

Minutes of  
IFA Board of Directors' Meeting  
June 8, 2013  
Grinnell, IA

Those present were President Roger Bissen, 1<sup>st</sup> VP Al Esch, 2<sup>nd</sup> VP Brad Yeager, 4<sup>th</sup> VP Bill Halleran, 5<sup>th</sup> VP Marv Trimble and Executive Director Wendy Lensing. Absent: 3<sup>rd</sup> VP Mark McNees and Past President Jack Runge.

Also present: Pat White, David Byers, David Crawford and Dan Sicard – Grinnell; Bob Platz, Dyersville; Randy Novak, FSTB; James Shutts, Belle Plaine; Richard Harman, Cedar Rapids; Dick Bowers, Montezuma.

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by President Roger Bissen. He presented a metal wall decoration to Chief Dan Sicard of the Grinnell Fire Department in appreciation of their hospitality for preparing a lunch and hosting the meeting.

Chief Sicard welcomed everyone to Grinnell and the station and thanked President Bissen for the gift.

**Al Esch made a motion to accept the agenda for the meeting. It was seconded by Bill Halleran. Motion carried.**

**Al Esch made a motion to accept the minutes of the last Board of Directors' meeting held on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013 in Carroll, IA. It was seconded by Marv Trimble. Motion carried.**

**Executive Director's Report – Wendy Lensing**

Wendy thanked everyone for coming and thanked Grinnell for hosting the meeting.

Dues reminders were sent out the end of March. Those departments that had not paid by May were deleted until payment has been received. Several have since paid and been reinstated.

The luncheon for winners of the fire prevention poster program was held in Carroll the end of April.

Wendy, Roger and Al were present. All but two of the winners were able to attend and had a great time with awards presentations, a lunch and a ride on a fire truck.

The first weekend in May the preconvention meeting was held in Vinton with representatives from Vinton and Garrison fire departments on final preparations for convention. Things are going well. The only issue is that the hotel had been locked up for the IFA since the day it opened back in 2010 but had changed hands and apparently there was a mix up in the exchange of information from one manager to the next on what that meant but the rooms have been reserved by departments that are attending convention and the IFA does not have enough rooms available for all of the board, past presidents and drill officials that need a room. At this time there is still a need for about 10 more rooms. An email was sent out to the membership about this but there has not been any response thus far. If someone has rooms at the hotel it would be appreciated if some of them could be turned back over to the IFA.

Wendy, Roger and Al went out to Washington, DC the first part of May to meet with legislators. They attended Senator Harkin's breakfast and met with him and staffers on Wednesday morning and attended a Congressional Fire Service Institute fundraiser BBQ prepared by the Washington, DC Fire Department that evening. On Thursday they met with the rest of the legislators and staffers from Iowa. The highest priority issue was continued funding for the AFG grants and USFA.

Drill officials are still needed for convention in September. If you are interested in helping please contact Wendy.

Scheduling is also underway for volunteers for the Hall of Flame at the Iowa State Fair. Dates for the fair are August 8<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>. Shifts run for 4 hours from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m., 1 p.m. – 5 p.m. and 5 p.m. – 9 p.m. each day of the fair. Volunteers will receive a t-shirt and admission to the fair. Please let Wendy know as soon as possible if you are able to help. Volunteers will also be needed to help set up on Tuesday evening, August 6<sup>th</sup> and to tear down on Monday a.m. August 19<sup>th</sup>.

Letters went out regarding the AD&D policy from American Income Life. There were members that called and asked if it was legitimate, etc. Every member is automatically covered for the \$2000 AD&D as part of their membership benefits regardless of whether or not they returned the yellow post card. AIL is still in the process of contacting those members that returned the cards to get their beneficiary information and give them their health services discount card. They will also give them information on other insurance policies that are available. There is no obligation to purchase anything from AIL or to return the post card. You are covered for the \$2000 AD& D without returning the card however you would not receive the discount card and any claims would be paid to the estate rather than a named beneficiary.

The credit card program is still generating an average of \$250 per month. There are still only about 260 members out of almost 15,000 that have the IFA credit card. The income that the IFA receives from this could really be a great benefit if more of the members would sign up and use it. The IFA gets \$10 for each new account and a portion of all the interest and retail transaction fees. This is a Platinum Mastercard with great benefits for the members as well as the association. The company is going to be sending out a letter to some of the members that don't have the card to encourage them to apply.

### **Financial Report – Wendy Lensing**

The total current assets of the Iowa Firefighters Association as of May 31, 2013 were \$513,037.90. Total assets for the Iowa Firemen's Foundation as of May 31, 2013 were \$74,900.95. That figure does include \$41,659.33 that is part of the smoke detector project that the Foundation is taking care of the financial bookwork for. That leaves the actual memorial account assets at \$33,241.62.

