

Iowa Firefighters Association  
Board of Directors' Meeting  
January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014  
Humboldt, IA

Present: President Al Esch, 1<sup>st</sup> VP Brad Yeager, 2<sup>nd</sup> VP Mark McNees, 3<sup>rd</sup> VP Bill Halleran, 4<sup>th</sup> VP Marv Trimble, 5<sup>th</sup> VP Al Muhlhause, Past President Roger Bissen, and Executive Director Wendy Lensing. Also present were Jeff Quigle, SFM office; Bob and Ellen Hagen, Jewell; Jack Runge, Buckeye; Jim Kenkel, FSTB; Brian Seymour, Indianola; Bob Platz, Dyersville.

Meeting was called to order at 10 a.m. by President Al Esch. He presented a new IFA banner to Chief Tony Hosford of the Humboldt Fire Department to thank them for their hospitality and hosting the meeting.

**Motion to approve the agenda was made by Roger Bissen. It was seconded by Bill Halleran. Motion carried.**

**Mark McNees made a motion to approve the minutes of the last board meeting held on November 10, 2013 in Indianola. It was seconded by Marv Trimble. Motion carried.**

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

I'd like to thank Chief Tony Hosford and the Humboldt Fire Department for their hospitality today. We appreciate them hosting our meeting.

The board met yesterday at my house and did an audit of the books, job performance review and worked on the budget for 2014.

Dues will be delinquent February 1<sup>st</sup>. At this time there are still quite a few departments left to pay. I've had information out in the paper and through the e-mails regarding the new license plate forms for firefighter license plates. Our website doesn't have a "members only" section like the Iowa Fire Chiefs Association does so if we put the form on our website anyone would have access to it. The IFCA does have the form posted on the members section of their website and if a chief doesn't have access to that I can e-mail, fax or mail the form to them if they call or e-mail me.

The tax credit for volunteers can be claimed for 2013. There is a template on our website on the homepage for a form that can be used by the chief to sign off on the eligibility of a volunteer for the tax credit.

There will be a legislative breakfast at the capitol in room 116 on Wednesday, January 29<sup>th</sup> from 7 – 9 a.m. We encourage anyone that is available to come and meet with their legislator that morning. Our events at the capitol this year are split into two separate days giving us 2 chances to have events and meet with the legislators. The breakfast being the 29<sup>th</sup> gives us a chance to meet with them at the beginning of the session and the Firefighter Day on the Hill and Chili Cook off will be on Monday, March 31<sup>st</sup>. There will be more information coming on that event.

I will begin working on the annual report for 2013 and planning to get the mailing for the Mid Year Meeting along with the annual report CD sent out the end of February so that everyone will have that by their March department meetings.

I will be at the annual fire school in Ames February 14 – 16<sup>th</sup> and we are excited that we will be rolling out our new partnership with California Casualty at that time. A representative from California Casualty will be at the fire school as well to get to start meeting our members and introducing their auto and home insurance products.

Again, thank you to the Humboldt FD and all of you for taking time to attend today's meeting.

**Financial Report – Wendy Lensing:**

Total current assets for Iowa Firefighters Association as of December 31, 2013 are \$500,611.55. Total assets for the Iowa Firemen's Foundation as of December 31, 2013 are \$35,763.06.

**Motion by Al Muhlhausen to approve the financial report. It was seconded by Brad Yeager. Motion carried.**

**Proposed 2014 Budget :**

Wendy read through the proposed budget for 2014. Total projected income is \$189,700.00. Total projected expenses are \$219,271.85. That leaves a projected loss of \$29,571.85.

It was asked what last year's proposed budget was. The estimated budget for 2013 was negative \$12,700.00 but we ended up with a positive of about \$4800 due in part to Perry being able to pay their back convention city amount and other line items coming out better than anticipated.

Dues income is projected down a bit due to departments losing members each year and expenses continue to rise each year and it all adds up.

**Officers Reports:****1<sup>st</sup> VP – Brad Yeager**

I'd first like to thank the Humboldt firefighters for opening their station for us this morning. It's always great to get into these fire departments around the state and see how they do business.

Second, thanks to Wendy and Dave for opening their home to us again this year for our budget meeting. It's a comfortable place to meet and we can get a lot done.

