

FLORIDA FIRE MARSHALS
AND
INSPECTORS ASSOCIATION



BOARD OF DIRECTORS HANDBOOK

2011

DEDICATION

This document is dedicated to the men and women who freely and willingly gave of their time and efforts over the years in the hopes of creating a better level of service, training, education and consistency in the application of fire codes and standards to the people of the Great State of Florida.

To all who have ever served on the Board of Directors for FFMIA we are grateful for the path you have paved and we only hope that we can leave our service to this organization in a better state of affairs than when we stepped into our roles as leaders.

ORIGINAL

Preamble

Welcome to the Board of Directors for the Florida Fire Marshals and Inspectors Association (FFMIA). The decision to be a leader is an easy one for anybody to make. The dedication and commitment to provide leadership and to be recognized as a proven leader takes years of hard work and countless acts of selfless sacrifice. BOD members must remember, *“Leaders lead by example, whether they intend to or not.”* As you embark on your mission to serve in a leadership role there are certain questions that you must be asking yourself;

- 1) Why do I want to be on the Board of Directors of this organization?
- 2) What difference can I make as a member of the Board of Directors?
- 3) What did the last person in this role do that I can improve upon?
- 4) Do I have the full support and commitment to serve in this role from my employer and my family?
- 5) What do I expect to gain personally from this experience?

If you cannot answer these five (5) basic questions perhaps you should be asking yourself, “do I have what it takes to serve this membership?”

This document will attempt to provide a step by step guideline as to the expectations for service to the membership while serving in your role as a member of the Board. Obviously you will come across situations that will likely not be covered more frequently than what you will find covered. When this occurs please remember to forward that and it will be considered for inclusion in this guide.

The FFMIA was founded in 1977 under the original name of the Florida Fire Marshals Association. A summary history of the organization may be found on the FFMIA web page at www.ffmia.org. The name of the organization was changed to add “and Inspectors” in 2000 coinciding with the dissolution of the Florida Fire Inspectors Association. For years this was a struggling organization of just a couple of hundred very dedicated individuals. Throughout the first decade of the 21st century the association has evolved into a membership base of over 1,500 strong and has an operating budget that is five (5) times what it was at the turn of the century.

It is an honor and a privilege to welcome you to a team that many before you have taken great pride in being a member of and more importantly had the privilege to lead. Please assure that you always give 100% and when you grow tired or find yourself in a position where you can do no more, step aside and allow someone else the opportunity. It is certain that you will foster many positive relationships and your experience will enhance your professional growth considerably. Good luck and thank you for stepping up from all who have served and from those you are about to serve!

Purpose of the Association

The following are the purposes for which this association has been created.

To unite for mutual benefit those public officials engaged in and responsible for fire prevention through inspection, code enforcement, public education, and arson investigation.

To serve as a central agency for the gathering and exchange of technical information in the field of fire prevention.

To unify the efforts of the fire prevention officials throughout the State in the enforcing, strengthening, upgrading, and development of codes and standards of the State of Florida.

To serve as the voice of professional fire prevention officials in the State of Florida with regard to the development of local, municipal, and state wide codes, standards, and legislation in the field of fire prevention and suppression.

To serve as a liaison between all organizations of professional firefighters with regard to fire prevention.

To actively promote the highest standard of professionalism and conduct among fire prevention officials throughout Florida.

To educate the public of the State of Florida that the enforcement of fire codes will lead to a safer environment.

Web Site and By-Laws

A summary description of each Board of Directors individual job responsibility is found in the By-Laws on the association web site. It is your responsibility to review and understand the contents of the FFMIA web site and specifically the By-Laws of the association before you commit to this endeavor. This document will attempt to describe in more detail what the expectations of your commitment are, but will not cover every potential issue you may face.

Specific Duties of Board Members

The following will summarize a normal duty experience of the positions on the Board of Directors. There is no way to capture all of the activities you may encounter as events arise from time to time that are unprecedented. As these occur we will attempt to capture these for archiving in this document. It is expected that Board members will be flexible in their duties and step up when the time comes and be the leader you have aspired to be.

