

WYOMING FIRE CHIEFS' ASSOCIATION

MEETING MINUTES

FRIDAY JANUARY 5, 2024

WYOMING FIRE ACADEMY – RIVERTON, WYOMING

Call to order by President Quinney at 12:30 PM, with 41 members present. Dennis McDonald led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motions – all motions made and seconded were unanimously passed.

Minutes of previous meeting: The meeting minutes of the Wyoming Fire Chiefs' Association meeting held November 30, 2023, in Casper were approved as emailed to the membership. Motion by Brent Godfrey, seconded by James Curren.

Treasurer's Report – Gene Diedtrich reported on the Statement of Cash for the period November 1, 2023, through November 30, 2023. There was beginning Cash balance of \$43,796, deposits of \$23,331, disbursements of \$15,772, leaving an ending balance of \$51,255, with a cash restriction for the LAST checking account of \$18,807, leaving an unrestricted cash balance of \$32,448. Motion by Jerry Munger, seconded by Chris Kocher.

Association Bills – Gene Diedtrich noted he had 3 items to bring up, Motion by Brent Godfrey seconded by Donny Munger to approve spending \$4,500 for legislation acquisition this year, this amount is matched by the WSFA and the Wyoming State Rural Fire Association. Motion by Bob Glasson seconded by Chris Kocher to approve spending \$250 for ½ of the annual National Volunteer Fire Council dues, the other ½ is paid by the WSFA. Lastly motion by Lanny Applegate seconded by Shad Cooper approving the WFCFA annual dues for 2024 of \$100 for the Chief and \$30 for additional members, this is the same amount for dues as last year.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Safer Grants – Gene Diedtrich reported that the WFCFA currently has two active SAFER grants offered through FEMA. The 2019 grant has a remaining balance of \$242K and is set to expire on November 21, 2024. The 2021 grant has a remaining balance of \$740K and expires November 19, 2026. The grants provide reimbursement for qualified training, college tuition/books and one-time physicals for volunteers in the Fire Service. President Quinney spoke on the need for anyone expecting to utilize the grant, to send Gene an email or contact him before the training, college course or physicals begin so, approval can be given, because if it's for something you want to attend, it might not be covered by the grant.

Missouri Valley Division, IAFC – Jim Wamsley reported that the 2024 conference will be held in Fort Collins, Colorado on June 5-7. The division has available a free scholarship for one member from each state to attend the conference. If you are interested, contact Jim Wamsley. There is another scholarship available for a up and coming female chief, use the same contacts if you are interested in obtaining one of the scholarships. He asked all to visit the website and obtain the newsletter. He stated that the Division is in the process of entering into an agreement to have an application (app) and making it available for all the Fire Service with info about the Missouri Valley Division. President Quinney reported that Fire Chief Haslam had retired from the Fremont County Fire District he will remain as the Wyoming representative to the division until his present term expires March 31, 2024. The position is a 3-year term and will be filled at the April 6, 2024, WFCFA annual meeting and officer elections, if you are interest, you must be a Chief of your department to qualify for the position. Craig had sent a memo to President Quinney stating that the División is looking for a host for it's 2026 annual conference.

IAFC VCOS – JR Fox reported and encouraged those members that are members of the IAFC to pay the additional \$25 to be a member of VCOS. Jason Caughey reported there is a gold ribbon report coming out on Data and the Amber Ribbon report coming out on Service Dogs. The annual symposium in the Sun at Clearwater, Florida was recently held, he reported that there is one annual scholarship available per state on an annual basis, for this symposium, apply for Scholarship on the VCOS website. Jim Wamsley encouraged membership in the IAFC, valuable resources are available for members on the IAFC Website.

National Volunteer Fire Council – Eric Quinney reported that he and Larry Erdmann from Green River are the Wyoming directors on the Council. The fall meeting was held in Cooperstown, New York. Wyoming has a total of 450 members in the NVFC, at one point there were seven hundred members. If we could reach the 500-member threshold again the annual dues to NVFC would be waived. Eric indicated that he would be glad to work with anyone to get signed up to the council, either by coming to your department or possibly having a zoom meeting. There are lots of online resources available on the website. The council works with the other Fire groups, keeping the volunteers in mind. Resources are available on the website for Mental Health issues, Recruiting and Retention and various other information. Eric plans on attending the spring meeting at the end of April in D.C.

National Fire Protection Association – Nick Hudson reported that the new website is up and running, it is having some newbie issues, so be patient.

Wyoming Fire Fighter Memorial – Dan Johnson reported that this year's Hall of Fame Ceremony and Firefighter Memorial will be held on August 17, 2024, at the Wyoming Fire Academy in Riverton.

