

## MSFA Scholarship Committee Meeting Minutes

The Maryland State Firemen's Association Scholarship Committee meeting convened on Thursday November 13, 2003 at 7:00 pm at the College Park Volunteer Fire Department in College Park, Maryland.

Members of the committee in attendance were:

George Kennett  
Robert Ryan  
Dr. Jim Milke  
Barry Munroe  
William Olson  
Brenda Fosler Johnson  
G. Dale Fishack, Jr.  
Ron Siarnicki  
Robert Jacobs, First Vice President  
Alice Olson – Guest

Chairman Siarnicki opened the meeting by welcoming everyone who attended and provided a brief explanation of his role as the new chair of the committee. The discussion revolved around the wishes of the leadership of the MSFA to have the committee look at its overall structure and the various components of the program delivery of the committee.

Vice President Jacobs extended greeting to the committee from the MSFA. Discussion included the importance of the scholarship program to members of the state fire service. He expressed his concern for more involvement with students at the community college level, and the increased tuition costs that are being experienced all around the state. He offered the committee his full support in their efforts and wished them all the best.

The Chair recognized the exceptional efforts of immediate past Chair William Olson and thanked him for all he has done to keep the scholarship committee moving under his tenure. Bill acknowledged that he was interested in remaining on the committee but would not be able to serve as the vice-chairman. Dale Fishack will continue in that role.

The Chair outlined the agenda for the meeting, which included three specific topics:

1. The recent determination by the Maryland State Higher Education Commission that the State Tuition Reimbursement Program only applies to fire service personnel that are state residents.
2. A review of the organizational and program structure of the committee
3. The establishment of committee goals for the coming year

Dr. Milke provided a brief overview of the problem associated with the state tuition reimbursement program for fire service members. He advised that the Maryland State Higher Education Commission has decided to deny tuition applications for members of the Maryland fire service who do not have a permanent residence in the state. The Office of Student Financial Assistance has taken the position that the program is only intended for in-state residents and does not apply to non-residents even if they are active fire service members in the state.

Dr. Milke has made contact with the office staff and is trying to determine if this is a new policy, part of the state law or just an issue that has been acted upon by the staff. Once it is determined as to how this ruling came about, it will be much clearer to determine how the committee should proceed in dealing with it.

The Chair opened the floor for discussion about the organizational structure of the committee and the need to look at the overall program process. The committee agreed that there should be quarterly meetings to increase the communications within the committee and that the use of e-mail would be the best way to share information. Three members of the committee do not have e-mail and a buddy system was established to ensure that they received all committee documents via US mail. Dale Fishack will send materials to Mickey Harris, Bob Ryan will forward information to Margaret Woltz and Ron Siarnicki will address Jim Deskins. The committee also agreed to hold its next quarterly meeting in February via conference call. The scheduled meeting dates are as follows:

Thursday February 12, 2004 4 PM (Conference Call)  
Thursday May 13, 2004 7 PM (College Park Fire Department)

Funding for the committee was the next order of business and it was reported by the Chair that a corporate sponsor campaign was being instituted for the committee. Pete Piringner was asked to serve as a grant coordinator for the committee and Brenda Fosler Johnson agreed to ask the grant writer for Shock Trauma to provide the committee with some guidance. It is hoped that the committee will secure additional revenues to enhance the scholarship program.

As the meeting drew to a close, the committee agreed to work on the following six goals for the term of this year:

1. Establish quarterly meetings.
2. Utilize technology more to improve committee operations
3. Establish an internal communications system for the committee.
4. Seek additional corporate sponsors for scholarship funding.
5. Seek grant-writing support for increased scholarship funding.
6. To continually evaluate the scholarship program to ensure student needs are being met.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Submitted by:

Ronald Jon Siarnicki, Chair