We've really got some good things going at the Capital. I met with Commissioner Noble back in November and several of us were able to meet with the Governor on December 16<sup>th</sup>. I think these meetings really helped bring home exactly who we are as an Association and certainly helped to get additional dollars budgeted in some of the areas we've been trying to get for years. The Governor's meeting was during the time that he finalizing his budget for the year so I don't think the timing could have been better. I'll let Al or someone else go into more detail about our legislative agenda and where we hope to make the gains this year. Needless to say I'm excited but we need to make sure the additional dollars the Governor has budget stay put throughout the session. And, this is the part where I beg and plead with each and every one of you to reach out to your local legislator and let them know how important the training dollars are and the impact the Training Bureau has on your department every year. We will continue to push for these things at the Capital but a legislator hearing from one of his or her constituents goes a lot farther than hearing it from me.

Another task we're taking on is a change to our member database. Since Wendy came on in 2004 there have been minimal changes or upgrades to the program she uses to keep records of our membership. We heard from a couple of groups at the Mid-States Networking meeting and also the Training Bureau that a program called FileMaker Pro was the way to go. I did some research on a couple of different programs and based on cost and ease of use believe we can make FileMaker work for our needs. This is

really a monumental task we're going to undertake with just under 15,000 members I hope to make it through without any hiccups but there may be a few. The end result will hopefully streamline how Wendy has to process the bills and give us more flexibility to make changes and updates down the road.

Finally, we're going to have to talk about a dues increase. Our projected budget was in the red last year but due to Perry paying off their convention debt and some breaks throughout the year we ended in the black. I don't think we'll be as fortunate this year. Each year, just like yesterday, we sit down with the budget and scrutinize every line item and discuss the cost versus reward. There are items in the budget that stand out, like the cost of newspaper, the legislative budget, or travel expenses. We as a board have brought this budget forward, red ink and all, to continue down the path we're on and keep this organization and our members headed in the right direction. The cost of doing business has increased and we have to be able to keep pace with those changes. Certainly, we could drop the newspaper or cancel a trip to a conference or DC. But, I feel, and we as a board agree that these things are too important to let go of. Being able to put The Firefighter newspaper in your hands every month, finding the benefits that work in other states, or more importantly the ones that don't, and face-to-face contact with our Senators and Representatives in Washington are vital to this organization. I hope you'll agree with the need for increased dues and as you look through the budget yourself, don't hesitate to bring your comments, questions, or concerns to me or any one of us on the board.

There was some discussion on procedures for presenting resolutions on dues increase at Mid Year.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> VP – Mark McNees**

Thank you to the Humboldt fire dept for hosting our meeting and to Wendy and Dave for hosting us this weekend for our budget work session and meeting.

This weekend the board really gets some serious work done and sets forth the tone for the coming year. I feel it's been a productive weekend with the board making some decisions that are going to keep the association moving forward and keep it healthy. Unfortunately, that is going to mean a dues increase is inevitable. Three years ago the board warned the membership of the cash flow issues facing the association and at the time asked for a one dollar increase for each of the next three years if necessary. A one-time one dollar increase was approved. The board and Wendy has been doing as much as possible to control costs since then as has been the standard procedure. However, even with those efforts, we are faced with the same facts. The IFA needs more cash flow to continue to do the work for Iowa's firefighters.

Over the last two years we have been fortunate that some normal costs were averted due to canceled events and the fact that some others didn't occur. And we have helped balance the budget by not turning in expenses and other donations. This can't be the way the association continues in a professional manner and we should not be working on the assumption we will just dig into our reserves for normal expenditures. I have been involved with organizations that have done just that and they have used up all their reserves and are in a struggle to survive. That is NOT where we can allow the IFA to go.

I know when you look through the proposed budget you wonder why some items cost so much or are even there at all. Anyone who has worked with any type of larger organization or fire budget knows there are many things you have to plan to occur based on past experience. Some items you hope may not be used but must be included.

I am struggling just as many other chiefs right now with maintaining a budget for my department. I have been asked to cut and find sustainable spending decreases and ways to increase income. I use that same prism while working on the IFA budget. I can tell you there is no wild eyed spending occurring or being considered. In fact, some things we would like to consider doing for benefits for members are being put on hold or set aside because we don't feel the timing is right and we are being very careful to consider the return on any investment and whether it's sustainable for the association.

So I am just going to re-iterate that members should be prepared for a dues increase.

