

IFA Board of Directors' Meeting  
June 7, 2014 – 11:00 a.m.  
Robins, IA

Present: President Al Esch, 1<sup>st</sup> VP Brad Yeager, 3<sup>rd</sup> VP Bill Halleran, 4<sup>th</sup> VP Marv Trimble and Executive Director Wendy Lensing. Absent: 2<sup>nd</sup> VP Mark McNeese, Past President Roger Bissen.

Also present: Randy Novak, FSTB; James (Louie) Shutts, Belle Plaine; Brad Ransford, Robins; Jeffrey Quigle, State Fire Marshal; Bob Platz, Dyersville; Matt Powers, Hiawatha; Neal Boeckmann, Robins; Richard Harman, Cedar Rapids.

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m. by President Al Esch.

An addition to the agenda was made to add Kent Larsen from Armed Forces Benefit Association under guests. Bill Halleran made a motion to approve the agenda. It was seconded by Brad Yeager. Motion carried.

Bill Halleran made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014 Board of Directors' meeting held in Humboldt, IA. It was seconded by Marv Trimble. Motion carried.

Executive Directors Report: Wendy Lensing:

Dues are still being collected for 2014. Most departments and individuals have paid and we have added several new departments as well since the first of the year.

Al, Brad and I were in Washington, DC at the end of April to meet with legislators. Good meetings took place with all offices. We also attended the Congressional Fire Service Institute dinner while we were there.

Al, Brad and I, along with John Novak, met with members of the Grinnell Fire Department on May 10<sup>th</sup> for the pre-convention meeting. We toured the locations of activities. It looks like Grinnell has everything well planned out and we look forward to coming back in September for convention. I am looking for volunteers for both the Hall of Flame during the Iowa State Fair – August 7<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> and also for drill officials at convention on Saturday, September 6<sup>th</sup>. Please contact me as soon as possible if interested in helping with either event.

The new partnership with Assets in Order was discussed at Mid Year. That is up and running and information has gone out through e-mails, Facebook and on the IFA website. You can receive a free 90 day membership by going to <http://www.assetsinorder.com/IFA>. Memberships are only \$14.95 which is a 25% discount from their regular price. This is a unique service that you can use to store important documents, photos, etc. on-line.

Brad has been looking into some different membership software programs as the one we are currently using has had a few glitches and we no longer have support for the program. We will keep you updated.

Financial Report – Wendy Lensing:

Total assets of the Iowa Firefighters Association as of May 31, 2014 were \$526, 838.76.

Total assets of the Iowa Firemen's Foundation as of May 31, 2014 were \$53,967.64 with \$43,534.38 being the memorial checking and savings accounts and the remaining \$10,433.26 being the funds in the account for the Smoke Detector Project.

Brad Yeager made a motion to accept the financial report. It was seconded by Bill Halleran. Motion carried.

Officers Reports:

1<sup>st</sup> VP – Brad Yeager:

As you are probably aware of by now Al Muhlhausen chose to resign his position as 5<sup>th</sup> VP on the board. It was just something he decided he wasn't cut out for. He will continue to help out in other ways. We will miss him on the board. That does leave us with 2 openings on the board to be filled at convention. We are still dealing with complaints from a few of our members about our decision to partner with California Casualty Insurance. We put it out there as a benefit for our members. It was not done with the intent to create any type of competition for those members in our association that happen to sell insurance. It is simply an option that members can look at as they offer some unique benefits since they only offer their insurance to groups of firefighters, police, nurses and teachers. They are currently partnered with many of the other states. Also as a benefit to the association they will be giving some money to the association for some of our events and initiatives. Mark and Marv had been at the Benefits Summit where they heard about not only California Casualty but other benefits that the other state associations offer their members. We want to be able to offer our members benefits also when we can. I guess we need to know if you don't want additional benefits from your membership.

Wendy mentioned the software. I was looking at FileMaker Pro and for me I was having some difficulties getting reports to come out the way I wanted them to consistently. I'm sure with more tweaking it could come around and it's capable of what we need it to do but I may not always be available to help with this and seeing some of the other states that are using iMIS software now or switching to it that may be the way to go. Their system would have all of our data stored with no worries of losing it should something happen.

Al did a great job talking to the legislators while we were out in DC. They are familiar with our issues and they recognize our "red coats" when we come in.

Grinnell is well on their way and it should be a great convention.

3<sup>rd</sup> VP – Bill Halleran:

Thanks to Robins Fire for hosting today's meeting. As always, it's nice to visit with other departments and trade stories and knowledge on how they run their operations.

My article in last month's IFA newspaper was cut short after editorial error at probably the worst spot possible. Please re-read it next month. It will make more sense. To go along with Brad's report, I'd like to reiterate that this is not per se a "Yes" governing board. We have great discussions amongst meetings, emails, etc. Votes are not always unanimous.

