

## **July 19, 2010 Lake Region Meeting Minutes**

President Doug Storck called the quarterly meeting of the Lake Region Firefighters Association to order at 7:40 PM. The pledge of allegiance was said. A moment of silence was observed for all fallen firefighters, specifically Brian Walz, Watkins Fire Dept. who passed away this week. We were welcomed to Forada by host chief Stephen VanLuik. Chief VanLuik introduced the Mayor of Forada, Kevin Sabiska. Mayor Sabiska thanked everyone for coming. The Forada Fire Dept. recently moved into their new fire hall which was really needed. Roll call was taken by the Forada Fire Dept. at the registration table showing 73 firefighters representing 22 fire departments. There were 11 guests and vendors also present. Minutes from the April quarterly meeting were emailed. Reading of the previous meeting minutes were waived with a motion made by Albany and second by Osakis to approve the minutes. Motion carried. The treasurer's report was presented showing a current balance in the checking account of \$ 4,665.63. Motion was made by Villard and second by Hoffman to accept the treasurer's report. Motion carried.

There were no State Senators or Representatives in attendance.

### **REPORTS**

Mike Schroeder, MSFDA representative presented his report. Mike presented Honorary Life memberships to the MSFDA to Charles Hanke, Belgrade Fire Dept. and Loren Pelzer, Albany Fire Dept. The MSFDA held their annual conference in Grand Rapids. Grand Rapids was commended for doing an excellent job in hosting the conference. The 2011 conference will be held in Detroit Lakes. There were no bids submitted for the 2012 conference, however Alexandria Fire Dept. stepped up and agreed to host the 2012 conference. Mike highlighted the training that was conducted at the conference and the message delivered at the symposium by Captain Mike Gagliano, Seattle Fire Dept. referencing SCBA air management at the fire scene. The MSFDA's website [www.msfga.org](http://www.msfga.org) has undergone a facelift and is back in operation with more improvements to follow. The OSHA/Safety committee met at the conference and suggested that fire departments check the State Fire Marshal's website for the top fifteen OSHA violations that fire depts. are cited for and use as a guide. The National Volunteer Fire Council will be holding their annual conference in Bloomington September 22 – 25. The MSFDA and MSFCA boards have been assisting with preparations for this conference. At the MSFDA conference, elections were held with Shane Schmidt, Alexandria elected to a three year term as President. With President Schmidt moving up there was a vacancy in the Vice-President position. The MSFDA board following their bylaws appointed Mike Schroeder, Willmar to complete the term as Vice-President which will expire at the 2011 conference. Tony Bronk, Hugo was re-elected to a three year term as Treasurer. Legislative issues were discussed at the conference with the next legislative session being extremely important in

efforts needed to hold any further cuts to the fire service. Mike stressed the importance of fire departments being proactive in seeking and using training dollars for fire training. These monies could be targeted again and further cuts could happen. Mike suggested that the Lake Region look at calling a legislative round table discussion with our State Reps. and Senators prior to the start of the session to help convey a strong message of securing funding for the fire service.

Shane Schmidt, MSFDA President spoke to the region. President Schmidt challenged members of the MSFDA to get involved. The MSFDA is constantly looking for individuals to serve on various committees. The MSFDA will be conducting a weekend board retreat January 21 – 22, and a fall board meeting on September 18<sup>th</sup> in St. Cloud. Discussions will center on the visions of the MSFDA and getting more attendance at the annual conference. The MSFDA is looking at hiring an administrative assistant who could help fire departments with grant writing assistance. They hope to have this person hired and in place by January of 2011. Shane publicly thanked former MSFDA President Dan Winkel for everything he had done for the MSFDA.