Marv and I returned from the national benefit summit last fall at the NVFC. I have been very interested in finding any benefits we can for our members to add value to the membership. In discussions with others from around the country I can state Iowa is low on our due structure for what we provide. We have begun to work with California Casualty for a benefit and I am excited for its rollout shortly. It's a top notch company with a stellar reputation amongst other state associations.

Another issue I brought back to investigate more was job protection for volunteers and workmans comp coverage. Iowa is well covered under workers comp, but we have more to do for job protection. Shortly after I began to investigate and discuss this we heard of an incident here where a firefighter was going to lose their job because they could not return due to an injury suffered as a volunteer firefighter. As a result we are working on drafting legislation to increase and provide protection in such cases and for call ups during federal or state disasters. We will again be one of the leading states in this effort as Delaware is working on the same type of injury protection, but from querying other states I can't find any with such protection. Several have or are working on the disaster declaration language or presently have such wording.

This will be one of our legislative priorities so I the county contacts and our members will be asked to support the effort. It's safe to say the board is very concerned and will be closely monitoring our grass roots efforts and marketing agent to make sure we are utilizing our contacts to our fullest extent.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> VP – Bill Halleran**

Thanks to Humboldt Fire Chief Tony Hosford and the fine hospitality for hosting our IFA board mtg.

Thanks also to Dave and Wendy Lensing for letting the IFA Board invade your house to set 2014 budget.

Legislation is starting to kick off soon. We as an IFA Board will be on a continuous rotation at the capital lobbying for Iowa Firefighter needs. We make a presence there and we are very well respected. You will be reading many board member monthly newsletter updates as things progress.

Chili cook-off at state capital will be March 31st. I will be point of contact for the 3rd Annual event. This has been very well received and a good time to visit with legislation while enjoying good company and food. My email is [bhalleran@iafireassn.org](mailto:bhalleran@iafireassn.org) to register to enter. Going to limit this to 40 teams.

Reminder to please send your fire department action shots to Jeff Gargano with the Iowa Firefighter Newsletter. These can be emailed to [jeff@iowafirefighter.com](mailto:jeff@iowafirefighter.com). The deadline is the 10th of the month. Also if your department has not been represented or it has been a long since it was previously

represented in the new letter, please submit a group photo and show us who you are and where you are from.

I have fielded several phone calls referencing renewal of fire fighter plates. The only place you will find this registration form at is either the Iowa Fire Chiefs Association website. You must be a registered member to print this off. Website is [www.iowafirechiefs.org](http://www.iowafirechiefs.org). The other way is to contact Wendy Lensing and she can fax this to you. We would rather you download your own first though.

Also on the Iowa Fire Chiefs website or the IFA website is the Fire/EMS \$50 tax credit information. You can print this word document off and add your own respective fire dept. logo. Re-print, fill out and hand out.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> VP – Marv Trimble**

Thank you to the Humboldt fire department for hosting our meeting and the Lensing's for hosting the budget meeting. At our last meeting in Indianola California Casualty gave a presentation for another member benefit. I want to be sure we have an air tight understanding about how our membership is going to be involved in the process. We heard all good reports about this company at the national benefit summit.

There have been some incidents where our members felt misled or even bullied by agents of American Income Life. This cannot continue. We spoke with Sue Akers, a representative from American Income Life and issues are being ironed out. I want to be sure all IFA members realize the \$2000 accidental death and dismemberment policy is in affect without meeting with an agent. If you choose to meet with the agent they will give information about products that are provided for free and other to be purchased if you like. If anyone has been contacted with a good experience or bad experience please feel free to contact me. All we hear about is the bad. Sue Akers has a number of comment cards from IFA members about their favorable experiences.

Wendy added in that if someone does have an experience with an agent that they are not pleased about to please be sure that you have that agent's name and phone number so that Sue can better follow up on any complaints.

The Garrison and Vinton fire departments met with representatives from Grinnell and Story City fire departments about our convention and answered their questions to the best of our ability. Judging from this interaction we are in for a couple well run and organized conventions.

I had the honor, along with other members of the board, to meet with Governor Branstad and discuss our priorities. The Governor was gracious and did his homework to know just what the IFSTB's budget had been. He agrees there is no way to cover the entire state for fires without volunteers. Governor Branstad has included increases of \$100,000 for fire training and \$120,000 for the Fire Marshal's office. This will be a huge benefit to all the firefighters of the state.