We had a pretty nasty motorcycle versus semi. For all Officers out there, please be cognizant of firefighters and medics. Follow up with them to make sure they are ok. Offer debriefing. If they decline, follow up with it in a few days.

With warmer weather right around the corner and any structure fires you may have make sure you have an ambulance on scene. Call for mutual aid more often and make sure FF are rehydrating while in rehab. Obtain a baseline set of vitals at one of your meetings or training so you have a starting point.

I attended Past President Dick Bowers funeral in Montezuma along with 5th Vice Marv Trimble and President Al Esch. It was a very nice turnout with neighboring fire departments and firefighters from the area.

As Wendy mentioned we are still looking for volunteers at Hall of Flame at state fair.

Convention is right around the corner. As an FYI, I've read that the trap shoot that is new this year may need to be cancelled if sign-ups do not increase.

Looking forward to another nice firefighter memorial, starting with candlelight vigil tonight and ceremony tomorrow.

4<sup>th</sup> VP Marv Trimble:

Since our last meeting I went to Gilman and handed out an award for a retiring firefighter there. They are helping Grinnell at convention. They are going to be supplying one of the meals as a fundraiser for their department.

As Bill mentioned we attended the memorial service for Past President Dick Bowers. I was very impressed. He was President 1959 – 1960. He was still active and attended conventions and meetings whenever he could.

Also with what Brad and Bill said, when we are out talking to departments or if a member sends us an e-mail about something we bring that back and discuss it as a board. Everyone needs to realize, we don't know what you want, or don't want, unless you tell us. If there is something that you are thinking is a good idea or something your department is doing that is a good idea, let us know.

We have had some complaints on the California Casualty partnership, but we don't get calls from people that don't care or are happy about things we do. Even if we had 20 complaints on something, out of over 15,000 that is a pretty small percentage. Out of 5 insurance agents that are firefighters that I am close to none have complained to me about it.

President Al Esch presented Brad Ransford of the Robins Fire Department with an IFA banner in appreciation of the department's hospitality for hosting the meeting.

President Al Esch:

While out in DC we did attend the CFSI dinner. We saw some people there we knew including Randy Novak and also Bob Platz was there for NVFC. We also saw several of the other folks we've met through the years associated with the NVFC. It was very interesting to hear from those at the national level on some of the issues. It was very inspirational and a beneficial event to attend. We met with our legislators and the benefit of those meetings we probably won't know for a while. One of the things we discussed was the continuation of the AFG and SAFER grants. We've been a huge advocate for those as many departments wouldn't have the required equipment without those grants. While waiting for some of our meetings we also had the opportunity to visit with others that were out there including a group from the Department of Transportation and the governor's liaison that was with them and we had the opportunity to speak with him briefly about the possibility for a training facility and seeing if there would be any interest in that from the federal side.

I left DC on Friday to attend the Dubuque County Emergency Regional Training Facility's annual fundraiser that evening otherwise I would have stayed for some of the NVFC meetings and dinners. If you have the opportunity to stay for that in the future I encourage you to do so to network and hear from other states as well as others at the national level.

While we were in DC we received the bad news about Past President Ellen Hagen and her husband Bob's welding business in Jewell burning. That set in motion a couple of things....one being outreach to her to see if there was anything we could do for them and the second being trying to figure out a way to get things taken care of for the fire prevention poster program luncheon that weekend in Sigourney. Ellen plays a big part in that and she had the posters with her for the weekend. We didn't want her to have to worry about being there with everything else she had to take care of at her business. As luck would have it Past President Dave Zimple was visiting Ellen at the time and he brought the posters with him back to North Liberty and met me at the airport in Cedar Rapids to hand them off.

Also while we were out there the legislative session back here in Iowa came to a close. The bills that were sent to the Governor included the budget, also one time spending appropriations and the tax credit. The tax credit received his signature and I was on hand for that as well as Past President Roger Bissen. Unfortunately the one time spending was vetoed. We will start right away to work on our

priorities for next year and get the process started. Input from you on what you want and what you need is crucial.

As a reminder the PAC is still there and contributions are welcomed.

Marv mentioned Dick Bowers' memorial service. I was very impressed with the procession through town. I talked to quite a few members of the fire department and his family afterwards.

I also attended a service for Bob Downs who lost his battle with cancer. Bob was one of the original board members for CITA Fire School.

Al read a thank you note he received from Bob's family expressing their appreciation and gratitude to everyone for their thoughts and prayers and the representation at the services.

During the time we were in DC we received the notification from Al Muhlhausen of his resignation from the board. He didn't make the decision lightly. He will be missed on the board.

