

Iowa Firefighters Association
Board of Directors' Meeting
January 20, 2013
Carroll, IA

Present: President Roger Bissen, 1st VP Al Esch, 2nd VP Brad Yeager, 3rd VP Mark McNees, 5th VP Marv Trimble, Past President Jack Runge, Executive Director Wendy Lensing. Absent: 4th VP Bill Halleran. Also present for the meeting: Bob Platz, Dyersville; Tom Hancock, Epworth; Cliff Renslow, Stuart; James Shutts, Belle Plaine; Pat Fay, Glidden; Jim Kenkel, Woodward; Bob and Ellen Hagen, Jewell.

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by President Roger Bissen. Carroll Fire Department responded to a large fire overnight in Jefferson so they had been out all night. President Bissen presented a metal wall plaque to Chief Greg Schreck prior to the meeting so that they didn't have to stay.

Mark McNees made a motion to approve the agenda. It was seconded by Marv Trimble. Motion carried.

Al Esch made a motion to approve the minutes of the last board meeting held on October 28th, 2012 in Panora. It was seconded by Jack. Motion carried.

Executive Director's Report – Wendy Lensing

Thanked Carroll Fire Department for hosting the meeting.

The board met yesterday and audited the books for 2012 and worked on the proposed budget for 2013. Dues are coming in. Delinquent date is February 1st. Need to get them paid as soon as possible.

Surveys have been coming in and we appreciate the response. Responses are being compiled to see where departments are with billing for services.

Information went out with the billing about the National Volunteer Fire Council's membership offer to state association members to join NVFC for only \$15. Their membership includes \$10,000 AD&D policy. So far about 50 members had taken advantage of this and applied for NVFC membership.

Will be working on the annual report and getting it burned to CDs and sent out for the Mid Year mailing around the 1st of March.

Brad redesigned website. Been learning the new system and it will be easier to make updates once it's figured out.

We've had pretty good luck putting together a list of members from each county to be legislative contacts. Down to only about a couple dozen counties that still need contacts. Call or e-mail the office if you are interested in helping with that.

Financial Report – Wendy Lensing

The financial report for the Iowa Firefighters Association as of December 31, 2012 shows total current assets of \$495,743.80.

The financial report for the Iowa Firemen's Foundation as of December 31, 2012 shows total current assets of \$22,823.28.

Motion was made by Marv Trimble and seconded by Al Esch to approve the financial report. Motion carried.

Proposed 2013 Budget – Wendy Lensing

The proposed budget for 2013 was presented showing an estimated total income of \$190,800.00 and estimated total expenses of \$203,500.00 for a deficit of -\$12,700.00.

Cliff Renslow asked what our proposed deficit for 2012 had been. President Bissen said that we had shown an estimated \$4,000 deficit but actually came out about \$12,000 to the good. Cliff asked if the newsletter was a lot of the increase to expenses again and President Bissen said yes. President Bissen also explained that we try to estimate low on the income side and we don't have any unknown quantities in there such as donations and we try to aim high on the expenses so that we hope to end up in a better position than we estimate rather than in worse position. We do have money in savings to balance things if needed. This past year we did have some planned expenses that have not yet been paid for yet such as \$4000 to the host department for convention updates because they had not yet turned in documentation and payment request for that yet so that would have taken away from the positive \$12,000 figure. We also budget for things such as \$1000 for the National Memorial each year that you hope you don't have to use but need to plan for in case you do.

Jack Runge commented that when we had proposed and implemented the \$1.00 dues increase our original proposal had been to go up another \$1.00 for the following year. If we had done what we proposed we would be showing a positive budget rather than a negative budget.

Al Esch commented that in the future we need to look at expanding membership and perhaps become aligned with some other organizations as affiliated and associate members.

Mark McNees commented that the membership committee did send out letters to non-member departments and we had picked up a couple more departments and a couple that had dropped and come back.

President Bissen said that we had stated before that we aren't losing departments; departments are just losing members so the overall membership totals are dwindling.

Cliff said he had talked to Jack about having Dawn Beisner design a poster that could be put up in schools to get kids interested in Jr. Firefighter programs to increase membership in departments down the road. He asked Jack if he knew where that was. Jack said Dawn is swamped. Bob Platz said NVFC probably has things like that already available and he will do some checking on that.

