State Firemen's & Fire Marshals' Association of Texas

Mid-West Texas District

SFFMA Constitution and By-Laws Committee;
% Chairman Harvie Cheshire

February 21, 2019

Dear Committee Members,

The members of the Mid-West Texas District are aware of, and concerned about the low number of votes that have been cast in the Association's recent annual elections, and the Conference's cost to the Association, and the members who attend the annual event. The situation was discussed extensively at the District's semi-annual meeting held on October 13, 2018 in Baird, Texas.

After a thorough and exhaustive discussion, all in attendance were in agreement regarding the following Points.

1. Changes were needed in order to increase the number of votes cast in June and provide a greater number of eligible delegates and opportunity to participate in the Association's elections.

2. Due to changes in the economy, personal and departmental budgets, employment restrictions, family commitments and lifestyle changes, fewer Training Conference and Convention attendees have the ability to remain at the event from Friday or Saturday through the following Wednesday, necessitating an avenue to shorten the annual event.

3. Delegates should attend the annual Training Conference and Convention in order to cast ballot in the Association's elections.

4. Every member that meets the requirements to be designated a voting delegate, and, commits the time and financial resources to attend the Training Conference and Convention should be afforded the opportunity to vote.

5. Attendance is significantly greater on the weekend of the trade show and Memorial Service than on the last day of the Training Conference and Convention when elections are traditionally conducted.

Randy Teague President, Alexander Smith, Jr 1st Vice President, ~Vacant~. 2nd Vice President,
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The voting delegates assembled unanimously approved a motion for the District to submit proposed amendments to the SFFMA's Constitution and By-Laws to address these issues for future consideration.

The District discussed the issue at length at its fall meeting held in Baird, Texas on October 13, 2018 and unanimously voted to submit a proposal to address these issues.

Therefore, the members of the Mid-West Texas District are respectfully submitting these proposed amendments to the Association's Constitution and By-Laws for consideration in 2019 in order to achieve the following goals:

1. Allow for increased representation in SFFMA elections while reducing the Conference's cost to the Association and the members who attend the annual event.

2. Facilitate the ability for delegates who cannot remain at the annual Training Conference and Convention until Wednesday to participate in elections.

3. Revise the Association's election procedure in a manner that will minimize the Association's cost.

4. Respect the tradition of attending the Convention to vote in Association elections.

5. Maintain the sanctity of the Firefighter Memorial Service by precluding any potential conflicts stemming from the election process.

Please note, this revision of the proposed amendments addresses the concerns you expressed at the January 2018 meeting in Arlington regarding any type of business session at the January planning meeting. Additionally, it will streamline the process of seeking office within the Association.

Please find the proposed amendments included in this package on the following pages.

CONSTITUTION
ARTICLE III – Officers

Current:
Section 1.1. Every elected officer of this Association, except chaplain, shall be from the active or retired membership of a recognized active member department of the State Firemen's and Fire Marshals' Association of Texas and shall be endorsed by the Executive Board of a District Association that is recognized by the Executive Board of the State Firemen's & Fire Marshals' Association of Texas, where they currently live or formerly lived.

Proposed Amendment 2 MWTD 2019:
Section 1.1. **Every elected officer of this Association, except chaplain, shall be from the active or retired membership of a recognized active member department of the State Firemen's and Fire Marshals' Association of Texas and shall be endorsed and nominated by the Executive Board of a District Association that is recognized by the Executive Board of the State Firemen's & Fire Marshals' Association of Texas, where they currently live or formerly lived.**

Current:
Section 2. The foregoing officers and a mascot shall be elected annually by the Association at the last session of the last day of the Annual Training Conference and Convention, and shall hold their respective offices until their successors shall be elected and qualified. Their duties shall be as are defined by the bylaws of this Association.

Proposed Amendment 2 MWTD 2019:
Section 2. The foregoing officers and a mascot shall be elected annually by the Association. **The names of the candidates seeking election shall be verified and placed on a ballot, voting by ballot shall take place during the hours of the trade show on the first day of the Annual Training Conference and Convention. The duly elected officers and mascot** shall hold their respective offices until their successors shall be elected and qualified. Their duties shall be as are defined by the bylaws of this Association.

BY-LAWS
ARTICLE I – Annual Meetings

Current:
Section 1. The Association shall meet during June of each year and shall begin with a business session on Sunday, beginning with an afternoon session and continuing for three days.

Proposed Amendment 2 MWTD 2019:
Section 1. **The Association shall meet during June of each year and shall begin with a business session on Sunday, beginning with an afternoon session and continuing for two days. Voting for all officers, mascots and meeting places shall be conducted, on the Saturday of the trade show of the Annual Training Conference.**

Proposed Amendment 2 MWTD 2019:
Section 1.1 **In the event successive ballots are required, they shall be cast the following day. Balloting shall not interfere, nor conflict with the Firefighter Memorial Service in any manner.**

ARTICLE VIII - Nominations of Officers and Selection of Meeting Place

Current:
Section 1. Nominations of all officers, mascots and meeting places shall be made at the hour designated on the official Annual Training Conference and Convention program, during the first (1st) business session of the annual conference.

