

MINUTES

Nevada State Board of Fire Services

February 8, 2023

9:30 a.m.

Location:

Nevada State Fire Marshal Division

107 Jacobsen Way, Classroom C, Carson City, NV 89711

Board Members Present:

Kelli Baratti
Mark Briant
Stephen DiGiovanni
Mike Dzyak
Thomas McCleister
Nicholas Moriarty
Dale Way

Board Members Not Present:

Kacey KC
William Snyder, Jr.

Others Present:

Mike Heidemann
Dennis Pinkerton
Nathan Hastings
Rich Harvey
Jared Dooley
Alex Haffner
Joe Rodriguez
Rich McKnight
Sean Stratton
Tom Martinez
Nicole Hoekstra

1. **CALL TO ORDER BY THE CHAIR** (Non-Action Item.)
The meeting was called to order at 9:34 a.m. by Kelli Baratti.
2. **VERIFICATION OF NOTICE OF COMPLIANCE WITH OPEN MEETING LAW**
(Non-Action Item.)
Nicole Hoekstra confirmed compliance with the Open Meeting Law
3. **ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS; verification of quorum** (Non-Action Item.)
Nicole Hoekstra called roll. Seven (7) board members were present. A quorum was established.

4. **PUBLIC COMMENT** (Non-Action Item.)

There were no public comments.

5. **APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 27, 2022 MEETING MINUTES** (Discussion/For Possible Action.)

Stephen DiGiovanni made a motion to approve the minutes and Dale Way seconded. Motion carried.

6. **STATE FIRE MARSHAL ADVISORY REPORT - CHIEF MIKE DZYAK** (Non-action item)

Mike Dzyak stated he had really good news as the Division goes through our budget process. We have asked for two Las Vegas fire inspectors, an Administrative Assistant III for plans, and a canine for Las Vegas that was included in the Governor's Recommended Budget (Gov Rec). The Las Vegas inspector positions were not initially approved but after some consideration in the Governor's office, we were told to place that in as a budget amendment, so I'm confident in those items. With those, we are projected by the Governor's Finance Office to have at least 1.4 million in reserve at the end of our first fiscal year and 2 million in reserve at the end of our second fiscal year. What does this mean to the Division is staffing? It means the additional accelerant canine in Las Vegas is huge for this budget cycle, but this also allows us to move forward with NPD-19's to say, what do we need more of? We need plan reviews because we want to turn those plans around in a more timely manner and get construction going, keep businesses going, more inspectors.

We also need to watch - I understand this is like a big surplus for us, but I need to make sure our infrastructure supports us. So I don't want to exclude administrative staff and things like that. I won't bore you guys with all of the rumors and speculations after the State of the State, with employee raises and law enforcement raises that would affect us. They're all out there, public knowledge, and I don't know what's going to happen with those. No one does, but it should be a very interesting legislative session.

We did receive some Executive Orders from the Governor's office, right out of the gate. One of them is to review regulations. Any agency that has is of a regulatory nature, such as State Fire Marshal, has to go back and review them. They have to pick ten regulations that could be removed. We simply don't have that in the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC), so we went to the Department. It is the Director's office's opinion that the order is Department wide, so we would all do that.

We are still going to look at ours to see if there are something that maybe we used to do or we had a reason for that we don't anymore, and if we can offer that up we're fine, but he has a Public Safety exemption in there, but we're not sure. It is kind of vague, so we're not really sure what that means and we're not just going to go run up the hill and start throwing things out. But we will obviously comply with that. The fact that it comes during the budget cycle is brutal for staff, but it is what it is.

On fires, since we met last, we've had two fatals, four incendiary arson fires with four arrests, and an explosion. So the guys have been very busy and I am pleased to

say we have been putting bad guys in prison. So, we are getting the convictions. We're getting a lot of confessions. The investigators are really doing a great job. I am really confident that once we have the accelerant canine up and running and online, probably around May, up here in the north, that that's going to increase because our dog is not only going to be picking up on accelerants and giving us good lab returns on our incendiary fires, but it will also be able to hit on fireworks, mosquito coils, brake fluid, chlorine, and all the little delay devices that the wildland guys like to use to start those fires. So hopefully, we're not four or five fires into it before we realize we have a guy out there torching stuff. And I wanted to, but I'm not going to steal Dennis' thunder, so I'm not going to talk about our new live fire deal.

