

Minutes of the
2014 FFLA Board Meeting

Walterboro, SC

The 2014 FFLA Board Meeting was held at the South Carolina Forestry Commission's Coastal Region office in Walterboro, hosted by Regional Forester Calvin Bailey.

Present were Chairman Keith Argow, Historian and Florida Director Bob Spear, Treasurer and North Idaho-Montana Director Gary Weber, Secretary and New Jersey Co-director Ray Grimes, Georgia-South Carolina Representative Mike Finch, and New Jersey member Ed Seifert.

The meeting started at 0930 with Regional Forester Bailey welcoming the group and giving a presentation on the history of fire towers in South Carolina from the creation of the commission in 1927 to the closing of the towers in 1993 with the progression from a statewide network of fire towers to the current regional dispatch centers.

The conference call portion of the board meeting started at 1100 with Southern Deputy Chair Ron Stafford, Maine Director Bill Cobb, Arkansas-Oklahoma Director Smoke Pfeiffer, Eastern Washington Director Rod Fosback, and Southern New England Director Henry Isenberg joining.

The first order of business was a moment of silence for the long-time members lost in the past year; Steve Cummings, one of the founders and the association's first chairman, Joe Higgins, founding member and first editor of Lookout Network, and two long-time New York members, Tim Sullivan, Chief Ranger for the Palisades Park Commission, and Larry Paul, historian and champion for the idea of re-establishing a fire tower in the Pine Barrens of Long Island.

Next was the approval of the minutes of the three meetings in 2013 that had previously been posted. With no corrections, the minutes were approved as read.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Ed Seifert tallied the election results received from Elections Officer Rob Hoeye; 18 ballots were returned out of the 35 sent out. The results were: Chair - Keith Argow, 18 (no write-ins), Treasurer - Gary Weber, 18 (no write-ins), Eastern Deputy Chair - Mark Haughwout, 5 (no write-ins). Grimes moved and Spear seconded to accept the election results with all in favor, except Isenberg, who abstained.

REPORTS

Treasurer Weber gave the membership report; as of Jan 1, paid membership is at 917 members, up 52 from a year ago, with 168 complimentary members for a total of 1,085. The Treasurers Report had previously been sent to board members; Treasurer Weber summarized the report and moved, seconded by Spear, to accept the Membership and Treasurers reports, with all in favor.

The proposed 2014 budget was gone over, line by line, by Treasurer Weber. Weber moved, seconded by Fosback, for acceptance of the budget. All were in favor of approving the budget as proposed, with no changes.

<i>Income</i>		
Balance Forward	\$7,409.33	
Dues	\$13,000.00	
Donations	\$300.00	
Chapter Grants/Donations (Pass-Through)	\$5,000.00	
Merchandise Sales	\$1,200.00	
Interest	\$30.00	
	Total	\$26,939.33
<i>Expenses</i>		
Publication		-\$10,000.00
Chapter Distributions		-\$2,000.00
Brochures		-\$2,400.00
Restoration Grants		-\$2,500.00
Emergency Stabilization Grants		-\$300.00
Chapter Grants/Donations (Pass-Through)		-\$5,000.00
Insurance		-\$2,000.00
Merchandise Purchase		-\$1,000.00
Operations		-\$1,000.00
Forest History Society/Archive		-\$150.00
Website Upgrade		-\$500.00
	Total	-\$26,850.00
Year-end Balance		\$89.33

Historian Spear presented the Historians Report. There was little to report; he is still cataloging things that are sent to him. He does occasionally send things to the Forest History Society in Durham, NC, to be archived.

Webmaster Cobb reported on the web site. The new site is up and running; he is trying to keep the site up to date with fresh material and requested anyone with things to post to submit them to him. He will be working with Weber and Kent Argow to set up on-line membership registration. Cobb also mentioned that he had received 12 chapter reports thus far. He noted that people do read the reports and when they do not see a chapter report, they do ask about it.

OLD BUSINESS

On-line membership registration and PayPal links: Kent Argow, Cobb, and Weber will continue to work to get this up and running on the FFLA website.

Liability Insurance: There has been nothing found at this time, but a new avenue will be pursued through the Alliance of Nonprofits for Insurance.

Social Media: In addition to the FFLA facebook page, there was discussion about the success of chapter facebook pages, as well as LinkedIn.

NEW BUSINESS

Cummings Memorial: Isenberg made a motion to use a letter writing campaign to petition the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry to rename the Hopewell Fire Tower the Steve Cummings Memorial Fire Tower to honor Steve. There was no second, but the discussion continued. There was consensus that a committee - chaired by Spear with members Isenberg and Haughwout - be appointed to seek the most appropriate means of honoring Steve. It was suggested that the committee consult with others in Pennsylvania, including the Pennsylvania Forest Fire Museum. Pfeiffer moved to approve the formation of the committee, Isenberg seconded, approved with all in favor.

Membership categories: Weber received a request from an individual (non-member) asking to be put on the list to receive the pdf version of LOOKOUT NETWORK. This prompted the question of whether or not a membership category should be offered at a lower rate for those only wanting the electronic copy. Weber will continue to solicit input, but initial responses did not favor this. Weber had also received an email from a member of another organization inquiring about affiliate memberships. After discussion, it was determined that Weber should continue to research options.

Back issues of LOOKOUT NETWORK: Requests have been received in the past for back issues of LOOKOUT NETWORK to be posted on the FFLA website. Currently, a CD containing every issue is available, selling for \$20.00. Discussion favored posting of a single recent back issue as a "teaser" with continuation of the entire collection on CD. It was also proposed that available back issues be made available for sale.

Tower restoration "How-To": Stafford brought up the idea of having something of a guide or tips of what to consider when restoring a steel fire tower. Argow has been in contact with South Carolina member Billy McIntosh, who bought and moved four towers, and is willing to work with Stafford on putting something together.

2015 Board Meeting: It was decided to continue with the conference call format to get the involvement of directors who cannot travel to the board meeting. The idea of returning west, to Southern California, for the physical location was brought up; a determination on the location will be made later.

FFLA shirts: As a final thought, Weber brought up a past suggestion to change the four lookout drawings around the FFLA logo on the t-shirts and sweatshirts the association sells. He noted that the current shirt inventory is relatively low and that this would be a good time to make the change, if there was still interest and someone available to do the new artwork.

After moved by Pfeiffer and seconded by Stafford with all in favor, the 2014 Board Meeting was adjourned at 1210.

Following the board meeting, Regional Forester Bailey took the group next door for a tour of the dispatch center, where they had the opportunity to meet one of the last South Carolina fire tower operators, who had been transferred into dispatch upon the closing of her tower in 1993.