



NEW HAMPSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS, INC.

Working Together to Make a Difference

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Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the NH Association of Fire Chiefs

Thursday, September 9, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 1817 hours by Chief Sitar.

After a salute to the flag, a moment of silence was requested for departed members.

Chief Sitar welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for their support of our Vendor Showcase, especially the vendors who participated.

Members were asked to introduce themselves.

Special Guests: NH Commissioner of Safety Robert Quinn.

Minutes of the August 12 meeting are posted. A MOTION (Buxton/Lyon) to accept them, carried unanimously.

Financial Reports: The July financials have been posted. A MOTION (Jones/R. Buxton) to approve them carried unanimously.

Communications: n/a

Applications for membership: 7 new members: Chief Andre Parent, Asst. Chief Matthew Lamothe and Dep. Chief Ryan Cashin, all of the Manchester Fire Department; Chief David Noyes of Waterville Valley Public Safety; Dep. Chief Jon Chisholm of Concord Fire; Chief Ronald Beard of Lincoln Fire and Chief Phillip Cloutier of Gorham Fire. Welcome to you all!

Life Membership: The Board conferred Life Membership status to retiring Chief Mark Klose of the Rochester Fire Department.

President's Report: (Sitar) –

- He informed the group of his and the Executive Director's meeting with Commissioner Quinn. He stressed his desire to expand firefighter health and safety resources.

- He spoke with Ty Gagne on the elimination of presumption of Covid by Primex as the State of Emergency has been terminated. Documentation is important to afford coverage.
- August 20 we had meeting with North Country fire chiefs at the Bethlehem Academy. Very productive meeting.
- He spoke of the Golf Tournament success. Final figures not out yet.
- He and Executive Director Lemire will be meeting with Governor on Tuesday, September 14.

Executive Director's Report (Lemire) –

- Thanks to all of you and especially our vendor partners for today. It is our first in-person monthly meeting in 18 months!
- Not sure if Chris and Steve have been able to have a financial report on the Golf Tournament yet. Save the date! August 8, 2022 is the next one!
- Chief Sitar and I went to Bethlehem on August 20 with Director Cutting, Marshal Toomey and Comm. Quinn to reach out to our North Country colleagues.
- The October 14 meeting will be a breakfast meeting at the NH Fire Academy.
- Our November weekend is on for the Red Jacket in North Conway, November 12-14.
- Our December meeting will be on the 9th and hosted by Chief Paul Haas in Dover.
- The January 2022 meeting will be on the 13th and be virtual.
- We will be also sponsoring a golf tournament August 8, 2022.

1st Vice President Report (Beattie) –

- I informally met with Director Cutting on August 31st to discuss continuation of the hiring and retention work that was started pre-covid. To get as many groups on the same page as possible, we will continue the discussion with the “Five Families” meeting.
- On 9/7/21 President Sitar, Chiefs Beattie, and Best as well as Adam Schmidt participated in a Zoom call related to potential retirement legislation. Also on the call were representatives from PFFNH, Troopers Assn, NH Patrolman's Association, NH Chiefs of Police.
 - We are working with our lobbyist to review a lot of information that was sent to us. This will include the wording of current RSAs.
 - Because we only received this information on Tuesday, we will have a much better understanding of our need for involvement after a thorough review which we are working on.

2nd Vice President Report (Emanuel) –

UNH: back in session, masked and testing for COVID.

- All members of the Durham community—students, faculty and staff—are **required to wear a face covering in all indoor campus**

spaces except when eating, in private offices or in personal residence hall rooms. The requirement applies to everyone, vaccinated and unvaccinated. This includes classrooms, hallways, elevators, restrooms, break rooms, entries and exits to buildings, laboratories, meeting rooms, shared offices and work areas.

- Air handling/ventilation will be increased in all campus buildings.
- Additional plexiglas barriers will be added in dining halls
- No non-UNH visitors are permitted in any residence hall.

Legislative Update:

Qualified Immunity – There is a lot of speculation regarding new legislation will be filed in 2022 to amend the existing qualified immunity laws. NHAFC, NH Chiefs of Police, NH Police Association, and NH Municipal Association held a call earlier this month to strategize regarding the issue. At this point, we will see what is filed and react accordingly. It seems likely the issue will re-emerge.