President

Shall serve as the Chief Executive Officer of the association. The President shall preside over all business meetings of the association. The President serves as an ambassador for the organization and should attend as many meet and greet functions as necessary to share our vision and mission. He / she shall prepare written greeting messages for all conferences for inclusion in the official program and shall produce a monthly article for the association e-newsletter. In addition to the duties described in the association by-laws, the President shall appoint or direct the formation of committees and may expect results on a time certain schedule to measure benefits of the committee work. He / she shall appoint members for committee work and may make recommendations for removal of members for cause. This action must be ratified by a majority of the Board.

The President will be contacted from time to time by members of the executive staff or by any of our allied fire service partners. There are certain decisions that must be made for the continuity of the association business that the President may simply authorize or concur on requests with a phone call or e-mail with or without Board notice or approval. If the Board feels the President has acted outside of the scope of his / her authority, the Board should direct that a written policy be created to document the direction for future officers.

The President shall work as close as reasonably possible with the 1st Vice President to assure seamless transfer of duties when the time arises. This includes inviting the 1st VP to attend meetings and functions and assure he / she is an integral part of the process.

1st Vice President

Shall serve as the first in-line back-up to the President and shall act in his / her absence. The primary responsibility of the 1st Vice President is to prepare for ascension to the Presidency. To do so requires much coordination and participation in many events the President attends as well as frequent discussions and meetings with the President to assure a smooth transition when the time comes. The 1st VP needs to be thoroughly familiar and comfortable with all aspects of the organization so that he / she is prepared to move into the position without reservation in the event the President can no longer serve.

The 1st VP will be called upon to attend conferences, seminars and meetings on behalf of the President and will often times be expected to deliver welcome speeches on his / her behalf. The specific primary duty of the 1st VP is to serve as the Chair of the annual “of the year awards” selections and to serve as the master of ceremonies at the annual conference for presentation of the awards. The 1st VP will also serve at the pleasure of the President and the Board on various committees and advisory boards as the need presents. The 1st VP will also work closely with the 2nd VP to assure he / she is being groomed to ascend to the 1st VP role.

2nd Vice President

As with the 1st VP, it is the responsibility of the 2nd VP to learn all that he /she can regarding the business affairs of the association. To prepare you for this journey the 2nd VP is responsible for serving as a liaison to the Regional Directors. This involves coordinating needs of the directors and assuring the directors are keeping their rosters current with county points of contact and meeting their area members needs. An orientation of new directors shall be held upon the election of new directors. The 2nd VP will assure that this orientation occurs and it may be as simple as a meeting or it may involve a power point presentation on the organization and discussion of the By-laws and this handbook. The 2nd VP shall meet with all directors at least annually to review expectations.

The 2nd VP will also serve as the Chair of the Finance Committee. Working closely with the Business Manager, or other designated agent, the 2nd VP will learn the business aspects of the organization through review of profit and loss statements and making recommendations for annual budget preparation.

The 2nd VP will also work closely with the 1st VP and make every attempt to attend events and meetings to learn the various partnerships and identify the key players in each allied organization and become a familiar face to those organizations that we interface with.

