

Michigan Professional Fire Fighters Union



Structure Committee 2018 Report

Executive Summary

The delegates at the last MPFFU Convention (2016) voted to renew the MPFFU Structure Committee. The committee was assigned to continue the review of the structure and finances of the MPFFU.

The following members were appointed to the MPFFU Structure Committee by MPFFU President Mark Docherty:

- Terrence Chesney – MPFFU Secretary/Treasurer
- Aileen Pettinger – Northern Trustee
- Mickey Wiewiura – Eastern Trustee
- Richard Clark – Western Trustee
- Brandon Hausbeck – Saginaw
- Christopher Love – Battle Creek
- Andrew Houde – Harrison Township
- Jeff Lentz – Dearborn
- John Zinn – Grand Rapids

The Committee met several times between September 2016 and January 2018. Brothers Lentz and Zinn requested to be excused from the committee due to scheduling conflicts.

The Committee presented a draft report to the MPFFU Executive Board for their review and comments on March 15, 2018. The completed final report of the committee follows this executive summary.

The MPFFU Structure Committee reviewed several areas of the MPFFU operations. The areas reflected in this report include the following:

- District Boundaries
- MPFFU Standing Committees
- MPFFU Office Locations
- Booster Retiree Communication and Involvement
- Review of Coordinator Positions
- District Meeting Format and Agenda
- Increase Leadership Participation in Fire PAC at all levels
- Probationary Employees and SAFER Grant Positions
- Type of Pay for District Vice Presidents
- Duties and Responsibilities of Executive Board Members and Trustees
- Salaries and Daily Compensation Rates
- Trustee Duties and Responsibilities

Resolutions will be submitted by the Structure Committee or the MPFFU Executive Board to:

- Make the Trustee Positions a non-voting member of the Executive Board.
- Increase the Compensation Rate for all Executive Board and Committee Positions.
- Establish a Timeline and Guidelines for Adding New Members to the MPFFU
- Creation of a Retiree Committee

MPFFU Structure Committee Report

Delegates at the 2014 MPFFU Conventions passed a resolution to establish an ad-hoc Structure Committee to examine the existing structure and finances of the MPFFU. This committee met several times and issued a report to the MPFFU Executive Board. The report also recommended that the committee be continued to further examine several items in more detail.

As a result, the delegates assembled at the 2016 Convention passed a resolution that authorized continuation of a committee to further examine the recommendations of the previous committee and to consider and develop any new recommendations to improve service to our members in a cost-effective manner.

President Docherty initially appointed Trustees Mickey Wiewiura, Aileen Pettinger, and Richard Clark, and Secretary-Treasurer Chesney to the committee. President Docherty also attended and participated in several of the committee meetings. The committee was tasked with gathering background material and brainstorming activities to assist the committee when additional members were appointed by President Docherty.

This subcommittee group met in September and December in 2016, and in March, June, and September in 2017. A list of topics for the

President Docherty then appointed John Zinn, Brandon Hausbeck, Jeff Lentz, Christopher Love, and Andy Houde to serve as additional members of the committee. The initial meeting of the entire committee was scheduled for December 12th. Brothers Zinn, Hausbeck, and Lentz were unable to attend this meeting.

The second meeting of the committee took place on January 3, 2018. Brothers Zinn, Clark, and Lentz were unable to attend this meeting. A third meeting of the committee took place on Jan 23rd.

The committee reviewed and discussed several items related to the structure of the MPFFU, as well as the services provided to members. Duties of all officers, rate of pay, and other issues related to the per capita rate were also discussed. These items are listed below, in no specific order of importance.

District Boundaries

A great deal of time was spent examining the current geographical boundaries of the six districts of the MPFFU. The committee reviewed the number of locals and members in each district. They explored the possibility of reassigning locals to different districts to balance out the number of locals in each district. After careful review, there was a consensus that all locals are receiving the necessary services they require under the current format. Service to a local by a District Vice President is normally related to the experience of the Local Union executive board members. It was also agreed that the politics of redrawing the boundaries would be an insurmountable task and it was felt there really wouldn't be any measurable improvement in service or cost savings by doing it.