In my opinion, the job protection act we asked for is a game changer. Nothing would be worse than to serve your neighbors, get injured and then lose your job. Governor Branstad was quite receptive to the idea of a plan that would mirror USERRA. We just had a Garrison firefighter get injured at a fire department function. He could be off work for up to 8 weeks. His boss is very understanding and will make every effort to accommodate the injured firefighter. Not everyone is this fortunate.

### **5<sup>th</sup> VP – Al Muhlhausen**

First off, I would like to thank the City of Humboldt, Humboldt Fire Department, and Dave and Wendy Lensing for their hospitality during the most recent board meeting.

Since our last board meeting I have attended my own department meetings and drills as well as some other functions. I attended the EMS summit on December 14<sup>th</sup> in Dubuque, Iowa with Al Esch.

County meetings in my area have started up again. Most counties do not hold meetings in December due to the holidays. I have attended the Jackson and Clinton County fire meetings, as well as the Jackson County EMS meeting so far this year.

I would be in favor of increasing the membership dues. The expenses of the IFA have increased in recent years and we have not raised the dues in a few years.

I was recently contacted by Earl Burken of Andover Fire. He would like me to come speak to his department about rejoining the IFA. He currently is the only member, and I will be going to speak to them in February.

I will be going to the next Jones County Fire meeting to see about getting a legislative liaison.

On January 11<sup>th</sup> Maquoketa held its annual supper and awards banquet. We handed out two 10years of service awards, one 20 years of service award, and two 25 years of service awards. We also handed out the annual firefighter of the year award.

I will be attending fire school in February.

Lots and lots of emails!

Marv and I audited the books, Wendy does an excellent job!

### **Past President – Roger Bissen**

I would like to thank the Humboldt Fire Department for hosting our board meeting this morning. I would also like to thank Dave and Wendy Lensing for hosting the board in their home to work on the budget for 2014.

At the budget workshop we worked on putting together an acceptable budget for the membership but with the expenses we have and the amount of income we have to work with. We are trying to find ways to increase income and reduce our expenses as much as possible.

We are continuing to work to come up with benefits for the membership but we will be struggling because balancing the budget needs to have a priority. Some of the benefits we are looking at will require a setup charge so we may need to postpone these benefits for a couple of years when the budget is more acceptable.

I want to thank the board for all of their professionalism throughout all of the business throughout the years. I have been very fortunate to be able to work with such great people.

I am very optimistic on the job protection act that is on our legislative agenda but I also feel it would be much easier to get accomplished if we could follow a national standard from NVFC and if we could mirror that job protection law from the military the fire service would be much better off.

Bob Platz and Brian Seymour both stated that it had been tried in the past at the federal level but never went anywhere since states have such different standards on workmen's comp laws.

### **President – Al Esch**

Dave & Wendy, thanks for hosting us this weekend for our budget workshop. Every year we do this and see what it takes to keep this organization viable now and into the future. This year is no exception and it is an eye opener. We are a little behind with updating our policies. We want to amend those to make our association sustainable in the future and I feel that inaction would be one of the cardinal sins of failure of leadership so we are going to be sure that this happens.

We spoke about visiting the governor this past December and I asked for \$1,000,000.00 for the Volunteer Firefighter Training Fund, spoke about a job protection law for volunteers and replacing a full time employee at the Fire Service Training Bureau. The training fund number was based on obtaining hard numbers from Randy Novak and Jeff Quigle in conversations prior to our meeting on where we need to be and what we need. Seeing the proposed numbers with the increases last week is an important step. At times we need to ask rather than make demands and it is why we need to be bi-partisan when we need to work with both parties to meet our goals. Without our members we don't have a perceived value in what we do. Based on that, I am pretty hopeful that this will happen. After the Governor's address John Pederson and I stood in very visible spot and talked to a number of senators as they walked past us. We spoke about a Firefighter Job Protection Act, the Volunteer Firefighter Training Fund and having staff at the Fire Service Training Bureau. I am not seeing any pushback from either side of the aisle but it is early in the session, so these may be some of our accomplishments this year.

I would like to say that the professionalism is here with the board but it really isn't. There are some past presidents who were instrumental in doing the groundwork for this progression in how we conduct business. Professionalism has filtered from the top down and I thank you for that.

A week ago, I made a presentation to the Epworth Fire Department to 5 members with 25 years of service. All younger than me! I also recognized Senator and past president Tom Hancock for 45 years of continuous service.

Met with Capture Marketing twice to begin negotiating a contract because the board does not feel we are getting a good return on the association's investment. We needed to allow some time to see some results and I feel we have reached that point, have not seen the desired result and must work to remedy that, one way or another, possibly at a reduced rate.

