

**GREAT LAKES DIVISION of the  
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION of FIRE CHIEFS**  
Minutes of the Winter Board Meeting March 21, 2003 Merrillville, IN

The Great Lakes Division (GLD) Winter Board Meeting was held following the close of Forum '03 held at the Radisson Star Plaza Hotel in Merrillville, IN. President Randall Sellnow called the meeting to order at 11:20AM, CST. The following persons were in attendance: President Sellnow, Vice President Timm Schabbel, IAFC Director Larry Gorud, Secretary /Treasurer Ron Hutchings and State Representatives Robert Wilcox -IL, Paul Klapprich -MN, Brian Lott -IN, Dale Duermit -OH and William Schmidt -MI. Peter Stinson - WI did not attend the meeting. The following guests were also in attendance: Butch Zaragoza, from Alabama, candidate for 2nd Vice President IAFC in 2002, Chief James Harmes from Grand Blanc, MI, Chief Tim Farmer, President MN State Fire Chiefs' Association, Chief Randy Brugeman, President IAFC, Chief Robert Weitzel, Green Twp., OH, GLD representative to the ICC, Chief Kenn Taylor, Violet Twp., OH and Chief James Whitworth, Miami Twp., OH, Federal Legislation Committee chair for the GLD.

President Sellnow asked if there were any additions to the agenda that he had e-mailed to each board member prior to this meeting. Hearing none the agenda was accepted as submitted. President Sellnow asked if any of the guests would like to address the board. Chief Harmes thanked President Sellnow for the opportunity and said that the purpose of his attendance at this meeting was to announce his candidacy for the position of second Vice President of the IAFC in 2004. Chief Harmes has been in the fire service for 31 years and is a past president of the Michigan Association of Fire Chiefs and the Southeastern Michigan Association of Fire Chiefs. Chief Harmes further reviewed his qualifications and goals for the position of Second Vice President of the IAFC.

President Sellnow asked for approval of the minutes of the November 7th and 8th annual board meeting. Gorud asked that the minutes be corrected to show that the next meeting would be March 21st and not March 20th. Duermit moved to accept the minutes as corrected. Second by Klapprich. Motion carried.

Secretary/Treasurer's report: The secretary provided copies of the membership report for 12/31/02 and 10/31/02 and copies of the ledger totals for 12/ 31/02 and 03/17/03 and a copy of the election policy for future discussion. This policy was discussed informally on Wednesday evening and the secretary recommended that it be reviewed and if changes are desired they could be discussed at a future meeting. Copies of the handouts are attached to these minutes.

Membership: At the end of 2002 the GLD had a total of 2244 members which includes Illinois -- 612, Indiana -- 206, Michigan -- 370, Minnesota -- 172, Ohio -- 611 and Wisconsin -- 249. There were 24 life members in other states. This total is down 66 for the quarter and down 81 for the year. We're down 53 dues paying members or over \$1000 compared with the previous year. The secretary will continue to send monthly new member and arrears reports electronically. Schabbel moved to accept the membership report. Second by Lott. Motion approved.

Financial: We ended 2002 with \$11,113 in the checking account which is down approximately \$3800 from the previous year. There was a January posting of \$2000 from the annual breakfast that reduces the year end difference to approximately \$1800. Expenses for 2002 were 1.87 percent over budget. While several line items were considerably over budget others were under enough to minimize the overage. Income was 2.58 percent under budget. This was due to the fact that dues income had been overestimated by nearly \$3000. At the conclusion of 2002 we had a total of \$67,131.69 in all accounts.

Hutchings asked for questions and reminded President Sellnow that we would need an audit committee to review the records for 2002. The President appointed Duermit, Klapprich, and Stinson to complete the audit before the annual meeting. The treasurer asked if the board had any questions about the 03/17/03 balances explaining that the checking account balance of over \$20,154 was high because none of the expenses for the forum had been paid yet. Lott moved to accept the 12/31/02 treasurer's report. Second by Duermit. The report was accepted. Lott moved to accept the 03/17/03 treasurer's report. Second by Klapprich. The report was accepted.

President Sellnow recessed the meeting at 11:55AM so that the board and guests could join together in having lunch.

President Sellnow reconvened the meeting at 12:45PM. IAFC President Randy Brugeman departed the meeting at this time.

President Sellnow then called on Chief Weitzel for a PowerPoint presentation on the progress ICC has made with IAFC in making up an International Fire Code. Chief Weitzel has been involved in the code process in OH for many years and understands the conflicts between building and fire code officials and the enforcement of safety regulations. BOCA, ICBO and SBCC have been working with the fire service through ICC to establish one code for the U.S. and the international community. Weitzel completed his presentation at 1:00 PM and the meeting resumed.

Grorud commented that we had the right people working on this committee (ICC) and that the ICC wants to work with us. The IAFC is looking forward to their recommendations. NFPA is concerned that we have this relationship with ICC, but they were told we would do the same with them. We really want one national code, but if not we're willing to work in both processes. What is NFPA willing to do for the fire and life safety section? NFPA seems to be hesitant to enter a formal relationship with us. There was considerable discussion about certifying inspectors and it was determined that the code did not govern this. It is the decision of local or state bodies what, if any, certifying process is used. After much additional fire code and certification discussion Chief Weitzel left the meeting at 1:30 PM.

