

WISCONSIN FIRE & EMS LEADERSHIP LEGISLATIVE COALITION

321 E. Main Street, Suite 200
Madison, WI 53703



April 2022 Fire & EMS Coalition Meeting Minutes

April 12, 2022 – 10:00am – Madison, WI

In attendance: Members: Chris Anderson (PAAW), Mike Stanley, (WI State Fire Chief's), Todd Blaser (WI State Fire Fighters Assn), Brad Bowen (WI Fire Chief Education Assn), Kevin Gerarden (WI Society of Emergency Services Instructors)

Lobbyists: Joe Strohl (PFFW), Matt Kussow (PAAW), George Klaetsch (WI State Fire Chief's)

Others: George Esbensen, MnFire

Meeting called to order and roll call taken at 10:00 am.

George Esbensen from the MnFire Initiative gave a presentation via Zoom on the strategy they used to get this implemented in Minnesota. No action taken.

Treasurer's Report: PAAW has a sub-account for us, balance remains at \$3,841.00. Member associations who have paid their dues are PFFW, PAAW, Chiefs Education Association, WEMSA and State Fire Fighters Association.

There was some discussion on the need for dues, what the organization plans to do with these funds, and how the funds are managed.

Discussion continued about organizing officially with the IRS as a 501 (c) (6) organization. We may have more clout with the legislature if we're organized in this manner. It would also be easier to manage the funds. All in attendance agreed this was the best way to move forward. There was not a quorum so no vote could be taken. This will be revisited at the next meeting.

Chris Anderson reported on the GEMT bill that was signed into law. This may take a year or more to get up and running. Rules will have to be written to implement it and the state will have to amend the State Medicaid Plan to CMS. Fire departments will need to be vigilant in making sure municipalities use these funds to support their fire and EMS departments.

The Congressional Fire Institute Symposium was discussed. Hottest topic of discussion was recruitment and retention. Mike Stanley will send a link to the report that come from this symposium.



George Klaetsch noted that more than 25% of the legislature will be new in 2023, so we're losing many members who were well versed in the issues that are important to all member organizations. He suggested targeting 10 or so freshmen and meet with them early so they're aware of the needs of the group. Brad Bowen suggested a Legislative Lobby Day at the beginning of next session.

The group discussed the legislative priorities list each organization submitted. Common themes were recruitment & retention, shared revenue, levy limit/expenditure restraint program, and mental health.

Joe Strohl noted that increasing Shared Revenue should be the #1 priority for all and that will help with the other priorities. Matt Kussow noted the GOP will be resistant to this increase. The best way to get more money to municipalities will be a push to turn voluntary departments into career departments.

It was suggested the state could have a program similar to the federal SAFER grant program that funds equipment and other infrastructure needs for departments.

Mike Stanley shared his discussion with DSPS Secretary Crim regarding lack of funding for fire-based services from recent ARP funding. She was receptive to his questions and observations and will look into it.

Next meeting – a doodle poll for dates and times will be sent in the near future.

Meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Cindy McGinnis, PFFW
May 2, 2022