Kelli Baratti asked if there were questions or comments on Chief Dzyak's report here in Carson City or from the board members on the phone. There were none.

7. STATE FIRE MARSHAL DIVISION TRAINING ADVISORY REPORT - DENNIS PINKERTON (Non-action item)

Dennis Pinkerton stated he had a few stats he'd like to present to the Board. First of all, we're doing a lot of certification testing and actually certifying. Since September, we had 881 written tests we sent out and 674 skills tests. Just a little brief note about. I want to give you an idea of what the success rate is. Like Hazmat Awareness, we had 87 tests, 82 passed and 5 failed. Our Fire Service Instructor 2 testing with 60 tests, 51 passed, 9 failed. So that's a pretty good rate of pass/fail.

Like the Chief said, we received our live fire training trailer in November/December. We got the tractor earlier than the trailer. We had a 2-day training with our adjunct instructors. We're going to have another training with more adjuncts to roll this thing out in the spring. And we're really excited about that. It's one of those things that we've been wanting to do for several years but the funding has come through and we're going to roll it out. We already have a partial schedule out, so we're going to get the others scheduled for the remainder of the year. The SAFER grant was approved, and that's the grant that was to support volunteers and combination departments through purchase or help purchasing protective clothing and our medical evaluations. Also it pays for the AD&D insurance policy for - Mike, is it 1,000 volunteers?

Mike Heidemann stated he had 1,000 NSFA active members.

Dennis Pinkerton stated they had an investigation training using our investigation trailer down in Clark County. We had 21 students attend that training. It's a weeklong training, over 40 hours, and 21 students participated and 21 students were tested and passed the course. We also had a Hazmat Technician class in Reno. And all those students - 25 students were tested and passed. That was directly from our budget. We have a contractor that does a 160-hour Hazmat Technician class and it's four weeks long, two weeks a breakable week, and then another two weeks. And it was highly successful. We also did a Hazmat program in conjunction with the Fire Shows West Conference. And that was very successful.

I also want to mention that JoAnne Hill, a longtime supporter of the Nevada Fire Service, has retired from the Fire Shows West, and I'm going to personally send her a note because she's done so much for the State fire training. It's just amazing.

We're also getting more people or more agencies to participate in our services. We've gotten calls from agencies we've never heard from in years, and one is Valmy and we're going to be sending some support up there for training and testing and certification, so that's good stuff. Since September, we've had ten courses that we put on here at the State Fire Marshal Division, and those were very successful. I have a list for people who want to see that. And then we're also performing a Hazardous Materials Awareness and Operations and Firefighter 1 program in Winnemucca. We'll be testing them pretty soon. And I think that's about it.

Mike Dzyak stated he had a comment because he was allowed to comment on the Investigative Bureau. I'm really proud of Dennis and his staff and the job that they're doing out there in bringing these massive pieces of equipment in here, their ability to be able to hook up a tractor trailer and bring it to Las Vegas and put this training on. I haven't got to see the Draeger, the new live fire action yet because I was out working or something or on my honeymoon or something when they did. But anyway, it's allegedly spectacular and I am very excited to have a safe environment for us to do that kind of training and the level of the professionalism and the certifications that they're doing is just topnotch. I'm very proud of them.

Dennis Pinkerton thanked him.

Kelli Baratti asked if there were plans to take these trailers to the Nevada State Firefighter's Association (NSFA) Conference in June.

Dennis Pinkerton stated there is. The live fire trailer will definitely be there in June, and we have a maze confined space that we're also going to present.

Kelli Baratti asked if there were any comments or questions from the Board Members in Carson City or from the Board Members on the phone. There were none.

8. NEVADA STATE FIREFIGHTER'S ASSOCIATION ADVISORY REPORT (Non-action item)

Mike Heidemann stated it had been kind of busy over the last few months. Again, talking about our conference in June. Get those dates out, June 21st through 24th. Typically, your Board has met at our conference in the past, so that's an information piece only. I have worked out the details of the live fire props. Also, we're going to have a very robust training this year, including a lot of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) as we bring our EMS partners into the Association. They really have been looking for a place to be and we think we're a good fit for them. Busy with Fire Shows West. We support Fire Shows West with the people on the ground and people helping out that Board. Busy with that. Looking forward to rolling out the SAFER grant to all of the volunteers, to have a program in place that meets all of their needs and does some things that Dennis and I have had several conversations on.