I also have heard from some local insurance agents that have not been happy with the decision to partner with California Casualty. We felt this was a good benefit we could offer to our membership for those that wish to look at it as an option.

We have also been approached by some auto dealerships wishing to have endorsements or partnerships with IFA members. We are not going to be pursuing this.

### **Committee Reports:**

#### **NVFC – Delegate Bob Platz:**

I also attended the CFSI dinner while out in DC this year since I've been appointed to the legislative committee for NVFC.

The National Benefits Summit has been being held in conjunction with the NVFC fall conference. The national sponsors did not want to give to both entities and it was quite expensive for NVFC. It has been cancelled for this year in Lafayette, LA.

In reading grants it seems that the number of applicants has gone down, think some have given up after being turned down. There were also micro-grants out there last year that weren't very well publicized but were \$25,000 federal grants that were available for high priority items.

Bob distributed an e-mail to the board that he had received from NVFC regarding physicals and mandatory age/retirement in the volunteer fire service. He would like the board to review the e-mail and provide input back to NVFC by June 20<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Memorial –**

Wendy passed along information from Mike Reuman that if anyone is available following the meeting they can use help setting things up in Coralville for tonight. Prior to the candlelight service tonight they can use help getting ready anytime after 8 p.m. and tomorrow morning they can use help anytime after 8 a.m. They can use help with tearing down and putting everything away following the service tomorrow.

### **Guests:**

#### **Fire Marshal – Jeff Quigle:**

The SFM Division currently has 20 fire deaths reported for 2014 to date. This is a sharp increase over the same time period in 2013 with only 9 reported fire deaths. Ten out of the 20 reported fire deaths occurred in residential home fires. Only two of the residential homes had working smoke detectors. Four out of the 20 reported fire deaths occurred in manufactured homes. Only one manufactured home had working smoke detectors. Three out of the 20 reported fire deaths occurred outside. One out of the 20 fire deaths occurred in an apartment that had smoke detectors; however, it is unknown if they were

working. One out of the 20 reported deaths occurred in a duplex that had smoke detectors; however, it is unknown if they were working. One out of the 20 reported fire deaths occurred in a garage.

The State Fire Marshal Division is continuing our partnership with the Iowa Fire Fighters Association and the American Red Cross to address smoke detector installation programs throughout the state. The American Red Cross conducted a smoke detector installation program in Newton last month and has an upcoming smoke detector installation program in Arlington this month. We are in the process of identifying communities that we would like to target for future smoke detector installation programs.

Bureau Chief Randy Novak completed an (AFG-FPS) Assistance to Firefighter Grant/Fire Prevention and Safety to continue to purchase smoke detectors for installation throughout the state. The application period has closed and we are waiting to see if our grant will be awarded. If the grant is not awarded we currently have enough money in the account to purchase approximately 400 smoke detectors for distribution.

We are currently working towards replacing one vacant funded fire inspector position. All paperwork has been submitted and we are waiting on approvals. Our intention is to create an inspection territory in the North east area of the state. The Eastern side of the state is currently lean on the total number of inspectors and has a large number of inspections to be completed annually. This will help cut down on travel time to inspections and create a more efficient and fiscally responsible process. Our fire and building inspectors have currently conducted 630 health care inspections during 2014 to date and 1223 state inspections have been conducted to date.

The Arson and Explosives Bureau has been very busy with fire investigations and explosive disposal work this year. As of today's date SFM Agents have worked 21 Accidental, 30 Arson, and 30 Undetermined Fires. SFM Bomb Techs have safely completed 28 Explosive Disposals. SFM K-9's have responded to 21 requests for service. The Bureau is currently working with the Department of Administrative Services for the bidding process to purchase a 3<sup>rd</sup> Sprinter Bomb and Explosive Response Vehicle for Eastern Iowa. The bidding process closes on June 25, 2014.

The State Building Code Bureau will be conducting interviews next week for the open Building Code Inspector position in Western Iowa. The Building Code Inspector vacancy occurred due to the retirement of Bill Lloyd in March 2014. Dan Wood is currently the Acting State Building Code Commissioner. I am optimistic that if our budget is favorable that we can fill the vacant State Building Code Commissioner position in the upcoming 2015 fiscal year.

The Electrical Licensing and Inspection Bureau has just completed the 3 year electrician licensing cycle. This Bureau is only funded by the licensing and permitting fees that are collected. We were able to fill a vacant clerk specialist position in which our new staff member started Friday, June 6, 2014. We have completed 5,448 electrical inspections since January 1, 2014. We have issued 15,407 electrical licenses since October 2013.

One project I am working on is to revitalize the Governor's Awards for Arson Investigator of the Year and the Fire Prevention Officer of the Year. There will be more information forthcoming.