Secretary / Treasurer

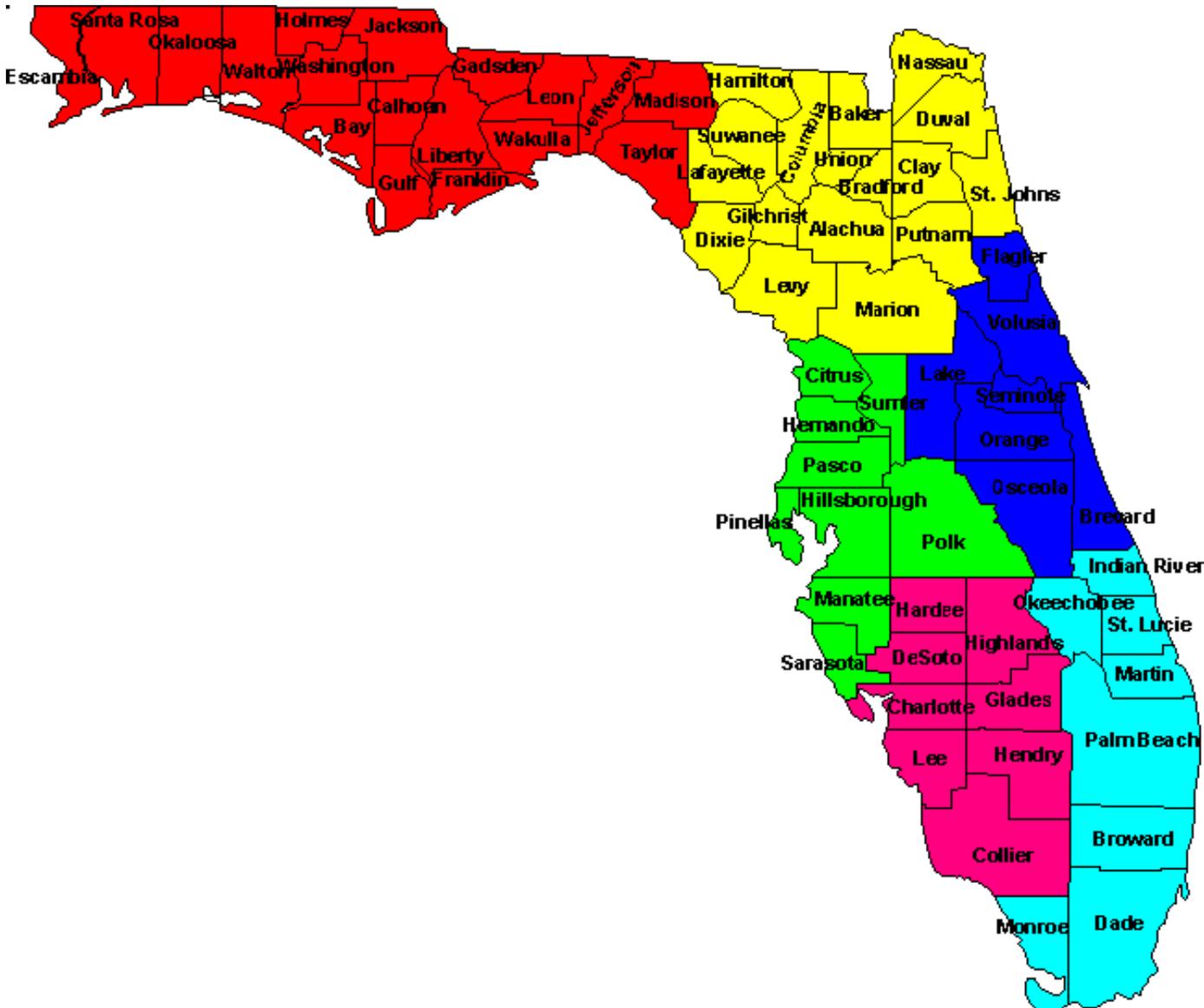
As of the writing of this document the Secretary / Treasurer position is under transition with many fiscal responsibilities going to the Business Manager. Updates will be provided when available.

Past President

The Past President is the most recent President that is an active member and is willing to serve. The Past President is not an elected position, but sits on the Board of Directors with full voting privileges. The duties of the Past President are as prescribed by the current President. Primarily this position will assist the incoming President in the transition of duties and may serve on various committees, task forces or working groups as directed.

Regional Directors

For business purposes and the establishment of regions for FFMIA, the State of Florida is currently divided into six (6) regions with each represented by a Director. The Regional Director position is generally viewed as the entry level position on the Board of Directors.



There are many opportunities for networking within each region and each director is expected to build on established partnerships as well as fostering the creation of new ones. There is no limit to the types of relationships that may be built. For

example; a relationship with a plumber's union representative from 3 counties away may result in a membership opportunity or educational opportunity.

Everything from barber shops to boat builders to other governmental entities is fair game when it comes to marketing and recruiting membership for the association. Keep in mind that every occupancy with the exception of one-and two family residential dwellings are subject to the provisions of the Fire Prevention Code. That means each must be inspected on a periodic basis. A good working relationship with your local chamber of commerce and your business development board may prove to be excellent opportunities for you as a director to share the mission of the association. It may also open endless doors to benefit you professionally in your local community.

