

Funding:

Dues Raise – Depending upon budgetary issues and expenses, the board should attempt a vision to anticipate a dues raise. This vision should also include advance notice to membership of why a raise is needed as well as an anticipated time frame to the next dues raise. The current and recent past boards have done a nice job of keeping expenses low and saving for the future. There are, however, many items contained within the budget that have inflationary ties. A dues raise is not a matter of if but more of a matter of when and how much. This committee recommends that the board establish a vision of small dues raises for the future and then make an attempt to keep the membership apprised of why.

Grant Writing Committee – It's recommended that a committee be established to investigate grant opportunities and establish timelines/deadlines for grant applications.

Membership:

Membership Committee – The membership committee has been underutilized since its inception. This committee should be able to assist with all areas of securing membership. They should be used as a tool to seek out those that are not members as well as aid in contacting departments that have dropped their membership. The board should make perfectly clear to the 4th and 5th VP's just what is needed so that their job is more clear prior to the membership drive.

Affiliated Membership – Continue to keep this type of membership opportunity on the front burner. Charge the membership committee with coming up with suggestions on how to better market this type of membership.

Running Accomplishments List – The board should keep a list of recent accomplishments list to be used to market the association and to maintain membership. The web site and the newsletter should be used frequently to ensure that this is known. It is also recommended that a one page listing of accomplishments be included within the membership application so that each department or member knows what their association is doing for them.

Membership Survey – It's recommended that a one page survey also be included in the next membership packet as an opportunity for each member or department to voice their expectations of what they would like to see from their association.

Advisory Services:

Out Reach Element - Need an outreach element to the association for its members that have questions or issues that concern the day to day administration of the fire department. This may fall under the realm of the Iowa Fire Chiefs Association and their manual. In absence of our own resource guide, we feel that our association needs to support or help market this manual in some way or form. Membership will continue to look towards the association for guidance on issues affecting their local fire service. We need to be prepared to deal with these issues as there may not be anywhere else for the member to turn. Furthermore, this could easily take the form of the current web site forum or maybe

a Frequently Asked Questions component to the web site. Wendy would have the answer to what types of repeated questions she may encounter on a daily or weekly basis. Some examples might be what do I get for my dues, what is the cost of annual dues, when are dues delinquent, etc...

Web Site Forum – The committee commends the board for the start up of this project. This has great potential and we recommend that the board take steps to market this tool so that people know it's available. The more people that know about it the more it will be used.

Legislation:

Representation – The committee recommends that the board continue to employ a qualified, reputable, career lobbyist that can provide for timely updates to both the board and the membership. The committee also recommends that the board continue to monitor the need to have a representative of the board at the Capitol throughout the legislative session when needed.

Political Action Committee (PAC) – The committee considered the idea of a PAC as not a direct part of the association but maybe a separate arm of the association. Without knowing the tax or organizational make up consequences we are unable to recommend the establishment of a PAC at this time. Furthermore the committee suggests that if there is an interest in pursuing such an element, that they do substantial homework and consult professionals in the field before making any decision. There was a thought that there is no doubt that supporting fire service friendly lawmakers was a positive step. However, the time, effort, and investment that it may take to establish such an initiative might not be worth the funds it might raise. The committee recommends that the board appoint an exploratory committee to research the feasibility of such an initiative with an appropriate deadline.

Election of Officers:

Monitor the election process for both representation and quality of candidates. Obviously with the current board structure, once a person makes a commitment to run for office they are in it for seven years. An advantage to this is that it affords the person with ample time to get used to the operations of the association prior to becoming president. Some disadvantages to this are that it is a long term commitment that is causing many qualified candidates from taking that step. The current system is also an at large system. Should you look at changes to shorter terms a design could be considered that allows for a district set-up. From this type of set-up you could look at having four to six districts with representatives. From these representatives you could have them run for a vice president and then a president's position. Again, something to consider but if the current system isn't broke than don't fix it. If we continue to get qualified candidates to step forward within our current system than it must be working well.

We recommend that the association institute a formal means for announcing one's candidacy for office. This could include an application with some requirements for time as a member. It could even include a number of signatures before being allowed to run

for office. Something else to consider is a letter of support from the person's host department. A formalized process would cause the candidate to seriously consider their decision prior to making an announcement. Most civic offices require a formal filing.

The committee recommends that the election of officers take place at the Mid Year meeting. We realize that this has been attempted in the past with no success. However, we feel that the spirit of the Mid Year meeting is to take care of business. The officers of the association conduct that business. The spirit of convention is to have fun and celebrate. Elect the officers where the business takes place and continue to vote on convention city at convention.

Office Operations:

The first item that is considered when discussing the improvement of the office is the staff function. The IFA made huge strides when it made the decision to hire its first full time position – Administrative Assistant (AA). The association is running very smooth and the current AA is very in tune with her current responsibilities. It is the committee's recommendation to consider the next step. What would the feasibility be and how would the association utilize and fund the position of Executive Director. There are many benefits to this leap. Those would include a consistent red coat at the Capitol, someone that can look at alternate funding mechanisms for the association, a liaison between the members and the decision making board, representation at meetings in an ever changing fire service, etc... Obviously, this also comes with some concerns with the obvious financial impact. The committee recommends that an exploratory committee be installed to look at the feasibility and impact of such a position. The exploration should also include a timeline in which such a position could be in operation.

The second item that was considered was that of the process in which the association facilitates its dues. Our current administrative assistant was consulted during a conference call and the general consensus was that it is a unique system and changing the actual system would require more work and confusion than what it would be worth. Out of this discussion it was noted that the actual sending of the dues requires approximately one week in time. More of a concern is that of dues processing at the time of delinquency. March is a busy time in the office due to the preparation that is taking place for Mid Year and Convention as well as other office work related to the legislative session. When delinquent dues processing and subsequent dues notices are placed on top of that work then the function of the office starts to suffer. The committee recommends that this be monitored and the board provide the Administrative Assistant with either the proper time or help during this busy period.

The committee applauds the board on its current and past work on providing for up to date and dependable office machines. It also recommends that the board continue to monitor the association's current inventory and update when appropriate.

Convention:

Due to the presence of a board appointed Convention Committee, the Long Range Planning Committee has decided to defer all study of this specific issue to that committee.

Newsletter:

The current monthly publication of the association is the main source of communication between the board and the association members. It is a wonderful membership tool and it appears to be doing what it was designed to do. A cost analysis of the annual newsletter expenses extrapolates to approx. \$1.80 of each membership sold. Even though this number will go up next year to \$2.02 the committee feels that it is worth every penny and the board should negotiate to continue with the current vendor.

The committee also feels that the board should continue to appeal to the membership of the association in an effort to determine what they would like to see within the publication. The current board has done this appropriately and should continue to do so.

Summary:

The committee recommends that because of the good work that our current board and association is doing, that a subsequent long range planning committee be established in approx. four to five years. This will provide for an on going analysis of the operations of the association as well as an opportunity to study the association's functions in a rapidly changing environment.