**A motion was made by Marv Trimble to accept the financial report. It was seconded by Brad Yeager. Motion carried.**

### **Officer Reports:**

#### **1<sup>st</sup> VP Al Esch:**

Al thanked Grinnell for hosting the meeting and providing the meal.

The poster winner luncheon in Carroll was a great opportunity to recognize the kids for their achievements and he thought they had a good time.

Al felt that they had great luck with the legislators on the trip to DC. The sequester was a big topic and big problem since they don't know what will happen until a budget is approved. We asked for level funding of the federal programs for 2014. We just received notification that the House passed the AFG and SAFER with a \$5 million increase over FY '13 and level funding for USFA. That is pretty good considering we were looking at 7 – 10% cut. This is a model for how advocacy can work. There were many firefighters out in DC meeting with their legislators while we were out there. The BBQ was also a good opportunity to meet with others from other states and discuss their frustrations as well as their successes.

Al also stayed on and attended part of the NVFC conference with Bob Platz and Brian Seymour. One of the things talked about at the meetings was a partnership between NVFC and Cardioviva™. This partnership is part of NVFC's Heart Healthy Program. Cardioviva is a natural health probiotic. They are teaming up to educate fire service and EMS volunteers about the dangers of high cholesterol. They will be launching a contest to search for Cardioviva Heart Health Champions to find volunteer firefighters

and EMTs who want to inspire heart-healthy living. You could win \$10,000 and a nutrition/fitness makeover for your volunteer firehouse.

On May 13<sup>th</sup> Al and Jack Runge were in Garrison to attend the recognition for Paul Schellhase for 50 years of service to the Garrison Fire Department.

At the state level for legislation things have wrapped up and we are waiting for the governor's signature on a few things. There have been some successes this year. We hope to have a meeting with the governor sometime this summer along with the DPS Commissioner and the Fire Marshal and start laying some groundwork for the 2014 session.

Something that Al heard at county meetings that he attended throughout the state was that communication needs to continue to improve. There were some opportunities that were missed with communication. We need to be on same page. Communication will continue to improve from this end.

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> VP Brad Yeager:**

Brad thanked Grinnell for hosting and complimented them on their beautiful station.

He presented certificates for the Kensett Fire Department this week. They have a new station.

The past few weeks he has been working on a new video that will be shown at the candlelight service.

The video features a lot of old fire pictures from departments around the state. He will post it on YouTube after this week.

Brad thought there were a lot of ups and downs this legislative session and agreed that communication needs to improve. We worked hard to get county contacts for all of the counties but he didn't feel they were utilized as well as they could have been. He thanked our lobbyists for what they were able to do this year.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> VP Bill Halleran:**

Bill thanked everyone for coming and Grinnell for hosting.

He is looking forward to convention. He did have a question that he couldn't find an answer for on their website and they answered his e-mail right away so he was happy and thought that members will appreciate that type of response to inquiries.

Bill thanked those that have signed up to be the legislative liaisons in each county. We have contacts for all but about 20 counties.

For those fire departments that would like a representative from the IFA to do presentations or speak at a meeting if you could notify us early it would help with scheduling.

Sigourney Fire Department is in the middle of working on the state smoke detector campaign. It's been exciting. They are in the process right now of collecting the data for names of where they need to have smoke detectors installed. They are over 100 right now.

#### **5<sup>th</sup> VP Marv Trimble:**

Marv thanked Grinnell for hosting and those that attended.

Marv has done presentations in Birmingham, Tama and Belle Plaine.

He said he was glad to hear that Bill got a follow up call right away on his question about convention. It has been raining a lot but in looking things over he said the camp ground area did not stay wet. It's very flat but water didn't pool anywhere. He drove by the other night and there aren't any ruts and grass is planted.

Marv worked the Hall of Flame last year and said it is a lot of fun and encouraged people to volunteer. He is helping again this year.

**President Roger Bissen:**

Roger said a lot of his activities have been in conjunction with other board members that have reported on those such as the trip to DC and the poster luncheon in Carroll.

He did make quite a few trips to Des Moines and had a lot of good conversations in sub-committee meetings and Al and Roger had a lot of meetings with legislators prior to the session. He thinks things went really well but agrees that communication needs to be worked on.

**Committee Reports:****NVFC – Bob Platz:**

Bob and Brian Seymour were in Washington, DC last month for the NVFC spring conference. During the general session there was a round table discussion on recruitment and retention. Most of what came out of that is that it is the local departments that need to be doing it. It is up to your department, your management, your officers on how they are being treated and how long they will stick around. As you go around states where the recruitment and retention is the biggest problem is where leadership is lacking in the departments.

