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LIEUTENANT PAUL J. MEDEIROS
CHAIRMAN

**Massachusetts Fire Training Council
Minutes of the February 3, 2021 Meeting**

Chairman Lieutenant Paul Medeiros opened the meeting of the Massachusetts Fire Training Council via webex with the Pledge of Allegiance at 11:05 am on February 3, 2021.

Roll call attendance: Deputy Fire Marshal Maribel Fournier, Chief David Celino, Fire Marshal Michael Swain, Assistant Chief Andrew Connerty, Assistant Chief Jonathan Miller, Vice Chairman Chief Tim Nelson, Retired Chief Sheri Bemis, Jason Cardoso, Assistant Chief Kurt Ruchala (left at noon), Chairman Lieutenant Paul Medeiros, Chief Frank Barresi, Chief Richard Donovan (arrived after roll call), and Chief Richard DeLorie.

Also present were Fire Marshal Peter Ostroskey, Operations Director David Clemons, DFS Counsel Steven Rourke, DFS Deputy Counsel Glenn Rooney, MFA Deputy Director Joseph Klucznik, Assistant Chief Tim Choate, Educational Specialist Sara Praguski Walsh, Call/Vol Program Coordinator Chris Norris and Administrative Assistant Susan Neaz.

Not present: Firefighter William Cabral and Undersecretary Jeanne Benincasa Thorpe.

A. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Chief Richard Delorie made a motion, seconded by Assistant Chief Jonathan Miller, to approve the minutes of the January 6, 2021 Training Council Meeting. The roll call vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

B. Fiscal Affairs Report

Deputy Fire Marshal Fournier presented the MFA Trust Fund report for the period of 12-27-20 through 1-23-21. The balance reflects items to be billed as well as items that are outstanding for this fiscal year. Due to COVID, we have been extremely busy with contract work with departments wanting to get their training done. We feel we are going to exceed our projected revenue and end up in the positive.

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

- Chief Nelson –representing part paid/part call –nothing to report
- Chief Delorie - representing metro – nothing to report
- Chief Barresi - representing call – nothing to report
- Chief Donovan – representing full-time – nothing to report

Professional Fire Fighters of Massachusetts

- Firefighter Cabral – not present
- Lieutenant Medeiros – we're busy working on the budget and we continue to have issues with PPE supplies. There have been challenges with receiving vaccines and getting testing. We just had a convention of the International Firefighters Association virtually which was attended by a large number of attendees.

Mass Call/Vol

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

Massachusetts Institute of Fire Department Instructors

- Assistant Chief Connerty – nothing to report

Fire Prevention Association of Massachusetts

- Fire Marshal Michael Swain – nothing to report

Citizen of the Commonwealth – Insurance Industry

- Jason Cardoso – due to COVID many folks have been at home to take care any homeowner

Bureau of Forest Fire Control

- Chief Celino presented the Massachusetts Wildfire Occurrence for 2020 including statistics by district, class, cause and month. This information was better reported this year. The powerpoint presentation is available upon request.

Citizens of the Commonwealth

- Ret. Chief Sheri Bemis – nothing to report

D. Legislative Update –Counsel Steve Rourke

- A number of bills are starting to be refiled but nothing directly concerning the Training Council. Some not so good news is the refile of a sparklers bill and a favorable bill concerning the one and two-family residential home sprinkler provision.

E. DFS Update –Fire Marshal Ostroskey

- Things are moving along well; all of our sites are up and running and the acting Director will give a report about the MFA activities.
- The Governor's budget has been released; the agency is in good shape. We will make a presentation at the next Training Council meeting.
- Mass planning efforts for Bridgewater are progressing well. We've had some meetings with the Plymouth county Chiefs and Commissioners about the site and some of the activities there.
- The agency is in the process of pushing out SAFE grants and round 1 of Fire Equipment grants; we're hoping to release those in the very near future.
- The Chairman asked if DFS has been involved with vaccinations. Marshal Ostroskey noted that the agency has afforded the opportunity to staff to receive the vaccination but has not been asked to be involved in any other way.
- Chief Donovan asked if the agency has asked any surrounding communities, specifically Carver, to use their burn building for the Bridgewater recruit program. The Marshal noted that the agency has reached out to various communities in the past including Carver. The

Council was shown pictures of the Carver training facility. At this time, no other burn building has been offered.

F. Academy Activities Report –Deputy Fire Marshal Fournier

- We're up to 157 on the Career Recruit assignment list for all three campuses. Stow is full up until July. Bridgewater is full up to June. We were concerned about not being able to fill the Springfield class in May.
- The MFA continues to develop lecture-only courses for virtual delivery to deliver as many as we possibly can before we get back to regular delivery. Fire service folks have been reaching out to deliver Impact courses. There are 27 virtual courses uploaded and underway with another 19 in development. In addition, I've directed the program coordinators to see if we can schedule department-specific courses before the re-opening of open training to minimize our backlog of training to schedule. Our EMS coordinator visits all sites ahead of the training to insure COVID protocols are being followed.
- I have been keeping the Chairman updated relating to any COVID positive cases pertaining to students or instructors. We've had a couple every week or so but it has not disrupted any recruit classes.
- The Chairman asked if the agency was tracking the vaccination of employees. The Marshal noted the agency is not tracking as it has over 600 contractors, many of which are full-time firefighters, that have the opportunity to receive their vaccination by other means.
- The MFA Director's position was posted in mid-January. It will remain open until filled.

G. Old Business

H. New Business

- Chief Delorie asked for the history behind the Academy's procedure that requires a recruit to pass the final certification exam in order to graduate from the program. One of his firefighter recruits attended the Fire Academy with very good test scores throughout the program but failed the final Firefighter I/II exam. Fortunately, he was able to pass the second time, but it was upsetting that he would not have graduated from the program if he failed a second time. The Chief believes that if recruits achieved all the requirements throughout the program, they should be able to graduate the program regardless if they have passed the final certification exam. He is asking how it was determined that passing the exam meant you can graduate. The Chairman explained that originally in order to be a recruit graduate you had to pass Firefighter I certification. The change made was that a recruit had to pass both Firefighter I and II to graduate the program. We decided to set the standard for certification because, as Sheri Bemis explained, there were many firefighters coming out of training back to departments without Firefighter I/II certification. We felt that the cost of sending a firefighter to the program was reason to require this certification standard. The point was made that in other professions, you could graduate from the program but without a license or certification, you could not practice your profession. The Deputy Marshal shared the statistic that since December of 2017, only four recruits have failed the second attempt at the exam. There has been several times a student has failed the first attempt but almost always they have passed the second attempt. At the end of the discussion, Chief Delorie understood the reason for the requirement.

- Tim Choate – at the district 14 chiefs meeting a couple weeks ago, there was a discussion about a recruit working for another department attending a PT orientation for his hiring department that tested positive for COVID-19. The question was who is responsible for the recruit. The General Counsel noted that this situation varies from community to community and outside the purview of the Training Council. The Marshal indicated that it would be a conversation with the individual town management.

I. Policy Presentation/Adoption

I. Review of Correspondence

- SAFER hold request for six seats in a future Springfield class from Chicopee Fire Department has been granted.

K. Determination of Next Date and Location

- The next meeting of the Training Council will be Wednesday March 3, 2021 at 11:00 am via webex call unless otherwise noted.

L. Public Comment

M. Adjourn Meeting

- Chief Richard Delorie made a motion, seconded by Chief Richard Donovan, to adjourn the meeting at 12:35. The roll call vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.