoso and Administrative Secretary Christine Dansereau.

Also present were State Fire Marshal Jon Davine, Deputy Fire Marshal Maribel Fournier, DFS Operations Sections Chief Dave Clemons, DFS Counsel Glenn Rooney, Instructional Design and Curriculum Development Specialist, Sara Praguski Walsh, Deputy Director of Administration Joanne Gardiner, Director of Hazardous Materials Response Jeffrey Winn, Chief Chris Norris, Easthampton Fire Department.

Not present: Deputy Secretary Susan Terrey

A. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Vice Chairman Firefighter William Cabral made a motion, to approve the minutes of the October 4, 2023 Training Council Meeting with the correction being made, seconded by Assistant Chief Kurt Ruchala. The vote passed in favor of the motion by roll call, abstained by Courtney Mayo, Esquire, Captain John Bonadio and Jason Cardoso

B. Fiscal Affairs Report – Deputy State Fire Marshal Maribel Fournier

- I'm going to take this opportunity to introduce Joanne Gardner, who is here with us today. She is our Deputy Director of Administration for the Mass Fire Academy. Just to give you a brief overview of what her responsibilities are, she in charge of registration, payroll, all of the fiscal responsibilities as they pertain to the Mass Fire Academy under the Director.
- Deputy Director of Administration Joanne Gardiner said a few words.
- The beginning balance was \$482,000 roughly. We received some revenue of \$56,000. We have some outstanding encumbered funds in revenues that we will be billing. The

ending balance is reflected as a negative amount of \$48,650. That's based on the billing that we have outstanding that we foresee should be coming in within the next 30 or 60 days. As you can see, we have an open receivable billing out there of almost \$67,000. When you combine those two, once we receive that those billings, we will obviously be in the positive. I will say that contracts have been extremely busy for Joanne and her staff and we are scheduling quite a few for the upcoming Spring semesters that communities have requested. I do not foresee any issues with the Trust for this coming Fiscal year.

C. EOPSS Update – Deputy Secretary Susan Terrey

- Not present

D. Update of Affiliated Members - Fire Chiefs' Association of Massachusetts

- Chief Nelson--representing part paid/part call – nothing to report
- Chief Madden – not present
- Chief Barresi - nothing to report
- Chief Justin Alexander – nothing to report

Professional Fire Fighters of Massachusetts

- Firefighter Cabral— nothing to report

Mass Call/Vol

- Assistant Chief Miller— nothing to report
- Assistant Chief Ruchala— nothing to report

Massachusetts Institute of Fire Department Instructors

- Capt. John Bonadio – The next MFDI meeting is schedule for January 24, 2024 at the NFPA Headquarters in Quincy.

Fire Prevention Association of Massachusetts

- Lt. John Lombardo – Not a ton to report. We are in the process of developing and planning for the May seminar and looking for educational programs on different types of topics to bring up for the two-day conference in Southbridge. So, if anyone has any ideas or passions that they would like to see in the prevention world for the two-day conference.

Citizen of the Commonwealth – Insurance Industry

- Jason Cardoso— Our President, John Golembeski is retiring at the end of the month and he is being replaced by Barbara Law. She is currently the President, CEO of the Guarantee Fund. She is going to maintain that position and our company as well. You may end up meeting her in the future.

Bureau of Forest Fire Control – Deputy Chief Fire Warden Andrew Regan –

- We have had 109 fires, we're almost at 1500 acres burned, 233 residential homes threatened, 5 homes destroyed, 103 structures impacted and over 220 responses by DCR on those wildfires. We've had 59 fires prescribed for 2109 acres. We've conducted 117 prevention programs, reaching out to over 5000 members of the public. We now have all 13 districts in place with 4 new wardens starting their positions. We also have one new patrolman in Southwestern County and DCR's has begun the process to formally develop a US program.

Citizen of the Commonwealth

- Attorney Courtney Mayo – nothing to report

E. Legislative Update – DFS Counsel Glenn Rooney

- Not much in the way of a legislative update. Bills are slowly starting to crawl out of committee. Hopefully we'll have more in the next couple of months to report on. There's been other current legislative priorities lately that they have, which kind of slowed the process on fire service-related bills, just fire code related again at the upcoming FPAM and FCAM meetings, will work through our fire code administrator to get copies of the NFPA 1 bound addition. To share the work of the BFPR, they will soon, probably over the next six months, once they receive the NFPA 12024 edition, begin work on the next code review cycle. They did establish at this last meeting a deadline for code change proposals for the current edition of the code. If you or anyone else has suggested edits and code change proposals to the current version of the code that is out there on the street, please get them to the BFPR by the end of February for them to be considered as part of an interim admit package on the building code side of the house. On the building code side of the house at the BBRS meeting yesterday, that board established public hearing dates for the 10th edition of the building code, and so their public hearings will start on February 14th. There will be one on the 21st and on the 28th, we haven't hammered out the details, they intend to hold a hearing in Springfield, Boston and one remote, so stay tuned to their website.