I will be attending the National Association of State Fire Marshals Annual Conference at St. Petersburg, Florida next month. This is a great opportunity to network with other State Fire Marshals and discuss issues at the national level.

Through watching our spending and implementing good budget practices the State Fire Marshal Division budget situation has greatly improved. We continue to look for new ways to save money and be fiscally responsible in the operation of our Division.

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

The Bureau is currently at 9 FTE. When the Bureau was created (authority transferred from ISU to DPS) in 2000, we had 12 FTE's. We also have 4 part-time staff in the central office (2 specialists and 2 students), and over 300 field instructors.

The Bureau will be level funded for FY15. The Volunteer Firefighter Training Fund will receive an increase of \$100,000, to \$825,520 for FY15. Funding will continue in the Firefighter Preparedness Fund (income Tax Check-Off) and the Paul Ryan Memorial Fund (fee on vehicle FF tags).

The one-time appropriation for the Bureau (\$450,000 to purchase new mobile training units) was vetoed by the Governor.

The Bureau has applied for the following federal grants:

- FSTB recently applied for our National Fire Academy "State Training Support Grant" for \$20,000 for federal FY 15 (October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015). This will be used to support the delivery of NFA Approved Courses (Instructor I & II, Fire Officer I & II) and NFA 2-Day Courses.
- FSTB has applied for an AFG grant for a new mobile live fire trailer (\$350,000).
- FSTB has applied for two AFG-FP&S grants: A \$200,000 (through IFA) on behalf of the SFM for smoke alarms, and a \$20,000 on behalf of the SFM for the Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program.

New Courses that will be coming this fall:

- VFIS: Highway Safety for Emergency Responders (6 hours)
- FHWA: National Traffic Incident Management Responder Training Program (4 hours)

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) the following courses:

- Courage to Be Safe ® (CTBS)
- Leadership, Accountability, Culture, and Knowledge (LACK)
- Leadership so Everyone Goes Home (LEGH)

Both the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) and the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (ProBoard) now accredit the Bureau to 12 levels. We are preparing for our "re-accreditation" visits from both later in the fall.

We are also using Pearson VUE "testing centers" for written certification testing (as an option for our students).

Upcoming events (check our website: [www.dps.state.ia.us/fm/fstb](http://www.dps.state.ia.us/fm/fstb) )

- FSTB Programs (2014)
  - Live Fire Skills, October 11 at FSTB
  - Hazardous Materials Symposium, October 23-24 at Ames
  - Fire Service Instructors Conference, November 14-15 at Ames

- Announcement for various open enrollment classes will be mailed to Iowa fire departments throughout the year.
- National Fire Academy (NFA) Courses:
  - Leadership II: Strategies for Personal Success, September 13-14 at FSTB
  - Leadership III: Strategies for Supervisory Success, December 6-7 at FSTB

NFIRS: see the State Fire Marshal's website (at [www.dps.state.ia.us/fm](http://www.dps.state.ia.us/fm)) for updated information. The Bureau is currently managing the Iowa NFIRS.

Check our website for new information: [www.dps.state.ia.us/fm/fstb](http://www.dps.state.ia.us/fm/fstb) .You can now sign up for an automatic e-mail notification when something has been added.

**Kent Larsen – Armed Forces Benefit Association:**

Kent gave a presentation on the Armed Forces Benefit Association. It was started in 1947 under the direction of General Dwight Eisenhower in the Pentagon. It is a non-profit which removes the profit incentive from having influence with claims and payments. It was created on the heels of two world wars to ensure coverage for military personnel. Organization was taken over by General Eberhart, Four Star General and NORAD Commander following the 9/11 tragedy. For-profit insurance companies denied over 50% of the life claims made by the 343 fire service victims post 9/11 because of exclusions in policies. Some of the exclusions that affect the Fire Service are "In the Line of Duty", "Hazardous Duty", "Occupational Restrictions", "Acts of Terror" and "Acts of War". General Eberhart and the AFBA board of directors made the push to make their military life insurance available to Fire/Rescue & Law Enforcement.

They have a \$5000 no cost, exclusion-free, 1 year policy renewed annually (age 18 -60); emergency death benefit payment within 24 hours of notice; coverage on and off duty; no occupation restrictions; no war or terrorism exclusions; \$40K family survivor college scholarship for LODD; optional spouse and child coverage. They have group level term life and whole life insurance policies available.

Kent can come and visit with your department about this program and give a short presentation. You can call him at 319-322-8334 or email [klarsen@afba.us](mailto:klarsen@afba.us) . There are many fire and law enforcement departments in Iowa that currently enrolled in this coverage.

**New Business:**

President Al Esch: After learning so much about the involvement of Past President Dick Bowers in the area of fire prevention President Esch would like to consider for the future naming the poster program in his honor.

**Meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Wendy Lensing,  
Executive Director**

