

**Congressional Fire Services Institute  
National Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes  
SVC 202/203, United States Capitol Visitors Center, Washington, D.C.**

October 24, 2013

**Vice Chairman Jim Dalton** - Call to Order at 8:55 a.m.

- Started the meeting by noting the location of the exit doors in case of emergency. Then called for a moment of silence in honor of the 19 Prescott firefighters who died in the line of duty and all other firefighters who have fallen in the line of duty since our last meeting.

Moment of Silence and Pledge of Allegiance (led by Steve Austin)

**Bill Jenaway – President, CFSI Board of Directors**

- Recalled having a meeting at the Capitol Visitors Center the day of the last dinner with 10 legislators from PA regarding fire services issues.
- Will attend a hearing in PA tomorrow regarding the state of the fire service in PA and what directions we need to take.
- Encouraged to keep networking and find issues that we can cohesively move forward and affect positive change to the fire and EMS system in this country.
- Acknowledged that the CFSI Board of Directors conducted a meeting yesterday and that Bill Webb will share some of the outcomes of the meeting.

**Vice Chair Report – Jim Dalton**

- Working with CFSI staff and Programmatic Subcommittee to develop dinner seminars program.

**Executive Director’s Report – Bill Webb**

- Thanked Senator Carper for being able to reserve the meeting space.
- Noted that two members scheduled to speak at the meeting were unable to attend due to funeral services for Congressman Bill Young in Florida.
- Gave a brief update on the Institute’s work
  - Noted some of the trips in the past few months – Tampa for FAMA/FEMSA, Delaware for DVFA, Pennsylvania for Cumberland Valley, Miami and Washington for presentations, and Nevada for the Nat’l Assoc. of Elected Fire Officials Conference.
  - Upcoming event in SC for BuildStrong regarding Safe Building Codes Incentive Act.
  - Thanked Jim Dalton for all his work on the Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act.
  - Have been doing a lot of work on updating the website in preparation for dinner registration.
  - Fundraising
    - Thanked Harvey Eisner for helping us with the Silent Auction and for letting us participate at the Firehouse Expo in Baltimore. Also thanks IAFC for allowing us a role at Fire Rescue.
    - Spoke about the new fundraising event – Washington Caps Hockey game – and thanked our sponsors – Common Voice, NFFF, and the Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors.
  - Board of Directors Meeting

- Board agreed on establishing a Corporate Advisory Committee. Primary role is to offer assistance in finding new revenue sources and enhancing market strategies. Right now, in the conceptual stages.
  - Funding for the Institute itself
    - Dinner this year didn't raise as much as we projected, but we still did pretty good.
    - Our expenses and revenue were both lower than expected.
- Upcoming Events
  - Holiday Party – December 10th at Phoenix Park Hotel
  - Dinner & Seminars Program – April 30th-May 1st at the Hilton
  - MFRI Day – November 1st
    - Thanked Steve Edwards for allowing us to do this once again.
    - This is truly a great program. We always get great feedback from congressional staff who participate.
  - Awards Program
    - We'll start accepting applications earlier this year.
    - Applications are on the website.
    - If you know of an individual or organization who deserves special recognition, please let us know.
- Thanks to everyone. Opened floor to questions.

### **Legislative Report – Sean Carroll**

- Membership of Fire Caucus
  - Over 300 when I first started and now we are down to 250.
  - Realize that there has been a heavy turnover with what is the largest caucus in Congress, but we need to focus more on recruitment of quality members.
  - Encourage everyone to reach out to new members in your designated states just like Dr. Jenaway has done in PA with the PA delegation.
  - Grassroots push is the best. Ask your member to get involved.
- Going to the Hill with issues has definitely been a team effort. Wanted to thank all the counterparts from all the fire organizations.
- FY14 Appropriations
  - House has approved funding bill for Dept. Of Homeland Security
    - \$680 million for FIRE and SAFER Grant programs
    - Funded USFA at \$44 million
    - Urban Search and Rescue funded at just over \$35 million
  - Senate Appropriations Committee approved bill, but it hasn't gone to the Senate floor. Funding same as FY13
  - Lots of fiscal issues Congress has to tackle. Currently, operating on a CR until January 15th.
- Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act
  - Chairman Camp and Chairman Baucus working on a comprehensive tax package, but no one really knows what will be included
  - Working with Senator Carper, Senator Collins, Congressman Langevin, Congressman Schock to get FSIA included
- Safe Building Codes Incentive Act