The meeting was attended by 42 states with 38 delegates and 25 alternates and one past chairman. The NVFC had 2 members pass away in the past year – Maryland Director Lee Sachs and Kentucky alternate Bryant Stiles.

There was a discussion regarding the situation in West, TX. The NVFC President Phil Stittleburg went down there to visit and convey sympathy from the country. Towards the end of the meeting the topic was brought up again and they passed a hat and collected around \$2500 just from those present to send to West, TX.

The legislative committee was working on some changes to how the Public Safety Officers Benefit program is managed and change to more on-line rather than paper.

The election of officers took place and Phil Stittleburg is Chairman again, Kevin Quinn is 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chairman and Steve Hirsch is 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairman.

General Motors wants to put out a new pickup next year. There will only be 5 of them and they requested one be in Iowa, along with Nebraska, Delaware, North Carolina and New York. It will be a red Silverado and then there will be a lot of NVFC sponsors on it such as Scott and Globe. It will be displayed at convention.

Bob worked at the NVFC booth during FDIC.

Dave Finger asked Bob to join the mentoring program on grants. Bob doesn't know if the program will work or not. It is set up for fire departments around the country that have been unsuccessful in obtaining grants. Someone that is familiar with the program can review their grant applications and give them advice.

With legislation – HF 2217 did pass the House with \$680 million for the grant program with \$340 million each to SAFER and AFG, which is an increase of \$5 million and \$44 million for USFA which is the same as 2013. This bill has now been passed on to the Senate.

SAFER application period is supposed to be sometime in June, AFG should be out in August and Fire Prevention and Safety should open in the fall sometime.

There is going to be a meeting out in DC on June 26<sup>th</sup> about Next Generation PPE. There is information about this on the NVFC website in health and safety news.

NVFC is sponsoring a HIPAA webinar on Thursday June 27<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m. EDT.

The next NVFC meeting will be in College Station, TX along with the National Benefits Summit. The fall meeting in 2014 will be in Louisiana and then in 2015 when National Benefit Summit is held again it is going to be September 16 - 20 in Charlotte, NC with a NASCAR theme.

### **Memorial Committee –**

Mike Reuman was unable to attend as they are setting things up for the services but asked that after the meeting anyone that can please stop by the memorial to see if there is anything further that needs to be done. They will need help tonight beginning around 8 p.m. and then Sunday anytime after 8 a.m. they will need help getting things ready.

### **Legislation –**

The board received a final update from Matt Eide and John Pederson following the legislative session with the status of the issues that were being watched. That has been posted on the IFA website. Some of the highlights:

SF 447 - \$725,520 was appropriated for firefighter training; SF 447 and HF 648 – create a Public Safety Training and Facilities Task Force and appropriate \$50,000 to it; HF 648 - \$150,000 was appropriated to the Regional Emergency Training Centers to be distributed on an equal basis; SF 446 – Establishes a 23-member task force charged with conducting 6 meetings concerning the EMS issues affecting rural and urban parts of Iowa, private services, public services, hospital services, volunteer and employed professionals, delivery of services, issues and necessary improvements. Appropriated \$28,664 for this; SF 446 – EMS Medicaid Increase – for FY beginning July 1, 2013 reimbursement rate for EMS providers shall be increased 10 percent over rates in effect on June 30, 2013; HF 644 – E911 Equalization-eliminates the existing voter referendum requirement regarding the implementation of the local wireline E911 service surcharge and the alternative surcharge applicable to wireline communications. The bill imposes a \$1 surcharge for both wireline and wireless E911 programs and reinstates the wireless carrier cost recovery for Phase 1 services. It also requires the E911 Program Manager, in consultation with the E911 Communications Council to establish methodology for the collection of data on all costs and expenses related to the operation of a PSAP and requires Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division to conduct a study to identify E911 operations and expense efficiencies; SF 447 – Repeals the Cigarette Fire Safety Fund and requires deposit of any revenues from certifications and civil penalties to the State General Fund. FM Office is permitted to spend funds from this fund retroactively to FY 2008 through FY 2013. FY '13 ending balance is transferred to victim assistance grants; HF 603 – Iowa Public Information Board Funding – makes appropriation of \$275,000 and 3.0 FTE positions for the Board to begin operations in FY '14; SF 295 – Property tax changes; SF 447 Public Safety Interoperable and Broadband Communications Fund – establishes official name in the *Code*. The bill states: A statewide Public Safety Interoperable and Broadband Communications Fund is established in the Office of the Treasurer of State under the control of the DPS. Any moneys annually appropriated, granted, or credited to the fund, including any federal moneys, are appropriated to the DPS for the planning and development of a statewide public safety interoperable and broadband communications system.