Wyo-Link Update – President Quinney received a report from Committee Chair Mark Harshman, that the 16 Tower Buildout that was mentioned at the last meeting has been completed.

Special District Association Update – President Quinney reported for Craig Haslam that the training requirement for board members of all special districts has been approved by the Wyoming Department of Audit. The training requirement must be completed by July 1, 2024, for every person a member of a Special District Board. You can access the website by going to the Wyoming Department of Audit and clicking Wyoming Special Districts. He recommends doing the training as a group function consisting of each district's board. In person training meetings are scheduled for Gillette on February 15th, Rawlins on April 25th, Pinedale on June 6th, and a training in Torrington later this month. Training can also be done on the website. Contact Craig with your questions and training.

Wyoming Council on Fire prevention and Electrical Safety – Dan Johnson reported that the council adopted the minimum fire standards, rules, and regulations, which do not exceed other authorities. The council consists of five members appointed by the Governor. The council has heard no appeals over the last quarter, nor are there any pending. The council has scheduled February 6, 2024, to begin the discussion and process of adopting the 2024 ISO codes.

WFCA Residential Sprinkler Committee – Nick Hudson reported that there is a very active group, contact him if you are interested and contact him and you will be put on the invitation list. There are National representatives attending the meeting every month. The group has a side-by-side residential sprinkler trailer, it has traveled to a lot of Wyoming communities. The trailer is available to all communities, there is a link on the WSFM website to schedule the trailer. Great resource. Reach out if you have questions.

Wyoming Association of Fire Marshal's – Nick Hudson reported that this group is the Fire base code group in the State of Wyoming. Have approximately thirty-five members in the state. Next conference of community risk reduction will be held on April 10-12, 2024, at the Casper Ramada Inn and will offer 16 hours of training and networking, different topics are to be covered at the conference, he noted the conference is not limited to code

officials only, information on the conference will be coming out around February 15, 2024. Membership in the group is cheap and the networking is great.

Industrial Fire Chiefs' – Jim Wamsley relayed an update from Ryan Wells, that the group is restructuring, recruiting and the industry partners that may want to join, should send him an email. He is planning a second quarter meeting to get the Section back on track and align some new goals. The Foam problem was brought up, it was mentioned that the group was working on that problem, and hopefully would tackle it as one of their first projects.

Legislature Committee – Shad Cooper reported the committee met, went over many bills, and recommends to the Association to support them in the upcoming legislature session. Motion by Brent Godfrey, seconded by Donny Munger to endorse the committee's recommendation. Shad encourages the members to help by going to Cheyenne and help with the lobbying process, and to obtain copies of the bills and go over them with your local legislators. Shad and the committee did such a great job, I'm enclosing their talking points and recommendations herein for your use in your lobbying effort.

The 2024 Legislative Budget Session is starting soon (February 12 – March 8, 2024). As such, we are getting everything ready at Fire Camp to support our legislative efforts. If you are unfamiliar, Fire Camp is a term referring to the joint lobbying effort between the Wyoming Fire Chiefs' Association, the Wyoming Rural Fire Association, and the Wyoming Firefighters' Association. Each year we distribute a calendar asking our membership to sign up and attend the legislative session to lobby on behalf of the Wyoming Fire Service (see attached calendar). If anyone is interested in participating, please contact Shad Cooper (shad.cooper@sublettefire.com) to sign up on the calendar.

Please see the list below of the proposed fire bills for the upcoming session. Because 2024 is a budget year, each proposed bill will require a 2/3 majority vote to be introduced. This means it will be important for our membership to contact each of the legislators within your response jurisdictions and ask for their support to introduce the proposed fire bills and to support the bills as they advance through the legislature. It is important to contact your legislators before the session starts to start the conversation and build a relationship.

We have provided talking points for each of the proposed bills below. These talking points are meant to summarize why the bills are important and to provide consistency in our messaging. Please do not copy/paste and email these talking points to your legislators (nobody likes receiving form letters). Instead, please use these talking points as a general reference when speaking with your legislators so our statewide messaging is consistent. If needed, here are a few links with contact information for your legislators:

Here is a link with contact information for the Wyoming Senators.

<https://wyoleg.gov/Legislators/2024/S>

Here is a link with contact information for the Wyoming Representatives.

<https://wyoleg.gov/Legislators/2024/H>

Here is a map showing each voting district.