I'll be working with Nevada Pack who insures most of the rural department cities, counties, and districts on a fire excellence program. And basically what they're doing is looking at a lot of bullet points to go out and they ensure things like are we doing background checks? Are our training and physicals meeting NFPA or State requirements? Do we have social media policies? And there's 42 different bullet points. And what that's going to do for the Fire Service and for the entities, if they're meeting these bullet points and setting that standard, they will see a reduction and their premium, and those that don't will be increases in their premiums and see what they can do to step into that standard. So with the goal of having more really consistent across the state, well-trained, universally trained volunteer fire departments in particular but this is going to affect other departments also, you know, protect the public, entities, the elected officials and responders. So I'm really looking forward to that program.

We're also looking at the legislation, just following right now. We don't have any Bill Draft Requests (BDRs) presented yet. We're looking at workers comp, so if workers comp opens up, we have an amendment to that in place to increase workers comp for the volunteers. We're going to kind of watch that for a while.

I've been approached by several mine rescue teams that actually joined the Association. A couple came to our conference last year. A few are planning on coming this year and looking at how we can work with them on some training and certification for the mine rescues. They provide mutual aid to departments in the rural areas. Those are the highlights from NSFA at this point other than you have a position for a Chief Officer and the combination of Volunteer Fire Department. I have a name that is very interested. I think he would bring a lot to your table. Very well educated and runs a topnotch fire department and that's Jared Dooley from Fallon and Churchill Fire. So anything we can do to help move that along, if he needs to fill out, would be great, and I do believe he is on the phone call. End of my report. Thank you.

Kelli Baratti asked if there were any questions or comments for Mike from the Board Members in Carson or from the Board Members on the phone. There were none.

- 9. NEVADA FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION ADVISORY REPORT (Non-action item)**

Rich Harvey stated the mission of the Nevada Fire Chiefs Association is to "Promote and Support the Fire Service of Nevada". We are active at the State level. It's not really a membership, but the Northern Nevada Fire Chiefs Association and the Southern Nevada Fire Chiefs Association kind of talked to us a lot. We're the Nevada Fire Chiefs Association at that level. We're affiliated with the Western Fire Chiefs Association as representatives of Nevada on that Board, and through them to the International Association of Fire Chiefs. So we have roots all the way down to the local government level all the way up to Congress on the Hill. And our support of the fire service takes many forms. One we're hugely proud of is the Ground Emergency Medical Transportation, GMET. The Nevada Fire Chiefs Association worked with the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services Division of Healthcare, Financing, and Policy during the 2015 Legislative session to implement GMET in Nevada. It's been hugely beneficial to the fire-based EMS programs that provide

ambulance services to some 85 percent of all Nevadans. We continue to keep an eye on GMET, most recently arguing unsuccessfully with CMS about depreciation of firetrucks that are used to provide first response on EMS call. We believe that that should count. They have paramedics on and they have life support equipment and they contribute to patient care. CMS disagrees because it says Fire. So, you don't transport and the fire truck don't count, but we'll continue to fight for the fire service on issues like that.

Nevada Fire Chiefs also sponsored and helped get passed in 2019 Senate Bill 329, aka the Nevada NV Energy Natural Disaster Plan, aka the Wildland Program. Senate Bill 329 opened the door for a partnership between NV Energy and local government fire departments and districts. Literally, millions of dollars in fuel reduction projects and the development of fuel reduction infrastructure, including chippers, masticators, brush trucks and crazy cool stuff like spiders and greatly enhanced the initial attack and fire suppression response. Somewhere around 100 firefighters and 12 additional firetrucks, 3 crews are all made response available for initial attack response in mostly Northern Nevada through that program, but we got roots in Lincoln County and up on Mount Charleston too. So that program still in effect. It's going on year 3. Everybody's redoing their contracts with NV Energy and we continue to be the leaders in trying to make that happen for Nevada. It's a great program.