I met with John Pederson and others at the Capitol before the session. Was not wearing the Red Jacket, but an Epworth Fire coat and badge and was amazed how many people have facial recognition and not just with a Red Jacket, while having coffee or walking around.

### **Committee Reports :**

#### **NVFC – Bob Platz & Brian Seymour –**

Bob Platz – On January 10, Assistant Secretary for Tax Policy Mark Mazur posted a notice on the U.S. Department of Treasury's blog that the IRS, "...will not require volunteer hours of bona fide volunteer firefighters and volunteer emergency medical personnel at governmental or tax-exempt organizations to

be counted when determining full-time employees (or full-time equivalents).” This is exactly what the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) had asked for in a September 9 letter to the IRS regarding this issue.

“This is very good news for the nation’s volunteer fire and EMS community,” said NVFC Chairman Philip C. Stittleburg. “We’ll need to wait and see what the final implementing regulations say to ensure that they address our concerns fully but based on the information in Assistant Secretary Mazur’s announcement it appears that emergency services agencies will not be forced to provide health insurance coverage to volunteer personnel under Obamacare.”

The Treasury announcement references having reviewed, “...statutory provisions that apply to bona fide volunteers under Section 457(e)(11) of the Tax Code...” in reaching the decision not to treat volunteers as employees under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA). Section 457(e)(11)(i) is a definition of bona fide volunteer that allows for individuals to be treated as volunteers even if they receive compensation for performing services in the form of reimbursement for reasonable expenses or reasonable benefits such as length of service awards or nominal fees.

Ensuring that nominally compensated volunteers would not be considered employees under the PPACA has been a top priority for the NVFC.

The House and Senate Appropriations Committees have reached agreement on omnibus legislation providing \$1.012 trillion to fund the federal government through the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2014. The legislation (H.R. 3547) was quickly passed by both chambers and signed into law by President Obama. H.R. 3547 provides \$340 million each for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant program, an increase for each program of \$2.5 million above the FY 2013 level. The bill also provides \$44 million for the United States Fire Administration (USFA), the same as in FY 2013 but nearly \$3 million higher than the level requested by the President. The Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) program is funded at \$13.025 million. As with USFA, the VFA funding level is the same as last year but higher than the President’s budget request.

The conference committee is looking at how to better coordinate the NVFC Conference and the States Benefits Summit.

Brian Seymour –

My report included two sections.

First was on the Wireless committee. This committee’s focus last meeting was on the impact that narrow banding had on the fire service. This was in two parts one on fiscal impact and the other was what is did on receiving a radio signal. In discussions Dave Finger had with the FCC they are not aware of any major impacts however the NVFC had received several comments. So we felt as a committee we should develop a survey and that would try to obtain further information on these two issues. So we have developed the survey and it will be coming out in the next couple of weeks. NVFC will push it out to members with an expectation that members will push it out to their mailing lists so we have a broad distribution and hopefully a big response so we can evaluate the information and forward it to the FCC so they are aware of the impact. Some other issues we looked at was possibly working with cell phone providers to see about discounts or unlimited text service for volunteer as more and more services use text messaging as a backup paging system.

Couple questions ask related to the status of the next round of narrow banding. There has been no deadline established by the FCC. Some initial talk has been 2018 but nothing is confirmed on this. There



has actually been two items that FCC may address in the future and that is ultra narrow banding and digital radio signals but neither have deadlines at this time.

The other question was on FirstNet and where it is but this group has meet for several months and direction they are taking is still sketchy at best. A lot of controversy with this process and NVFC is taking a wait and see what shakes out position at this time.

The other committee I sit on is the International committee and this is a newly developed committee and last meeting was the second organizational meeting of the group. There was a need that arose when overseas fire fighters started contacting the NVFC for help with setting up tours, training and places the overseas FF could sit down and visit with other US fire departments. They were looking for assistance in helping out departments coming to learn and take back information on how we do things in the US. We haphazardly put a couple of things together but it was clear we needed a better plan in place and that is what the International Committee will work on as well as working with departments and associations on being members of the NVFC and travel back and forth to promote greater International partnerships. There is planning in place to attend a huge worldwide fire conference in Germany which more to follow as we proceed on this.

Bob also mentioned that not-for-profit ambulance services can also apply for AFG grants. He also will be going out to help read grants next month.

