

**KENTUCKY FIRE COMMISSION**

Fire Commission Meeting

Minutes

February 24, 2023

Owensboro, Kentucky

**Present:**

Chris Black  
Wayne Briscoe  
Joe Choate  
Mike Haney  
Josh Keats  
Ricky King  
Lonnie Madden  
Andrew Scott  
Dwane Smeathers  
Dr. Irvin Smith  
Jerry Stephens  
Mike Sutt  
Father Matthew Young

**Absent:**

**Ex Officio Members**

**Present:**

Rick Bobo  
Joe Baer

**Absent:**

Cathy Rigney

Ricky King called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm (CST). Ricky King conducted the swearing in of Jerry Stephens. Josh Keats motion to approve the nomination for Ricky King as Chairman, Andrew Scott as Vice Chairman and Lonnie as Secretary of the Fire Commission Board. Dwane Smeathers seconded. Motion approved.

Andrew Scott motion to approve the minutes from December 1, 2022 in Paris, Kentucky. Josh Keats seconded. Motion approved.

### **Loan Committee**

Joe Choate said the Loan Committee met this morning to discuss one loan. Grahn Fire Department is requesting \$75,000.00 for ten SCBA's. Joe Choate motion to approve. Father Matthew Young seconded. Motion approved.

### **Eligibility Committee**

Dwane Smeathers said the Eligibility Committee met this morning to discuss several items. The first item was for the instructor regulations. This was to clean up language in the KAR's on the live fire instructor and the live fire instructor in charge. Dwane Smeathers motion to approve. Joe Choate seconded. Motion approved.

Dwane Smeathers said that Charles Brumfield from Nicholasville Fire Department passed away in the line of duty. Dwane Smeathers motion to approve the LODD benefits for Charles Brumfield. Josh Keats seconded. Motion approved.

Dwane Smeathers the second LODD was for Duane Suttles with the Grayson Fire Department. Dwane Smeathers motion to approve. Joe Choate seconded. Motion approved.

Dwane Smeathers said there are changes to the State Aid list. Wayne Briscoe motion to approve. Josh Keats seconded. Motion approved.

Dwane Smeathers said that the South Oldham Fire Department had two firefighters who did not get their 100 hours of training in for the calendar year of 2022 for incentive pay. The Fire Commission is requesting approval to send a letter to South Oldham Fire Department requesting reimbursement for \$8,299.88 for incentive and \$3,905.64 for pension. Wayne Briscoe motion to approve. Josh Keats seconded. Motion approved.

### **Education Committee**

Lonnie Madden said the Loan Committee met this morning to discuss an update on the Degree program. Casey Hall said last we had 287 credentials issued for the students through the degree program. We have also been working with the

Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) to fast track the high school programs streamlining into the degree program. The potential is out there for rapid growth for high school programs that will allow students to leave the high school with a KCTCS Basic Firefighter Academic certificate which is a portion of the degree as well as a provisional certification.

### **State Fire and Rescue Training**

Marc Rudder said that SFRT has trained 66% of the fire departments through January. We currently have open registration for a fire instructor II course that will be held in person in Bowling Green at the end of March and through April. Registration can be done through the Fire Commission website. Marc said we have plans to host the NFPA 1031 Fire Inspector I course for certification. This will be held in the Central Kentucky region sometime in the next few months. Marc said that State Fire School will be held June 8<sup>th</sup> through the 11<sup>th</sup> in Lexington.

Marc Rudder said that the Accredited Certification Skills sessions for FF I and II are beginning in March. Marc said they have to have all the mandated paperwork before they can take the skills sessions. Marc said there will be no skills sheets on site by or for the candidates to review. Marc said on February 1, 2023, the facility in Greenville officially became the Fire Academy of Kentucky. We encourage everyone to stop by and check it out. There are 21 recruits in our second recruit class that started on February 13, 2023. We have plans to start our third recruit class in August.

Marc Rudder said that SFRT currently has eight open positions. Marc Rudder said that Tammy Duncan has taken a different job. Pam McAllister is retiring on February 28, 2023. Father Matthew Young asked has a graduation date been set for the second recruit class? Marc Rudder said the graduation date is on May 12, 2023.