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/f086f052f28b4185a785f19344a057be/>

2024 LEGISLATIVE BUDGET SESSION BILLS(<https://wyoleg.gov/Legislation/2024>)

F0003 - State employee leave for volunteer fire or volunteer EMS. (<https://wyoleg.gov/Legislation/2024/SF0003>)

- o Sponsor: Joint Labor, Health & Social Services Interim Committee
- o Position: Vote to Support 11/30/23 & 01/05/24

o Talking Points – This bill provides Wyoming State Employees up to 24 hours leave with pay to serve as volunteer firefighters and volunteer EMTs. This bill is important because it increases the availability of volunteers during daytime response hours. This bill serves as an example of leadership from the State of Wyoming supporting public safety and emergency response for local volunteer fire departments. Ideally, local departments will be able to use this bill as template language so they can also work with their local town and county governments to adopt similar language.

SF0004 - Rehiring retired firefighters-continued retirement benefits. (<https://wyoleg.gov/Legislation/2024/SF0004>)

o Sponsor: Joint Labor, Health & Social Services Interim Committee

o Position: Vote to Support 11/30/23 & 01/05/24

□ Talking Points – This bill allows retired Plan B firefighters to be rehired while continuing to receive retirement benefits. This bill is important because it increases the workforce of available firefighters by allowing firefighters to be rehired after retiring. This bill provides incentive for experienced firefighters to remain in the workforce and continue to provide services.

SF0008 - Health insurance for volunteer emergency responders. (<https://wyoleg.gov/Legislation/2024/SF0008>)

o Sponsor: Joint Labor, Health & Social Services Interim Committee

o Position: Vote to Support 11/30/23 & 01/05/24

o Talking Points -This bill is important because it allows eligibility for volunteer firefighters, volunteer EMTs, and volunteer S&R personnel to participate in the State Employees' Group Health Insurance plan. This bill directly provides a critical recruitment and retention incentive for volunteer firefighters to join fire departments, and to continue to serve with the fire department long-term. It is important to emphasize there is no financial appropriation necessary from the legislature to enact this bill. The costs for the health insurance will be funded completely by the individual firefighters, not the State of Wyoming. Volunteer firefighters will only be eligible to join the health insurance plan 90 days after first joining a fire department, then annually thereafter during the open enrollment period. Volunteer firefighters must attend 50% of monthly volunteer meetings, and 25% of annual calls for service to be eligible to access the health plan. Volunteers also must not already be eligible for other health insurance coverage under a government sponsored health care program.

SF0016 - Military department emergency fire suppression account. (<https://wyoleg.gov/Legislation/2024/SF0016>)

o Sponsor: Joint Transportation, Highways & Military Affairs Interim Committee

o Position: Vote to Support 11/30/23 & 01/05/24

o Talking Points - This bill creates an account for emergency fire suppression costs on all state lands managed by the military department and authorizes the adjutant general to expend money for emergency fire suppression. If this bill is passed, rulemaking will establish billing procedures through Wyoming State Forestry Division using the 537 Account to expedite payments and reimbursements for counties.

SF0039 - Firefighters recruitment film. (<https://wyoleg.gov/Legislation/2024/SF0039>)

o Sponsor: Joint Labor, Health & Social Services Interim Committee

o Position: Vote to Support 11/30/23 & 01/05/24

o Talking Points – This bill authorizes the Wyoming State Fire Marshal's Office and the Department of Workforce Services to produce a film related to the recruitment of firefighters. The bill includes a fiscal appropriation of \$150,000. This bill is important because it provides targeted recruitment advertising specifically intended to reach potential firefighters in Wyoming.

HB0043 - State forestry good neighbor-positions. (<https://wyoleg.gov/Legislation/2024/HB0043>) Sponsor: Select Federal Natural Resource Management Committee

- o **Position: Vote to Support 11/30/23 & 01/05/24**

- o **Talking Points – This bill authorizes Wyoming State Forestry Division to hire additional employees funded through the Good Neighbor Authority Revolving Account. The state forester will have authority to fill no more than four (4) full-time employee positions and six (6) at-will employee contract positions. This is an increase of three (3) additional full-time positions, and two (2) additional AWEC positions from current staffing levels. This bill basically doubles the WSFD’s staffing to increase support for Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) projects. GNA projects frequently address hazardous fuels reduction projects to improve forest health and reduce wildfire risks in Wyoming.**

- o **The Federal Good Neighbor Authority program was authorized by Congress in the 2014 Farm Bill and revised in the 2016, and 2018 Farm Bills. The Authority allows states and counties to partner with the United State Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management to carry out authorized restoration activities on federal lands utilizing the state’s own processes and procedures.**

- o **It would be beneficial to seek an additional \$500,000 appropriation of state funds to support ongoing and future GNA projects and positions.**

