



# MASSACHUSETTS FIRE DISTRICT 7

Chief Matthew R. Belsito, Sutton  
Chairman  
(508) 865-8737

Chief Robert P. Parsons, Spencer  
Vice Chairman  
(508) 867-8825

Chief William T. Kessler, Uxbridge  
Treasurer  
(508) 278-2787

Chief Richard P. Hamilton, Millbury  
Secretary  
(508) 865-5328

## District 7 Chiefs Meeting Minutes February 21, 2021 - 6:30 p.m. Zoom Meeting

**Call to Order – 18:30 by Chairman Belsito**  
**Pledge of Allegiance**  
**27 in attendance from 22 Towns/Cities**

### Treasurer and Secretary Report

M – Chief Kessler: to accept both as emailed

S – Chief Parsons

V – Unanimous

**EXPENDITURES:** Chief Kessler explained two payments that there were questions on. One was for \$890 for the annual calibration on the fit testing machine that Uxbridge agreed to let the District use, that was agreed by the District to have done annually. The second was for an invoice from Fire Tech and Safety for filters for the Air/ Light truck.

**MEMA:** No report.

**DCR:** David Celino, the Chief Fire Warden for the state, gave a presentation with historical data of fires in the state. A very active 2020 season, more data collected during the season instead of waiting until the end, there was very much interest in the data, charts showing 1353 fires with 897 acres throughout the state, fire departments did a good job keeping the fires in check and not spreading widely, he explained multiple slides of data, more months have active fires now than in the past, more lightning strike fires, District 7 had 161 fires with 78.4 acres, 1 home was threatened, 44 DCR responses, will be looking for more reporting of homes that are threatened, debris burning is the number one cause of fires, smoking is the second most cause, staffing levels same as last year, 8 vacancies (none in D7), VFA fund requests lower than normal, if your population is under 10,000 apply, excess equipment program is good. Roy Liard: Not much with the snow cover, status quo on seasonal start, daily fire reports should start in about a week (as soon as snow disappears), email Roy for excess equipment requests.

**State Fire Marshal:** Marshal Ostroskey addressed the group. Fire equipment grants still in review process, hopefully finishing soon.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- *Training:* Chief Kessler gave an update on the district trainings, the Fire Instructor class and the Fire Officer Class. He received a call this morning and was able to modify the Fire Officer class to include the practical portion for the certification at no additional cost to the district. He felt it was a good thing to include. This will add 10 hours of project work that they will do on their own time. The class schedule will remain the same. They will have to take the written exam at a later time. The Instructor's class is more involved to accomplish that.
- *Radio:* Chief Fleischer: Testing was done on the Orange system by a contractor and identified a problem area, the issues will be corrected when the weather clears, Cradle Point will be added to both Comm Units (adds mobile Wi-Fi), working on a \$56,000 grant from Homeland for radios; will add VHF radios to the cab of each Comm Unit that can record fireground communications, 7 new 700/ 800 MHz portables for each Comm Unit, some replacement VHF portables to replace older ones in the caches of radios in each truck, new batteries for all portables in both trucks, exploring Zello options for the district, the Zello would have most D7 channels to monitor and be able to transmit on either orange, the county or to other chiefs on the system. Chief Normandin explained a situation in Southbridge, the roof failed in the radio storage area and the radios got wet. As of right now they are still working, he has filed an insurance claim for them, the county radio does have a backup.
- *FCAM:* Chairman Belsito explained a report sent by Chief Coleman with legislative priorities, which was shown on the meeting for everyone to see.
- *Homeland Security:* Chairman Belsito showed a report from Chief Kochanowski on the meeting.
- *Tech Rescue:* Chairman Belsito: Not much going on, leadership role posted, closes Wednesday, meeting will be held to interview candidates.
- *State Mobilization:* Chief DiFronzo: Met today, reworked the state mobilization website, should be much easier to use, forms on it as PDF, move of oversight from MEMA to DFS on the Governor's desk, reworking of mobilization plan still in the works along with a tabletop exercise, should be available as soon as possible and will include private EMS, trying to make the exercise more realistic, will be done on Zoom, will have to limit the amount of participants, finalizing tech rescue mobilization, inventories have been updated, run cards being worked, D7 seems up to date, mobilization activations have to go through the control point per state, cannot call MEMA direct yourself, correct your run cards that have that, helicopter radio frequency changing, elimination of local frequencies and will use common frequencies, make sure you have VTAC11 or UTAC 41D, or the 800 MHz Tac channel, all direct no repeater channels.
- *EMS:* Chief Normandin: COVID-19: last week the Governor's office stated starting March 1<sup>st</sup> only mass vaccination sites will get vaccine, Harrington Hospital Southbridge site should continue on due to its location, FCAM EMS Committee working on OEMS licensing and MATRIS software issues, CMEMS annual awards banquet May 11<sup>th</sup>, hopefully in person.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**PREPLAN PROGRAM:** Chief Edwards: Thanks to those who have shown interest in it.

**EXPIRED SCBA BOTTLES:** Chairman Belsito stated Chief Dupuis asked about the disposition of the expired SCBA bottles from the Air/ Light Truck, as they were purchased through Homeland Security, we need to clarify what can be done with them, the Chairman will check with Chief Kochanowski or Peter Peloquin.

### NEW BUSINESS

**FCAM D7 CALL/VOL REPRESENTATIVE:** Chairman Belsito explained he sent out a request and received three names back: Larry McDonald, Bob Parsons and Mark DiFronzo, Chief DiFronzo explained he only applied because FCAM kept showing it vacant and he didn't think anyone was taking it, he opted out it one of the other two members wanted it, Chief McDonald bowed out for the same reason as long as Chief Parsons was willing to do it, Chief Parsons agreed to take it

**USE OF COUNTY BAND:** Chief Knopf explained they had two fires in the last two weeks and during the after actions it was asked if there was a more efficient way to call for mutual aid, they asked if they could go on the county radio and make the full request at once, Chief Normandin felt it was difficult depending on the dispatcher, Chief McDonald had a similar issue and needing to call the closest mutual aid is also an issue but felt we should be able to accomplish it, Chief DiFronzo was not a fan of self-dispatching but felt if the run cards were clear who would be called you can automatically send equipment, Chief Fleischer wondered if a master plan could be put on the website with the run cards, Chief Hulyk stated many departments tweak their cards often and wondered about maintaining them, Chief Holway explained how well New Braintree dispatch does with calling mutual aid, they have all of the run cards, Chief Normandin asked how many dispatchers work at a time and Chief Holway stated 2 to 3 at a time, Chief Parsons stated towns around have good relationships, incoming chiefs have to understand that you are not jumping the gun if you start moving before being called, Chief Knopf appreciated the conversation and will reach out to his mutual aid to discuss automatic response, Chief Normandin explained if you put the Zello app in your phone you can monitor county and get a heads up when mutual aid is requested, Chief McDonald agreed Zello does a lot, Chief Normandin will email out to ask who wants to be added to the county band Zello, Chief Fleischer suggested a sub-committee for notification and automatic aid, after discussion the Chairman agreed an 11-member committee would be good, Chief Parsons asked if Spencer is on anyone's run cards to let him know if they should automatically respond.

M – Chief Normandin: To adjourn

S – Chief Parsons

V – Unanimous

**Adjourned 20:10 hrs.**

**Next Meeting: March 25<sup>th</sup>**