George Oster said that he met with John Pederson, Roger Bissen and Jack Runge before the legislative session regarding the reimplementation of benefitted fire districts and that apparently didn't happen. George asked if there was any chance that could be looked at again for the next session and also possibly partnering with the Iowa League of Cities on it. George is willing to help in any way he can. Roger and Al said that they would talk with him about that.

Randy Novak pointed out that with the governor's required 2-year budgeting that in the bigger picture of the bill that the funding for the Volunteer Firefighter Training Fund stayed level for 2014 but is cut in half for 2015 to \$362,760.

### **Fire Service Training Bureau – Randy Novak:**

The FSTB is still at only 9 FTE positions since losing one. That is a critical need for them.

As stated earlier the VFFTF was level funded for the next fiscal year. There is still money in the tax check off and Paul Ryan funds that are also being utilized for training.

The application period is going to be opening for the state training programs to apply for the NFA state training support grants. This is later than normal and has been cut to \$22,000. It is automatic grant, not competitive, so the FSTB will receive this after they apply for it.

They have received and used their mobile fire investigation prop that was purchased through a Fire Prevention and Safety grant. The smoke detector grant that was put in through IFA for \$245,000 will be closing out sometime in August. When the next FP&S grant application window opens they may be applying again to get additional smoke detectors.

New FFI and FFII programs are coming out this summer. The standards change every 5 years. Students will now have options on how to take classes. They will continue to do direct deliveries for those departments that want it but for departments that would like to try a blended learning approach where the students independently go through the course material in an on-line system they can do that and then they will schedule just skills sessions and send in an instructor just to teach the skills portion. Once they get the first classes underway in that format they will be doing an on-line version of Fire Officer I and II and several other courses.

They have been working with the volunteer and combination officer section of the International Association of Fire Chiefs on a leadership skills for volunteer fire chiefs and officers course. They were supposed to do a pilot in Oregon in March but didn't get any enrollment. They were going to follow up with a pilot here only to find out that nobody seems to have the program quite ready. They are slated to field test it now in July in South Carolina and then looking at dates in September and October to bring it to Iowa.

They have presented the Crash Scene Management course about 45 times in the field now. A lot of them have been at county association meetings where they are looking for a short presentation. This is about an hour to an hour and a half and seems to be going well. They are encouraging those wanting the class to also invite law enforcement, EMS and others that would be involved in crash scene management to be there as well.

The new propane prop is out on the road now and that is going well and that was partially funded by the Iowa Propane Gas Association.

Upcoming training: Firefighter Recruit Academy – July 22-August 2 at FSTB, Ames; NFA Department Wellness Coordinator – Sept. 12 – 13 at FSTB, Ames; Live Fire Skills Weekend, Oct. 12 at FSTB, Ames; Hazardous Materials Symposium – October 24-25 at Ames; Iowa Fire Service Instructors Conference – Nov. 15-16 at Ames.

#### **SAFER Grant Update: George Oster and Deb Samuelson**

George Oster and Deb Samuelson gave a presentation to the board updating them on the Recruitment and Retention Workshop program that they have been presenting with the funds secured through a SAFER Grant awarded in November 2010. The first pilot delivery was in July 2011 and there have been 36 deliveries of the workshops. Two were the pilot deliveries, 10 were at regional and state fire schools and 24 were hosted by Iowa fire departments. In addition, 4 workshops were handed off to neighboring states. At least 115 fire departments and 488 individuals have had participants in the Iowa SAFER workshops. There is \$4000 for administrative costs figured into the grant for the work that the IFA does with this. That has not been drawn out yet. Grant ends November 2014. Course still needs to be handed off to Nebraska and Iowa.

**There was no New Business.**

**Good of the Association:**

Bob Platz mentioned that with the CapWiz program that NVFC uses they have a program called “Engage” that was real reasonable cost wise. It might be something for the board to look into.

President Bissen said that Wendy should get the \$4000 administrative fee drawn out from the SAFER Grant for IFA expenses.

Dave Crawford from Grinnell said that for convention 2014 things are progressing. They have 60 acres. They have everything divided up into committees. They want to stay ahead of things and everything is going well. They are looking forward to having everyone there.

Al Esch announced that Mid Year 2014 will be April 5 – 6<sup>th</sup> at the Hotel Julien Dubuque. Rooms are \$99. Phone number is 563-556-4200 and website is [www.hoteljuliendubuque.com](http://www.hoteljuliendubuque.com) .

Meeting adjourned at 2:30.

Respectfully submitted,  
Wendy Lensing  
Executive Director