### **Fire Commission Operations**

Jeremy Rodgers said they have started handing out AEDs to the fire departments at the Office and here at the Green River Officer's school. Jeremy Rodgers said the total of AED's that will be awarded will be 343. Jeremy said he started working with Brenda Goddard this week on requisitions for the thermal imaging cameras, gas detectors and combi-tools. Deliveries could go until the end of the Fiscal Year. Jeremy said after the process is completed, we will distribute 154 thermal imaging

cameras, 343 gas detectors and 243 combi-tools. Jeremy said the fire departments must be compliant to receive these grants.

Jeremy Rodgers said the Accredited Certifications have been imported into the KyFIRES training system. We did have a handful of certifications that did not import. We will look at these certifications. Jeremy Rodgers said that Terry Wattenbarger is helping with the online IFSAC testing. Jeremy said through June 30<sup>th</sup>, written testing for FF I, FF II, Hazmat Awareness, Operations will continue to be free of charge throughout the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

### **Kentucky Office of Homeland Security**

Josh Keats said that KOHS has been busy in the last few months. Josh said they purchased some new software to help them scrape social media and dark websites for images of missing individuals and human trafficking. They have sent two analysts to DC to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children so they can help increase the states bandwidth for recovering kidnapped individuals and identifying those who have been human trafficking victims. Josh said they have hired a new criminal Intel analyst who will be based out of Louisville. Josh said they have a new Office Admin Assistant.

Josh Keats said they are the recipients of a big federal grant to increase impact statewide for Cyber Response endeavors. They are looking at hiring three new Cyber Criminal Analysts in the next few months to create the first Kentucky Cyber Response Team. Josh said their 911 Sector of the Office has been very busy trying to help elevate Kentucky into the new standards of E-911. Josh Keats said their grants team has been super busy renovating their process to make things smoother, quicker and customer service oriented so the LAPP grants program within the last six months has been able to award about 1.7 million dollars. That program goes to ensure that our police officers and sworn officers in the state have access to the correct body armor, cameras, firearms, ammunition, etc. Josh Keats said there is some legislation that has impacts pending for both the Fire Commission and KOHS.

### **Kentucky Firefighter's Association**

Rick Bobo thanked the Fire Commission Board for approving Duane Suttles's LODD benefits. Rick said they are going to continue working on the PTSD taskforce. They are working with Kentucky Public Health on this. Rick said the 501 C and 3 are up and running now. One of these is for Disaster Relief. Pat

Thompson is the chairman of this group. The Memorial Fund is now complete for renovation and upkeep of the State Memorial. Eric Philpot is the Chairman of the Memorial fund.

### **Fire Marshal's Office**

Ricky King said that Mike Haney is having problems with his mic on his computer. The Fire Marshal's Office has a couple of job openings that will be listed on the state website.

### **Kentucky Association of Fire Chief's**

Nathan Mulvey said their leadership conference is scheduled for August 23<sup>rd</sup> through the 25<sup>th</sup> in Bowling Green. Nathan said they established an EMS sub-committee if anyone is interested in joining. Nathan said their meeting is scheduled right after the Fire Commission meeting in the same room.

### **Kentucky Professional Firefighter's Association**

Joe Baer said this time of year, the KPFF's primary focus is in Frankfort and the legislative session. The legislative session is scheduled to end on March 30, 2023. Joe said they are working on the final details of their biennial convention which will be held in Covington from May 22<sup>nd</sup> through the 24<sup>th</sup>. Joe said that he and Bruce Roberts were appointed to the Public Safety Peer Support Best Practices taskforce. They are tasked to provide documentation by July 1, 2023, on what are the best practices to take care of mental health and public safety individuals.

### **KBEMS**

Executive Director Eddie Slone said they are watching House Bills 200 and 403. TI applications are due on March 31, 2023. G3 forms are due by May 31, 2023. Executive Director Slone said that all Medical Directors licenses expire on February 28, 2023. KBEMS has hired Levi Hanshaw. He is an Inspector Liaison for KBEMS.

Gary Hall said the Fire Commission has funded two EMT courses and four EMR courses across the state. These courses should be wrapped up by the end of June 2023. Gary said the EMT class in District 13 has 14 students. Currently the Somerset course has 16 students registered. The course in Paducah has 20 plus

students. District 3 has approximately 20 plus students. District 4 can have up to 15 students in that class.