HB 343 (Ambulance Billing) – House Commerce has scheduled a work session for September 21 at 11:30 am. NHAFC is working to coordinate strategy prior to the meeting later this month. we have attempted to connect with several members of the House Commerce Committee to determine how they would like to move forward with the bill.

Potential Pension Reform – Kirkpatrick
House:

- House members can start to file bills for the 2022 session on September 13. Their filing deadline is September 17.

Senate:

- Senators can start to file bills for the 2022 session on October 13 and the deadline to file is October 27.

Tuesday, September 7, 2021

10:00 HOUSE EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION
AM subcommittee work session on **HB 275** - Relative to The Governor's Power to Initiate A State Of Emergency and Various Emergency Powers in LOB 306

Wednesday, September 8, 2021

9:00 HOUSE EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION
AM subcommittee work session on **HB 619** - Designating Police and Fire Dispatchers As Group II Members Of The Retirement System in LOB 306

Tuesday, September 14, 2021

1:15 HOUSE FINANCE DIVISION I work session on [HB 91](#) - Relative to
PM Death Benefits Of First Responders Who Die From Suicide in LOB
212

2:45 HOUSE FINANCE DIVISION I work session on [HB 481](#) -
PM Establishing The Office Of The Right-to-know Ombudsman and
Making An Appropriation Therefor in LOB 212

3:15 HOUSE FINANCE DIVISION I work session on [HB 536](#) - Relative
PM to Death Benefits For Public Works Employees Killed In The Line
Of Duty, and Relative to Workers' Compensation Offsets For
Certain Retirement System Benefits in LOB 212

Thursday, September 16, 2021

11:00 HOUSE LABOR, INDUSTRIAL AND REHABILITATIVE
AM SERVICES full committee work session on [HB 589](#) - Requiring
Workers' Compensation to Cover Prophylactic Treatment For
Critical Exposure in LOB 307

Tuesday, September 21, 2021

11:30 HOUSE COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS subcommittee
AM work session on [HB 343](#) - Relative to Billing For Ambulance
Services in LOB 302-304

Sgt. At Arms (Best) – No report

Committee Reports

Scholarship Committee – (Dep. Toomey) – Three applications have been received. The committee has awarded \$500 scholarships to Lauren Best, Mariah Chamberlain and Kaycee Reagan.

Recruitment and Retention Committee – (Chief Beattie) – (no report)

Division Reports

Fire Marshal – (Marshal Toomey)

ADMINISTRATION:

Personnel:

We have several openings within the office, please share this information with anyone that may be interested:

Full time Assistant Director/Deputy Fire Marshal

Full time Deputy Fire Marshal/Fire Protection Engineer

Full time Fire Investigator- background in process

Part time NFIRS Program Coordinator- background in process

Part time State Building Inspector
Part time State Building Permit Coordinator- background in process
Part time Fire Protection Specialist (Inspector)

Statewide Fire Incident Reporting:

We are working with FSTEMS on a joint initiative to implement and pilot the new NH Emergency Reporting Software using Imagetrend. This solution will soon be available for all fire departments for incident reporting, inspections, inventory and scheduling. NFIRS data reporting will remain a function of the FMO.

Legislation:

We are following the study committee for SB 106 relative to the adoption of the 2018 fire code. A report is due out of the committee by November 1, 2021.

We will be monitoring the upcoming filing period for LSR's that impact the fire service.

BUREAU OF INVESTIGATIONS:

New/Active cases (synopsis of some of our cases are listed below):

- On August 4, 2021, investigators responded to the area of Oxbow Pond Rd. in Canterbury to assist the Canterbury FD and PD with an investigation into a fire that occurred at a property along the Merrimack River banks inhabited by Dave Lidstone aka "River Dave." There were civil court actions between Lidstone and the property's owner at the time of the fire, and Lidstone was incarcerated due to non-compliance of a court order. Access to the property was difficult and investigators and FD personnel had to use ATVs to travel 1.5 miles into the woods. The fire is undetermined at this time but it does not appear to be criminal in nature.
- On August 6, 2021, investigators and an IGL K9 team responded to 854 Battle St. in Webster to assist the Webster FD and PD with a fire in a vacant/unoccupied house. During the course of the investigation, criminal indicators were discovered. The investigation is ongoing by the three agencies.
- On August 13, 2021, an investigator responded to 60 Middle St. in Newport to assist the Newport FD and PD with a fire in the sleeper cab of a tractor trailer unit that was parked and unoccupied. There does not appear to be any criminal indicators. However, due to the amount of damage, the cause of the fire is undetermined.
- On August 21, 2021, an investigator responded to Rt. 16S in Dover to assist the Dover FD and NH State Police with a motor vehicle fire. When first responders arrived on scene, nobody was with the vehicle. During

the course of the investigation, criminal indicators were discovered. The investigation is ongoing.