A good Regional Director is a major key player in the success of the organization. There have been many wonderful recurring events as a result of aggressive Regional Directors. Unfortunately a lazy or incompetent Regional Director can be very disruptive to an organization if the members find their needs are not being met.

While there is no set job description for Regional Directors, there are some established expectations such as, but not limited to:

- 1) Regional Directors are expected to provide a minimum of 16 hours (ceu's) of training to the membership in their region each calendar year.
- 2) A county liaison shall be established and maintained for each county in your region. This person is your go-to point of contact for events, or for receiving information on the training or other association related needs in your area. The county liaison is designed to minimize your need to seek all needs from all members, but always leave yourself open to discuss any need with any member.
- 3) The Regional Director answers to the 2nd VP for reporting purposes on training activities in your area. A form has been created and reports are expected to measure needs and successes.
- 4) Attendance at local fire inspector, fire marshal, public educator, fire chief or any other fire service local association meetings you may work your way in to is an excellent way to promote yourself and show your interest in your role. While not mandatory, the membership knows who you are and how active you are in representing their interests.
- 5) Participation in monthly conference calls unless excused in advance. It is understood that we all work in emergency services in some capacity. If an emergency arises please contact the 2nd VP and/or Business Manager as soon as possible after you miss a meeting and be sure to read the "Action Summaries" posted on the web page.

- 6) Attendance at all face-to-face Board meetings is expected. Again, if you cannot make it please notify in advance. Board meetings are held one to four times per year depending on the current President and the needs of the association.

Section Chairs

FFMIA recognizes the need to partner with associations that are representative of our core mission. From time to time we are approached by organizations who would like to join forces with us, currently the Florida Association of Fire and Life Safety Educators (FAFLSE) and the Florida Fire Investigators Association (FFIA) are recognized sections under the umbrella of FFMIA. Once an association / section reaches a threshold of fifty (50) members they are appropriated a voting member seat on the Board of Directors known as the Section Chair.

The Section Chair is the representative to the FFMIA Board of Directors for purposes of liaison to the Board and they are expected to represent the best interest of their section. They have full voting privileges and are given full responsibility and liability as a member of the FFMIA Board of Directors.

Fellows

The Fellows network is regarded as the elite of our membership. Many of these individuals are founding members of this association. Others have served in varying capacities from membership / leadership on the Board to advisory and even fund raising ventures. Their leadership and their vision have brought us to where we are today and they remain active serving as an advisory board on special projects. The Business Manager / C.O.O. is the liaison to the Fellows and their input remains as valuable today as the days they served. Do not forget this special group and be familiar with who they are. They have earned our respect and they deserve any recognition we may offer. You may be surprised what you can learn if you only ask.

Business of the Association

The business of FFMIA is over-seen by the Board of Directors. The Board currently employs an Executive Director and Secretary to handle all member related matters and training needs and a Business Manager / Chief Operating Officer to manage the day-to-day affairs of the association.

The Board conducts regular conference calls on the 4th Tuesday of every month to discuss routine business matters. Face-to-face Board meetings are held at least twice annually at the FAFLSE Conference in June and the annual Fire Prevention Conference in November. Additional meetings are scheduled at the direction of the current President.

Meetings are conducted with a published agenda and under the general direction of Robert's Rules of Order. Any action item voted on by the Board during a meeting is recorded and placed on a set aside section of an action summary which is posted on the Member's Only section of the web site.

There is a calendar of "Key Dates" for Board members that is published and distributed. Any recurring events that are note worthy should be forwarded to the Business Manager for inclusion in this document.

FFMIA members serve on a number of different standing committees, working groups, advisory councils and boards. Likewise FFMIA facilitates a number of standing committees such as, but not limited to finance, legislative, By-laws, etc...There is plenty of opportunity to be as involved as you like. New or perspective Board members should speak with any member they feel comfortable with and may always contact the Business Manager for direction or advise.

