State of Maine

LOSAP Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

November 20, 2017

Attendees: Bill Gillespie, Brent Libby, Bill Hussey, Jeff Brackett, Fred Brewer. Tim Nichols was Excused

Guests: Dan Brooks, Maine Fire Protection Services Commission, Edward Holohan, Penflex, Inc.

The meeting was called to order by Bill Gillespie at 10:08

Alex McPhedran submitted his resignation as Secretary. Bill G. will talk with someone he knows about possibly taking the position.

MMA appointed trustee position is still not filled. Hoping to have an appointee for the next meeting.

Minutes from the October 16, 2017 board meeting were presented for approval. Bill Hussey made a motion to approve the minutes, Jeff Brackett seconded the motion. All trustees in attendance voted to approve the minutes.

Bill Gillespie introduced Ed Holohan to the board. Ed is an Actuary with Penflex, Inc. of Latham NY. They were hired to prepare the actuarial report in 2002 that MSFFF and MFSC used to develop the LOSAP program. Ed was instrumental in crafting the legislation in 2014 that established the LOSAP program for the State of Maine. Penflex, Inc. started working with New York fire departments to establish the length of service program in that state. They now work with 8 other state programs along with many individual departments as far away as California.

Ed described the process to arrive at the legislation that was approved. The plan as it was setup is a defined contribution plan that allows for three funding sources; The State of Maine, the municipalities and the firefighters. There are a few dozen state programs that are funded this way, which is good. This is setup similar to a 401k in that there is the opportunity for multiple funding sources for contributions. The volunteer has the opportunity to select investment choices from a pool of mutual funds that the Board of Trustees selects. One of the items that we are tasked with is determining the service credit rules for the volunteers. This was left out of the legislation to give the board flexibility to change the requirements as we see fit. It is easier than going back to the legislature to ask for approval of a new set of rules any time we want to make changes. Most programs use a points system to award contributions to volunteers and the rules that the board establishes determine who gets a contribution. Ed suggested that there be a minimum number of points to earn a contribution to limit lots of small contributions. He reminded us that there is a May 1 due date for submission of participant information. His suggestion is to have it be a hard cut off and any information submitted after that date is not eligible for contributions. Without the data by May 1 it makes it hard to calculate the state contribution because it is a moving target. If you miss the date then too bad there is no contribution for your department for the year.

We need to evaluate the activity we want to give credit for. This is an opportunity to decide what we want to support for firefighting activities. We can allocate more of the contribution to calls or training. Other things that we could include are things like meeting and fundraiser attendance and work done around the station. You can also award additional points to those firefighters that are interior certified or other certifications. He did say that you can let individual departments determine the points earned for their department but it gets time consuming and confusing with multiple contribution allocation calculations. One problem that they ran into with the data collection was making it so complicated that people have a hard time accumulating the information. With the small departments they see a simple spreadsheet or a manual grid, in larger departments they use database software that they purchased. Pensco is focused on training with new chiefs to help get them up to speed on how to use the system; focusing on an easy system for the chiefs to input the data into. The system should also have the ability to produce reports showing what time firefighters have earned in the point system. This makes it easy to produce quarterly progress reports so the members can see how many points they have earned. The underlying data is key to the information that the chiefs use to accumulate the information for the calculation of contributions. This is key because the call sheets and training records need to be signed off on and approved by the chief or other officers. Documents relating to calls and training need to be kept for 6 years and all payroll information needs to be kept for 55 years.

Some additional comments that he had:

1. You are looking at a couple of bumpy years to start out. Chiefs have to adjust to accumulating information and not all departments will sign up from the start.
2. $300-$400 a participant is where they have found the minimum contribution needs to be for the program to be worthwhile.
3. We need to really start our thought process on figuring out what qualifiers for a contribution we want to have. What drivers for a contribution do we want?
4. Get the information out to the participants so that they are prepared when we start allocating money to the firefighters accounts. Utilize the following
   1. Maine Chiefs Association (convention in March)
   2. Maine State Federation of Firefighters (convention in 3rd week in September)
   3. Videos for distribution
   4. Facebook
   5. Meetings with departments and chiefs

Ed will send some samples of other state programs for us by the first week in December.

Ed Left at 11:42

Bill Gillespie presented the By-Laws that Brent and Fred had developed. Suggested changes to the Secretary description and numbering the pages. Fred will make the changes and Bill will present them to the Fire Protection Service Commission for their December meeting. He will then send them to the AG’s office for final review before we approve them at a future board meeting.

Future meetings schedule discussed. Decided that the third Monday of the months was still good for everyone. The only problem are holidays that the third Monday falls on (Martin Luther King Day and Presidents Day). Set next meeting date as December 18, 2017 at 10:00 in the Burton Cross public safety building.

Bill Gillespie said in closing that we need to be thinking of what qualifications we want to use for the point system. We need to bring our ideas to the next meeting with the goal of having something together before the March meeting.

Jeff Brackett made a motion to adjourn, Bill Hussey seconded, all members in attendance approved. Meeting adjourned at 12:24.

Submitted by Frederick Brewer, Trustee