- On August 25, 2021, FMO investigators, with the assistance of NH State Police EOD and Allenstown PD, executed a search warrant at an address in Allenstown. The FMO had received information that a resident in Allenstown was illegally manufacturing M-100 type explosives. During the execution of the search warrant, evidence was discovered to show that this resident had been manufacturing explosives.

Ignitable Liquid Detection Canine Teams:

Our two IGL Canine Teams were deployed three times in the month of August. A joint training day was conducted with the IGL Canine Team from the Manchester Fire Department at the Concord Fire Department training grounds where we focused on open field and motor vehicle sniffs.

Public Outreach:

Investigators are assisting with youth firesetter assessments in multiple communities throughout the state. Our youth fire setter coordinator continues to work with the mental health community in trying to resurrect a youth fire setter task force.

Training/Committees:

Investigators attended several trainings in the month of August, some to include: IAAI's Recognizing Burning to Defraud, School Resource Officer, various CFI Trainer courses and GPS Tracking Technique.

One of our investigators also started the NH Fire Academy's Certified Fire Investigator School which runs from August to October.

Court Actions:

One of our investigators testified in Merrimack County Superior Court regarding a 2005 arson homicide that happened in Concord, NH. Richard Ellison is on trial for First Degree Murder and Second Degree Murder for causing the death of Robert McMillan, age 85 of 284 N. State St., Concord on December 9, 2005. The investigator testified to his involvement in this case when he was a Concord Police Officer. Other members of the FMO who have retired, or since left the office, have also testified in this case. The trial is expected to continue for several more weeks.

BUREAU OF BUILDING SAFETY & CONSTRUCTION:

State Building Permit System:

We processed 34 building permit applications in the month of August.

Technical Assistance, Educational & Healthcare Reviews:

Our staff remains available for technical code assistance. We initiated 4 educational and 7 healthcare plan reviews in the month of August.

Variance Requests:

We processed 4 variance requests in the month of August.

BUREAU OF PLANNING AND SUPPORT SERVICES:

Hazardous Materials:

Hazardous Materials coordination and coverage remains a priority. Personnel are ready to deploy if needed and may be contacted through the on-call FMO supervisor for consultation purposes.

We are working on a review of the Tier II reporting and have identified some deficiencies in the required reporting. Our office is working with EPA Region 1 on outreach to impacted facilities. A letter will be going out to ice arenas as approximately 20 locations have not reported.

Survey:

So far we have received survey responses from 63 fire departments about their upcoming fire prevention education activities. If you haven't had a chance but would like to share feedback, the survey is still open and we would love to hear from you. www.surveymonkey.com/r/FireDeptEvents
We appreciate your input very much!

Fire Prevention Week:

Fire Prevention Week planning is ongoing and we look forward to sharing more information about NH happenings soon. A statewide proclamation has been sent to Governor Sununu and an invitation to attend a signing event will be forthcoming, pending the Governor's schedule.

The NFPA also has some excellent FPW resources, including social media cards and printouts you can hand out at open houses, fire station tours and community events. <https://www.nfpa.org/Events/Events/Fire-Prevention-Week/Educate>

Outreach:

The public education and K-9 teams were fortunate to attend several National Night Out events on August 6th and Safe Kids 301 at NH Motor Speedway on August 13th. The venues did a great job and we were pleased at the opportunity to share educational fire and life safety messages.

Training:

The NH State Fire Marshal's Office has partnered with the Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid Association and will be conducting a free training on October 12th to provide an overview of the roles and capabilities of the State Fire Marshal's Office. Please register in advance at www.lrmfa.org.

NH Fire Standards, Training and EMS - (Dir. Cutting)

ADMINISTRATION

Personnel

- We have two full-time fire training Captains retiring at the end of the summer, early fall.
- One of our Administrative Supervisors is retiring at the end the summer.
- Our Compliance Unit leader has left to accept a job at HSEM, we are in the process of hiring someone.
- We are in the process of hiring an EMS Training Coordinator.

