



New Hampshire
Association of Fire Chiefs

New Hampshire Association of Fire Chiefs Facilitation



Session #1 - February 1, 2023

Location - The Grove at Primex³

Participants

- Scott Hunter – Bedford Fire Chief
- Michael McShane – Dover Fire Chief
- David Emanuel – Durham Fire Chief
- Mike Sitar – Tilton – Northfield Fire Chief
- Jay Watkins – Berlin Fire Chief
- Hank Thomas – Newbury Fire Chief
- Larry Best – Salem Fire Chief
- Steve Buxton – Nashua Fire Chief
- David Chamberlain – Jaffrey Fire Chief
- Brent Lemire – Executive Director of NHAFC

Facilitated by:

Rick Alpers, Risk Management Consultant and Continuity of Operations Coordinator, Primex³

Purpose and Intended Results

The Executive Board has gathered to review their current Mission and Vision Statement along with looking to set achievable goals for the association over the next 12-18 months. Reviewing their current Mission and Vision Statements allows the board to reaffirm why the organizations exists and also help guide where the organization should go.

The Executive Board reviewed the associations current Mission and Vision Statement. The Executive Board unanimously agreed that the current Mission Statement still accurately describes who the association is at its core. The Board also approved the current Vision Statement with the only discussion being whether or not to add “EMS” to the statement. Majority of the group is in favor of adding “EMS” to the statement, but the topic will be discussed again at session # 2 to ensure everyone is still in favor.

Mission Statement

Providing leadership, education and advocacy for the New Hampshire Fire Service

Vision Statement

The vision of the NHAFC is to create a self-sustaining organization that promotes leadership, mentoring, development and empathy in the NH Fire and Emergency Services. The organization shall foster an atmosphere of creativity, cohesiveness, professionalism, and integrity as its core value.

At the beginning of the session the board was asked the following questions:

What is currently going well for the association?

What are some of the challenges currently facing the organization?

Here are their responses:

Going Well –

- Monthly meetings being held in person, and strategically around the state.
- The Association has become a clearing house for information sharing
- Fellowship and networking is strong throughout the association
- Association has solid relationships with the DOS Chiefs
- Chief Fire Officer program
- Legislative strategy and approach are strong
- Association finances becoming stronger.
- Seeing growth in partnerships and sponsorships
- Meeting participation numbers are trending upward
- Current board representation covers the state geographically
- Positive working relationships with legislators

Challenges –

- Helping departments with recruitment and staffing challenges
- Board Succession planning
- Continue to improve communications to the membership
- Improve the management of the legislative calendar
- Establish 501c3 status for the association
- Improve how the board receives legislative feedback from members to help guide position statements
- Improve the use of technology for efficiency reasons
- Better manage all internal and external relationships
- Many small town unable to manage their all-volunteer departments
- Become a resource for the studying of regionalizing services at the community level
- Continue and improve Emergency Management resources and training
- Integrate EMS Association into NHAFC

Goals from each attendee were identified as:

Chief Sitar

1. Achieve 501 c 3 status for the association
2. Craft, Implement and support a succession plan for the board of directors
3. Explore the viability of NH EMS agencies joining NHAFC
4. Improve communications to the membership through the use of technology
5. Partner with state wide agencies to begin talking about the benefits of regionalizing services

Chief Emanuel

1. Recognize champions and celebrate efforts of Fire Chiefs
2. Strengthen communication and ties with national organizations to advance safety and health initiatives here in NH
3. Foster communications and collaborate with members on national events

Chief Hunter

1. Offer one major professional development event each year to the fire service
2. Explore inviting EMS agencies into NHAFC
3. Collaborate with various NH stakeholders to increase availability of emergency responders and provide benefits to attract high level workers to NH

Chief Chamberlain

1. Focus on legislation through lobbying effort
2. Develop and share recruitment and retention strategies
3. Retirement system benefits

Chief McShane

1. Explore the benefits and viability of high school fire service programs
2. Develop strategies to assess community needs

Chief Watkins

1. Increase professional development opportunities for the fire service
2. Develop talking points for board members to use when asking small town chiefs to join the association.
3. Develop and share recruitment and retention strategies

Chief Best

1. Increase membership involvement in the association
2. Craft, implement and support a succession plan for the BOD
3. Drive to fill all open committee seats from the membership

Chief Buxton

1. Develop a formal mentorship program for new chiefs
2. Establish a working group to study regionalizing of fire services

Chief Thomas

1. Improve and deliver association sponsored trainings
2. Develop a top 10 list on why to join the association
3. Develop and share recruitment and retention strategies for the fire service

Executive Director Lemire

1. Continue to improve the website along with increasing the use of social media to improve communications
2. Increase networking opportunities
3. Improve and strengthen member participation in legislative advocacy

2023 CONSOLIDATED GOALS

#1: Increase Professional Development Opportunities for the Fire Service and Emergency Services

- One large training a year
- Partner with NHFST, NHHSEM, Primex³, NHMA to deliver trainings
- Work with FST Commission to update Administrative Rule SAF 700
- Communicate these services to the membership regularly

#2: Positively create and foster a working relationship with NHFST Recruitment and Retention Officer to assist local departments with modernizing their strategies

- Explain the benefit and the possibility of beginning high school fire service programs
- Collaborate with various New Hampshire stakeholders to increase availability of emergency responders and provide benefits to attract high level workers to New Hampshire
- Work with the Recruitment and Retention Officer at NHFST to help improve resources for Members

#3: Complete and attain 501c3 status for the association in 2023

#4: Increase the number of members in the Association and increase overall engagement to all Members. Continue to increase board diversification and succession planning

- ▶ Improve communication with NHAFC members by better utilizing social media platforms
 - ✓ Create and populate a communications committee comprised of 2-3 tech-savvy members to help with the set up and outreach.
- ▶ Recognize champions and celebrate efforts of Fire Chiefs
- ▶ Develop talking points for Board Members to use when asking other departments to join
- ▶ Continue to improve the NHAFC website for communication purposes
- ▶ Develop Top 10 Talking Points on the advantages of joining the association.

The following was crafted:

1. Immediate networking possibilities with your peers
2. Stay current on leadership challenges facing today's Fire Service
3. Help drive the legislative process at the state level
4. Numerous collaborative training opportunities
5. Be up to date on various funding opportunities.
6. Ability to problem solve in real time with your peers
7. Better understand what statewide resources are available to you and your department
8. Benefit from the association's strong working relationship with all agencies within the Department of Safety
9. Chief Officer credentialing designation offered by the Association
10. Regular monthly membership meetings to ensure engagement and networking is available