This year, the Nevada Chiefs are supporting legislation to improve delivery of Emergency Medical Services in Nevada. Our bill draft number 859 is based on the "white paper on the State of EMS challenges and opportunities within the State of Nevada", written by such luminaries as Chief Dave Fogerson, Chief Mike Brown, Chief Dennis Nolan, and Chief Darryl Cleveland, among others. And we're hoping that that starts to provide a basis towards improving the delivery of EMS in the State of Nevada. And like I said earlier, about 85 percent of that EMS comes from fire-based EMS folks. So, we're hopeful to get that passed. We have strong support and we're working on it.

We're also engaged and supportive of initiatives such as the Nevada Personal Lines Property Insurance Wildfire Mitigation Incentive Program. Basically, working with insurance companies and fire agencies to ensure that if you do defensible space work on your house, that you get reduced insurance cost commensurate with the work that you do. It's also designed to help make sure that homeowners are able to get insurance if they follow certain rules to create defensible space. It's more of a problem in California than it is in Nevada right now, but there are places in Nevada, aka Virginia Highlands in Storey County where homeowners are struggling to get insurance. Nevada Fire Chiefs working with Western, Frank Frievalt is their insurance expert there, are trying to make sure that that insurance is available to those homeowners at a reasonable cost. Available first, reasonable cost second, and ability to mitigate it down the road third. So it may be a mouthful of a program, but we think it's usually beneficial.

We also sponsor and host Fire Officer 3 and 4 courses, alternating North and South. Most recently, November 2022 in Las Vegas we sponsored. There's about 18 in the

Fire Officer 3 course and about 12 to 14 in the Fire Officer 4 course. That was pretty good. It will be up here. Dates unsure next, but we'll move it up North.

Our annual conference is March 27th at the Peppermill in Reno. It's in conjunction with the I-Chiefs WUI Conference and you have to see it. Special thanks to our sponsors, FireRescue GPO/Sourcewell, Siddons Martin, NVEnergy, Alchemy Analytics, ESO and First Net. Our officers for 2023, Dave Cochran, Reno Fire, President; Kelly Blackmon, Clark County Fire; Sean Slamon, Carson City Fire; Travis Anderson, North Las Vegas Fire; Matt Peterson, Elko County Fire; and Rich Harvey, Central Lyon County Fire. We are currently recruiting for our Executive Director position and hope to have an answer after lunch today. Nevada Fire Chiefs Association is appreciative of the opportunity to appear before the Board of Fire Services. Thank you for your efforts on behalf of Nevada's firefighters. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

Kelli Baratti asked if they could get a copy of his notes and Dennis's list of classes. It will just make doing the minutes for Connie much easier and it will make it more comprehensive. She asked if there were any questions or comments for Chief Harvey from the Board here in the North?

Pete Briant stated he knew they are seeing in the Reno area some of the insurance issues to like you mention Virginia City Highlands, some of the areas where the Pinehaven and Collin fires were some of the homeowners there are starting to feel the pinch on the insurance situation too. So that's spreading. It's definitely here.

Kelli Baratti asked if there were any comments or questions from those on the phone.

Mike Heidemann asked Rich if his website has been changed, moved or new address? I don't seem to be able to find it.

Rich Harvey stated all of the above. Nevada Fire Chiefs is going through a little bit of a transition phase. Between Covid and everything else, we kind of got knocked around for a little bit and our long-time Executive Director, Ken Riddle retired. At the time of that, the website was fairly neglected for quite a period of time and when I kind of played Acting Executive Director and tried to send out an email list to announce our conference, about 80 percent of that email list bounced back. That website is completely obsolete, so we took it down. We are working currently with R&R Partners. Mike Brown's - I guess you would call it lobbying firm, and they're going to donate a new website to Nevada Fire Chiefs Association and we hope to have up and running by the end of the month. So yeah, it's down. If you need something from us, reach out to me direct, Mike, and we'll make sure it happens.

Mike Heidemann stated he would be looking forward to seeing the new site and thanked him.

Kelli Baratti asked if any other folks on the phone had any questions or comments. There were none.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT (Non-action Item)

There were no public comments.

11. ADJOURNMENT (Discussion/For Possible Action.)

Kelli Baratti adjourned the meeting at 10:03 a.m.