Proposed Amendment 2 MWTD 2019:
***Section 1*. A filing period shall be established in order to allow individuals seeking office, or position within the Association to formally declare their candidacy for the office or position. The filing period will be opened on the day following the last business session of the Annual Training Conference and Convention of this Association and shall remain open to the close of the Annual Training Conference and Convention planning conference held in January of each year.**

Proposed Amendment 2 MWTD 2019:
***Section 1.1* A Declaration of Candidacy from the person seeking office or position shall be submitted to the Association's Secretary within the filing period. The declaration must be prepared in writing, and must be accompanied by a letter of endorsement and nomination by the Executive Board of a District Association that is recognized by the Executive Board of the State Firemen's & Fire Marshals' Association of Texas, where they currently live or formerly lived. The letter of endorsement and nomination by the Executive Board of a District Association shall constitute the official nomination for the office or position.**

Proposed Amendment 2 MWTD 2019:
***Section 1.2* The president shall appoint an Elections Committee consisting of the secretary and four (4) past presidents prior to the close of the Annual Training Conference and Convention planning conference held in January of each year. The Elections Committee will review the nominees' eligibility to seek and hold the office or position and distribute the committee's findings to all district secretaries on or before March 15th.**

Proposed Amendment 2 MWTD 2019:
***Section 1.3* Nominations for meeting places shall be submitted to the Association's Secretary within the filing period. The nomination must be prepared in writing, and must be submitted by the Executive Board of a District Association that is recognized by the Executive Board of the State Firemen's & Fire Marshals' Association of Texas.**

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ARTICLE IX - Voting and Elections

Current:
Section 3. Ballots shall be distributed to the Delegates by the Sergeant-at-Arms at such time as their attendance cards are taken up at the last session. The Sergeant-at-Arms shall act as tellers during balloting, the president shall appoint a committee to count all ballots and return a total count to the secretary.

Proposed Amendment 2 MWTD 2019:
Section 3. **The Sergeant-at-Arms shall maintain a polling location at or near the trade show held on the first Saturday of the Annual Training Conference and Convention. The polling location shall be open in order to allow delegates to cast their ballots at any time during the stated period of time the trade show is open.**

Proposed Amendment 2 MWTD 2019:
Section 3.1 **The Credentials Committee shall provide a list of delegates that have been verified as eligible to cast votes in matters of the Association prior to the opening of the polling location. In the event a delegate was not registered prior to arriving at the Annual Training Conference and Convention, or, addition information is required prior to the delegate being determined to be eligible to cast ballots, the Credentials Committee shall provide the Sergeant-at-Arms an amended list verifying the delegate (s) in question are eligible to cast ballots, prior to the delegate(s) receiving a ballot.**

Proposed Amendment 2 MWTD 2019:
Section 3.2 **The Sergeant-at-Arms shall maintain the provided list of delegates and First Ballots at the polling location. Upon a delegate's entry of the polling location, the Sergeant-at-Arms shall verify the delegate's eligibility to cast a ballot, indicate the delegate voted on the provided list of delegates and then provide the delegate with a ballot to mark and place in a secure ballot box. The Sergeant-at-Arms shall act as tellers and maintain security of the ballot box during balloting, and at all times prior to the time the ballots are counted. The president shall appoint a committee to count all ballots and return a total count to the secretary prior to the Firefighter Memorial Service on Sunday morning.**

Proposed Amendment 2 MWTD 2019:
Section 3.3. **In the event a second ballot is required, the Sergeant-at-Arms shall maintain a polling station as specified in Section 3.2 of this article at or near the location of the Sunday busines session luncheon for a time period of time from 30 minutes after the conclusion of the Firefighter Memorial Luncheon to the opening of the Sunday Business Session. The president shall appoint a committee to count all ballots and return a total count to the secretary within ninety (90) minutes of the opening of the first (1st) business session of the annual conference.**

Proposed Amendment 2 MWTD 2019:
Section 3.4 **In the event subsequent balloting is required, it shall be conducted prior to the close the first (1st) business session of the annual conference in the manner specified in Section 3.2 of this article.**

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Mid-West Texas District

Respectfully submitted at the SFFMA Annual Training Conference Planning Meeting, Longview, Texas on January 26, 2019

Mid-West Texas District Constitution and By-Laws Committee

Randy Teague
President, Lake Coleman

Alexander Smith, Jr.
1st Vice President, Baird

~Position Vacant~
2nd Vice President

Robert Wheeler
3rd Vice President, Hamby

Clyde Patterson
4th Vice President, Anson

Kristopher Hester
Secretary-Treasurer, Merkel

J. Clay Deatherage
Parliamentarian, Albany

Danny Campbell
Chaplain, Hon. Retired

Jason Hull
Immediate Past President, Rotan

Edward Mike Konczak, Sr.
Member, Baird