- Continue to work with NAMIC and BuildStrong Coalition to educate Congress on the issues
- House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee working on a FEMA reauthorization bill
- Fire Safe Cigarettes
  - Farm Bill has a provision dealing with manufacturing and production standards
  - Questions about impact on state fire safe cigarette laws
  - Met with House Agriculture Committee staff
    - They feel the provision only deals with production/manufacture, not performance standards
    - Should be okay, but they are concerned enough that they have committed to working with us. Left the meeting with a positive feeling.

**Craig Sharman:** Have you heard anything from Program offices regarding grant applications?

**Sean Carroll:** Sounds like they are trying to get them open pretty quickly, but delayed.

**Jim Dalton:** What about the Historic Preservation?

**Sean Carroll:** Senator Leahy from Vermont introduced a Historic Preservation Act in relation to fire sprinklers in older buildings in downtown areas. The bill would provide a tax credit for retrofitting fire sprinklers and elevators in historic buildings. He is supportive of FSIA, but a lot of these historic buildings are owned by non-profits, so a tax incentive doesn't help them.

- Programmatic Update
  - 26th Annual National Fire and Emergency Services Dinner & Seminars
    - Programmatic Subcommittee approved seminars
    - Putting final touches on schedule and will share soon
    - Working with BuildStrong to have a seminar on the Hill the morning of the Dinner.
  - Hill briefings
    - Trying to organize a few soon

**Dr. Carter:** Any more developments regarding health care under Obamacare for volunteer firefighters?

**Sean Carroll:** I will pass this question over to Dave Finger who has been doing a lot of work on this issue.

**Dave Finger:** There is a resolution regarding this. Potential impact on volunteers who work enough hours to be full time. Some organizations will be considered large employers. Submitted request to IRS that volunteers should not be considered as full time. I am confident that volunteers will be considered de facto employees. Still need to wait to see how IRS chooses to implement it.

**Sean Carroll:** Vice President Biden at last dinner mentioned PSOB changes and we are reviewing the program to see if these have been implemented since then.

**Bill Webb:** Do you know the confirmation hearing dates for Secretary of Homeland Security?

**Sean Carroll:** Jeh Johnson nominated for new Secretary of Homeland Security, but don't think hearing has been announced yet.

**Dennis Compton – National Fallen Firefighters Foundation Board**

- Discussed changes in the Memorial Weekend due to government shutdown

- The NFFF office was moved to the Emmitsburg Ambulance Company. Moved candle light services to the Daughters of Charity Basilica. Mount St. Mary's let us use their athletic center for the Memorial Service on Sunday.
- Really appreciate the work of the staff and others who volunteered their time and efforts. The focus of the weekend was on the families. The services couldn't have been better.
- Huge thanks to Ernie Mitchell. He really helped us out in getting the government to open the USFA facility for two hours. Also, thank you to Congressman Steny Hoyer as well.

**Jim Dalton:** Heard that the cost of all of this was pretty high? Do you know the numbers?

**Dennis Compton:** It is more than what we usually have, but overall it was a very nice ceremony done with honor and respect.

Hope to see you next year! The ceremony will be Oct 11-12th next year!

**Bill Webb:** Want to talk about the challenges next year?

**Dennis Compton:** Next year we will have 19 firefighters from Prescott and 14 from West, Texas, as well as others throughout the country that we will be honoring.

#### FIRE SERVICE-BASED EMS

- In 2010, small group that I chaired created an electronic Fire-Based EMS tool kit that includes links, videos, etc.
- We have now regrouped and in process of not only updating original tool kit, but also adding a second section.
- Should be out by Dec. 1st. Even if you don't have a reason to use it, make sure people you know are aware of it. It's great and useful.
- Thanks to IAFF for the production of this, especially Dr. Lori Moore, who has been the motivation behind so many studies, and also behind Fire-Service Based EMS in our industry. Additionally, thank you to several members from the IAFC, the Metro Fire Chiefs, and CFSI.