Bill Thoennes, MSFCA representative presented his report. The MSFCA annual conference will be held in Rochester October 21 – 23. Reservations and registrations should be submitted soon to secure room availability. Bill highlighted the training sessions and symposium that will be held at the conference. The Lake Region had 100% participation in MFIRs with the State Fire Marshal's division in 2009. Bill reminded everyone to notify either Mike Schroeder or himself in the event of a firefighter or fire chief death on your department or neighboring fire dept. so that they can be properly recognized at either association's annual conference. Bill encouraged fire chiefs to submit legislative issues to the association for discussion purposes. Bill introduced Chief John Nienaber, Garfield to address the region about some issues their fire department has encountered. They are a small town fire department that has had a rash of fatality accidents that they have responded to. These calls have resulted in an abundant amount of stress on the department. Chief Nienaber attempted to call in a Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) team but was told to handle it internally. In the process, they have one firefighter that has not been able to perform because of psychological damage that was incurred from these calls. With Larry Rieber, SCTC's help, Chief Nienaber was able to finally get a CISD team from St. Cloud to meet with his department. The main issue that Chief Nienaber stated is that Workers Compensation insurance that cities carry **does not** cover post-partum events of this nature. This firefighter has mounted up over \$18,000 of expenses that was not covered by the city's insurance. Chief Nienaber is seeking assistance in drafting and adopting legislation that would prevent this from occurring in the future. Bruce West HSEM suggested that Chief Nienaber contact Nyle Zikmund the chair of the legislative committee of the MSFCA to assist in drafting legislation. Bill introduced the Vice-President of the MSFCA, Randy Polzin to the region.

Randy Polzin, MSFCA Vice-President spoke to the region. The 2011 legislative initiatives survey will be coming out soon to identify the top five initiatives that the MSFCA will focus on for the next legislative session. \$8 million dollars of training monies were stripped from the Fire Safety Account in the last session. Randy reiterated the fact that fire departments need to step up or risk even further cuts in the future. Randy commented on the fact that the Lake Region has great leadership in its representatives to the MSFCA and MSFDA and should use these people to get things done legislatively. Randy serves on the Governor appointed Shared Services board task force. Six different models have been identified and will be introduced at the MSFCA conference in October. These efforts are being done to create ways that fire departments can share services and reduce costs. Randy stressed that fire departments look at the

possibilities rather than have their governing entities force it on them. His message “is change is coming and be ahead of the curve rather than behind it”. Randy addressed some calls he received involving the FAST team’s response to the Wadena area after the tornado outbreak. Some wondered why they did not get a call to help. In order to participate in a FAST team response, members need to apply on the MSFCA website at [www.msfc.org](http://www.msfc.org) to be on a list that the State Duty Officer uses to call from.

Dean Wrobbel, Minnesota Fire Service Certification Board representative introduced Dave Schliek, Chairman of the MFSCB who was in attendance. Dean presented his report. Dean spoke about two incidents recently that the St. Cloud Fire Dept. called a CISD team in to talk to their members after the calls, and the importance in recognizing the need and initiating the call in a timely fashion. CISD teams are made of volunteers and it takes some time to organize and respond. Dean stated that he will continue to email the Lake Region Secretary the monthly report from the MFSCB which can then be forwarded to all fire departments in the region. There were some fee increases that took effect on July 1<sup>st</sup>. There is a test coming up for Fire Investigator Certification with a house burn scheduled. Plan Examiner I certification will be starting near the end of the summer. Haz-Mat Tech and Haz-Mat Ops. NFPA 472 lists are forming. Dean highlighted several other training certifications that are coming up and reminded everyone to check the website at [www.mfscb.org](http://www.mfscb.org) for up to date information. There will be an opportunity in August in St. Cloud for any make-up certification testing that someone may need.

Dave Schliek, MFSCB Chairman spoke to the region. Dave thanked the Tech College coordinators for their efforts resulting in a 25% increase in certifications specifically Firefighter I and II. The MFSCB is now on Facebook.