### **Legislative Reports**

Bruce Roberts passed out packets on the Legislation Bills that we are watching. Bruce discussed the following bills: HB 5, SB 117, SB 179, SB 195, HB 52, HB 8, HB 157, HB 193, HB 219, and HB 359. Bruce discussed SB 121, which would move the Fire Commission under Homeland Security. Bruce said we have met with Senator Higdon and Senator Mills. Bruce said he discussed this with Senator Higdon. Bruce asked what would happen to our employees, props, property, training academy, etc. Bruce said he told Senator Higdon that our money comes from Insurance Surcharge, it is not from general fund dollars. Joe Baer said the KPFF is opposed to SB 121.

Josh Keats said the legislature had been discussing this topic when he first joined the Kentucky Office of Homeland Security. Josh said this conversation predates him by a number of years. Josh said this would make a lot of extra work for him to bring the Fire Commission under Homeland Security, but there are a lot of other states that are organized in a similar fashion. Josh said our offices are similar in that we are involved in public safety, involved in education, involved in counseling services, and involved in grants. Josh said he thinks there is probably an appetite in the legislature to move things that are like minded into one place. Josh said he thinks there is a lot of political capital to be gained by being in closer proximity to the executive side. Larry Potter said we were completely blindsided by this. This will have a huge impact on the State of Kentucky. Larry said we have worked for the last three years with KCTCS to build bridges. Jeremy Rodgers said we have awarded approximately 9.89 million dollars to the fire departments in grants. Larry Potter said we are working for the fire service in the State of Kentucky. Father Matthew Young said this seems to put the cart before the horse. Josh Keats said this is not personal for him. Chris Black said he thinks the Fire Commission needs to define what their position is on this bill. Chris Black motion that the Fire Commission Board draft a letter to the Legislators that this body opposes Senate Bill 121. Wayne Briscoe seconded. Joe Choate said he doesn't know what they are trying to do or not do. Rick Bobo said that the KFA Board voted unanimously to oppose this bill and this legislation and we will be contacting our senators and representatives. It's too vague. Ricky King asked Attorney John Wood what his recommendation is. Joe Choate said he is fine with opposing this bill for this session. Dwane Smeathers said he agrees with Chris Black's statement. John Wood recommended a roll call vote on this.

### **Commission Member Voting**

### **Voted For**

Chris Black	Yes
Wayne Briscoe	Yes
Joe Choate	Yes (with explanation)
Mike Haney	Yes
Josh Keats	Abstained
Ricky King	Yes
Lonnie Madden	Yes
Andrew Scott	Yes (with explanation)
Dwane Smeathers	Yes
Dr. Irvin Smith	Yes
Jerry Stephens	Yes
Mike Sutt	Yes
Father Matthew Young	Yes

Motion approved.

Andrew Scott asked who is writing the letter. Ricky King asked John Wood if the Fire Commission could get with him to draft this letter. John Wood said you could draft a letter consistent with the discussion today and the vote and delegate the authority to Larry Potter. Joe Choate motion to approve. Andrew Scott seconded. Chris Black asked Larry to send a copy of the letter to the Board after it is completed. Motion approved.

Joe Baer said regards to the increase in Incentive pay and State Aid, it was our intent to propose legislation to codify those increases in the statute this session. Joe said that he and Bruce Roberts met with Representative Meredith and he was more than willing to sponsor the bill and have it drafted. He wanted a letter from the Fire Commission supporting that codification supporting the increase and he wanted a letter from DOCJT to support that on the law enforcement side. Law Enforcement decided that they wanted an automatic increase. Joe said the Chairman of Senate A&R directed us to bring this back at the next Legislative Session.

### **Executive Director Reports**

Larry Potter thanked all our employees for their hard work. Larry said that Pat Thompson is the new Coordinator for the Academy. Larry said we are extremely proud of what they do. Right now our numbers have to be held to a minimum due to space. That is why we are investing in a classroom facility there along with a tower and other props. Larry said we just finished our six-year capital project plan through KCTCS. Larry said we just purchased property in London for District 13. Larry said we do have some new positions that we are in the process of hiring for. Larry said have a new HR manager that just started in our office this last week.

Ricky King said that he and Jeremy Rodgers will work on the committee assignments and get back with everyone. Tina Moore is going to work on the Fire Commission workshop at Rough River.

### **Correspondence**

None.

### **Announcements from the Audience**

Mark Lockett discussed SB 121.

Dwane Smeathers motion to adjourn. Father Matthew Young seconded. Meeting adjourned at 2:45 pm (CST).