Officer Reports –

1st VP – Al Esch:

Dubuque Co. Firefighters Association co-sponsored the Tri-State Emergency Responder Conference in Dubuque back in November.

Iowa Society of Fire Service Instructors had their conference in November. Al made presentation to them and they wish to join the IFA as an affiliate member. They would like to work with us more closely on legislation and other things.

In December there was a Joint Public Safety Committee meeting in Des Moines. One of the things they are going to look at is the 911 equalization to bring cell phone surcharges up to a dollar to match landlines. They also discussed a joint training facility and everyone that was in attendance does still support that if it is brought up again this year. Senator Sodders is introducing SF 9 which is a study bill for a joint training facility.

Al and Roger met with the DPS Commissioner Brian London along with Fire Marshal Ray Reynolds and our lobbyist John Pederson. They sat down and talked about what was accomplished last year and what we would like to see from the Dept. of Public Safety and specifically from the Fire Marshal's office.

Al also attended the annual meetings for the Dyersville Fire Department and Asbury Fire Department in December.

Al attended the Governor's Address and reception. It didn't seem there was a lot of mention about the public safety sector but we haven't seen the budget recommendation yet. We'd like to see the Volunteer Fire Fighter Training Fund increased and also the addition of another full time staff person in the Fire Service Training Bureau.

2nd VP – Brad Yeager:

Website has been redesigned. If anyone has suggestions or sees anything that is not working correctly don't hesitate to let us know. Hopefully things are easier to find and the calendar is right on the home page now.

Brad will be working on video for memorial. He's looking for a good selection of pictures of fires, the fire service, everything that we do.

Brad also attended the Governor's address and felt that with that and the opening ceremony that Ray Reynolds put together with fire service honor guard opening the House session the day before that we are off to a great start this year.

Firefighter Day on the Hill is March 21st. Please be there if you can.

3rd VP – Mark McNeas:

Looking forward to meeting with the new legislators this year. We've started identifying potential friends down there. Some new firefighters have been elected.

There has been a good response to the survey. We've just started compiling the data.

Getting people in each county to be the contact for legislation has been going well.

American Income Life representative spoke to the board yesterday about offering a no-cost AD&D policy to our members. It won't cost association anything and it won't cost departments anything. All of our members will be covered by the basic insurance and it's completely up to the members whether or not they wish to be contacted by the company to purchase any additional insurance.

There are a couple issues on the convention host city contract that we are going to work to make more specific. We updated some things last year but there are still some things that need to be tweaked as far as deadlines for things so that our bookwork doesn't overlap between years.

The board may look at going around and visiting the departments that are housing the Elks trailers to see how everything is going with those and if there are any items that need upkeep or upgraded and maybe come up with a list that they can report back to us on quarterly. Some of them have been around a while and some concerns have been voiced about condition. We want to be sure that everything is as it should be and we can let the Elks have a better idea of what is needed as they are willing to help with these.

A time of 10:00 a.m. on March 21st has been set to take a picture in the rotunda of all those in attendance for Firefighter Day on the Hill. We would like to have as many there as possible.

The board chose two recipients for IFA scholarships. They will be notified soon.

4th VP – Bill Halleran – unable to attend

5th VP – Marv Trimble:

Presented a certificate in Belle Plaine.

Winter Waterfights is coming up this weekend in Coralville. Mitch Johnson from Parkersburg will be missed as he was fatally injured in an accident while cutting trees this past fall.

Fire school will be coming up the end of February.

Will be presenting some more certificates in Urbana.

Some of our talks have been about recruitment and retention. At the last meeting Garrison did not have anyone on their waiting list to get on the department but now they do. They just walked up and asked

the person if they had ever thought about being on the fire department. You may have people in your communities that are willing, but just need to be asked.

As far as legislation – if you don't tell your representatives what is on your mind, they aren't going to know. Know who your representatives are, meet with them, talk to them. Don't just call when you have a complaint. If they do something you like, give them a call and thank them.

Past President – Jack Runge:

Jack has been presenting many awards also in Holland, Aplington, and Lake City. The presentation in Lake City was the week before the smoke detector installation took place there. They are feeling the effects of having a 4 person fatality fire there and trying to deal with that. Jack was also there for the installation of smoke detectors that took place.