Budget

- The biennial budget was signed by Governor Sununu in June.

Legislation

- We filed an Emergency Administrative Rule to increase the tuition discount for Firefighter I and II, for NH emergency service personnel as outlined in HB 2. The new cost for affiliated members for Firefighter I is \$135 per student, reduced from \$960, and \$150 per student for Fire fighter II, reduced from \$530.
- The Governor signed SB142 reestablishing the commission to study the incidence of PTSD in first responders.
- The Governor signed SB133 which includes the repeal of REPLICA and allows for the Commissioner to issue a letter of concern in EMS licensure cases when appropriate, both effective 60 days after signing.

Grants

- We have not received an update on the AFG grant, which if awarded will replace Engine 1, 3 forcible entry door props and the current certification testing software.
- The American Rescue Plan Act included \$80 million in funding to address suicide, burnout and behavioral health conditions - including substance abuse - among public safety officers and healthcare professionals. The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) announced it is accepting applications until August 30th for these funds through the Health and Public Safety Workforce Resiliency

Training Program. We are working to complete a project design concept and completed grant application, even within the limited timeframe.

Special Projects

- We are planning for a September 11th memorial at our main campus.
- We are working with our partners to plan for the annual Firefighter's Memorial that will be held at the main campus on September 25th.
- We are working towards a website rebuild with our Department of Safety partners.
- We are completing an analysis of the instructor to student ratio for Firefighter I/II and how that may affect course costs.

Outreach

- August 20th we are partnering with the Fire Marshal to hold a roundtable discussion at the Burton Training facility with Fire Chief's from the northern part of the state.

BUREAU OF FIRE TRAINING

Courses/Programs

- The Airport Firefighter programs have been completed.
- Sunapee Firefighter I program held its graduation on July 31.
- Firefighter I in Tuftonboro is on-going and ends in August.
- Firefighter II in Bethlehem is on-going and ends in August.
- Recruit School is finishing on September 10th.
- The LRCC FF I/II begins on September 10th.
- New fall courses:
 - Firefighter I in Bartlett
 - Firefighter II in Sunapee, Brookline, Newington and at the Fire Academy in Concord.
- A course planning guide/policy that will allow departments, individuals and services to share their needs for classes and to make requests for courses is anticipated to be complete by late fall.

Facilities

- A new vehicle exhaust system has been installed in the fire station.

- Minor repairs to the Burton “A” building are underway.
- The roof project on the “J” building continues and is expected to be an additional 2-3 weeks depending on weather.
- The Confined Space / Trench Rescue project should be completed in 2 weeks.
- The LPG Transport and CNG Trailer project have not yet begun.
- We experienced a culvert failure at the south entrance of the drill yard. We are working with the Division of Administration and NH DOT to facilitate repairs.

Apparatus/Equipment

- We have permanently acquired an ARFF Truck from Portland, Maine for interim use until a new one is purchased. We are working through the logistics of its delivery and subsequent storage.
- Ladder 1 Aerial portion OOS.
- The new Aerial is being built and is expected next year.

BUREAU OF CERTIFICATION AND SUPPORT

Courses/Programs

- New fall courses:
 - Instructor I at the Fire Academy in Concord.
 - Fire Officer I at the Fire Academy in Concord.
 - NFA – Preparation for Initial Company Operations
 - Fire Investigator at the Fire Academy in Concord.
- On September 30th there will be a seminar for county and federal arson prosecutors. This is a cooperative project between FSTEMS, NH FMO and US BATFE.
- The Educational Technology section continues to work on the development of content for FF I /II.

Instructors

- We are finalizing work on a comprehensive Instructor Recruitment Plan.

CPAT

- The last CPAT of the year is scheduled for Monday September 13th and will be at the academy. Candidates are able to sign up for the test until August 30th.

Testing

- If awarded, the AFG grant we will replace the current certification testing software.

BUREAU OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Operations

- As noted above we are in the process of hiring a new full-time employee that will be focused on EMS training and continuing education offerings the Division offers.
- There is still a higher than normal delay in processing Criminal History Record Information (CHRI), background checks, on any New/Lapsed EMS Provider license applications. This process is handled by the State Police Criminal Records Unit (CRU). There is an approximately three (3) to four (4) week delay in some instances. If departments have specific issues please reach out to us.