### **Legislation –**

The second session of the 85<sup>th</sup> Iowa General Assembly is now underway. After special elections during the interim the Republicans have the same 53-47 majority in the House and the Democrats have the same 26-24 Majority in the Senate.

Governor Branstad gave the Condition of the State address on Tuesday and members of the Democratic and Republican leadership made remarks. If you would like to read highlights or view the address you can go to click <https://governor.iowa.gov/2014/01/gov-branstad-delivers-2014-condition-of-the-state-iowa-is-working/> .

The State General Fund surplus for FY14 was \$882.2M. The general fund spending increase for FY15 is \$503.7M. Even with the increase in spending the general fund is still expected to have a \$723M surplus at the end of FY15. The volunteer tax credit is expected to cost the general fund \$900,000 and the state will have over \$650M in reserves at the end of FY15.

1. Governor adds \$100,000 to training funds.
2. Governor adds \$120,000 to State Fire Marshal's office.

### **Firefighter Job Protection Act**

A bill for a firefighters job protection act has been pre-filed through Senator Jeff Danielson. A lot of work will need to be done on this bill when it comes out and we anticipate that others will want to join.

### **Legislative Meetings**

Al Esch and John Pederson had productive conversations with Representative Worth and Senator Courtney (co-chairs of the Justice System Appropriations Subcommittee) concerning budget requests. Budget committees will start working on details of all budgets next week. We have a long way to go but PLEASE talk to any legislator you can

### **Multi-Use Training Facility**

Very preliminary but worth watching is the interest in a multi-use training facility at Camp Dodge. Rep. Worthan brought it up as something he is working on with the hopes of getting federal money. We will need to work on corporate match and naming rights if this starts to come together.

Jack Runge asked if anyone had seen any studies on the affect of the commercial property tax rollback and how those dollars are going to come back to the communities. There are communities that are really reeling from this. Al Esch said he'd seen a few numbers but hadn't gotten too deep into it. Jack said there is a lot of concern in little towns where they may have an elevator and that is almost the extent of their tax base. Mark said he has also asked John to check into how much is supposed to be coming back to the towns. Brian Seymour said their city is looking at a loss of about \$200,000 but the backfill the first year is supposed to take it back to a loss of \$30,000 but there is concern about how many years there will be a backfill.

### **Convention Committee – Mark McNeas**

There are some issues with some clarifications of language within rules and the drill rules committee may be looking into some of that.

Convention hosts need to look at trailers, axles, brakes and have inspected before passing on to next town.

### **Guests:**

#### **FireMarshal – Jeff Quigle –**

**DPS** - Our Department announced administrative operational efficiency changes at the beginning of January 2014. Director Jim Saunders is overseeing the Division of Criminal Investigation, Division of Intelligence, Division of Narcotics Enforcement, and the Division of State Fire Marshal. Former Division of Criminal Investigation Director Chari Paulson will oversee the Departments Administrative Support and Technology Services Division.

**Budget** - The overall budget of the State Fire Marshal Division has improved since I reported at the meeting in Indianola in November and has moved slightly into the black. The contributing factors to this increase have been reducing our overall daily operating costs, realignment of management, and the reduced costs associated with operation of our vehicles. I am optimistic that the overall budget picture will continue to improve.

**Fire Prevention Bureau** - Special Agent in Charge Kyle Gorsh is returning from the Commissioner's Office to oversee the Fire Prevention Bureau. This transition will occur starting February 1, 2014. Approval was also granted to fill the vacant Fire Prevention Bureau Secretary position. Interviews were conducted a couple weeks ago and this position will be filled in the next few weeks. This position is funded by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid.

**Arson and Explosives Bureau** - We have staff involved with instruction at the upcoming Winter Fire School, February 14-16, 2014 and the Fire/Arson Investigation School at the Fire Service Training Bureau, March 17 through 28<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

**State Building Code Bureau** - One of our Construction/Design Engineers within the Bureau who was funded by the Department of Inspections and Appeals to review health facility plans resigned last month. Due to meeting our plan review timelines with our current staffing levels and the current budget picture we will not be filling this vacant position and will be shifting the health facility review duties to another one of our Engineers.

The 2012 Energy Code adoption is proceeding through the Administrative Rules Process.

