



NEW HAMPSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS, INC.

Working Together to Make a Difference

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Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Board of Directors – April 7, 2021

Called to order by Chief Jones at 0834 hours

Present: Chiefs Jones, Sitar, Beattie, Emanuel, Christopoulos, Thomas, Howard, Rhodes, Toomey, Watkins, Buxton and Executive Director Lemire.

Minutes of previous meeting: Motion (Howard/Beattie) to approve the minutes from the March 3 meeting carried unanimously.

Financial Reports: February reports tabled until next month.

Correspondence: n/a

President's Report: (Jones)

- Bi-Weekly Covid -19 virtual meetings with Comm. Quinn
- Bi Weekly with Marshall Parisi, current covid-19 numbers, legislation Decision HB 111
- NED-IAFC Mtg tomorrow in Concord, possible annual meeting. and two days of seminars in Worcester MA. FRI Charlotte, NC July 28th – 30th.

Report of the Executive Director: (Lemire)

- Annual meeting will be tomorrow at 1600.
- The dues have been increased. Reset this morning.
- I still need help in soliciting vendors for Advocate Members. Any luck?
- I have received the information regarding casino fundraising and will be reviewing it.
- I should be hearing something about our IRS application this week.
- We will be also sponsoring a golf tournament in August I believe.
- Looking to have an in-person BOD meeting August 4 here in Litchfield as in the past. I will invite past officers who missed out.

1st Vice President's Report (Sitar) –

- **State Interoperable Executive Committee (SIEC):** Just a reminder that for those departments that received a radio reprogramming grant that they have

until August of 2022 to complete the grant process. Next Meeting of the SIEC in on May 14th.

- **State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee (SDMAC):** Last Meeting was on February 19th where members of the Committee gave guidance to the Governor's Office on the use of the J&J vaccine. No new meeting date has been set.
- **New Hampshire Chief Fire Officer (NHCFO):** I currently have 7 applications for consideration. Applications are still being accepted. The application can be found on the web site under the "Fire Chief Credentialing" tab.

2nd Vice President's Report (Beattie)

HB 111 – Qualified Immunity

- Bill was heard by the House Judiciary Committee. They voted 19-2 to pass the bill. It will be on the House floor this week during their session in Bedford.
- NHAFC did not testify at the initial hearing. Once the bill was flagged by members, a letter was prepared to House Judiciary Committee outlining the Association's concerns. The letter was copied to the House Speaker, House Majority Leader, House Minority Leader, and Senate Judiciary Committee.
- NHAFC has focused on the potential impact of the bill on recruiting and retention. We have also shown support to police and NHMA through our actions.
- On Friday, April 2, NHAFC participated in a legislative forum on the bill. Along with NH Association of Chiefs of Police, we explained our concerns to about 25-30 House members who participated via Zoom. Our comments reflected concerns regarding recruitment and retention as well as financial hardships of lawsuits when members are acting in good faith and under presumed lawful actions.
 - The meeting was successful, and although its only a fraction of the full house, it was certainly in our favor (for those in attendance).
- **Next steps:** If the House passes the bill, it will head to the Senate. NHAFC members will need to contact their respective Senators to share the Association's concerns. We will present testimony at the hearing in opposition as well. NHAFC continues to coordinate actions with both NHMA and Police Chiefs.

HB 343 – Ambulance Billing/Balance Billing

- The bill was heard by the House Commerce Committee. They voted to retain the bill back in February. It will remain in the House Commerce Committee for the rest of the calendar year. The Committee will likely hold work sessions later this year. They will vote in the later fall on whether to pass/amend/kill/study the bill.
- NHAFC testified in opposition to the bill. The Association highlighted that while consumer protections were important, the bill did not consider the revenue side for communities. These concerns were shared with the Prime Sponsor, Rep. Joyce Weston, prior to the hearing.

- Since the bill was retained, a NHAFC subcommittee has been reviewing the issue in greater detail.
- Chief Jones coordinated a Zoom meeting with a Chief Flynn from Suffield CT to learn about their laws on reimbursement for ambulance transports.
 - Representative Weston is very interested in the CT model.
 - CT uses a statewide negotiated rate, adjusted as needed for individual communities
 - Any adjustment for this would need to be addressed by multiple groups including NHAFC and DOS.
- Chief Morrison has developed a good working relationship with Rep. Weston and has provided her with details regarding insurance reimbursement reductions by carriers.
- **Next steps:** The subcommittee would like to schedule a time to connect with Rep. Weston. It is worth discussing with her various proposals to help increase payments to ambulance providers. We want to develop arguments to rebut the bill in its current form and potentially move the needle to help with the revenue side for ambulance services.

Meeting with Adam and Jodi for new President, First and Second VP, and Sergeant at Arms.

- Will schedule early May

Sgt. At Arms Report (Emanuel) –

- He described Durham's current experience with COVID 19.

Our lobbyist, Adam Schmidt, joined the meeting at 9:10 with an update on HB 111. The Police Association is suggesting a press conference tomorrow to address inaccurate information on the bill. The board decided not to participate in the conference but concentrate on in-person contact.

Chief Buxton thanked everyone for his time on the board and expressed his pride at how it has grown.

Scholarship Committee (Toomey) –

- Applications will be sent out by the end of April.

New Business:

- With Marshal Parisi resignation it may be time to meet with Governor Sununu.
- We need to find someone to Chair the current fund raiser. ED Lemire will speak with the Marshal to determine.
- With Chief Skantze's resignation opening on the Board of Fire Control? He is currently Chairman of the committee.
- Budget Comm – 2021 budget. A MOTION (Toomey/Rhodes) to approve the 2022 budget and present it to the membership carried unanimously.

- Nominating Committee Report - 2021 List of Officers submitted by the Nominating Committee.
- Audit Committee Report – 2020. Chief Thomas reported that they have been meeting and have found not discrepancies. The final report will be issued in June.

Old Business:

IAFC - Chief Christopoulos reported that FRI is on for July 28-31 in Charlotte. Rates have been lowered and programs have been adjusted. Hotel information will be released shortly.

Good and Welfare: Chief Jones thanked everyone for their support during his 9 months as President.

Upcoming Events: The monthly meeting will be held tomorrow at 1600 hours.

Meeting adjourned at 1017 hours.

Respectfully submitted,

Brent T. Lemire, MPA
Executive Director
NH Association of Fire Chiefs