The committee also discussed adding additional districts and/or combining districts, but these ideas were dismissed for the same reasons discussed above.

- **The committee recommends no change to the existing district boundaries.**

MPFFU Standing Committees

The committee reviewed the current committees, their tasks, and the number of members on the committees. It was determined that the MPFFU President has the ability to modify the number of members on each of the committees as well as the number of times a committee needs to meet.

- **The committee recommends no changes to the standing committee process.**

Location of MPFFU Offices

During the initial meetings of the committee, Secretary-Treasurer Chesney stated he thought it was possible to downsize the Trenton office. He indicated that the current space was no longer required due to all the technological advances and because most meetings now take place in Lansing. This issue was discussed at the Executive Board workshop in June and it was decided that because of the substantial cost savings associated with the downsizing, there would be no need to wait until the committee issued its report to move forward with this process. The Executive Board also discussed the possibility of relocating the office in Lansing to a larger suite in the same building.

- **The Trenton office was subsequently moved to a small room in the current location and will keep the same address.**
- **The Lansing office was subsequently moved to a larger suite in the AFL-CIO building in Lansing.**
- **The net overall savings will be approximately \$10,000 each year.**

Booster Retiree Communication and Involvement

The committee determined that a definite need exists to maintain communications with retired members of the MPFFU and to find ways to stay in contact with them. The goal would be to include them in our legislative rallies and other political activities. The committee also discussed the possibility of inviting them to an annual meeting and to district meetings and the MPFFU Convention.

- **The committee recommends that a resolution be submitted to create a MPFFU Retiree Committee, that includes at least three retired members of the MPFFU. The purpose of this new committee will be to find ways to booster communications with retirees and to increase their involvement with the MPFFU.**

Education Coordinator and Communications Coordinator Positions

The committee discussed the accomplishments of the Education and Training Coordinator and Communications Coordinator positions. These positions were created at the last convention and the per capita tax to fund these positions sunsets on June 30, 2018 unless extended by convention action. The committee reviewed the expectations and any measurable results from the creation of each position. After much discussion, the committee decided that the decision to renew these positions should be deferred to the MPFFU President and Executive Board.

- **The committee made no recommendation on the Coordinator Positions.**

District Meeting Format and Agenda

The committee discussed and reviewed the existing format and agenda for MPFFU District Meetings. The committee agreed that no substantial changes need to be made to the existing format.

- **The committee recommends no changes to the district meeting format and agenda.**

Leadership Participation in Fire PAC at all levels

The committee discussed ways to improve membership participation, especially by local officers, in the MPFFU Fire PAC program.

- **The committee recommends that the MPFFU Political Education Committee make it a high priority to increase local leadership participation in the MPFFU Fire PAC program.**

Timeline for adding Probationary Employees and SAFER Grant Positions to MPFFU Roster

The committee discussed and reviewed the process for locals to add new members to their roster with the MPFFU and the IAFF. They also discussed how the MPFFU initiation fee is being applied to probationary employees in general and to SAFER Grant employees.

- **The committee recommends that locals should submit the MPFFU dues and initiation fee for all new members within 30 days of the start of their employment with the fire department.**

Method of Payment to District Vice Presidents

The committee reviewed the current method of payment to District Vice Presidents. Currently, each DVP receives the daily compensation rate of \$200 for each day they are assigned by the President to do anything on behalf of the MPFFU. The committee discussed the pros and cons of paying the DVP's a salary rather than the existing method of daily compensation for days of service. The committee determined that the current method of payment is the fairest and most effective way to insure adequate services are provided to the locals.