Jerry Rosendahl, State Fire Marshal addressed the region. John Steinbach was conducting an investigation and was unable to attend the meeting. Jerry commented on the exceptional leadership in the State fire associations with good working relationships being formed. Jerry said that it is through region meetings that many new ideas are initiated and some become introduced as bills in the legislature and with enough support become new laws. Jerry commented on the exceptional communication between agencies that took place following the tornado incident in Wadena and how well the incident was handled because of high quality communication. The legislature has appropriated some monies for Medical Response Unit to study the value of first responders getting to a scene early and treating patient(s) with proactive care and recovering some of their costs of the response, specifically medical items. Check the State Fire Marshal’s website for further information. As of this meeting, there have been twenty-four fire deaths reported. Jerry stated that 97% of all fire departments are now reporting their MFIRs through electronic means with 73% using the State’s program and 24% using FIRESOFT or other programs. They are continuing to get the remaining fire departments on line to achieve a 100% report. The MSFCA magazine now has three columns in each edition originating from the State Fire Marshal’s division. These include fire code issues for small fire departments, public education notes, and a column from the Fire Marshal. Jerry recommended that everyone check the website at [www.fire.state.mn.us](http://www.fire.state.mn.us) to view the top 15 OSHA violations that fire departments have faced. He noted that Type II High Visibility vests are required; however the breakaway straps are not required at this time.

Steve Spaeth, VFBA representative presented his report. Steve is the district 9 representative for the VFBA and covers three counties within the region; Douglas, Grant and Traverse. Steve highlighted benefit coverage provided from the VFBA through annual insurance premiums of \$7 per member. Steve

provided the new benefit coverage amounts that were approved at the annual VFBA meeting in Grand Rapids. The disability benefit was increased from \$85 to \$100 a day effective August 1<sup>st</sup>. Maximum disability benefit is \$18,000 or 180 days. Steve commented about the issue of post-traumatic stress from a fire/rescue call that was mentioned earlier in the meeting. These types of incidents should be submitted if it is anticipated that the individual may miss work. The VFBA changed the reporting requirements for reporting these incidents to 90 days from when the event occurred. The submissions are reviewed by the VFBA Board of Directors. Steve provided some pamphlets referencing the benefit coverage of the VFBA and new member applications.

Ernie Schmitt, DNR representative presented his report. There have been some retirements in the Alexandria office of the DNR further reducing the staff at that office. They are working on mutual aid contracts for equipment needed with an initial run rate of two hours. Ernie talked about the Firewise Program that is used to inform homeowners of urban interface issues and provide incentives for homeowners to incorporate ways to reduce fire hazards such as thinning of trees and removal of branches touching a rooftop, etc. Ernie talked about the electronic fire permits and issues that have been faced. Fire grants have been awarded totaling \$433,000 to 250 fire departments with 400 fire departments applying. The DoD (Dept. of Defense) vehicle program is still in operation. Ernie provided a website: [www.mndnr.gov/grants/ruralfire](http://www.mndnr.gov/grants/ruralfire) as a source for any needs. The DNR has been working more with the Fish and Wildlife Service with mutual aid needs especially in the western and southwestern portions of the State. Ernie talked about the amount of fire deaths reported from wildland fires. Last year, there were seven deaths with six of these being elderly males older than 70 years of age. Many of these were small fires that grew beyond their control with the victim succumbed trying to put the fire out usually by a medical condition.

Bill Mund, IAFC (Great Lakes Division) representative was unable to attend the meeting.

Warren Jorgenson, MN Fire/EMS Safety Center presented his report. Warren also had some handouts consisting of training opportunities through 2011 for those in attendance. The Federal SAFER grant is in the final stages with openings anticipated for late July or early August. Warren said it will be interesting to see the details of the program guidance document to see the requirements specifically the matching dollar requirements which could be beneficial to some paid-on-call fire departments. Another part of the program is recruitment and retention of firefighters. The Assistance Firefighter Grant (AFG) program has undergone some administrative changes. There may be some shifts in funding of this program and everyone should stay current with the program. Warren reminded all fire departments that need to make radio communication improvements to do so and not wait for the deadlines that have been extended by the FCC. Warren stated that there were ten pieces of federal legislation that could impact fire departments in MN and stay informed. The MnFAC report highlighted all the legislative activity in MN and can be viewed on the MSFDA website. There will be some NFA direct delivery program courses that are for training officers of fire depts. and are reasonable in cost. Warren highlighted some of these upcoming NFA courses. Registration for these courses needs to be done a minimum of thirty days prior to the date of the event to avoid cancellation of the class. There are some NFA classes available at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland. There is an upcoming M-Step Terrorism Preparedness conference scheduled for November 16 – 17 in Brooklyn Park. Fire departments did manage to use up most of the remaining 2006 voucher dollars before the June 30<sup>th</sup> deadline for forfeiture. Warren's website can be accessed at [www.minnesotafireservice.com](http://www.minnesotafireservice.com).

