Minutes of the Proceedings

Host Keith Franz welcomed the participants and the meeting was called to order by Bob Vallero, interim chairman.

A financial report was presented, stating that there was roughly $9000 on deposit with the IAFC, and $600 with the bank in Slinger. It was not clear if the IAFC had ever reimbursed the Texas Fire Museum for their expenses at the last seminar, which if not paid would reduce our cash by about $2000. Bob stated that Sheila had never reimbursed his museum for their expenditures at the seminar, which amounted to a $200 donation in the name of the FMN to the TFM.

There was discussion on what financial obligations we have, and how much is needed to support our mission. The website is the only ongoing expense, and David Lewis stated that the site is actually self supporting, through the use of advertising. He also noted that he has donated, and will continue to do so, the annual registration fee for our domain name. The President requested that David submit a bill for those services to the Treasurer, and to accompany that bill with a letter stating that he wishes to donate the fee. This would establish a history for future boards, assist in the setting of a budget, and provide Lewis with a document for tax purposes. It was felt that, other than initial legal expenses incurred in the startup of the corporation; a budget not to exceed $2000 per year was adequate. The budget was approved as below:

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Revenue:  
  Dues - @2000.00 at $30.00 each  
  Contributions – 0  
  Seminar - @700.00  
  Gifts/Commission - @300.00  
Total Revenue:  $3000

Expenses:  
  Seminar - $700.00  
  Legal - $1500.00  
  Website - $300.00  
  Insurance - $300.00  
  Communications - $200.00 (printing, postage, etc.)  
Total Expenses:  $3000
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Discussion began concerning the direction of the organization. It was pointed out that the IAFC was less cooperative each year, and that there had been several registration problems in Dallas. In a discussion with Sheila Jarboe, our liaison with the IAFC, prior to the Dallas convention, Mr. Garry Briese was no longer the Executive Director of the IAFC, and she was transferred to a different job title. She did not attend the Dallas meeting. Subsequent to the seminar it was learned that Briese was in fact still the ED. It was also pointed out that the IAFC did not include the FMN as a program on their convention brochure this year.

Lengthy discussion followed, and the following points were brought up. First, can we get control of our funds from the IAFC? Secondly, was the IAFC as a whole, no longer interested in supporting us, or was that idea promulgated by only a few. Third, if we go out on our own, can we survive when we are spread out over the entire country, meeting only twice each year?
Following that discussion a motion was made and seconded to incorporate the Fire Museum Network as a nonprofit corporation in the state of Wisconsin, and to inform the IAFC that we no longer would be a subcommittee of their organization. The motion passed unanimously. Keith Franz volunteered to take on the task of filing the appropriate documents, working with an attorney, Mr. Seymour Pikofsky, Esq. of Milwaukee.

Following the decision to disaffiliate, discussion turned toward the formal organization of the FMN. Talking points were the formation of Bylaws, formation of a Board of Directors, financing options and organization of annual seminars.

The mission statement of the FMN was edited and approved by the Board. The mission statement is: “The Fire Museum Network is a nonprofit entity which provides a means for networking among fire museums and promotes the interests of those dedicated to collecting, preserving, and interpreting the artifacts, history, and traditions of the fire service.”

It was felt that if we were to have any credibility there needed to be formal communication with our members via a newsletter, and a “members only” area of the website. Additionally, it was decided that there was no need for the corporation to be affiliated with any umbrella organization such as the IAFC or AAM, for example.

The formation of the organization was formalized through the writing of draft Bylaws, subject to review by counsel. The current board was dissolved, and by unanimous action the following members were elected to the first Board of Directors of the Fire Museum Network, Inc. Those who were on the past board (committee) and who had expressed an interest in remaining with the organization were also elected. Thus, the following officers of the corporation were elected: Bob Vallero, Pres.; Tom McDonald, Vice-Pres.; Keith Franz, Sec’y-Treas.; Debby Davis, Ted Gerber, David Lewis, Jane Rogers, Gary Williams and Randy Wootton.

The length of terms was discussed however a formal decision as to how the current members would vacate their seats was left for a future meeting.

Action items to be pursued are as follows:

The President was directed to write a letter to Garry Briese requesting the funds from the IAFC be forwarded the corporation.

The President will compose a letter to be sent to each museum joining the FMN.

Keith Franz, Sec’y-Treasurer, will (working with legal counsel) go forward with incorporation in Wisconsin. He previously had obtained a TIN from the IRS.

Jane Rogers will investigate the procedure to obtain a trademark for our logo and our legal name with the appropriate government agency. She will also work on a newsletter to be distributed to fire museums nationwide.
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June 11 & 12, 2004
Slinger, Wisconsin

Tom McDonald will act as liaison with potential seminar hosts.

Gary Williams will obtain information on FMN logo items such as clothing, mugs and so on.

David Lewis will continue as webmaster.

Following a trip to the Venerable Fire Museum the meeting adjourned.

Recorded and submitted by Debby Davis