



Colorado State Fire Chiefs' Association

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Legislative Committee Meeting Notes

Friday, December 18, 2009

A meeting of the CSFCA Legislative Committee was held on Friday, December 18, 2009 at 1330 at South Metro Fire-Rescue Headquarters. Conference call capabilities were provided for this meeting.

The following members of the Legislative Committee were in attendance: Steve Pischke, Chair; Chris Riley; Dave Parmley; Dan Qualman; and Paul Cooke (ex-officio). Doug McBee, Jerry Rhodes and Roberta Robinette (ex-officio) joined the meeting by conference call. Chris Mueser (AXA Advisors) attended the meeting as a guest.

Discussion Concerning Specific Legislative Items

Waste Tire Legislation

- CSFCA continues to work with the Waste Tire Stakeholders Group to address our concerns (this includes coordinating with Jim Reid, El Paso County; Chief Carl Tatum of Hanover Fire Protection District; Jerry Stricker, FMAC; and Kevin Klein, DFS).
- The CSFCA position is that review and approval of fire protection plans is a local matter, with technical assistance from the Division of Fire Safety, upon request.
- Another Stakeholders meeting is slated to occur in early January, 2010 to specifically address the financial and training aspects of this legislation.

Urban Renewal/TIF

- The CSFCA Board continues to recognize this as the priority legislative issue for the 2010 session.
- Cooke reported that the "Mayors and Commissioners" Urban Renewal Reform Working Group has not held another meeting that he is aware of. He has heard nothing back from the Working Group on the recommendations submitted by the CSFCA.
- Both Rep. Dickey Lee Hulinghorst (D-Boulder, who is promoting greater transparency in the URA approval process) and Rep. Randy Fischer (D-Fort Collins, who would like to restrict the inclusion of agricultural land in a URA) have pulled bill titles and are considering legislation in the 2010 session.
- Both Rep. Hulinghorst and Rep. Fischer will be looking for CSFCA participation in their respective coalitions in support of their bills.
- It is rumored that the School Finance Committee is looking at sponsoring a bill that would have an affect the backfill to school districts.

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- The CSFCA wishes to participate in a collaborative approach, but will look into the possibility of a bill that would exempt fire district revenue from TIFs (which at this time would have to be a “late bill” requiring leadership approval).

Prescribed Fire Legislation

The committee discussed proposed legislation dealing with prescribed burns. Since that time, we have received a draft of a bill concerning the Certification of Users of Prescribed Fire According to standards established by the Colorado State Forest Service and sponsored by Sen. Gibbs.

As Cooke pointed out in a recent e-mail, the bill is significantly different than what was presented to the CSFCA by the Prescribed Fire Council. The most significant difference is the Council’s proposal set forth what the training and certification standards should be; this draft also virtually removes any checks, balances and stakeholder involvement. The bill vests complete authority to the CSFS to establish training and certification standards for users of prescribed fire, recommended processes for landowners and managers to conduct a prescribed fire, recommended organizational structures for prescribed burn operations, and training standards for certified burners.

And Cooke goes on in the e-mail (which we all received) with some additional significant facts – bottom line, at the present time in its present form, the recommendation is for the CSFCA to NOT support this piece of legislation.

CSU/CSFS Indirect Billing Issue

As most of you are aware, there is a movement afoot to take the billing for wildland response (by fire departments) away from the CSFS/university setting and potentially move it to an Executive Branch agency because of the excessive indirect cost assessment by CSU.

The Sheriffs Association wants to be aligned with the CSFCA on this issue and is asking us to “push the issue” from the perspective of not signing the AOP or sign it with the stipulation that the overhead costs do not exceed 15%. It is important that we determine where some of the key Sheriffs (such as Sheriff Robinson) are on this issue. To that end, Chief Qualman was going to speak with Sheriff Robinson in the near future. Chief Pischke will also have a conversation with Sheriff Pelle as well.

Our direction at this time is to try and get this before the Governors Policy Office to educate them on the issue and seek solutions.

Pre Paid Wireless 911 Surcharge

- There may be another legislative effort in 2010 to require Pre Paid Wireless to pay 911 surcharge fees. A sponsor for this legislation has yet to be introduced. There are conversations occurring with Rep. Rice and Speaker Carroll, although Rep. Rice wants a Republican to be the Prime Sponsor. Sen. White is a candidate to do this but already has the limit on bills sponsored, so would need leadership approval to do this.
- The 911 Task Force is developing a one page overview explaining the need for the legislation. However it appears that the primary issue surrounding this potential legislation is who is going to collect the fee (the previous bill on this subject required the fee be collected by the retailers rather than the service provider).
- At this time there is no reason not to lend our support to this legislation, and Chief Marsh of Federal Heights would be a good SME on this.

Other Issues

The Legislative Committee discussed the following additional items:

State Budget

Roberta reported that the JBC met today and Legislative Council staff presented the current revenue forecast. Leg Council believes the recession is bottomed out - BUT (and this is the kicker), it appears that the State needs to cut an additional \$40 million for the current fiscal year. And the state is now facing what appears to be closer to a cumulative \$1.5 billion shortfall for the 2010/11 fiscal year that starts in July. Not sure we have heard the last of this (unfortunately).

Here is link to Leg Councils forecast:

http://192.70.175.104/gov_dir/leg_dir/lcsstaff/Economic_and_Revenue_Forecast_December.pdf.

Orientation to Legislative Process & Capitol Tour

There will be an orientation/tour of the Capitol for ALL of the Legislative Committee on January 6, 2010 at 1330. Meet in the cafeteria – lower level (aka the basement) – use the entrance on the north side of the Capitol. Good opportunity to get dialed into the nuances of the Capitol and how things operate during the legislative session.

Participation in Legislative Committee Meetings by Vendors

At this meeting we had a request by a “vendor” to attend the meeting. Chris Mueser (AXA Advisors) asked if he could attend to better understand what this committee does and to see if there was any way he could assist any of the efforts we are involved with (and, he has a strong desire to get involved in politics – at the political level in terms of running for an office of some sort – at some time in the future).

Chief Pischke has been tasked with determining his intentions but the general feeling was that, unless we had some issues that required some internal only discussions (so a case by case basis), we could invite him to attend the meetings (the key word being invite).

Thanks to all for your interest and continued efforts to improve what we do.

A Happy New Year to all – see you next year!!

Steve Pischke
Legislative Committee Chair