Jim Dalton: Break

**Jim Dalton:** Reconvened at 10:20 a.m.

#### **Chief Ernie Mitchell, United States Fire Administrator –**

- Commented on plan for the U.S. Fire Administration in dealing with sequestration. Mentioned that budget reductions create limitations.
- Working with stakeholders in fire service and other organizations to make improvements in fire services.
- Described "Fire is Everyone's Fight." Involvement of Red Cross, as well as others, with the message. Also wanted to add in community risk reduction and reemphasize residential fire sprinklers.
  - Want to try enlisting public support for asking elected official and builders to say that we need built in protection.
  - Also need to work on educating the public and have more training outreach.

- Doing more with FEMA now and in the process of becoming a coordinator of ESF 4 (National Response Framework Emergency Support Function #4 – Firefighting Annex). This Describes response capability between neighboring states, etc.

**Congresswoman Susan Brooks (IN-5) –**

- Freshman member of Indiana-5th District
- Chair of House Homeland Security Committee’s Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications
- Described her involvement with first responders since the 90’s
  - Attended Emmitsburg training academy exercise as deputy mayor of Indianapolis
  - Was co-chair of World Police and Fire Games (host committee in 2001 in Indiana)
  - As chair of subcommittee, just held hearing in March on evaluation of homeland security grant programs. Still waiting for FEMA to share details on proposed consolidation of grant programs.
  - Has some concerns with consolidation and has yet to receive information on what that proposal would be. Stressed that the members are working hard to ensure that firefighters have the funding that they need to keep communities safe.
  - Received briefings on medical preparedness and weapons of mass destruction in central Indiana
  - Next week, holding a mark-up of Medical Preparedness Allowable Use Act
    - Purpose is to ensure that homeland security grants can be used for medical preparedness
    - Also, monitoring FirstNet's public safety broad band network
  - Questions?

**Dr. Jenaway:** I wanted to encourage some of your staff to look at documents produced by the Gilmore Commission (weapons of mass destruction preparedness issues). Look at recommendations from 10 years ago and make sure they are implemented today. Can relay through Sean to get you the documents.

**Dennis Compton:** Nice to hear you talk about fire service-based EMS. Please let us know if there is anything else we can do.

**Rep. Brooks –** I just recently learned about an issue from an ER in my district. I didn’t realize that it was hard to gain access to some basic drugs that they need. I was wondering how/and if this affected EMS. I would love to learn more about the challenges that you face.

**Dennis Compton-** Yes, this is an issue. Drug boxes throughout the country are replenished by hospitals. So if hospitals can’t replenish them, then we are short, too.

**Kevin O' Connor -** Delighted to hear comments regarding FirstNet. A lot of folks in this room work hard for emergency communications. Protecting the critical voice capabilities is very important for the safety of the firefighters. Also, 11 major metropolitan centers that need to vacate existing T-band will experience a huge disruption in service. Still a lot of issues that need to be addressed.

**Rep. Brooks to Aiken** - Do you feel that the fire service is represented sufficiently with respect to FirstNet's board?

**Doug Aiken:** I am a member of the FirstNet Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) and we certainly have challenges in communicating. We have had only one meeting and when we asked for copies of the briefing slides they were not able to share them with us. It has been a challenge and I hope things improve.

**Rep. Brooks:** We will see if we can work on that.

**Doug Aiken:** We aren't going to replace tactical communications that we use every day, at least not in the near future. We need a bigger voice with FirstNet.

**Rep. Brooks:** We had a hearing on it. Have the fire services talked much about the role of social media in your response? I'm curious because an event like the Boston bombing had a huge response through social media. This generation is getting information from Twitter. What is your role in ensuring your departments understand this new mode of communication?

**Doug Aiken** – I chair the state's 9-1-1 commission and I agree. If you are 25 or younger, you use social media to communicate. It's a very important issue for us.