Representative Deyoe was invited to and attended a meeting at the Radcliffe fire station. Inviting legislators to a meeting is something that he would encourage. Representative Deyoe has been getting questions from his constituents in Nevada that respond to I-35 and the time and dollars that are spent to serve something that creates no tax base but creates a lot of expense.

Jack, Roger, Al, Alicia from the FSTB and John Pederson met with Senator Dvorsky. NFIRS is funded through the end of this fiscal year but then it needs to be funded at \$40,000/year to keep it going. Alicia presented information to Senator Dvorsky on the reporting system.

Jack also attended Governor's address and reception.

It would be great to have over 100 people attend Firefighter Day on the Hill on March 21st.

The Chili Cookoff will take place again in conjunction with Firefighter Day on the Hill. Last year it was a great hit and it turns the tables a bit as during that time the legislators are coming out and talking to us instead of us calling them out to talk about an issue.

The Alden Fire Department is celebrating their 100th Anniversary this coming June.

President – Roger Bissen:

On January 10th Roger was in Des Moines for some meetings and met with some representatives from the Pro Chiefs. We are also working with the I-Chiefs and career Firefighters and trying to get everyone together on the same page.

Roger attended awards presentation for Deloit Fire Department.

Roger and Bill attended the opening session of the House on January 14th when the fire service did the opening ceremony. There were honor guards, career firefighters, volunteer firefighters all represented and the fire service made a really strong presence.

Committee Reports:

NVFC – Bob Platz:

On December 21st there was a bill attached to the defense bill for the grant program. That was approved and has been signed by the President. With that the grant funding has dropped. Grant funding is at \$337.5 million for AFG and SAFER. That is down from \$405 million. This has a 5 year sunset so will have to work to get it back to 10 year that it had previously.

Fire Prevention and Safety grant application period just closed and those applications will be read February 10 – 13. Bob is on a committee to look at some things with the grants. One thing is the boilerplate grants they are seeing and they want to get rid of that. Grant writers are writing grants for departments and not changing anything but the name. Another thing that is confusing on the grants is the 2 items per department. That confuses the grant reader and would be easier if there was only one item per grant. Would also like to get something done about PPE that is supposed to be priority of the grants. Would like to see automatic awards to departments that show need for it.

NVFC delegate from Maryland, Lee Sachs, passed away on December 19th.

Jim Daly from Cresco was a former District Coordinator for the IFA and he also just passed away.

There was a question on whether or not the medical helicopter crew from Mason City that crashed might be covered under PSOB. Bob did some checking and Hope Janke from the DOJ was contacted. She advised to fill out the paperwork and it is in the works. It's not known if it will be covered or not but the paperwork will be done to find out if it is.

There was some discussion on the 10 year limit for turnout gear and if that will be changed. There are departments that have been awarded grants a while back for all new turnout gear and the time will soon come that the 10 years will have gone by and they will be needing all new sets of turnout gear again.

Legislation – Roger Bissen:

Roger met our lobbyist John Pederson and Capture Marketing in Des Moines last week. The plan they have come up with in regards to the county contact list that we have put together is that they will send out a couple of test messages to make sure that everyone is receiving our messages and then set up a conference call and explain how the information is going to flow out throughout the state. When something comes up that John wants to get out to the membership he will let Capture Marketing know and they will put the message together and then John and the board will review it then it will be sent out and our county contacts will contact their legislators and gather the feedback for Capture Marketing to pass on to the board and John.

Convention Committee – Brad Yeager:

Contract specifics need to be addressed as far as deadlines for getting convention reports to the board and bills and receipts turned in for reimbursement.

Marv Trimble reported that Vinton/Garrison is ready for Mid Year. They have over 1500 camp sites. All the committees are working hard. They are looking forward to having everyone come.

Guests:

Jim Kenkel: Reporting for Randy Novak, FSTB and Ray Reynolds, Fire Marshal

Dawn will be working on two banners for IFA to display at Firefighter Day on the Hill. Brad will talk to Dawn about the design.

Fire school is coming up February 22 – 24th in Ames. There are other open enrollment course announcements on the training bureau website under "Training Opportunities".