Forum 2003: Lott mentioned that we originally thought we might clear a few hundred dollars, but was not so sure now. Hutchings stated that we had 45 paid registrations with six extra dinners and there were seven complementary registrations. Two paid registrations canceled before we had to guarantee meals and will be refunded. Considering the meal guarantees and the extras for audio equipment it looks as though we will be lucky to break even financially. There followed an extensive discussion about the future of forums: location? format? partners? audience? programs? One major suggestion was Harley-Davidson in Milwaukee. The decision will have to be made soon so that the arrangements can be made. Duermit put forth the following motion. That we are going to have a forum program for 2004, the place and content to be determined. Second by Schabbel. Motion passed. There was additional discussion that we do not market the program well and have relied on word-of-mouth and a loyal attendance base that we established 10 years ago. This base has been eroded. President Sellnow appointed Schabbel, Taylor, Lott and Schmidt to work as a committee to organize a program for Forum 2004. Grorud suggested that Stinson be on the committee if we were considering Harley-Davidson in Wisconsin. The committee will organize and meet by conference call.

Director's Report: Grorud provided a written report of his activities and reminded us that he provides us each with electronic information as it comes out. The most recent information that he is providing today follows:

A) U.S. Fire Administration report – Dave Paulson has been a champion of the fire service with the U.S. Fire Administration.

B) NFPA 1710/1720 Timelines – The standard is on an expedited schedule as it is up for review at this time. The IAFC Executive Committee recommended and the board adopted the position of allowing more time, not looking for wholesale changes, but hoping to just work through this. The IAFF has agreed also. The contentious portion of this issue is what is the definition of a company? Neither side will push the issue at this time.

C) IAFC Member Advisory -- concerning IAFF members volunteering in other departments. Not all locals, and in fact the IAFF itself, seem to want to pursue these matters if not pushed by a local.

Additionally, the IAFC has signed an agreement with a publishing firm, Bartlett and Jones, to possibly use IAFC resources to publish a chiefs handbook. In 1998 the IAFC and IFSTA had similar discussions, but no formal contract was signed. IFSTA is unhappy about this new publishing agreement. To date IFSTA has not followed our recommendations about updating existing training manuals, and under their procedures it takes three years to bring a new subject to print. The Director's report is attached to these minutes.

Old Business: Schabbel presented a written report that explored options for revenue alternatives for the Great Lakes Division. The report is attached. It was not recommended that we increase participant fees or expand educational programs. This leaves two alternatives, increase sponsorship or decrease spending. Schabbel felt that it is important to maintain the sponsorships that we have now and attempt to establish some additional new sponsorships. Trumpet advertising was also discussed, as well as adding sponsors to our web page. The general feeling of the board was that they favored creating a sponsor classification system. More to be discussed at our April conference call.

Kids and Smoke Alarms: President Sellnow had nothing new to report on this subject. It seems this may not be a solvable problem other than additional education. It was suggested that the president send a letter to Underwriters Laboratories expressing our pleasure that they are looking into this issue and offering our assistance if it is needed.

Candidate for Vice President: Duermit reported that the OH Fire Chiefs' Association was putting forth the name of Kenn Taylor of Violent Township, OH for the position of Vice President of the GLD at the annual meeting in August 2003.

Web Page: Schabbel commented that he felt that it was time for a facelift of our web page. Web page formats and webmasters were discussed. There were several suggestions for webmasters that are doing excellent work in Indiana, Michigan and Ohio. All seem to have excellent/responsive web sites at a lesser cost than ours. It is the board's feeling that we definitely want to upgrade our web page. Lott put forth a motion that Schabbel investigate the possibility of making changes in our web page and report back at our teleconference, with the goal of being able to make a decision before our next quarterly payment for a webmaster is due. Second by Grorud. Motion carried.

IAFC Elections Task Force Committee: Lott reported the committee met twice by teleconference and came up with a draft of recommended changes. After revisions were made it was presented to the IAFC

Board to consider. The board has adopted seven of the nine recommended changes. Grorud will send details to our board.

#### New Business:

Firefighter Memorial- Chief Burns did not stay for the board meeting as he is satisfied with the position and approach to this matter that the IAFC has adopted.

FRI 2003 Update- There is no new news at this time. Several of the board members expressed concern about attendance, as reduced budgets are affecting the travel of many departments. In fact, three GLD Board members may not be able to attend unless they fund the trip themselves. There was considerable discussion about future GLD meetings; cost/location/reimbursement/etc. There was also discussion about the possibility of using more teleconferences to conduct business of the GLD. It was felt that a teleconference was good to deal with one or two items but not for a full meeting. After additional discussion it was decided that we would try a board conference call on April 17th, 2003 at 2:00PM CDT.

Summer Meeting Schedule- We will attempt to finalize the schedule during our conference call.