- **The committee recommends that no changes be made to the method of payment to District Vice Presidents.**

Duties and Responsibilities of Executive Board Members and Trustees

The committee reviewed and discussed the duties and responsibilities of each of the positions. It was noted that the last structure committee recommended that further investigation be done to determine if there was a need to create another Principal Officer position (such as an Executive Vice President) to assist the President on an as needed basis. Currently, the MPFFU President maintains the authority to assign any members to assist with services or representing the MPFFU. The committee felt that maintaining the President's ability to assign individuals to assist him/her on an as needed basis provides needed flexibility and is more cost effective than creating a new position.

- **The committee recommends no changes in the existing duties and responsibilities and also determined that it is not necessary to create an additional Principal Officer position at this time.**

Salaries and Daily Compensation Rates Of All Positions

The committee reviewed and discussed the history of pay increases for elected positions and committee members. The last pay adjustments for Executive Board members, Trustees, and Committees occurred in 2010. The committee discussed various ways to provide a modest increase. Since 2012, the per capita has been increased by the CPI each year which totals approximately 10%. Even though the CPI increase was included in the per capita rates, the pay rates were not subject to these same CPI increases. It was determined that if the CPI increases had been included since 2012, the following rates would have been currently in effect:

| | 2010 -Present | With CPI Increases since 2010 (13%) |
|------------------------------|---------------|--|
| Principal Officers' Salaries | \$48,000 | \$54,240 |
| Daily Compensation Rate | \$200 | \$226 |
| Committee Rate | \$75 | \$84.75 |

The committee determined that since 2012, the CPI increases have already been included in the per capita rates. (approximately 10%) A similar increase in the rates of pay could be made without assessing any additional increase in per capita. The committee felt that the actual amounts of pay should be continued to be listed in the MPFFU Constitution and By-Laws and that no increases to these rates should take effect without convention action.

- **The committee recommends that resolutions be submitted to the MPFFU Convention proposing increases in the following rates of pay, to be effective July 1, 2018: Principal Officers-\$54,000, Daily Compensation-\$250, and Committees - \$100.**

Trustee Duties and Responsibilities

The committee reviewed and discussed the history of the MPFFU Trustee position as well as the Trustee's duties and responsibilities. The role of the Trustees has evolved into much more than the original duties of examining the books twice a year. The position has expanded to having them attend all executive board meetings, seminars, and committee meetings. In addition, the Trustees have been assigned by the MPFFU President to assist with many other tasks when necessary. The committee discussed the question of if a Trustee can maintain their objectivity if they participate in any tasks other than examining the finances of the MPFFU. The consensus was that there is 100% transparency of the finances which are reviewed by the members of the executive board and all MPFFU members. The committee felt that any oversight of wrong doing missed by the Trustees would be easily detected by other MPFFU members.

The committee discussed the Trustee's role and participation in discussion at the MPFFU Executive Board meetings. Because they are not voting members of the MPFFU Executive Board, the Trustees are rarely permitted to engage in the discussion and debate of issues at MPFFU Executive Board meetings. They receive a daily compensation payment to be there to observe. The committee discussed the advantages of having additional members participate in discussion and debate of issues.

- **The committee recommended that the Executive Board consider making a resolution to the MPFFU Convention to designate the Trustee position as an Executive Board position and grant these individuals a formal voting position of the MPFFU Executive Board. This would also formalize having their duties expanded to assist the Principal Officers and the District Vice Presidents as needed when assigned by the MPFFU President. These changes will not require any increase in per capita.**

- **The committee recommended that the Executive Board consider changing the name of the Trustee positions to reflect this additional change of duties.**

CONCLUSION

The members of the MPFFU Executive Board and the MPFFU Trustees reviewed and discussed the recommendations of the Structure Committee at its March 15, 2018 Executive Board meeting.

The Executive Board agreed with all the Structure Committee recommendations except for giving the Trustees a voting position on the MPFFU Executive Board.

Instead, the MPFFU Executive Board will submit a resolution to make the MPFFU Trustee position a non-voting member of the MPFFU Executive Board.

It was noted that individual members of the committee retain the right to submit their own resolutions to the MPFFU Convention.

The Executive Board thanked the Structure Committee members for taking the time to examine the operations of the Michigan Professional Fire Fighters Union.