**Dan Mathews – Staff Director House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure's Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management**

- Why is the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee involved in emergency management?
  - Federal role of putting things back together again after disasters (roads, bridges, etc.)
  - Three major legislative efforts - followed big disasters
    - Creation of Department of Homeland Security after 9/11
    - Post Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act
    - Sandy Recovery Improvement Act
  - Three principles
    - Disaster management has to be a national undertaking
    - Federal policy needs to support an all-hazards system. Need to respond no matter what caused it
    - Must be united at federal level with mitigation, protection, preparedness, response, and recovery. Need to make sure authorities and capabilities are as closely aligned under the President as possible.
  - Current Priorities
    - FEMA Reauthorization Act of 2013
      - Reauthorizes FEMA for next 3 years at current spending levels
      - Authorizes FEMA to modernize public alerts and warning system
      - Authorizes urban search and rescue system
      - Emergency Management Assistance Compacts
        - This helps when local fire departments can send resources to another state in response to a disaster
- H.R. 3300 mark-up on October 29th
- Mitigation

- As population continues to grow and people move to coasts, there has been a steady increase in the cost of federal disasters.
- Pensacola, FL example - some homes barely damaged, some completely gone
  - Building to better codes saved lives and money

**Bill Webb:** How much focus within committee is on WUI fires (Wildland Urban Interface)?

**Dan Mathews:** Would fall under House Agriculture Committee, but once homes are damaged and involved, FEMA gets involved. There are efforts to find mitigation money despite the tight fiscal situation.

**Dr. Jenaway:** There is also a significant gap in insurance coverage for volunteer teams.

**Chief Mitchell, cont.**

- **Bill Webb:** Budget for FY15 with budget caps?
- Chief Mitchell:
  - Given a budget based on a continuation of previous budget but this number could change
  - Things we can't do because they are authorized, but not appropriated.

**Dennis Compton to Chief Mitchell:** Thank you so much for what you did for Memorial Weekend. It was a big deal that you helped us out.

**Ross Arends- Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms and Explosives**

- Send regards from ATF Director Todd Jones
- Still have approximately 100 certified fire investigators; 3 national response teams comprised of 25 experienced special agents
- We are facing some difficulty with sequestration. Approximately 40% of our special agents are eligible for retirement.
- E-mail address if need anything: [ross.arends@atf.gov](mailto:ross.arends@atf.gov)

**Subcommittee Reports**

- **Ethics** - Doug Aiken - None
- **Programmatic** – Jim Dalton - None
- Fundraising
  - Bobby Halton not present, but no report
- **Membership** – Janet Wilmoth not present, but no report
- Resolutions Subcommittee- Steven Austin
  - Three resolutions considered. Just want to thank everyone on the Resolutions Subcommittee for this.
    - IAFC/IAFF/NVFC Resolution in Support of Activities to amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act's Application to Volunteer Firefighters and the High-Risk Occupation Exemption

- Barry Kasinitz: Recognized that Ken LaSala was the driving force behind this. Great resolution because really demonstrates how CFSI brings the different aspects under one resolution. Wanted to mention one specific aspect of this that does impact paid firefighters. There is in the law a tax that is imposed on high tax health care plans called the Cadillac Tax. We argued that health plans for firefighters might cost more simply because the work is more dangerous, not because they are getting better benefits. To address this, Congress implemented a “high-risk exemption”, specifically mentioning firefighting. Congress also added a provision defining health plans covering high-risk groups as plans in which the majority of employees covered are in a high-risk occupation. Because many firefighters are in healthcare plans with other municipal employees (like teachers), they would not be covered by the high-risk exemption. Because of this, we are asking for your support.
  - Ken LaSala: Other issue regarding volunteer firefighters being considered employees under fire departments because they are working more than 30 hours a week. Trying to get an answer from IRS regarding what firefighters will be classified as under the Affordable Care Act. We would ask that firefighters be exempt from the Patient Protection Affordable Care Act, and if not, want clear direction on how fire departments are supposed to treat their volunteer firefighters.
  - Ken LaSala: Motion to accept
  - Ken Willette: Second
  - Resolution unanimously approved
- IAFC/IAFF/NVFC Resolution in Support of Federal Agency and Congressional Initiatives to Ensure the Deployment of Effective Indoor Technology That Will Meet the Needs of Public Safety
  - Ken LaSala: Currently, the FCC does have regulations out about accuracy of 911 calls from outdoor locations because more calls are being made using cell phones; however, there aren't any indoor regulations. This is creating problems for fire departments and EMS because they can locate the building, but not persons inside the building. Purpose of this resolution is just saying that whatever requirements the FCC adopts, the new technology should be affordable, ready to deploy, easy to use, and accurate.
  - Steve Austin: This is an escalating problem. More cellular phones than landlines
  - Jim Dalton: Is there a problem with cell phones calling 911?
  - Doug Aiken: It's not a problem to get through, but the problem lies in the vertical location that determines where you are exactly -- for instance in high rise buildings. Location information is extremely important. It takes 3 times longer with wireless phones to figure out location than with landline phones.
  - Ken LaSala: Motion
  - Doug Aiken: Second