Future of Forum- This was covered earlier in the meeting.

GLD Logo/Emblem - After discussion Duermit moved that we adopt the recommended logo to be consistent with the IAFC. Second by Wilcox. Duermit amended the motion to consider the addition of art work representing the six GLD states behind the IAFC logo and "Great Lakes Division" in a banner below. Wilcox concurred with the changes. The motion was passed. President Sellnow will contact Gail Walters about designing a GLD logo and attempt to have a design for the board to view before the conference call.

*The time being 3:00 PM Lott excused himself from the meeting to return home on personal business.*

Strategic Plan Review- President Sellnow had provided a draft copy for the board's review. It is now mirrored to follow IAFC's plan. Having had insufficient time to review it before the meeting it was decided that this would be put off until the April teleconference. Wilcox moved that this matter be reconsidered at that time. Second by Klapprich. Motion passed.

Position Statements-After a discussion of the Fire Act and possible changes in Washington it was determined that there was no need for changes/additions to the position statement at this time.

#### State Reports:

Michigan: Schmidt reported that some reorganization in the state is possible. The union has proposed to the governor that the fire service be moved into a state division that is fire service oriented and get it out from under the state police. This would include fire training, public education and the Fire Marshal's Office. Michigan is also suffering a loss of state funding to communities. This June will be the first Fire Expo which will include all portions of the fire service except the union. The problem is that it will be difficult for many departments to send all of their key people at the same time. Because of this Expo the Chiefs Conference will be in October.

Indiana: Schabbel explained that the state of Indiana was changing their tax system and would be going from an assessed value to true market value. If it is not done quickly the majority of communities will

have to borrow money because the funds will not reach them when they normally do. The new system will shift the greater portion of the tax burden to residential and away from commercial. The fireworks battle is ongoing. There's a proposal to place local control of fireworks at the county level. Another proposal would require a fire chief to issue a shooters permit upon request. We believe this has been stopped in committee.

Illinois: Wilcox reported that the Promotion Bill is back and has had a second reading. The bill puts more emphasis on seniority and monitoring the testing procedure. State level changes are taking place due to a new governor taking over. Illinois will exercise their state wide plan "Top Off" within the next couple months. The Chiefs Symposium will be held in May and will be in Peoria.

Minnesota: Klapprich reported that last weekend was the Annual Minnesota Fire Chiefs' Board Retreat. The Executive Director will retire the first of the year. The new governor is replacing the fire marshal who has held the position for 16 years. Changes are expected. Minnesota also has budget problems with Local Government Aid. It looks like many departments will have to make labor cuts. Minnesota has had some relationship problems between state fire organizations that they are trying to work out.

Ohio: Duermit reported the Ohio Fire Chiefs' longtime proposal to move the Fire Marshal's Office from the Department of Commerce to the Department of Public Safety looks like it may finally happen. Will know more midyear. The governor signed two bills recently; one allows for intrastate mutual aid and the other requires background checks of all firefighters and allows the use of the police department's LEADS systems to do so. This bill also exempts the fire service from being part of the public record. The Winter Forum and Legislative Breakfast brought in 77 legislators on a day that they were not even in session. There was a statewide test of the state mutual aid system last week and it was very successful.

Wisconsin: Sellnow reported that the Wisconsin Chiefs had just completed Chiefing 101 for new chief fire officers. The GLD and the IAFC were represented at the program. Fireworks battles are still going on. The EMS service is not satisfied with the service that is being provided by the State EMS Office. The new governor is now looking at cutting shared revenues in spite of a campaign promise not to do so. Eighteen legislators and the governor attended a recent Legislative Breakfast sponsored by the Chiefs Association. Legislation has been proposed to allow anyone being disciplined to file for arbitration on the discipline. This arbitration may be either at the local level or done by outsiders.

Communications: The Secretary reported that he had received a note from the family of Joan Braun (Donna Grorud) for flowers that had been sent as an expression of sympathy in the name of the Great Lakes Division.

Good of the Order: Grorud thanked Jim Whitworth for all the work he does on behalf of the GLD and Butch Zaragoza for being with us. He also wished Jim Harnes good luck with his campaign which will start Monday. Butch thanked the board and their wives for the hospitality shown to him and to his daughter during their stay in Merrillville.

After a brief discussion about the new pocket slides provided to the president, director and secretary by the IAFC, Duermit moved that the secretary look into furnishing this type of badge for the entire board. Second by Grorud. The motion passed. Expense vouchers were distributed and the board will receive reimbursement for one night lodging and one day per diem and the 300 mile excess where it applies. Duermit moved to include expenses for Kenn Taylor the same as the board. Second by Grorud. Motion

passed. Sellnow will attempt to make more contacts for the legislative e-mail tree and get the information to IAFC. We're still supportive of this process!

The next meeting will be by phone on April 17th 2003.

Motion to adjourn by Duermit at 3:48 PM. Second by Schmidt.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Ret. Chief Ron Hutchings, Secretary/Treasurer  
Great Lakes Division, IAFC