Clinical Systems

- Trauma Systems
 - We are working on the transition of level 3 trauma center designations from the state to ACS, reviewing the state level 4 designation and the proposal of a new level of Trauma Ready.
- Specialty Services
 - We are still progressing forward on a project within the BEMS that would add a Specialty Service sub-section to include Inter-Facility Transportation and Mobile Integrated Healthcare programs. This proposal would dedicate a combination of full and part-time personnel to these programs as a resource for development, management, education, training, integration and oversight. They would coordinate operations including infrastructure, stakeholder communications, and oversight of MIH application process, customer service, and efficiency and continuously improving operations and outcomes by using evidence-based methods. Funding is through a grant for two years with an evaluation on

whether or not to continue these based on program success and EMS system needs. The work includes finalizing an MOU with DHHS, our legal department and preparation for approval at Governor and Council.

➤ Critical Care Protocols

- Work continues on the development of expanded scope of practice to facilitate critical care transport in the state outside of the current licensed unit (DHART). This includes four additional services in Maine, Massachusetts and New York whom are all currently operating in the State on variable regularity. This is currently in a sub-committee of the MCB and has been discussed with several stakeholder groups. A meeting with all sub-committee members is currently being planned for the second week of September with an actual date to be determined.

Data Management

➤ Respond NH

- Implementation is still moving forward. As issues and problems are identified, they are taken care of by either fixing it internally or submitting a “ticket” to Image Trend to address.

➤ TEMSIS

- Based on stakeholder input we created a *Report Writer 101* presentation with the goals of instructing leaders on how to build their own reports, how to automate reports, how to export data to Excel, to provide sample Excel templates with pivot tables and how to share reports among administrators.
- Work is in progress to create videos for users to reference at their own convenience.

➤ NFIRS

- As of July 23rd we are officially receiving reports in the NFIRS reporting system from two agencies, Lisbon and Peterborough.
- We continue to work with services to onboard. Onboarding time for services is also significantly decreasing – Peterborough Fire was a cumulative 10 hours to get to reporting status; comparatively Tilton-

Northfield began reporting after 3 hours of onboarding. The expectation is that through education and outreach, onboarding will be accomplished in less than an hour for most services.

- Anyone interested in the system can contact Joseph Cartier at 603-223-3403 or joseph.w.cartier@dos.nh.gov

Preparedness Section

- On August 17th there will be a Pediatric Surge Stakeholders Meetings with GSHCC.
- Ongoing discussions regarding hospital diversion and the use of Juvare with communication of such between hospitals and EMS services.

NH Fire Standards and Training Commission – (Chiefs Clark/Buxton) n/r

NH Emergency Medical and Trauma Services Coord. Board – (Chief Allard)
n/r

National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) – (Chief Corey) –

- He encouraged volunteer/call members to join at \$18 per year.

EMS Trauma Medical Review Board – (Chief Beaudoin) – n/r

Forest Protection Bureau – (Chief Sherman) - n/r

Board of Fire Control – (Chief Clark) –

- Marshal Toomey reported that they will be meeting on an amendment to NFPA 37 on September 22 at 1330.

Building Code Review Board – (Marshal Lennon) – n/r

Manufactured Housing Installation Standards Board: (Chief) n/r

Division of Emergency Services and Communications – (Director Doyle) – n/r

E-911 Commission – (Chief Thomas) –

- They are meeting tomorrow

IAFC Director – (Chief Christopoulos) –

- He reported on FRI and its success.

New England Fire Chiefs – a Division of the IAFC – (Chief Jones) –

- He stated that they will be meeting in a couple of weeks and asked everyone to save dates in June next year in Worcester, MA.

Old Business –

- Report on the golf tournament – Chief Carrier thanked everyone for the support and reported that we had 54 golfers. Great feedback from golfers. They estimate a \$10,000 profit.

New Business –

Good and Welfare –

- Tom Green reported that the Fallen Firefighters' Memorial ceremony will be September 25.
- Glenn Davis will be stepping down as President of the NH State Firemens' Assn.
- Chief Klose thanked everyone for their help and support during his tenure as he is retiring September 30.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, October 14 starting at 0900 hours.

The raffle proceeds were counted by Chiefs Best and Emanuel. \$100 was awarded in prizes.

Following the raffle, a MOTION to adjourn the meeting carried at 1912 hours.

Respectfully submitted,
Chief Brent T. Lemire, Ret.
Executive Director/Secretary, NHAFC

September 9, 2021