As an association serving a membership with a geographic spread the size of Florida it is nearly impossible to do this from behind a desk. It is essential that members of the Board be willing to travel to the membership in their areas and as needed travel throughout the State of Florida and in some cases beyond. This lone requirement can be a strain on your routine and something that must be considered prior to your commitment.

Thoughts to consider

1) As a member of the FFMIA Board of Directors you will often be asked your opinion on a variety of matters. Please keep in mind any position taken by the Board on any particular matter. While you may be the fire official in your local community your personal opinion, or that of your organization may differ from an official position taken by the Board. This is a very delicate position to find your self in and has caused grief for some past Board members. Finding that balance and presenting it in a positive manner takes a little finesse and is sometimes uncomfortable. Often times taking a neutral position is safe in that type of environment. When you speak on an issue to an audience that is literally state-wide, your comments are often a reflection of the entire Board so be careful what you say.

Key point to remember: If you have a local position that is in conflict with a position taken by the Board, it is best to share that with only members of the Board. If your statement is going to greater audience be clear that this is your opinion or position and not the official position of the FFMIA Board or its' membership.

2) Being a member of the Board of Directors for FFMIA requires many hours of dedicated work outside of what many might consider normal working hours.

There are expectations that you will attend meetings that may go into late evening hours and may require over night travel and weekends. Many telephone and e-mail communications are initiated after normal working hours on nights, weekends and even holidays and significant personal dates. Prepare your spouse, significant other, children or whomever is necessary for these inconveniences. There are also many activities that will interrupt your work schedule and will require careful coordination of your time with your employer. It is essential that you participate in as many of these meetings and activities as possible. Logistics for coordinating events across the entire State requires full participation and involvement of the Board for us to be successful. This is why the question appears above in the preamble as number four. 4) Do I have the full support and commitment to serve in this role from my employer and my family?

With monthly conference calls, annual conferences, coordination with county coordinators for Regional Directors, committee participation, travel for committee members and officers, regional training, legislative activities, code hearings and rule workshops, etc, being a Board member can be very cumbersome and may take a toll on your professional position in your local community that actual pays your salary.

Key point to remember: This position will require many hours that may interfere with my employment and my personal life. I need to be prepared and have the blessings of my employer and my family.

Benefits of Service

There are many benefits to serving on the Board of Directors. The ability to influence change and develop as a leader can be a tremendous asset to your home organization that cannot be purchased or taught in a classroom. Your exposure to issues and operations and your ability to engage in professional debate, deliberations and consensus building and how they can produce statewide impacts (good and bad) will no doubt provide real life educational incentives that your employer should embrace with welcome arms.

The Board of Directors currently has a policy whereby conference fees and hotel costs may be waived for Board members. This is a way of saying thank you to employers for allowing members the time necessary away from their primary jobs to serve in their duties.

Additionally expenses incurred while traveling as a member of the Board may be reimbursed upon submitting the appropriate form. Costs eligible for reimbursement include gas (for personal vehicles) tolls, meals and lodging expenses. Whenever possible we ask that you use an assigned vehicle from your employer in an effort to curb expenses.

Conclusion

As stated in the preamble the decision to be a leader is an easy one. Proving yourself as the leader you envision may also be easy, but it will require hard work. Active participation on the Board of Directors is a very fulfilling experience. If you work hard and apply yourself, whether you choose to ascend through the ranks of leadership or not, great rewards will come your way. One of the greatest rewards is in the development of life long friendships and travel opportunities you may never have dreamed of. You will see people you have admired or have only heard about through your career and you will watch in amazement as those people will turn to you for advise or support on issues.

Make no mistake that a leadership role as a member on the Board of Directors for FFMIA will enhance your professional credibility and elevate you to new levels and goals in your career.

Good luck and once again thank you for your interest in serving the membership and the citizens and visitors of the Great State of Florida.

Submitted by: Jon W. Pasqualone, Business Manager/C.O.O.
June 22, 2011

Approved for posting
June 22, 2011

Original Signature on file
Wesley Hayes, Jr. President

06/22/11
Date