(Not Assigned Yet) – Firefighter Cancer Screening Benefits

- o **Sponsor: Representative Landon Brown**

- o **Position: Vote to Support 01/05/24**

- o **Talking Points – This proposed bill will allow volunteer and career firefighters to receive annual cancer screenings provided under Wyoming Workers' Compensation. The proposed bill will likely specify that cancer screening benefits will not be included in the employer’s experience rating, but it may be included in the base rate calculation setting procedures conducted. Additional information will be available on this bill once it has been officially filed.**

Not Assigned Yet) – Regional Emergency Response Teams Funding

- o **Sponsor: Unknown**

- o **Position: Vote to Support 01/05/24**

- **Talking Points – This proposed bill will provide an appropriation to replace existing RERT apparatus and equipment. The existing apparatus and equipment were originally purchased many years ago and needs replacement and upgrades. Additional information will be available on this bill once it has been officially filed.**

(Not Assigned) – Wyoming Dept of Fire Prevention & Electrical Safety - Plan Review & Inspection Fees

- o **Sponsor: Unknown**

- o **Position: Vote to Support 01/05/24**

- o **Talking Points – This proposed bill will seek to adjust the distribution of plan review and inspection fees. Currently the revenue from these fees is distributed equally between the Wyoming State Fire Marshal’s Office and the General Fund. This bill would seek to increase the distribution from these fees to the Wyoming State Fire Marshal’s Office to support their budget necessary to support plan reviews and inspections. Additional information will be available on this bill once it has been officially filed.**

Wyoming Volunteer Pension Board – Tracy Brown reported that there have been 8,955 total participants, 4,524 terminations, 617 deaths and 1,440 retirees, the current membership on September 30, 2023, is 2,364. Total fund balance on September 30, 2023, was \$111 million, monthly benefit payments are \$650 thousand. The next

meeting is scheduled for April 5, 2024, in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Wyoming Fire Chiefs Association on April 6, 2024, at 9 am.

Wyoming Fire Academy Report – Ian Kraft reported that they had another good year. A copy of the annual training report and the 2024 schedule of training courses are attached for your perusal, information on the training courses can be reviewed on the Fire Marshal’s website. Currently the staff is down one training position. The Academy roof overlay is scheduled to start on January 15, 2024. The Academy grounds project is scheduled to go out to bid within the next couple months. Moving all the social media face book pages to one site, that being the Fire Marshal’s face book page. The new Fire Vent training prop is scheduled to be delivered in June of this year.

Wyoming Firefighter’s Certification Committee – Allen Robinson reported that there was a meeting held on January 4, 2024. Bryan Borgialli was elected Committee President and Allen Robinson was elected Vice Chairman. He reported Hazmat certification is now moving forward under the 2022 standards. Technical Rescue is still in the works. Fire Investigator Certifications are moving forward with the changes. Fire Investigator Technician and the CFI (Certified Fire Investigator) will be completed and moving forward for the review process. The CDL, or the entry level Driver Training is progressing forward. The committee discussed holding meetings in conjunction with the 4 Chief’s meetings held annually.

Wyoming State Fireman’s Association – State President and Afton Volunteer Fire Department Chief Cody Wilkes reported that the Afton VFD will be hosting the 91st annual Wyoming State Firemen’s Association convention in Afton on June 13 – 15, 2024. We would like to extend an invitation for all to enjoy the festivities. Every year the Association, in conjunction with the hosting department organizes a benefit raffle to help defray the expenses of the convention and drill team competition. This year the prizes are as follows: first prize Custom Freedom Arms 454 Casull pistol, second prize Henry Firefighter Tribute Edition ,22 S/L/LR, third prize bourbon package (Pappy Van Winkle), fourth prize Weatherby Vanguard 6.5 PRC First Lite Edition and fifth prize is a \$250 gift certificate. Anyone interested in buying tickets or information on the convention can contact Cody via email at cody.wilkes@simplot.com or telephone at 307-884-8207.

Wyoming State Rural Firemen’s Association – Shad Cooper reported that they had a very successful meeting at the last meeting held at the Ram Kota Inn in Casper. The had 154 attendees. The rural fire meeting will be held this year on December 4-6, 2024, at the Best Western (formerly Park Plaza) in Casper. Uinta County will be the host department for the event.