Training Officers Workshop is April 13th. Forest Reeder will be keynote speaker and he will be talking about Training Officers Bootcamp. The Volunteer Fire Chiefs Workshop will be April 20th and Dominic Colletti is the keynote speaker, New Technology and Rural Firefighting Operations.

Two-week Arson Investigators School is March 11 – 22. Announcement is on FSTB website. Class is filling up quickly.

They will be taking delivery of new Fire/Arson Mobile Training Unit at the end of February. This was funded with an AFG – FP&S grant of \$250,000.

Revised/New Instructor II/III will be available in the spring. First pilot will be in Burlington in April or May.

New Firefighter I and II will be released in FY14 with handoffs to field instructors and community college partners in July/August 2013. This will be based on latest NFPA 1001 (FF Professional Qualifications, 2012 edition) and the new IFSTA Essentials 6th edition.

Orders have been placed for more smoke detectors for the SFM statewide smoke detector project. These additional detectors were funded from an AFG – FP&S grant of \$245,000 through IFA.

The Bureau is now working with the State Advocates for the Everyone Goes Home program to promote the 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives and to provide at no cost Courage to Be Safe (CTSB) and Leadership, Accountability, Culture and Knowledge (LACK). There is more information on those programs at www.everyonegoeshome.com .

Check the FSTB website for new information: www.dps.state.ia.us/fm/fstb . You can sign up for an automatic e-mail notification when something new has been added.

Application window for the Firefighter Revolving Loan program closes on February 15, 2013. Reviews of applications will occur shortly after.

Old Business: none

New Business:

Roger gave more information on the presentation that the board had from American Income Life that was talked about earlier in the meeting. The board heard about this last fall at the States Networking Meeting. Nebraska has this benefit for their members. If the IFA signs up to participate, each member of the IFA that is 18 years of age or older, including retired members, will automatically be covered for \$2000 AD&D without having to do anything additional. All members will receive a letter explaining the coverage that the company will send out. There will be a postcard included with the letter that they can send to the company if they want to be contacted by a company representative about additional coverage. Even if they don't return the postcard, they are still covered for the \$2000 AD&D. The company does a review every 18 – 24 months and coverage would be increased in \$500 increments up to \$4000. The board discussed this at length following the presentation. One concern was the mailing itself. The company will send everything out but would need the member addresses. The company said the list can be sent to them electronically and they assured us that the list is not given to anyone else and is eliminated after the letter is sent. The printing is done in-house. If we were still concerned we could print the labels ourselves and give them to them to put on the envelopes. They will have no contact information on file for our members unless the member themselves sends in the postcard to be contacted by a representative of the company. Another concern was that many years ago Mike Reuman said that the association had signed up for something similar and after a year or so the company said that not enough people had purchased additional insurance and they pulled the plug and the IFA had to contact the members telling them that the coverage was no longer in effect. The representative from AIL assured the board that they do not have any minimum sales requirements and that would never happen. Nebraska has participated in this program for 7 years and has been very happy with their partnership with AIL.

A motion was made by Brad Yeager and seconded by Mark McNees for the IFA to enter into an agreement with American Income Life to provide AD&D coverage for the members of the IFA.

There was some additional discussion regarding the mailing list and whether or not our members would be contacted by this company in the future. There will be no way that the company will be contacting members unless the member requests the information themselves from the company by returning the postcard. **Motion carried.**

AI Esch: Asked for a consensus from the board to look into forming a PAC. The board gave o.k.

Good of the Association:

Mark McNees: Wishes Past President Mike Schechinger well with the health issues he is experiencing right now.

Ellen Hagen: EMS Advisory Board – has attended a couple of their meetings as our representative on the board. She attended one by webinar which was very convenient. They are talking about the need to be running lights and sirens on ambulances. Some talk that in some instances lights and sirens cause more accidents. Committee had agreed that could be case on a routine transfer but different in an emergency situation. They are looking at the issue.

LODD funeral training – Ellen, Joe Specht and Todd Edeker attended funeral training in Arizona. She wants to provide training in the West, Central and East parts of the state. She has sent e-mails out to those on her list that have expressed interest in being part of the LODD team. She has had some people that have not replied to e-mails that she has been sending. She is going to drop those people from the team if they do not respond. She would like to print out manuals for those that are going to be part of the team. Joe Specht is thinking about March for training on the East side of the state.

Meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy Lensing
Executive Director