

# MFSA Scholarship Committee Meeting Minutes

The Maryland State Firemen's Association Scholarship Committee meeting convened on Thursday February 12, 2004 at 4:00 pm via conference call.

Members of the committee in attendance were:

Chairman Ron Siarnicki  
Vice Chair Dale Fishack, Jr.  
James L. Deskins  
J. Barry Munroe  
William Olsen  
Robert W. Ryan  
Richard Steinberg  
Faron Taylor  
George D. Kennett  
LAMSFA Liaison, Margaret Woltz  
Special Liaison, James E. Milke  
Alice Olson – Guest

Members of the committee excused  
Special Liaison, Brenda Fosler  
Special Liaison, Albert D. Harris, Jr.

Members of the committee absent  
Pete Piringer  
Tammy S. Quidas

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM via telephone conference call by Chairman Siarnicki. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the call and commented how beneficial it was to do committee work for the first time using technology to make it more time efficient and better for the entire group. 2nd Vice President Lee Sachs was acknowledged as attending the meeting and he brought greetings from the President and 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President who could not attend the meeting.

The Chairman began his report on activities that have transpired since the last committee meeting and gave a detailed report of the meeting that had occurred on February 11, 2004 with the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC.) The purpose of the meeting was to discuss with Ms. Andrea Hunt, Director, Office of Student Financial Assistance the issue of the MHEC denying some tuition remission claims this year.

Ms. Hunt explained that the commission was going to continue to process remission claims in this fashion and abide by the strict interpretation of the state law. Dr. Milke and the Chairman attend the meeting and in conversations with Ms. Hunt developed the following two strategies to pursue in relation to correcting this problem. 1. Work to have the definition of Maryland Resident changed in the Annotated Code for Maryland, or, 2. Work to add a Service Obligation Agreement component to Section 18-603 of the Education Laws for the State. The committee

discussed this point at great length and voted unanimously to support the proposal of sending this issue to the Executive Board for a decision on seeking a legislative solution to the problem. The committees suggested course of action is to have the Service Obligation Agreement component added to the language.

The Chairman reported that he had updated the Committee Guidelines and Application forms as was agreed upon at the first committee meeting and that information was forwarded to the MSFA Webmaster for placement on the Web Page. Bill Olson reported that the information had only been changed under the Committee Page and not under the Scholarship Information Section of the MSFA Home Page. The Chairman advised that he would ask the Webmaster to make those changes immediately.

The discussion moved onto the need for the committee to determine the exact amount of funds that will be available for this years scholarship awards. The Chairman has requested an updated fund balance from the Treasurer, however that information was not available to the committee as of this time. As soon as the Treasure provided it, it will be distributed to the group. Bill Olson agreed to go through the numbers from last year and work on projection amounts for this year's awards. Jim Deskins agreed to work with him in an effort to share the work load and to bring another person into the budgeting process for the committee.

George Kennett reported that he is working to secure a scholarship grant form the Southern Maryland Cooperative to support our students. He will be meeting with a member of their Board of Directors to make a proposal that they match the Connectiv Grant each year. He will continue to keep the committee informed of his progress.

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Sachs reported that work on the MSFA Foundation is continuing and that at some point more fundraising efforts will occur under the auspices of the Foundation itself. It is not known as to when the Foundation will be fully up and running, but that should occur sometime between now and Convention in June.

Chairman Siarnicki presented to the committee a fundraising proposal for the Scholarship program involving awards made to students in the name of past presidents of the Association. This proposal will be presented to the Executive Committee at the meeting in Mt. Airy next week and hopes are that it will be up and running very soon. A great deal of discussion perused with the committee concerning the need to find adequate funds to provide more scholarships each year and the chairman did reiterate that it is the responsibility of every member of the scholarship committee to do their part to locate funding sources. 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Sachs added to the discussion the concerns he has about new fundraising initiative that may harm the critical need of raising monies for the Maryland Fallen Firefighters Memorial. The committee acknowledged his concerns and continued the discussion. The committee was in agreement with the fundraising plans and voted unanimously to support the Chairman's recommendation to bring this proposal to the Executive Committee at the next meeting.

The Chairman opened the discussion to the committee at this time on the topic of the scholarship awards accounting and the need to examine how the awards are currently made. He reported that the current system was very labor intensive to the committee and the Association treasurer. He

reported that he had spoken to the treasurer and he supported the following proposal. For future scholarship awards, the committee will secure agreements with the education institution to accept the monies from the association and apply them to the student's individual account. No monies will be given directly to the students and the committee would establish restrictions as to what these funds could be used for. It would become the responsibility of the educational institution to track the expenditure of these funds and if any funds remained at the end of the educational session, the funds would be returned to the association for another disbursement. The committee voted unanimously to support this initiative.

The final issue on the agenda for the member's of the committee to discuss was that of extending scholarship applicant opportunities to part-time students who are members of the association. The committee discussed the proposal at great length, which include a complete history of why the committee had up until this time not considered funding part-time students. The discussion continued with each member of the committee who chose to, having the opportunity to express their feelings on the matter. The Chairman called for the question and the motion to add part-time students to the scholarship application process passed 4-2 with 3 abstentions. The motion instructs the committee to receive and review all applications, from full-time as well as part-time students, and to make awards based on all factors, including student financial status.

At the conclusion of this vote, the Chairman thanked the entire committee for their involvement in this democratic process and urged all of them to move forward now with doing what are best for the association and our fire service students.

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Sachs also congratulated the committee for the efforts they put forth in this nearly 2 and a half hour conference call meeting and the positive outcomes from the process. He acknowledged the need to find more funding for scholarship and for the many other worthy initiatives the Association has on-going.

The meeting concluded at 6:20 PM with a reminder to the committee that the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 13, 2004 at the College Park Fire Station starting at 7:00 PM.

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ronald Jon Siarnicki". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ronald Jon Siarnicki, Chair