L.A.S.T. Update – Dan Johnson reported that one member was placed on the Firefighter’s Memorial wall from 2022, Bruce Lang with the Pine Haven Fire Department passed away in December of last year during an ice rescue operation. A big thank you to Game and Fish Commissioner Rusty Bell for his generous donation of a commissioner tag that was auctioned by the Wyoming Sheep Foundation. LAST will recognize and publicly thank Commissioner Bell at the Game and Fish Commission meeting in January of 2024. Any member of the Wyoming Fire Service that has contact with a Game and Fish Commissioner, and can help set up a meeting, the LAST would travel to them and discuss the program and “lobby” for the commissioner tags. Please contact Lanny Applegate for meeting arrangements. Thank you to Mike Larsen for the donation of the 75th anniversary edition of the Winchester Model 70 (.30-06). The drawing for the rifle was held and the rifle was won with ticket 001 by Cindy Keller, Chief Dan Johnson’s administrative secretary. Congratulations to Cindy. There was a total of \$7,640 tickets sold, proceeds for the raffle will be used for the Fire Engine rehab project for funerals. The current Bank Checking balance is \$11,463 checking and \$20,576 in CD’s. LAST is planning to schedule training for team members in 2024, details pending. Lanny Applegate added that Game and Fish Commissioner Richard Ladwig has committed a commissioner tag to the LAST for 2024. Dan commented on the Fire Engine Rehab going on, currently

working on the installation of a hydraulic lift to assist in loading and transporting funeral caskets. PSOB continues for families. Have level 3 mission (retired members) planned at Cody on January 13, 2024.

Firefighter Cancer Support Network – Shad Cooper reported for State Director of the Network Paul Juergen’s that January is Nationwide Cancer Awareness month he suggests that you go on the firefighter website, there are a lot of beneficial resources to help your firefighters.

STATE AGENCY REPORTS

Wyoming State Forestry – Jerod DeLay sent the following report,

- Apologize that Kelly or I won't be able to attend in person. But here is a quick update from WSFD.
- Below average 2023 fire season. 526 fires for 10,876 ac., 6-year average is 874 fires for 106,573 acres.
- As of Jan. 1, most of the river basins are showing a below snow water equivalent (SWE). All basins are below 80% of median SWE.
- Have two budgets requested for '24 Legislature for the Wyoming Single Engine Airtankers and the Wyoming Helicopter contracts to be funded entirely from the State Forestry budget and not yearly exception requests.
- Working in conjunction with the Wyoming Military Department for creation of an Emergency Fire Suppression Account for military lands.
- Funding for a new Wyoming Helitack Base has been approved with the location either Casper Airport or Duncan Ranch south of Glenrock.
- Still working with ESO/ER to close out the contract with the records management and transition to Image Trend with coordination of the Fire Marshal's Office.

Fire Marshal’s Office – Byron Matthews reported that they are moving forward with Image Trend, it is live and working. Have been going through transitions the last couple weeks and getting departments activated. Training on the program is forth coming. It’s different then originally planned, everything will be okay. There will be challenges. The program is a very powerful tool. Regarding the Insurance Work Group, there are six states regionally now working together to put pressure on insurance underwriters, which is a positive move now in that we’re starting to collaborate as a group instead of on a single state basis. He reported the SFMO agency has job openings that need filled. Things are going well with the Agency.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

Calendar of Events – Chris Kocher reported that he has been adding items, that there is a lack of communication and not enough feedback. To make the website work, more communication must be sent to Chris.

NEW BUSINESS

President Quinney stated he is appointing Jason Caughey to be the IAFC VCOS Wyoming representative to that group. J R Fox the present representative indicated he would like to be replaced by Jason as he sits on the Board of Directors of that group. President Quinney thanked JR for his many years of service as the Wyoming Representative.

Second Vice President Wamsley proposed adding a Consortium Section to the WFCA as allowed in the group’s bylaws. He went over the proposal, there is a copy of the document he presented enclosed with these minutes. President Quinney discussed current By-Laws as it relates to adding a section to the WFCA. Due to conflicts with the By-Laws, President Quinney advised that work would be done between meetings to seek clarification as to the process of adding the Section and would report back at the next regular meeting of the WFCA. HE asked that if any Chief’s had any input or discussion points to please contact a member of the Executive Board.

Motion to adjourn made by Lanny Applegate, seconded by Brent Godfrey at 2:40 PM.

FUTURE MEETING DATES AND SITES:

April 6, 2024, starting at 9:00 AM at the Riverton Volunteer Fire Department Fire Station #1. This is the annual meeting of the WFCA and when the annual officer election is held.

June 12, 2024, starting at 3:00 PM at the Afton Volunteer Fire Department held in conjunction with the 91st annual meeting and drill team competition of the Wyoming State Firemen's Association, which runs June 13-15, 2024.

December 5, 2024, starting at 8:00 AM at the Best Western (formerly called Park Plaza) in Casper held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Wyoming State Rural Fire Association.