**Electrical Licensing and Inspection Bureau** - The Electrical Licensing and Inspection Bureau continues with the 3 year licensing cycle of electricians. The fees received from electrical licenses and permits determine the funding for the next 3 years as this Bureau does not receive any state funding appropriations. We will be working on the Bureau's budget to develop a plan for the next 3 years.

We currently have one clerk vacancy within the Bureau that we intend to fill later this year.

**2013 Fire Fatalities** - We saw a significant decrease in overall fire deaths for 2013. 2013 will be the second lowest number of fire deaths since the State Fire Marshal Division started collecting this data in 1911. The lowest number of fire deaths was recorded in 2002 with 24 fire deaths. In the mid to late 1970's the State of Iowa was averaging 80 fire deaths per year. Since 2000 the State of Iowa has been averaging 40 fire deaths per year. With continued education and smoke detection installation efforts we hope to continue to see an even larger reduction in fire death numbers.

**2013 Lives Saved** - We are happy to report 112 Iowans were saved by working smoke detectors in 2013. The State Fire Marshal Division is dedicated to the continued installation of smoke detectors throughout the State of Iowa.

Al asked Jeff about FireBridge and plans for continuation of that. Jeff said it has been being paid for by asset forfeiture. Jeff is proposing that they continue to fund that. He said Iowa is one of the model states now that other states are calling to ask how we are doing things. He would also like to see some additional modules purchased that would allow easier "mining" of some of the data for reports.

Roger Bissen asked with the average of 40 fire deaths where Iowa ranks nationally. Jeff said Iowa is on the lower end. There are a few states lower but they also have lower populations overall.

Ellen Hagen presented a check for the Smoke Detector Project in the amount of \$10,050 that she had received from the Mutual Insurance Association of Iowa.

Brad Yeager asked if Ray Reynolds was still the person that departments should contact regarding smoke detectors and Jeff said yes he was still spearheading that project.

**Fire Service Training Bureau – Jim Kenkel –**

The 90<sup>th</sup> Annual Fire School is coming soon. Attendance is on track. There are many new classes again this year. Rescue Skills Weekend is again a part of this year's fire school.

Many extra "open enrollment" classes (instructor, inspector, fire officer) have been announced. They can be found on the FSTB website under "Training Opportunities".

A new mobile training unit has been put in to service – Fire Extinguisher Trainer. It includes a gas feed fire extinguisher prop, along with fire extinguishers and fuel. This will serve the business/industrial customers and support regional fire schools.

The FSTB has applied for an AFG grant for a new mobile training unit. They are asking for \$350,000 for a new burn trailer. Their cost share will be 15%.

They will be announcing the 2014 Volunteer Fire Chiefs Workshop (March 29) and the 2014 Training Officers Workshop (April 26). Brochures are being finalized and then they will be posted on their website and mailed out when they come back from printing.

Future training events: 2014 Regional/State Fire Schools, 2014 State Schools and Conferences, Federal FY 14 National Fire Academy Course Offerings.

#### **Unfinished Business:**

##### **Member benefits –**

The upcoming roll out of new partnership with California Casualty was already mentioned.

Another benefit had been discussed with a company but it would have required an upfront expenditure that is not possible with the budget we have to work with.

Bob Platz asked if the board knew how much of a dues increase would be asked for. Al said that the board had discussed it during the budget meeting but an agreement had not yet been reached but it is looking like a minimum of \$2.

##### **New Business –**

Ellen Hagen had sent an e-mail to the board asking about their thoughts on EMSAC possibly changing rules on running lights and sirens on ambulances. She has requested the white paper that started the discussion and will send to the board when she receives it. She also asked them to check with their insurance companies to see if they would be covered in an accident if they were NOT running lights and/or siren.

**Brad Yeager made a motion to proceed with developing a resolution for a dues increase for 2015. It was seconded by Roger Bissen. Motion carried.**

##### **Good of the Association:**

Wendy shared a thank you note from Linda Adams at the FSTB thanking the membership for the thoughts, prayers and plant at the time of her father's passing.

Past President Dick Bowers passed away on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Services are scheduled for May 24<sup>th</sup> in Montezuma.

Jack Runge said that the new LED lights at the Iowa Firefighters Memorial in Coralville have been installed. If you see anyone from Linn Co. REC thank them for providing these lights.

With the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the memorial coming up Jack has been discussing with Mike Reuman using the old memorial medallions that haven't sold to make plaques for all of the original memorial committee members. They will discuss further and bring up to the memorial committee for approval.

**Meeting adjourned 12:30 p.m.**