Scott Schaefer, Alexandria Tech. College coordinator was unable to attend the meeting.

Mike Roe, Ridgewater Tech. College coordinator presented his report. Mike stated that all the colleges will assist any departments with filling out the training reimbursement paperwork. The average amount received last year was \$4,000. There will be FF I and FF II classes starting up this fall; check for nearest availability. A new class led by an instructor from the Rural Electric Association out of Benson will teach about "Electricity & the Firefighter". Ridgewater also has a three hour training session taught by a MN State Patrol officer on the subject of "scene safety", and will touch on proper PPE. An anhydrous ammonia safety class is also available. There are opportunities for free training for Haz-Mat Operations, liquid propane tactics and practical burn. Mike offers a workshop on how and when to use the PCA for an actual incident. There will be a fall seminar at Ridgewater College assisted by Willmar Fire Dept. on the subject of "Positive Pressure Ventilation, Positive Pressure Attack". The seminar will be led by two firefighters from the Salt Lake Fire Dept. Check with Mike for any training needs.

Larry Rieber, St. Cloud Tech. College coordinator presented his report. St. Cloud will be starting FF I and FF II classes this fall in Freeport and possibly St. Joseph. They will attempt to run a Fire Instructor I class in St. Cloud either at the college or a nearby fire station this fall. A Fire Officer class is being planned during the winter period. Some departments have requested to hold FF II classes for their entire department and could be an opportunity for someone who needs to make up a specific class. St. Cloud has a Driver Simulator that departments can use as a training tool. A State Fire School will be held next spring in Brainerd. Larry is seeking input for possible training course needs for the school. St. Cloud will be hosting a NFA course "Decision Making for Initial Company Operations" on February 5 - 6, 2011. Larry has hired a part-time fire programs manager, Mike Anderson, to assist him. St. Cloud has been using the online State Certification test upon completion of FF I and FF II with the participants only needing to do the practical certification testing to become certified.

Marv Calvin, MN Board of FF Training & Education Representative was unable to attend the meeting.

Bruce West, Homeland Security & Emergency Management presented his report. Bruce introduced Rockford Fire Chief Kevin Reed, as a new hired Safety Coordinator specifically the CAT teams, the Bomb Squad, and Structural Collapse. Kevin assists the State Duty Officer with deployment of needed resources. HSEM will be doing an after-action review and report for HSEM's response to Wadena's tornado incident. There will be a study conducted on the Decon Program including the future use of the fifteen decon trailers in the State. The study will be conducted by an outside resource using interviews and public meetings with a preliminary report hopefully ready for the MSFCA conference and a final report due in December. Fire departments with neighboring fire departments can use up to \$6,000 for a hazardous materials training exercise through the HMEP education program. Bruce cautioned the members of the latest way that individuals are using to hurt or kill public service responders through the rigging of pressure cookers as IEDs.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

President Storck updated the Region on the status of the Lake Region website formation. Doug has been working with Iceburg Web Design on preparation of the website. The website is anticipated to be up and running later this year.

Mike Schroeder, Bylaw committee member highlighted the proposed changes to the bylaws that the committee has identified. Language was also reviewed referencing the creation of an “associate membership” status. These changes will be voted on at the annual meeting in Hoffman.

### **GOOD OF THE REGION**

Doug Storck announced a water ball fight will be held in Morris on July 28<sup>th</sup>.

The next meeting will be in Hoffman on October 18<sup>th</sup>.

Motion to adjourn was made by Ashby second by New Munich. Motion carried. Meeting was adjourned at 9:35 pm.

Tom Zabinski, Secretary/Treasurer