- Resolution unanimously approved
- NFPA Resolution Expressing Support for Appropriate Review and Approval of Consensus Standard Requirement Waivers for Assistance to Firefighter Grant Awards
  - Ken Willette: The purpose of this resolution is to provide guidance to AFG office when they work with reviewers.
  - Ken Willette: Motion to accept
  - Tony O' Neill: Second
  - Resolution unanimously approved

**Unfinished Business-** none

**New Business –** none

**Meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.**

Attendance List

Aiken, Doug – International Municipal Signal Association  
 Arnold, Justin – International Society of Fire Service Instructors  
 Austin, Steve – International Association of Arson Investigators  
 Bailey, Dan – International Association of Wildland Fire  
 Brooks, Paul – Center for Public Safety Excellence  
 Cade, Greg – National Fire Protection Association  
 Carroll, Sean – Congressional Fire Services Institute  
 Carter, Harry – Institution of Fire Engineers-USA Branch  
 Collins Eggerman, Diane – Center for Campus Fire Safety  
 Compton, Dennis – International Fire Service Training Association/National Fallen Firefighters Foundation  
 Dalton, Jim – National Fire Sprinkler Association  
 Deppa, Karen – National Association of State Fire Marshals  
 Edwards, Steve – North American Fire Training Directors  
 Eisner, Harvey – Firehouse Magazine  
 Finger, Dave – National Volunteer Fire Council  
 Gibson, Hugh “Skip” – Insurance Services Office (ISO)  
 Goldfeder, Brian – Congressional Fire Services Institute  
 Hill, James – International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters  
 Jelenewicz, Chris – Society of Fire Protection Engineers  
 Jenaway, Bill – CFSI Board of Directors  
 Kasinitz, Barry – International Association of Fire Fighters  
 Kehoe, Bill – Congressional Fire Services Institute  
 Krupp, Roger – International Association of Arson Investigators  
 LaSala, Ken – International Association of Fire Chiefs  
 Muncy, Steve – American Fire Sprinkler Association  
 Nathan, Stuart – International Fire Buff Associates  
 Neitch, Deborah – International Association of Arson Investigators

O'Connor, Kevin – International Association of Fire Fighters  
O'Neill, Tony - National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications  
Owen, Sarah – Underwriters Laboratories  
Roxson, Randy – USA Sprinkler Fitters Association  
Sammander, Leila – Congressional Fire Services Institute  
Sharman, Craig – Tyco/SimplexGrinnell  
Sobotka, Debbie – Center for Public Safety Excellence  
Webb, Bill – Congressional Fire Services Institute  
Wilette, Ken – National Fire Protection Association  
Wiley, Justin – International Code Council  
Yang, Jiann – National Institute of Standards and Technology

Speakers:

Congresswoman Susan Brooks (IN-5)  
Chief Ernest Mitchell, United States Fire Administrator  
Ross Arends, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives  
Dan Mathews, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Guests:

Levin, Catherine – Vision 20/20