DFS and MFA Update – Deputy Fire Marshal Maribel Fournier

- I'd like to introduce Director Eric Littmann, who start with the MFA as the Director effective January 8th.
- Director Littmann offered an introduction and his background
- The wait list numbers, we are booking into Stow in May and April. Springfield and Bridgewater are booking into April. We have approximately 187 on the wait list.
- Dr. Sara Walsh, Program Coordinator Kevin Robinson and I are working on MFA's reaccreditation as it pertains to the Proboard. Our 5-year limit has come up. We expire in December of 2024. This is something I kept under my purview even when I was serving as a Director and I want to get through accreditation to understand the process. Dr. Walsh has done a tremendous amount of work to prepare for this. We received our notification from the Proboard and our application needs to be submitted by June for the site visit. That will happen this fall and hopefully will result in accreditation in December of 2024.
- January is Firefighter Cancer Awareness month. Abby Baker and the MFA team have about 7 screenings scheduled for across the Commonwealth. In addition to that, we are running some data and getting some data together to see where we're going to be stationing our mobile unit that we procure that we have on state contract as well with these funds to start seeing where the need is in the Commonwealth and starting scheduling that.
- We still have 2 openings over at the Mass Fire Academy for Program Coordinator positions. Our Special Hazards is in the final stage of candidates. They are going through reference checks, so we hope that that position will be filled shortly and round 1 of the recruit coordinator position, which was previously held by Dennis Ball, who is the Deputy of Training, interviews start today.
- The Marshal has talked the past few months on the live burn qualification. As you know, we have our online training for our current instructors. The burn qual in-person delivery for new instructors has been completed and is in the process and the delivery of that will be in February and we have 2 deliveries in March which will bring all of our new instructor and support

personnel that meet the criteria, will all be burn qualified. We also have 2 other sessions budgeted for the remainder of the fiscal year to get anybody who was not able to attend those session and any other new staff that we may hire in the meantime, to make sure they meet the standard and are qualified.

- Overall agency updates for FY25 budget, we expect that the Governor's budget will be released on January 24th. We will have a meeting once it is released. I will prepare the presentation for the Marshal. Depending on schedules, it'll probably be for the March meeting, because once it's released, I'll prepare the documentation and he will present to the training council and the Fire Service Commission of what the Governor's recommendation is for the budget.
- **Old Business -**
- **New Business** – Captain John Bonadio raised concerns regarding a resignation of an instructor and discussed complaints he has received regarding Academy dynamics and the flow of information among instructors.
- **Policy Presentation/Adoption – Deputy State Fire Marshal Maribel Fournier**
- We've had two sub-committee meetings before this, and they've made a recommendation to move these policies forward to the council for an overall acceptance.
- **MFA Anti-Harassment Policy - General Counsel Glenn Rooney** – Discussion regarding the need for a policy to be adopted by the MFTC, which parallels existing policies for other Commonwealth public safety academies. If adopted, this policy would align with upcoming in training to be delivered by DFS Legal to all MFA instructors on anti-harassment. One of the recommendations which was accepted by the sub-committee was a small grammatical change from references in the fourth paragraph. It says we after MFA, so the motion was made and accepted that the first sentence, because the MFA takes allegations of sexual harassment seriously, we will respond. So, any reference to it will be changed to MFA.
- Chief Justin Alexander motioned to adopt the sub-committee's recommendation and was seconded by Captain Drew Piemonte. The vote passed in favor of the motion by roll call
- **Massachusetts Fire Service Personnel Policy – Director Jeffrey Winn** – Just to make it more specific and be clearer that all members of the military bases and the Commonwealth who are civilian firefighters are allowed to attend or take MFA training at no charge like an in-state firefighter would be allowed to attend or take MFA training at no charge like an in-state firefighter would be allowed to. The previous language kind of made it look like they're out of state or federal firefighter or something on those lines, or thus they would have to pay for any MFA training. Subcommittee met this morning to review the policy and make a recommendation to the Council actual on the language that you see in front of you.
- Chief Justin Alexander motioned to adopt the sub-committee's recommendation and was seconded by Chief Tim Nelson. The vote passed in favor of the motion by roll call
- **ISO – Hazmat – Certification Policy – Director Jeffrey Winn** - The policy you see on the screen in front of you, we had to make a slight tweak, a slight recommendation of the tweak and striking out the language that carries the date of May 1st, 2018. What we found was there are some candidates that we're had training conducted prior to that outside of MFA that we're allowed to challenge the ISO certification exam and by deleting the language that the date there, it'll just bring us back more in line with how the Pro Board is set up for MFA certification. We presented this to the sub-committee this morning on certification, and the subcommittee was in favor of adopting the changes as proposed in front of you on the screen.

- Chief Justin Alexander motioned to adopt the sub-committee's recommendations and was seconded by Captain Drew Piemonte. The vote passed in favor of the motion by roll call
- **ISO – Fire Suppression – Certification Policy – Director Jeffrey Winn** - We discovered going through some of our review of our certification policies, the original policy language, that third paragraph alluded to, a training course that was really, that doesn't exist at MFA. So, we gave a quick verbal our discussion last month to the Training Council to get the training Council's intent that we want to go with a specific safety training track, if you will, versus a creation of a new HAZMAT safety training course that would take us, you know, a pretty good amount of time to stand up, create that and roll out to the field. And the Council's direction is really to stay in line with the safety aspect of it, which kind of drives not kind of does drive what we have in front of us now, where we reworded the policy, worked as a committee, ran it through legal. Obviously, of course I brought it through the sub-committee on certification earlier this morning and we looked at if you're already certified as a fire officer 1, you're a HAZMAT technician certified as well, and you've completed ISO of fire suppression and you're either a member of the HAZMAT team in good standing or you completed all the requalification courses within 12 months. You would be allowed to challenge the written exam, become an ISO of hazardous materials, and this is what's now in front of you on the screen as well.
- Chief Justin Alexander motioned to adopt the sub-committee's recommendation and was seconded by Chief Frank Barresi. The vote passed in favor of the motion by roll call

- **Review of Correspondence**

K. Determination of Next Date and Location

- The next meeting of the Training Council will be on Wednesday, February 7, 2024 at 11:00 am at our Stow campus.

- **Public Comment**

M. Adjourn Meeting

- Chief Justin Alexander Motion to adjourn the meeting and seconded by Chief Tim Nelson at 12:06 p.m. The vote passed in favor of the motion by roll call